

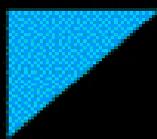
Making It Happen!

A guide for small organisations on how to involve student volunteers



Student
Volunteering **England**

YEAR
OF THE
VOLUNTEER
2005



Making It Happen!

in association with Year of the Volunteer 2005

A guide for small organisations on how to
involve student volunteers



Derbyshire Street
London
E2 6HG

0800 0182 146
info@studentvolunteering.org.uk
www.studentvolunteering.org.uk

So you want to work with student volunteers?

Student Volunteering England is a national charity that works towards ensuring every student has the opportunity to volunteer and make a positive difference in their community and beyond, through having access to relevant volunteering opportunities and receiving effective support.

Which is where YOU come in - we know you have exciting opportunities for student volunteers to be involved in your organisation and this guide will tell you how to make it happen!

If you are part of a national organisation, please speak to us as we can help you design a national student volunteer recruitment strategy.

If you are a small organisation, when thinking about recruiting student volunteers for your local project, contact the student volunteer co-ordinator at your local university or college. You can find out who this is by visiting www.studentvolunteering.org.uk or e-mailing info@studentvolunteering.org.uk.

Students are amazing, vibrant, enthusiastic and innovative volunteers who really will make it happen!

Student Volunteering: A brief history

Student volunteering in England has a long history, dating back to at least the nineteenth century when universities set up missions in deprived inner-city areas and students went to live and work in them. It was in the mid-twentieth century when, as a number of universities set up social services organisations, students became involved in traditional community volunteering.

During the 60s and 70s a new approach was taken leading to the rise of Student Community Action (SCA), a national network of student-led groups running and managing their own voluntary projects in their local community. The three principles of SCA are:

- it is about students who volunteer in and with their local community
- it values the involvement of students in the decision-making process
- it believes in and strives towards equal opportunities and diversity

SCA is based within Students' Unions, and for many years was the only established way to volunteer in the community. Although the emphasis of SCA was on it being student-led, as volunteering became increasingly recognised as an important activity for student development, students' unions and the institutions started giving money to the SCA groups for paid staff or a sabbatical officer. These workers acted in an administrative capacity, to provide support to the students. The governance still came from the SCA managing committee and the relationship was akin to those of civil servants and ministers.

As volunteering's importance grew it was adopted in other arenas such as careers, widening participation and accredited modules thus diversifying the avenues through which volunteering could be accessed. The wider benefits of volunteering to the volunteer such as building confidence and enhanced employability gradually became well-known.

Student volunteering underwent a further rise when an initial £27 million was invested in 2002 via the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF). The HEACF meant that more staff than ever before are now employed to manage volunteering, it is set up in universities with no previous history of student volunteering, and more and more diverse projects are being run.



Currently there are over 42,000 students volunteering in England, however we are sure with your help we can make it many more!

What's the Point?

It is accepted nowadays that volunteering contributes so much more than the age-old saying of 'giving something back'. But what does it contribute and to whom?

Student Volunteers

- Develops skills that equip students for life and work, enhancing employability.
- Opens up new opportunities and challenges, and provides something different from the degree subject.
- Allows students to widen their horizons by bridging the gap between the town and university.
- For non-British students it gives a greater awareness of British culture.
- Builds confidence.
- Widens the social circle of friends.
- Makes a difference and provides personal fulfilment and satisfaction.

The University

- Improves the public profile of the university.
- Enables better relationships to be built with the local community.
- Informs universities of community needs.
- An enhanced community environment will improve the marketability of the university to potential students.
- Enhances student retention levels.
- Builds external links and partnerships.
- Produces more complete graduates.

The Community

- Student volunteers can be used as a resource for the community to set up their own projects.
- Skills and expertise can be transferred from the students and universities to the community.
- Success will encourage new projects.
- Aspirations may be raised.
- The share of social resources such as sports equipment.
- A more successful university will lead to a healthier local economy.
- Greater respect and understanding shown by students to the community.
- Breaks down stereotypes both of and by the community.
- Student volunteers will encourage increased local volunteering, creating a cascade effect.
- Students can be seen as role models.

Motivating Volunteers

Thinking about volunteers' motivations when advertising could have a major impact on your recruitment and retention of volunteers. Think about the messages they might like to see and how to let them know what your volunteering opportunities offer.

Remember also to talk to your local student volunteering project - they may be able to offer assistance in designing an effective marketing campaign and you may even be able to recruit a student volunteer to help you with the marketing!

Students want to:

- develop their skills and abilities
- make new friends
- widen their horizon
- be challenged
- have responsibility
- augment course learning with practical experience
- 'taste test' possible career paths

Think about the following when planning your recruitment of student volunteers:

- Highlight team-working opportunities.
- Provide information on positions available within your organisation and give them a title. Think about any opportunities to influence the decision making process.
 - Encourage new volunteers to come forward with and follow through ideas for new project development.
 - Emphasise that every volunteer can make a difference to the local community.
 - Promote any opportunities to be on a committee.
 - Display information on volunteer role descriptions, training opportunities details of any accreditation or recognition schemes.
 - Highlight previous successful events and projects and display any thank you letters you might have from service users and previous volunteers.

Project Models

There are four models for involving students in the community. This guide is designed with the placement model in mind as this is how most organisations initially involve students. In time however you will probably find students will want to have more input in creating opportunities and ultimately they can lead a project within your organisation.



The four models are:

- The placement model

The student community action/volunteering group acts as a 'broker' between student volunteers and projects or activities that already exist and which are run by other organisations like yours. The group organisers find out what local opportunities exist and, after recruiting volunteers, provide them with the information in a referral capacity. This is sometimes described as a "Volunteer Shop" or "Student Volunteer Centre".

- The one-off model

The student community action/volunteering group organises one-off events such as a Christmas party for children, young people or the elderly, often in conjunction with another organisation. This type of event is great for Student Volunteering Week in February, Volunteers' Week in June and Make A Difference Day in October.

- The partnership model

The student community action/volunteering group joins with a voluntary, community or statutory agency and runs a project in partnership with that organisation.

- The student-led project model

Established Student Community Action projects place students at the heart of decision making: they source community need, recruit student volunteers and manage their projects. Many are registered charities with students as the trustees.

Things To Think About When Working With Students Volunteers

- Time constraints

Exams – Students may want to volunteer less during exam times.

Terms – Many students will go home to a different area during holidays.

Lectures and travelling time.

There is no minimum or maximum time commitment which students can give.



- Motivations

These may be different to those of other volunteers and it is important to be aware of the distinctions.

- Other commitments

Many students have part-time jobs to earn extra income.

- Flexibility

Younger people are generally more flexible in the roles they will undertake. They are positive, adaptable and have vision.

- Enthusiasm

Students become committed to, and passionate about causes. They really want to make a difference - and will!

- Knowledge

Students bring valuable knowledge from their course studies, for example social care, marketing and IT. They also bring fresh thinking and new perspectives!

- Cultural diversity

Students come from a variety of diverse backgrounds.

- Input

Students want to be more involved in decision making and feeding back on projects and experiences, as well as reflecting on their learning from volunteering projects.

- Recruitment

Word of mouth is strong amongst students. Ensure one volunteer has a fabulous experience and you will have a steady stream of volunteers.

A Volunteer Policy For Your Organisation

Once your organisation has committed to involving volunteers in its work it is important to have a volunteering policy. A volunteering policy will outline the procedures and policies you have in place to deal with day-to-day issues that may arise when working with volunteers. This is something you can discuss in conjunction with your local student volunteering project.

It is advisable to have a policy in place before recruiting volunteers as it helps to clarify the volunteers' role within your organisation and helps to lay the foundation for a successful volunteer programme.

It is very tempting to copy another organisation's policy and fill in the blanks but it is important the policy relates to your unique situation and responds to the issues relevant to your organisation.

There isn't a blue print as to what should be in it but should include the topics covered in this booklet and you might want to add a few more!

- Consult as widely as possible when drawing up a policy. The more input you receive, the more relevant it is likely to be – and the more people are likely to feel ownership of the policy.
- Make sure colleagues from all levels of the organisation are involved in the consultation.
- Involvement from senior management is key, ensuring that the document is taken seriously within the organisation.



- Implement it, don't just put it in a filing cabinet! Display it on noticeboards and introduce the policy at inductions. Give all staff a copy.
- Make sure your policy is inclusive and encourages diversity in your organisation.
- Review the policy with input from staff and volunteers. Keep it in line with the changing needs of your organisation.

A Student Volunteer Agreement

Write a Role Description

- Work out exactly the role the volunteer will undertake: what they will doing, when, where, how and why.
- This will help determine the skills you need the volunteer to have – remember to be flexible though!
- A role description helps to recruit student volunteers – students can imagine what they will be doing and they can decide if the role is right for them before applying. Thus saving your time and theirs!



Rights And Responsibilities

Volunteers' Rights and Responsibilities being made clear is paramount to both parties enjoying a successful and productive relationship.

Outlining these as part of a written agreement is an easy and effective way of ensuring both the volunteer and your organisation are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Issues to consider are:

- Confidentiality
- Equality with paid workers
- Equal opportunities
- Supervision, review and development
- Time off
- Health and safety
- Insurance
- Training and equipment
- Recognition

Training

Student volunteers should be given the opportunity to enhance and develop their skills.

Students value the provision of training enormously, regarding it as an essential part and tangible benefit of their volunteering experience. It will undoubtedly increase their confidence and satisfaction, and training is also something students can add to their CVs, increasing their employability. Therefore any accreditation or recognition attached to the training you provide would be very attractive to students.

Remember all training must be well planned and designed to meet the needs of both the student volunteer and your organisation.

Induction

- Why should I be working here?

Provide enough information about your organisation so the volunteer feels confident enough to explain to someone else what you do. Volunteers can be a great word of mouth source for recruitment and fundraising!

- How will I be working here?

Ensure you cover all management issues. Introduce the volunteering policy and explain in full all the different policies you have, including health and safety, telephone and Internet use and claiming expenses.

- How do I fit in with everyone else?

Let volunteers know about office rules. For example where the tea and coffee facilities are, where to put coats, where they will sit, what happens at break times and what everyone else does.



Support And Supervision

The most common reason for volunteers leaving placements is lack of support. Support is therefore vitally important and can be provided in a number of ways, both formal and informal. One way is to have regular meetings with a supervisor. This can provide an opportunity for volunteers to air concerns, discuss work, ask questions, help in identifying skills gained and feel rewarded.

- The time should be given exclusively to the volunteer with no distractions and a space that allows the volunteer to raise any confidential issues they may have.
- Use the time to give feedback and praise the volunteer. You may want to keep notes of meetings.
- Always identify a staff member who will be the supervisor, and make sure the volunteer knows who this is!



Expenses

- It is very important ALL volunteers claim expenses. If one volunteer doesn't want to this puts pressure on others not to claim.
- Reimburse actual out of pocket expenses not a flat rate as this could lead to a contract of employment being created if the volunteer receives anything of economic value in return for volunteering.
- Think about paying in advance if people on very low income, and in cash as cheques can be hard to cash for some people.
- Always pay on the day if possible.

Health And Safety

Whilst a volunteer is carrying out a task for your organisation you have a duty of care for that volunteer. Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 imposes a duty on every employer: 'to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that persons not in their employment, who may be affected by their undertaking, are not exposed to risks to their health or safety'.

- All organisations have a duty to ensure that no one is exposed to risks to their health and safety.
- The 'duty' applies regardless of the size of your organisation.
- If a volunteer has an accident your organisation maybe liable if it can be proved that the organisation failed to take reasonable care. A risk assessment will assess the level of risk and how to minimise it.
- Duty of care extends to all activities from the use of equipment to charity walks and selling food.
- Provide student volunteers with information, training and instruction on health and safety issues to protect them in their work.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 state that health and safety training must be easily understood – you can't just hand out a copy of policies and assume people will read it.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment is a way of identifying and controlling the hazards that exist in your organisation's activities. The two main elements that combine to form the basis of a risk assessment are:

- Hazard
- Risk

You will need to identify both the hazards and the risks involved in the activities the student volunteers will be undertaking. The next step is to assess these and then put in place measures to control the risk. You'll need detailed knowledge of the task and working practice to put in place measures to control the risk, and the best way to do this is to involve employees and volunteers.

Remember to review your risk assessments and activities on a regular basis!

Checklist

Does your organisation provide....

- o Volunteer Expenses
- o An Induction & Induction Pack
- o Written Role Description
- o Training
- o Support & Supervision
- o Insurance
- o Regular Risk Assessments
- o Relevant Policies, including
 - o Equal Opportunities
 - o Health & Safety
 - o Volunteer

Do volunteers need to....

- o Complete an application form
- o Provide references
- o Undergo a CRB check

Many student volunteering projects are happy to provide help and advice in setting up these policies, as are your local volunteer centres.

Further Information

Student Volunteering England provides an information service, which includes publications, toolkits, news updates and personal support. We also publish 'Grapevine', a tri-annual magazine just for the student volunteering sector.

Additionally, by working with Government, education institutions and other national organisations, and carrying out research into student volunteering, we work towards providing greater clarity, cohesion and continuity for a sustainable student volunteering sector.

We offer the following publications:

The Art of Crazy Paving: The groundbreaking employability toolkit for student volunteers

Student Volunteering: The National Survey

The Student Response to the Russell Commission

Student Volunteering: Involving Further Education Students in the Community

Making a Difference: Your guide to creating a successful volunteering group in Further Education

Making a Difference: Your guide to creating a successful volunteering group in Higher Education

Freephone for more information on 0800 0182 146.



Year of the Volunteer 2005

What is the Year of the Volunteer 2005?

2005 is the Year of the Volunteer, a year-long celebration of the work volunteers do and a call to action to get more and more of us volunteering. CSV (Community Service Volunteers) Volunteering England and the Home Office are working in partnership with lots of voluntary sector organisations to create a dynamic year of volunteering opportunities.

What is happening during the year?

Events will be happening all year to promote volunteering or provide opportunities to get involved. In addition, each month will have a different theme (such as health, sport or animals). You can log onto our website www.yearofthevolunteer.org to find out more.

How can I get involved?

- Visit the website at www.yearofthevolunteer.org where you can find out about volunteering opportunities in your area.
- Organise an event and register it at www.yearofthevolunteer.org
- Visit your local Volunteer Bureau
- Contact the CSV Action Desk at your local BBC radio station
- Watch the Community Channel for further information on Skydigital 585, Freeview 46, Telewest 233 or NTL 14
- Phone the automated 24 hour national rate telephone line on 0845 367 0062

Our thanks to



For making this publication happen!

