



# Australian University Student Volunteering: Volunteering to Learn *and* Learning to Volunteer: Companion guide

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Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views in this project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching

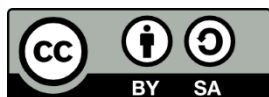
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## Preface

Volunteering Western Australia and Volunteering Australia are proud to be partners in this investigation of university student volunteering in Australia. The development of resources including a website, a series of Good Practice Guides and Concept Guides, and this Companion Guide designed to assist students, host organisations and universities will serve to support the work of student volunteers, and to enhance their opportunities when volunteering and beyond.

We look forward to using the findings of this research to advance student volunteering, and to work with volunteer referral services, student volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and university stakeholders to promote good practice for the benefit of our communities.

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## List of acronyms and terms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACEN	Australian Collaborative Education Network
ASV	academic student volunteer
FSV	facilitated student volunteer
HOS	host organisations with student programs
HOV	host organisations that mainstream student volunteers
ISV	independent student volunteer
OLT	Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching
SHO	student driven host organisations
USV	university student volunteer
UVA	university volunteer activity
VA	Volunteering Australia
VTL	Volunteering to Learn
VWA	Volunteering Western Australia
WIL	Work integrated learning

# 1. Introduction

This Companion Guide is part of a set of resources developed during a project that examined university student volunteering in Australia. The *Volunteering to Learn* project was designed to investigate the under-researched, emerging and important issue in higher education – that of volunteering by university students. It included a specific focus on identifying the learning from various forms of volunteering taking place in universities and aimed to develop an understanding of good practice in university student volunteering.

The project was undertaken against the backdrop of a period of rapid change in the university sector, particularly in relation to the broader learning undertaken by students to prepare them for work and employment. At the same time, the broader volunteering sector in Australia was also experiencing change. At the national level, both the university sector and the nonprofit sector were undergoing changes associated with new directions in government policy, and as the economy slowed following the mining boom, the role of each sector was being appraised. In recognition of changing community needs, and of the maturation of volunteering across the country, Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering, and the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*, were reviewed by separate steering committees (Volunteering Australia, 2015a; 2015b). The outcomes of these reviews became available just as the *Volunteering to Learn* project was ready to launch its resources.

Student volunteering is a practice promoted and adopted by universities to enhance student learning, and yet it has been identified that limited research exists about the learning which takes place or the opportunities to maximise this learning. The project team identified a need to understand how the three parties in the student volunteering relationship (universities, students and volunteer involving organisations<sup>1</sup>) work together to enable successful outcomes for all parties, and so further promote volunteering as a credible and legitimate cross-disciplinary activity.

The project aimed to examine the learning associated with university student volunteering, and to add to the growing body of knowledge about university student volunteering in Australia; provide contextual information; and offer ideas for enjoying, joining, establishing, managing and monitoring programs from the perspectives of students, host organisations and universities. The project was funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT). It involved:<sup>2</sup>

- a review of the English language literature on university student volunteering and related topics<sup>3</sup>
- a desk audit of publicly available information about university student volunteering on all Australian university websites (as at December 2013)<sup>4</sup>
- interviews with students, program managers and senior decision makers in universities, volunteer managers in host volunteer-involving organisations and representatives of peak volunteer organisations and cross university volunteer involving organisations
- a series of feedback workshops examining good practice and concept guides developed by the project team based on the data

Assistance was sought from a reference group comprising the Tertiary Community Engagement Committee at Volunteering Western Australia, and from a group of Critical Friends, all of whom provided valuable feedback on the draft Good Practice Guides and Concept Guides as they were developed. The project team developed a series of Good Practice Guides and Concept Guides based

<sup>1</sup> Volunteer involving organisations is a term adopted by Volunteering Australia, as these types of organisations can be found in the public, private, nonprofit and household sectors.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1 contains a more detailed outline of the methodology.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 2 contains a summary of the literature.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 3 contains the matrix developed in the desk audit.

on the evidence gathered in this study. The decision to refer to good practice rather than best practice was based on the premise that there are many examples of good practice and that it is unlikely that there would be just one way of enhancing university student volunteering. There is a range of key guiding principles which will assist those seeking to develop university student volunteering, as is evident from this Companion Guide.

This Companion Guide provides greater depth than the Good Practice Guides developed by the project team as easy reference guides for particular stakeholders. It commences with a discussion of terminology and concludes with some of the more controversial aspects of university student volunteering. It highlights the importance of five key elements which have been identified with respect to good practice, and which can assist with enhancing the learning in university student volunteering. The elements are:

- Preparation and Planning
- Relationship Building
- Expectation Formation and Matching
- Communication
- Feedback and Evaluation.

Key to these elements is the notion that development of university student volunteering programs and activities is an iterative process. If formal learning outcomes are being sought, then early establishment and communication of all of these is likely to lead to enhanced outcomes.

## 2. What is university student volunteering?

In the Australian context, the term “volunteering” has a number of accepted definitions. Volunteering Australia has recently conducted a review of its definition of volunteering, and in July 2015 has adopted the following:

*Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.*  
(Volunteering Australia, 2015a, n.p.).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) uses a definition with four criteria: unpaid; willingly undertaken; help in the form of time, service or skills; and formal, through a group or organisation (ABS, 2007). They exclude some forms of student volunteering from their statistics.

### What is meant by volunteering in the university setting?

The accompanying notes to the Volunteering Australia definition of volunteering indicate that ...

*Compulsory educational service learning (where students are required to volunteer as part of a course) (Volunteering Australia, 2015b, n.p.)*

... is not considered to be volunteering, but is recognised as a valuable activity, and could be considered to be a pathway to volunteering (Volunteering Australia, 2015b).

Similarly, in their definition of volunteering, the ABS excludes activities done “as a result of a legal or institutional direction” (ABS, 2007, p.72) and “student placement” (p.87).

In general, University Student Volunteering refers to those activities that university students do that meet the criteria of time given (time, service or skills), no remuneration (unpaid/without financial gain), free will (willingly), of benefit to the community (for the common good), and formally structured (through a group or organisation). In many organisations, students work alongside and in the same capacity as other volunteers and unpaid workers. They are welcomed and offered the same processes, recognition and events. Volunteering activities are integrated into universities in a variety of ways, whether within units and courses or independent from academic programs.

Students take up volunteering of their own volition, often encouraged by their universities, for a range of reasons. Some want to help others and give back to society. Our evidence indicates a trend towards volunteering motivated by self-development, personal growth, and career development as university students seize opportunities to gain experience, skills, and networking contacts assisting them to find employment.

The evidence is strong, however, that even those students who volunteer for reasons other than learning, will benefit and learn from the opportunity. The learning includes a range of life skills, including leadership, time management and organisational skills, and an appreciation of what it is like to be an active volunteer. Students report that volunteering enhances their confidence and self-efficacy, helping them to feel that they can make a difference and achieve something positive for others.

### Two main inconsistencies

Two main differences of opinion were identified in this study. These concerned the debate around whether students are volunteering because:

1. they receive credit for a unit of study; or
2. the activity is compulsory within a unit or course of study.

This debate is reflected in the variety of terminology in use across universities.

## Extra-curricular volunteering

The term “volunteering” is used to refer to activities that include service by students to their university; service to clubs and associations, ranging from environmental groups to photography, business and sporting clubs; placement in volunteer positions in community organisations; and volunteering through university and guild-organised programs such as a volunteer hub, referral service or centre.

There is a trend in universities to recognise extra-curricular volunteering on an academic or similar transcript and this is often measured by the number of hours; but mechanisms to capture this volunteering are a challenge for universities.

University students are often recruited to volunteer on campus (e.g. orientation and open days), and in community engagement programs arranged in part by the university or student groups such as the student guild. Leadership and support roles of university clubs may also be referred to as volunteering but membership of these clubs is not. This volunteering is considered to be “extra-curricular”.

## Volunteering within the curriculum

Students often volunteer in order to learn professional, personal or employability skills. In general, learning is the primary goal of university student volunteering activities within courses.

Volunteering has been integrated into academic programs as *Work Integrated Learning* (including practica or placements), service learning, or community service identified by other terms such as learning through participation. Volunteer activities embedded into academic study may attract credit. There are usually specific learning objectives or statements of skills to be developed that may be discipline-based or designed to enhance generic graduate attributes.

Students and university staff in our study used the term “volunteering” to refer to both compulsory and elective elements of university courses or programs and, while this does not strictly fit the definition of volunteering as identified by Volunteering Australia, it is recognised as a pathway to volunteering. Many of the good practices identified in this project apply to these pathway activities as well as to more general student volunteering activities.

## Terminology in use

Over 75 terms, or permutations of terms, were identified in the articles selected for a systematic review of the literature on university student volunteering. These terms can largely be clustered into three categories:

1. volunteering
2. community service / community engagement
3. service learning.

Work Integrated Learning was not canvassed by this literature review.

Evidence in the interview data was that study participants also referred to internships, practica, placement and work experience as being forms of volunteering in some circumstances. Community engagement and service learning were found to be moving towards a model of mutually beneficial, reciprocal collaboration in which all parties work together towards agreed goals with long-term impact.

Some participants stressed the voluntary nature of volunteering, and others felt that the reward of credit in a university unit is an important component of the activity. Holdsworth and Brewis (2014, p. 204) suggest that “the ideal of active citizenship assumes that volunteering is a choice, and the celebrated figure of the selfless volunteer who contributes to their communities is valued not just on the basis of his/her unique contribution, but because their contribution is given willingly without compulsion”. Despite this, some literature refers to students being required to volunteer (Kang et al., 2011) and “service learning or other compulsory volunteer programs” (Gage & Thapa, 2012, p. 426).

The conundrum in terminology is when volunteering is said to be *required*. Volunteering Australia states clearly that volunteering is always a matter of choice and specifically excludes compulsory activities required by the university. The data from the desk audit, and in the interviews for this project, however, show that volunteering, as a term, is often used in universities as a verb to describe what students do in a compulsory activity or a program. For example, university students are often said to volunteer to undertake community service activities or service learning units or courses. Even if service learning or community service activities are electives and therefore not compulsory, if the activity is a required part of a unit then some would say that it is not of the students' own free will. Yet, our research indicates that these programs are often described as volunteering.

There is a growing trend for university students to volunteer in nonprofit, community groups or other volunteer involving organisations. The demand for universities to arrange experience-based learning for students to develop practical, professional and employability skills has meant that university students seek the opportunities that volunteering activities offer.

In Australian universities, volunteering is currently being used as a noun to describe an activity that students do of their own free will in an unpaid capacity to help the environment or people who are outside their own family or household. Volunteering is also being used as a verb to describe what students do when undertaking volunteer activity, as well as in service learning, community service or other activities that may be part of an academic program, or separate from their studies.

### Service Learning

A variety of experiential learning has been termed *Service Learning*. One defining feature of Service Learning is the balance and equal weighting given to both service and learning. When Service Learning is a required part of a university course, students are not volunteering, according to some of the interviewees. Service Learning is any service experience in which a student has intentional learning and service goals, and intentionally reflects on their learning and experiences.

### Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Patrick et al.'s (2009) definition of Work Integrated Learning is now generally accepted and widely used:

- Work Integrated Learning is “an umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum” (p. iv).
- A Work Integrated Learning placement is “a type of work integrated learning that requires the student to be situated in the workplace” (p. iv).

Our study has separated out formal Work Integrated Learning, such as placements and practica, from volunteering; but it is not as easy to separate out service learning and community participation. Table 2.1 offers a comparison based on our data.

**Table 2.1 Comparison of volunteering, community participation and service learning**

<b>Volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• primary purpose is to help the community, environment, or people beyond family or household</li> <li>• of own free will (so not a required part of a course or unit of study)</li> <li>• unpaid; not rewarded with any compensation</li> <li>• may be for credit or other recognition by the university</li> <li>• may be on campus, e.g. Open Day, Expo</li> <li>• may be organised by students or the university.</li> </ul>
<b>Community participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• primary purpose is to help others in need who are outside the volunteer's own family or household</li> <li>• unpaid</li> <li>• may be for credit or other recognition by the university</li> <li>• activity done outside the university, in the community, may be for a nonprofit or other similar charity organisation and may be within a school, hospital, event, or tourism setting but it is not practicum or placement in a school or hospital;</li> <li>• may be organised by students or the university.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose gives equal weighting to both service and learning</li> <li>• associated with learning in a unit or course of study for credit, is required, recognised with credit, usually assessed or graded</li> <li>• is usually recognised in an academic transcript or similar</li> <li>• tends to involve written reflection or other activity to enhance learning</li> <li>• may be organised by students or the university.</li> </ul>

What was also apparent in the data was that there was a wide variety of volunteer activity taking place across Australian universities.

The desk audit of the nature and types of Australian university student volunteering is included in the appendices to this document. The mapping exercise illustrated not only the variety of terminology in use and the different understandings of the forms of volunteering, but it also revealed the dynamic nature of university student volunteering. The initial matrix took the form of a large spreadsheet with over 300 entries. It was identified that while a mixture of terminology was in use, and understandings of the nature and form of volunteering varied, there were some patterns in the way programs operated in universities. For instance, programs might be organised within a specific school and only available for those students, or they might operate across the university; students can volunteer on campus, assisting fellow students or the university, and off-campus with nonprofit organisations, while external organisations can operate on campus, organising volunteer programs for students. A classification of university student volunteering from the university perspective was developed based on who manages the program. While the project team do not consider “volunteering for credit” to be a form of volunteering, this is the language used at many universities. Eight models of student volunteer programs were identified based on the way they are set up at each university.

These were classified as:

**Student-driven programs including student-run volunteer hubs or referral services:** In these programs, a student-centred guild, union or organisation facilitates the volunteering opportunities.

**Centrally administered programs, with little or no input from students:** Volunteer programs across and external to the university are organised centrally by paid university staff.

**Faculty-based program linked to a specific discipline:** The faculty, independent from the central volunteer hub or referral service, facilitates or promotes volunteering within their school or area.



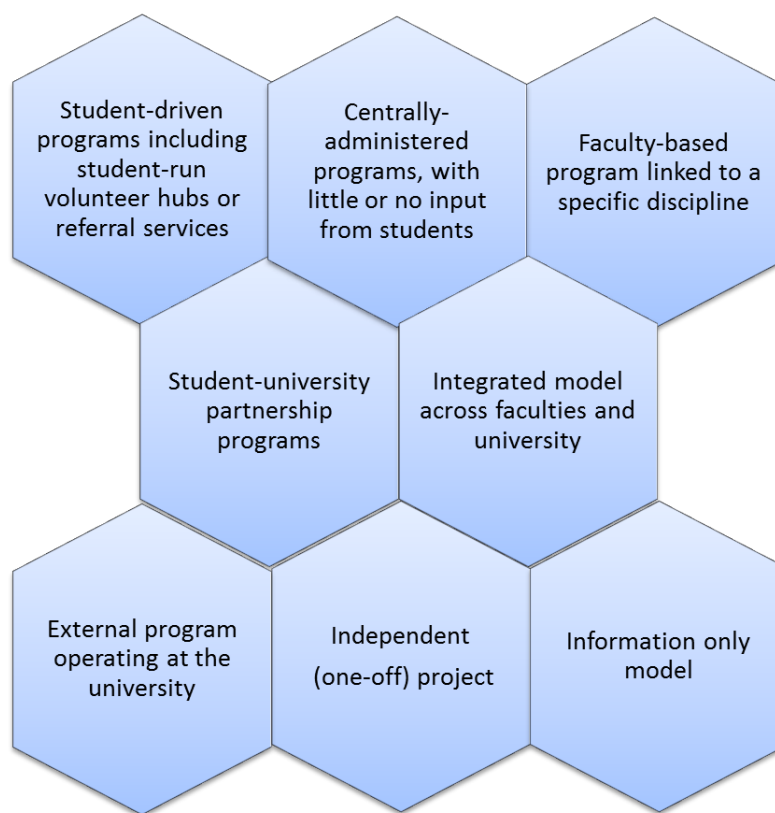
**Student–university partnership programs:** In these programs, students work with paid university staff to deliver volunteer programs. These programs often begin as student-driven.

**Integrated model across faculties and university:** This model coordinates all volunteer opportunities both on and off campus within the same administrative framework.

**External program operating at the university:** A volunteer-involving organisation or broker organisation operates on campus and provides volunteer opportunities to students. Examples include ENACTUS (<http://enactusaustralia.org.au/>) and AIME (<https://aimementoring.com/>).

**Independent (one-off) project:** Volunteer projects organised occasionally by the university, faculty or students but not on an ongoing basis.

**Information-only model:** The university encourages students to volunteer and provides information about off-campus opportunities but does not organise any programs or engage in any formal partnerships with volunteer-involving programs.



**Figure 2.1: Models of university student volunteering programs at universities**

This classification, based on the publicly available data on the university websites as at December 2013, provided a basis for further investigation and formed a part of understanding the use of terminology across Australian universities.

### Vignette: In the news

Enactus stands for Entrepreneurial Action Us and is a nonprofit global student organisation aimed at empowering the community through entrepreneurial projects. A number of Australian universities have Enactus teams, which vary in size, composition and the nature and scope of the projects they undertake.

Of the universities participating in this research project, three have active teams and participated in the Enactus National Championships during July 2015. The two Western Australian teams from Edith Cowan University (ECU) and the University of Western Australia (UWA) progressed to the finals, with the Enactus ECU team eventually placed as runner up.

During 2014–2015, students in the Enactus ECU team worked on their three active projects in a purely voluntary capacity with no payment or academic recognition towards credit-bearing units. The 18 students in the team worked over 5000 hours in the year leading up to July 2015 with many different and diverse groups, including senior citizens, new arrivals and migrants to Western Australia, and local cafes and businesses.

The team's Net University project, for example, came about from the recognition that many older Australians lacked the technological skills needed in daily life. The project involved training more than 170 senior citizens in the Joondalup area to use iPads and androids to stay connected with loved ones. This project has been received extremely positively by all involved and is seen as a mechanism to combat the isolation and associated health implications of senior citizens.

The Enactus National Championships are judged by a variety of people including industry leaders from organisations such as KPMG, HSBC, American Express, Staples, CPA Australia, Woolworths, the Commonwealth Bank, and senior academics from across Australia. The National Championships provide an excellent avenue for students to engage and network with senior industry leaders and showcase their talents and job readiness, in turn leading to employment opportunities.

Table 2.2 below illustrates some of the forms of volunteering in which students are engaged, identified both in the desk audit and from the data collected in the interviews from this project.

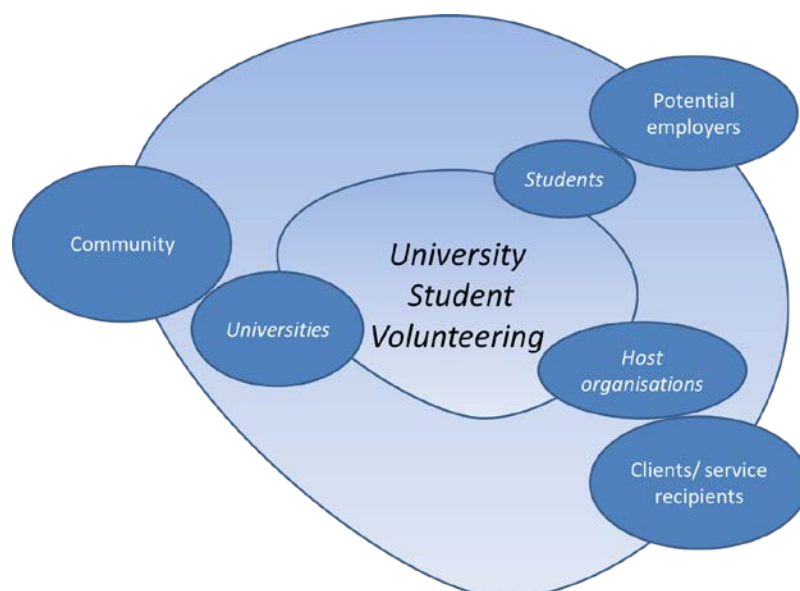
**Table 2.2 Forms of volunteering**

<b>Form of volunteering</b>	<b>Examples include</b>
Traditional volunteering	Befriending, mentoring, tutoring, hospital volunteering.
Long-term volunteering	Committed long-term member of a group who volunteers.
Short-term volunteering	Semester-long programs, summer holiday programs.
Episodic volunteering	Short-term, sporadic or intermittent volunteering, includes events and festivals.
Project volunteering	Student or student group completes project such as communication plan for nonprofit organisation.
Micro volunteering	Monitoring and counting wildlife, citizen science.
Online volunteering	Online tutoring, creating or updating webpages, blogging for a cause.
International volunteering	Group or individual activities with nonprofit organisation in foreign country.
University service	Orientation, open days, peer mentoring.
Student service	Student government, student club leadership.
Activism	Campaigning for a cause.

As data collection progressed, it became apparent that one of the areas where mismatched expectations could lead to disappointment on the part of one of the parties, was in the area of each party's understanding of the term volunteering. As a result, a specific concept guide on terminology in university student volunteering was developed by the research team and the area of terminology is one where further investigation and thinking is underway.

### 3. The parties in the relationship

The parties to the relationship in the university student-volunteering sphere comprise three primary parties and then a range of secondary or subsidiary parties, with members of the community being seen as overall beneficiaries. In each of these groupings there are also peak bodies with an interest in university student volunteering. They are considered to be part of the stakeholder group they represent.



**Figure 3.1 The parties in the university student volunteering relationship**

#### Primary parties to the relationship

##### Students

When university student volunteering is well run and well organised, university students benefit from the experience in a number of ways. Not only do they have the opportunity to gain experience, apply their skills, meet people and have fun, our evidence demonstrates they also benefit from experiencing volunteering. The evidence in our project, and from elsewhere, is that volunteering provides benefits associated with self-esteem, wellbeing and life balance. These benefits accrue to student volunteers in such a way that some choose to continue to volunteer beyond their university life.

As discussed, our evidence is that the term volunteering is used interchangeably with ‘service learning’ in some universities, while in others there is a very clear distinction. In addition, even in programs which are not purely voluntary – that is, the activity is mandated by the selection of a particular course or program – terms such as community participation or engagement are adopted, but students are still often referred to as ‘volunteers’ and ‘undertaking volunteering’.

Three types of student volunteer were identified in the data for this study:

**Academic student volunteer** – student volunteer undertaking assessable course work for academic/course/unit credit associated with their volunteer activity in the host organisation.

**Facilitated student volunteer** – student volunteer associated with the host organisation because of a relationship between the university (or the guild hub, referral service or some other agent) and the host organisation or host university program.

**Independent student volunteer** – self-organising student volunteer giving their time independently of the university. The volunteer activity may or may not be related to their university studies, but nevertheless their studies make demands on their availability.

### Why do students volunteer?

There is a great deal of published research which discusses motivations of university student volunteers (see literature review in Appendix 2). The student feedback in our project reinforced many of the findings in this literature. Their reported motivation can be grouped into social, values and employability categories.

*Firstly, leadership skills, it gains my confidence and getting in touch with working in real life and dealing with real people ... and it's also for a great cause, that's another drive for me. **Student volunteer***

*There's a personal motivation of wanting to develop myself and who I am as a person, ...there are also other benefits as on your transcript it looks really great... but the people most involved in volunteering don't do it because of that, they do it because they get satisfaction, they like seeing other people be happy and satisfied. **Student volunteer***

**Table 3.1 University student motivation to volunteer**

<b><i>Social</i></b>	<b><i>Values</i></b>	<b><i>Employability</i></b>
To be active For fun To make friends Because their friends do	To act upon values To help others To support a cause "It's expected" "It's what you do"	For credit To gain experience To add to their CV To increase employability To develop skills To learn/practise English Because it's required <sup>5</sup>

*Actually, volunteering just looks good, ... [when] you've been doing a "really good job" and it gives you the advantage over other people when it comes to work. **Student volunteer***

*New friends definitely, and as I mentioned when I first came into Australia, no friends, so the only way I could think of was to network. **Student volunteer***

*When I first came here I was helped by a mentor from [identifier deleted], and he was a very nice person so that day I actually made my choice saying that maybe next semester I should help somebody like him ... the thing I got out of it was new friends, the satisfaction of helping a person, it's always good to help a person who's in university first day, ... and also it's really good to know that I've helped somebody to settle in and keep them in university to further their education. It is not a major thing for them, but you feel happy inside "I helped somebody". **Student volunteer***

<sup>5</sup> The "requirement" to volunteer is discussed in Chapter 2.

### Vignette: Starting my own organisation

*A few years ago I also started a charity [name of organisation] and we get university students to be mentors for high school students for low socio-economic area schools.*

A started this organisation because,

*Firstly, I really care about educational equality. I think education is so important in terms of giving you a grounding your life. Personally, as well when I was in high school, I was lucky enough to have some amazing mentors in the form of university students through different extra-curricular things I did. They really inspired me, motivated me. I really wanted to be like them. When I got to university, then as I got to university and volunteered some more with other organisations, I realised that not everyone has that, not everyone has the same opportunities and I really didn't think that was fair. So, I didn't see any existing way to mobilise a lot of university students to get involved and support high school students, so I started [the organisation].*

A is in the sixth year of studies and started volunteering when in high school, continued on arriving at university and is now involved not only in this organisation but others. This organisation started through,

*Just me approaching my friends to be on [a] committee who I thought would be good, and then us approaching some other people and knowing there was no application process, actually. And then we implemented an online application form the next semester and then there were a couple of semesters after that when we started doing interviews as well. We have always run some form of training, but we very much refined the training process and we have actually made it a bit longer, and also advertise that it would be quite long as well so mentors know that they have to be prepared to do that.*

Now this organisation is embedded in the university, has a core committee of seven people, with approximately 80 mentors and 200 students in two high schools. Recruitment occurs at the beginning of each semester.

*We advertise through university emails, through networks, a lot of social media on Facebook, and we have an application process. They have to fill out an online form. We do group interviews and then if people are successful, we will allocate them to particular groups and then run training. By and large we accept most people because you think they're – generally, people who have actually applied have been genuinely very interested in helping out and I think volunteering for the right reasons, but it is really important to us that we have, obviously, the capacity to reject people if we don't think that they are going to be suitable. With the students, we very much work through the schools. So, we go to the schools and ask which groups that they think would really benefit from having these people there and which groups that we can logistically fit into.*

This organisation has good relationships with other volunteering organisations on campus and provides a useful model of student-run, student-initiated traditional volunteering incorporating the facilitated student volunteer. Its operations mirror an effectively managed host organisation with recruitment and management structures in place; it provides a service within the capabilities of the students and the ability of the organisation to manage the operations.

## Universities

Universities are one of the key stakeholder groups involved in university student volunteering. As the host organisation, they also play the critical role of source organisation, facilitator of external relationships, and innovator in developing and maintaining student volunteering programs. These various roles would necessitate different approaches and complex relationship building both within and outside university structures, extending not only locally, but also possibly nationally, and internationally.

Successful student volunteering programs not only benefit students at an individual level and the community at large, but they also benefit the universities and their reputation for producing responsible citizens and job-ready graduates. As with any other strategic initiative, universities are also faced with challenges in building, maintaining, and actively managing university student volunteering programs. As was evident in the various models of student volunteering programs depicted in Figure 2.1, there is no single approach in any university, and a range of models exists. Appendix B provides further information about the range of models in place in universities.

There are two main focus areas for universities in implementing successful arrangements: Macro or university-wide initiatives; and those at the micro or program management level. Aspects of the former include, but are not limited to: strategic partnerships, champions, planning, funding, structure, and policies. The latter includes, amongst other factors, effective: advertising and promotion, risk management, open communication channels, evaluation and feedback, training and induction, social support, managing of performance, and equity.

The importance of appropriate strategies and resourcing (financial, human and other) cannot be understated in successful university student volunteering programs.

### Why do universities support student volunteering?

Universities seek ways to engage with their communities, both within and outside campus life. Our evidence is that universities promote, encourage and engage in university student volunteering for reasons relating to recruitment and retention of students, for learning (both formal and informal), to build relationships with the community, and for reputations and citizenship. These reasons are summarised below:

- to attract students
- to boost student retention
- to help students apply academic learning
- to give students leadership skills and experience
- to enable international students to immerse themselves in the local culture
- to help students develop soft skills, e.g. communication and problem-solving skills
- to increase students' employability
- to enrich the student experience
- to build relationships with the local community
- to build a good reputation for the university in the community.

*Some of the best universities in the world are very active in volunteering and service learning and we aspire to that. **University representative***

*... but there are a couple of students who have said to us that [identifier deleted] and the volunteering program that we run is a point of difference to other universities. It formed part of their choice as to why they wanted to come to [identifier deleted], because it was an amazing opportunity. **Student leader***

The relationships between universities and their students, and with the local community serve to increase the capacity of universities to develop graduates who are work-ready, and have an understanding of the wider community. These relationships also increase the capacity of staff to be involved in relevant research and community engagement.

### Trends in student volunteering

Our project identified that student volunteering is extremely dynamic and programs are constantly evolving. Influencing factors include a change in university leadership; changes in student demand and study patterns; concerns about student employability and the university's social responsibility, and efforts to differentiate the student experience at each university.

Universities across Australia were all at differing stages in terms of their recognition and incorporation of university student volunteering, and different parts of the same university were often found to be in different stages of development of programs. This dynamic environment included not only trends associated with the development of programs, but also with respect to ownership, responsibility and emphasis.



**Figure 3.2 Trends in universities relating to university student volunteering**

**Integration of programs:** During the course of our research it became apparent that one of the areas where change was being experienced in terms of university student volunteering was in the assembling of programs which had previously been scattered. This trend included changes to the



location of volunteer referral services and programs, as well as to the structural reporting arrangements.

**Universities taking control of programs** – This integration process included programs which were previously run in faculties and schools becoming centrally administered, as well as student-run and student-driven programs becoming part of university-run programs, or becoming part of a collaborative centre or set up. This extended to highlighting the work of faculty-based programs and connecting them to the central operation or service.

**Service learning** – In many universities, service learning has been in place for a considerable period of time, but there was evidence across our study of increased emphasis on service learning, and of inclusion of this in centralised programs, which also included work integrated learning and community participation as well as university student volunteering. As discussed above, the language used in relation to service learning often included reference to voluntary work and volunteering, with students undertaking these activities being referred to as volunteers. It is important to note here, however, that in some universities a very clear separation was identified between service learning and volunteering.

**Careers focus** – The location of volunteer referral services within or beside careers centres at universities was another pattern observed across the desk audit and interviews. In one of the universities in which data was collected, the co-location was a recent development; in another, the creation of positions with responsibility for student volunteering within the university careers service had occurred in the last four years. The promotion of volunteering as a potential avenue to gaining skills and experience for employability was part of this focus.

**Bundling with leadership** – The integration of programs and the linking of various aspects of student development included leadership development. Development of leadership capabilities was promoted by universities, including in some of the programs. In addition, it was also found that leadership programs were including volunteering activities as part of their repertoire of activities for leader development. In one of the project partner universities, a leadership program was established after the audit was completed, illustrating the dynamic nature of the field.

**Transcript recognition** – Recognition of volunteering – either by way of a separate transcript or documentary evidence – for students to provide evidence to potential employers was found to have been a practice in some universities for over ten years. The evidence in our study was that many more universities were developing some form of recognition, including some form of transcript recognition. Policies and processes for capturing volunteering activities for this purpose are in development.

The trends in university student volunteering identified in this project are a product of the desk audit and of analysis of the transcripts from the interviews.

A further element identified was the frequent mention of the related terms sustainability, the role of the university in the community, and corporate social responsibility, which are reflective of the link between universities and citizenship.

### **Vignette: A trend towards partnership in referral services**

XYZ University runs a referral service for student volunteering. The service was initially led and run by students and provided a range of leadership opportunities for student volunteers as well as volunteering with community organisations. In the last few years volunteering has become part of the university's leadership strategy, with volunteering viewed as one of the activities that makes their graduates stand out from the rest.

*Our strategic projects are very much about, students choose [university] because industry choose [university] students and we want students to be work ready and eminently employable when they leave university, and volunteering is one of a range of activities that will help people acquire skills that help them stand out from the rest ... it takes people out of themselves and gets people committed to other people.*

In order to support the further development of student volunteering and provide continuity, the university formed a partnership with the student leadership team and currently funds staff positions to manage the service. The students still lead the service, but with the support of paid staff. The student volunteer leader brings a student perspective, looks after the marketing and liaises with the programs and program student leaders. The paid manager and staff administer the service, attend to risk management and make initial contacts with community partners.

## Host organisations

The term *host organisations* has been adopted for use in this project to refer to all organisations which host student volunteers. Volunteer-involving organisations exist in all sectors public, private, nonprofit and household sectors, and the involvement of volunteers can range from a small group of volunteers providing a service for an individual outside their family and outside any organisation (referred to as informal volunteering), through to volunteers on governing boards and committees. Organisations which involve student volunteers include a wide range of organisations from informal non-incorporated groups of individuals who are all volunteers, through to the more traditionally thought of volunteer-involving organisations who have been set up for a particular purpose such as to provide human services or undertake work in the community. In the data collection for this study, a pattern of four specific organisational hosting types was evident:

The first of these is the **Host organisation with student program**. This is a mainstream volunteer-involving<sup>6</sup> organisation which sets specific volunteer activities for students to undertake around their university studies. The host organisation takes the approach that hosting students is best conducted via offering short term or periodic volunteering opportunities, or by establishing a specific student volunteering activity tailored to meet the needs of student volunteers. In our data this included organisations that host students for international volunteering opportunities, either in groups or as individuals.

A second type of host is a volunteer-involving organisation in which no specific student programs are developed and student volunteers are expected to fit in with existing programs. **Host organisations which mainstream student volunteers** include any and all volunteers in a similar manner. Often, in this type of volunteer-involving organisation “volunteers” refers to a range of individuals undertaking activities on behalf of the organisation in an unpaid capacity and can include individuals on community service orders and social security beneficiaries, and service learning and community engagement students, as well as student volunteers.

The third type of host organisation which emerged from the data is the **Student-driven host organisation**. This type of volunteer-involving organisation highlights the involvement of students in community activities or student-focused activities as one of its primary aims. These organisations can be university specific or pan-university organisations, and can be part of a network of similar organisations or specific to a single university or even a course. They include sporting organisations (whose office bearers are volunteers), environmental organisations, clubs and societies, as well as such organisations as AIME and Oaktree Foundation.

Universities themselves represent the fourth type of organisation which involves volunteers.

**University volunteer activity** ranges from students recruited to assist with university activities, including orientation and open days, to specific university-oriented volunteer activities, such as peer mentoring.

As with all typologies, there are variations within each of these types. These include organisations which offer specific university student volunteer opportunities in some parts of their organisation and incorporate students with all other volunteers in other volunteer activities. These hybrid volunteer-involving organisations were evident in a range of sectors, including in the health sector where students are welcomed to specific programs and activities, but also in mainstream volunteer roles.

### *Why do organisations host university student volunteers?*

Similar to the range of reasons for the other parties in the university student-volunteering sphere, host organisations have a range of reasons for hosting students. The reasons include instrumental and altruistic motives, but like those of students they change over time and are complex. It is evident that the reasons for hosting fall into three categories: organisational capacity and profile focused, student focused, and community focused.

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<sup>6</sup> The term *volunteer-involving organisations* is used because these types of organisations can be found in the public, private, nonprofit and household sectors.

*I think number one, the youth aspect, because they are bringing in just a different vitality, a different vibrance. Host organisation representative*

Most of the reasons cited by volunteer-involving organisations are associated with their *capacity- and profile-building activities*. These include reasons such as the inclusion of younger people in their service, particularly for their energy and commitment, but also for the skills they are acquiring at university – often these are costly to obtain elsewhere, while skilled supervision is available via the university. Other reasons include the ease with which students can be recruited in groups, via university hubs, referral services or

programs. Frequently, host organisations see student volunteers as a source of potential volunteers beyond their university years, and also as potential advocates or supporters of their cause if they have a good volunteer experience.

Host organisations also cited reasons associated with *offering benefits to the students* and to the universities, such as provision of opportunities for students to try out their nascent skills, and get a sense of the real world beyond the university campus. These reasons coalesce with the third cited reason, that of *being good citizens*: aiding in the development of young people and the community.

*I think there's a huge learning experience for them. Mainly because it's a life experience, because they've kind of gone from school to university; they haven't had [jobs] – some have jobs, but they're not jobs that are relating to what they are doing [studying]. So if they're actually working in an area and volunteering in an area where it's something they're going to be doing in the future, it's a real eye-opener, hands on look and a hands on view of, 'oh this is what I'm actually going to be doing, this is actually how I'm going to be interacting'. Host organisation representative*

Our evidence is that the hope on the part of host organisations that some of the student volunteers will stay on beyond their initial commitment as a student volunteer does pay off, with, as an example, one student volunteer joining an organisation as a youth member of their board, and another continuing to volunteer beyond the time committed as part of a facilitated arrangement.

## Subsidiary parties to the relationship

Data was not collected from those we have termed the subsidiary parties to the relationship, but it might be argued that these are the primary beneficiaries of effective university student-volunteering relationships: the clients, service recipients or customers of host organisations, the employers of university graduates and the community. Embedded in the data collected from our interviewees was evidence worthy of further exploration, suggesting that the value added to each of these beneficiaries was worth the time and effort invested by the primary parties.

## The clients or service recipients

Those who are served by the host organisations was shown to vary depending on the nature of the host, and ranged from clients in disability services, to students in primary schools, patients in health-based charitable organisations, and the elderly living independently in their own homes and receiving support services. Beneficiaries or service recipients also include nonprofit/nongovernment organisations in international locations (in essence, a secondary host), and other students and peers at the student volunteers' own university. A third type of beneficiary includes the arts and culture, the environment, and animals, where students volunteer in organisations which are serving these fields.

Data collected from host organisations, and from the students themselves, provided evidence that there is a benefit to the service recipients. The impact of this benefit is difficult to measure and would require a substantial project to investigate, but there are examples from our data which substantiate the claims that there is benefit to clients and service recipients:

*The benefits to partners are a lot less tangible than that, and they see a lot of the benefits being around the relationship building. Having exposure to all these new people and new ideas that keep coming through with each group [of students]. A lot of the partners that we work with work with young people, either really young kids or adolescents, and they find that the students bring – kind of broaden their horizons too. **University program manager***

### **Vignette: Outcomes of mentoring**

The students who volunteer don't always get to know what the contribution is that they are making to clients or service recipients. Often they only find out when a commemorative event is held, perhaps to host an important visitor. One story related to us referred to a visit by the Governor General:

And there was a really nice moment where one of the kids who had been mentored told his story about the impact of having been mentored by a uni student and what that meant in terms of the choices he made and the career path he followed. And he actually went, you know, basically from somebody who was probably relatively directionless, he ended up joining the Australian Defence Force and you know, was sort of early in his military career but quite clearly could say that that was directly related to the experience of having been mentored by one of our students. I mean, it's a great outcome, that's exactly why you do it. And there are countless stories like that and probably unfortunately there's a lot of the stories that we never really know about because these guys are young adults and we treat them as such and we don't pry sort of too deeply into their lives but when we hear those stories they're really nice.

An area related to this, however, is the notion of exploitation of the service recipients for the purposes of the students and universities, and while our evidence did not provide weight to this argument, it is an aspect worthy of further exploration along with the impact of the student volunteering programs and is discussed in the section on controversies later in this report (See Chapter 6).

### **Potential employers**

During interviews with the various stakeholders, a recurring theme emerged – the importance of student volunteering to their future employability. Students, university representatives, coordinators and others discussed volunteering from the aspect of its contribution to students' ability to be recruited and employed in the future. Like clients or service recipients, employers were not interviewed for this project, but the data provided some insights which might be useful to potential employers of university graduates.

Our study shows that university graduates with volunteering experience have social awareness, a strong set of values and skills, and a desire to work for an employer with social responsibility. They could therefore become engaged employees and good corporate citizens. From an employer's perspective, recruiting graduates with volunteering experience means they would be more likely to not just participate in

corporate volunteering programs, but also engage in other extra-role behaviour, such as mentoring others. This would assist in increasing corporate volunteering rates; create stronger social impact; and enhance the company's citizenship and positive reputation. Participation in corporate volunteering was found to be related to other positive workplace outcomes, such as positive CSR attitudes, job satisfaction and emotional attachment to the organisation, leading to better financial and overall performance.

Our evidence is that student volunteering develops the students' employability. Through their volunteering experience, students develop new skills, confidence and social awareness, and this enhances their levels of self-efficacy, independence and ability to deal with pressure. Many students mentioned that volunteering led them out of their "comfort zone", which allowed them to mature more quickly than their counterparts who did not volunteer. In addition, by hiring graduates who had already volunteered, employers could leverage on the human and social capital they had developed during their volunteering experience, for instance stronger social networks.

However, not all employers are aware of these benefits:

This aspect is explored further in the controversies section later in this document (See Chapter 6).

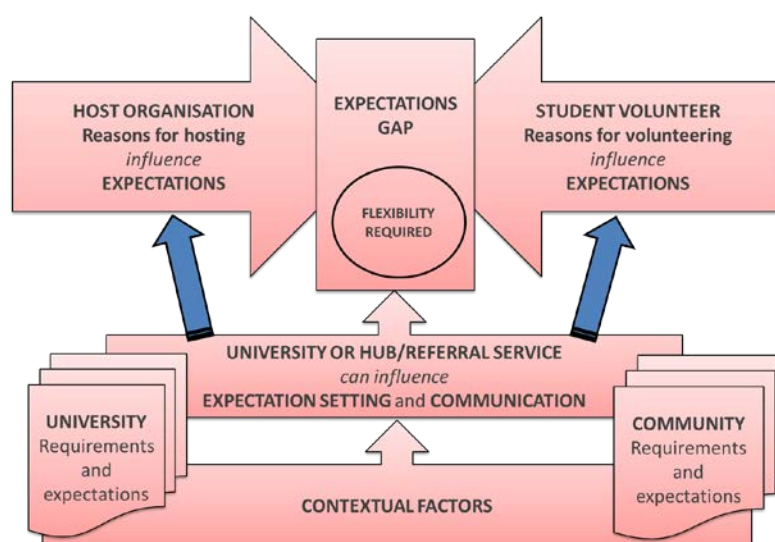
*Any time I've ever given my resume out to anyone they look at the top box and they say, "Wow, you've got scholarships for Peru and Austria and England and Cambodia, this is a huge differential from anyone else, and especially that vocational aspect. There's such a focus on students now, they don't spend a lot of time at university, they spend a lot of time working (...) trying to get ahead by getting this experience so that when they apply for a job the employer will say, "You've already had two years' experience, I'm going to take you over the person that has none." And, [identifier deleted] has facilitated that within a university context, they've given you really interesting work experiences that stand out on a resume but that's in the holiday period and it allows you to still go to all your lectures and get the most out of your education. **Student volunteer***

*I remember one job that I was sort of applying for, they were like – it really fit in with what I was looking for because it was sort of like helping people again. They were all like, that's great with you but the problem that we have with you is that you do a lot of volunteering and that – we have this notion that people who do volunteering don't, won't work as hard because they're not being paid for it so they don't, you know, they can slack off sort of thing, they don't have the drive to work as hard. So I was sort of having this debate with them about the idea of volunteers. That was probably one of the most negative things that's happened with me. **Student volunteer***

## 4. Good practice

Good practice in this project refers to those activities, structures, situations and practices which provide benefit to students, universities, and host organisations in university student volunteering. We are using the term “good practice” in this project in preference to “best practice” because our aim is not to encourage the same practices in all settings. Rather, we aim to capture what works, and highlight what may not, in an effort to assist students, universities and host organisations to enhance university student volunteering. The term “best practice” can be traced back to 1980s management consultancy and was eschewed in this project due to the implication that best practice should be transferred from one setting to another; whereas we expected, and discovered, a range of approaches to which the term “good practice” can be ascribed.

The elements of good practice which were identified in our data fell into a range of areas: planning and preparation; communication, including relationship building; and support, including resources, recognition and encouragement. All these elements contribute to a positive outcome for all parties. One of the clear outcomes of our research is the need to match expectations at the outset, and for these to be realistic and achievable.



**Figure 4.1 Matching expectations**

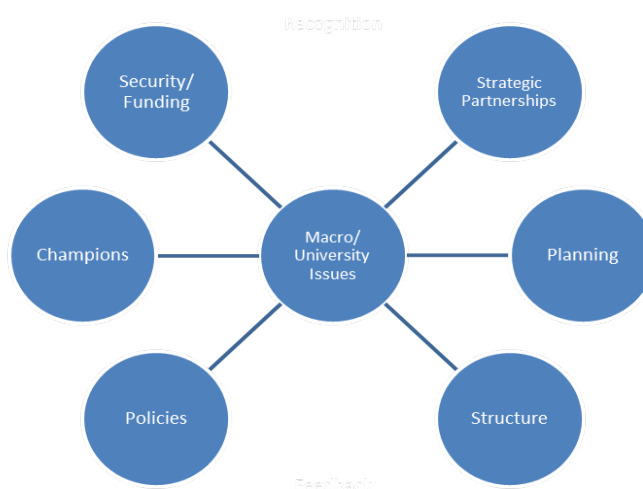
The matching of expectations is the responsibility of all parties, but can be facilitated by the university or the volunteer hub, referral service or equivalent, as a consistent and experienced party across many relationships.

This discussion will commence with the university perspective and then elaborate on the host and student perspectives.

### University considerations

Our evidence is that there are two levels within universities which have considerable overlap but which require separate discussion. The first of these is at the senior management level involving such matters as strategy and policy. The second is more applicable to the operational level and is relevant to the program managers, as well as to the hubs or referral services run by universities, guilds and volunteering organisations.

## Macro/University-wide volunteering considerations



**Figure 4.2 University-level considerations in university student volunteering**

Our evidence suggests that university programs enjoy greater success when a range of key issues is determined in advance of program establishment. Many of these issues relate to the reasons for establishment of the program, and the expectations with regard to outcomes.

Three underpinning elements are the planning, structures and policies that envelop any program or suite of programs, which need to reflect the intent of the university. Such issues as ownership and responsibility need to be clearly established. Our recommendations include:

**Planning** – Prior to implementation it is important to identify the university’s strategic reasons for wanting to facilitate the arrangements – to what end, for whose benefit, and how will it be ensured that the program runs well? Forward planning also includes proactively dealing with demarcation issues such as who owns the program, and who will be credited with success and responsible for managing difficulties, if any.

**Structure** – This needs to be appropriate to reflect the intent of the program and the support needed. Appropriate arrangements also need to be in place, with a clear and well-understood interface between the faculties and centres.

**Policies** – Needed for the arrangements or programs to provide clarity for all in terms of expectations, roles and responsibilities. This is especially important since the arrangements will reflect on not only the students, but also the image of the university through the conduct, behaviour and actions of their students. Recognising the volunteer activity should be considered, along with certain questions in the development of policy. For instance, what is the best reward for students and the university?

Transcripts, references, award ceremonies, t-shirts and parties are some of the formal and not-so-formal ways of rewarding students’ contributions. If formal transcripts are to be issued, how will records be kept and what will constitute sufficient service for recognition?

Three further key issues that promote success and longevity of programs emerged from the data: security and funding; strategic partnerships; and starting a volunteer program from scratch.

**Security and funding** – The establishment of security and funding for those running the programs mitigates uncertainty about the future of programs, which in turn leads to less commitment from all parties and can jeopardise relationships with host organisations. If the positions of the managers and coordinators of the program are not secure, this will impact on the stability of the arrangements, and may possibly reflect on the program’s value proposition. There is a need for stability, a sense of continuity, and proper succession planning to position the program well for the best results. Student



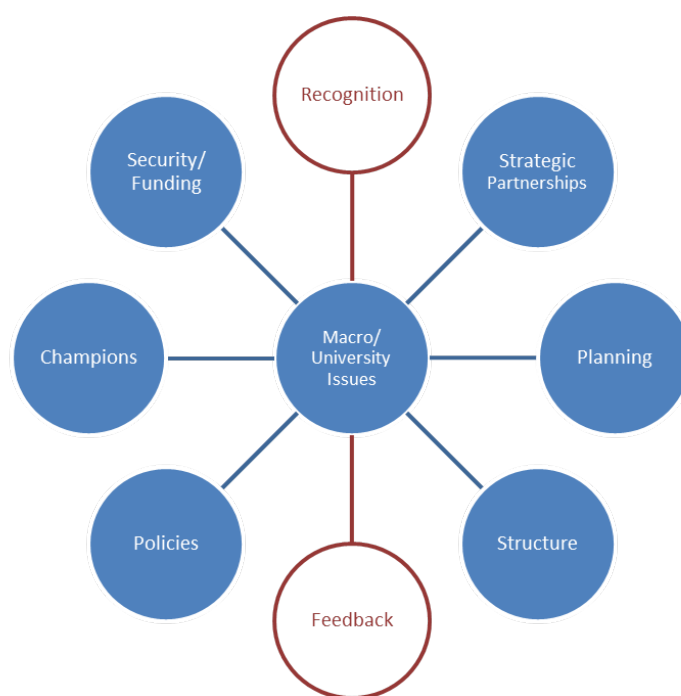
turnover is to be expected, as students graduate and move on from university life. Like any program, losing good leaders, means that there is a constant cycle of recruitment, both to run the program and participate in it.

**Strategic partnerships** – Partnerships with host organisations and peak bodies also add strength to programs. Universities, volunteer hubs and referral services, and student organisations all indicated that long-term partnerships are valued by all parties and should be carefully selected. One question that arose concerned who the university (or referral service) should partner with. Should the partnership exist only with nonprofit organisations so as not to take away paid working positions from others? Such important questions produce varying answers from university to university, which are related to the strategic intent of the initiative and individual volunteering programs. Building relationships with host organisations takes time and it is better to have a few good friends than many casual acquaintances. Relationships which benefit both parties are built on good communication and clarity of expectations. For instance, confirming the type of help and the level of commitment expected from students.

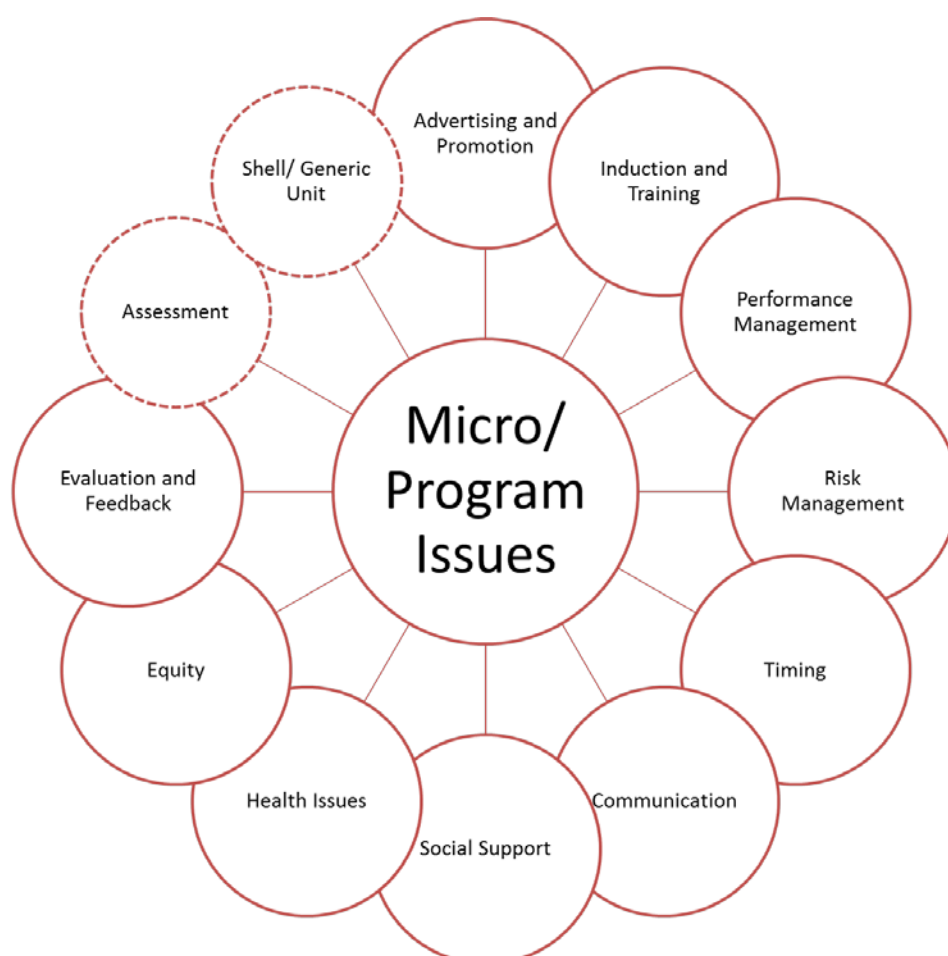
**Starting a volunteer program from scratch** – The advice from our study participants is to start small and gradually increase the number of volunteers each semester, particularly where the program involves partnerships with volunteer involving organisations outside the university. Peak bodies can provide advice on starting partnerships, as can program managers from existing programs. It is important to carefully manage expectations of both students and host organisations in the early days of a partnership; this will assist in ensuring its longevity because the systems and processes set in place will continue beyond the individuals who establish them.

It was also evident in our data that strong champions of university student volunteering were apparent in those programs which were strong and vibrant. More senior champions were able to provide support for the strategic policy and structure requirements, as well as provide support for the stability and security matters evident in some of the less strong programs.

Two further issues emerged during the dissemination workshops – recognition and feedback mechanisms. These were apparent in the data but inconsistent across the various universities in relation to whether they should be considered to be macro issues or more operational micro issues. . To some degree, these are factors in the security and funding elements of the macro perspective. As will be discussed below, recognition and feedback mechanisms are required at the operational level of university student volunteering, but it is also evident in our data that universities who are providing recognition to their program managers and referral services, and who seek feedback from those managers, are better positioned to sustain their programs. It is often the champions who ensure that this liaison between senior university staff and program managers occurs.



**Figure 4.3 Two further university-level considerations in university student volunteering**



**Figure 4.4 Program-level considerations in university student volunteering**

## Micro/program-level volunteering considerations

The program level for university student volunteering can be the responsibility of a range of program managers across the university, and in university-affiliated organisations. This includes volunteer referral services, which can be run by paid staff of the university with sole responsibility for volunteering, by university staff in schools or faculties, by staff or volunteers associated with the student guild or related organisations, or by program managers in pan university organisations.

Figure 4.4 highlights the key issues for program managers which emerged from the data as contributing to quality university student volunteering programs. These should be considered in conjunction with the university level factors in Figure 4.3. These are briefly discussed in turn below:

**Advertising and promotion** – Realistic advertising and promotion of university volunteering activities is an important factor in the formation of expectations for both students and host organisations.

**Induction and training** – Preparation of students for their volunteering experience can be undertaken by the university or by the host organisation or both. Our evidence is that induction and training activities relevant to the volunteering can enhance the student experience. Training is needed, including induction, expectation management, and information on clear boundaries for operations. Cross-cultural issues also need attention, especially for international volunteering.

**Performance management** – Delineation of performance expectations at the outset can minimise the incidence of performance issues. Behavioural issues need to be promptly addressed as these can have an impact on the reputation of the university and the volunteer program. Students need to be aware, for example, of the impact of failing to attend their volunteer commitments. Sometimes attendance issues are a function of competing priorities and casual work, which does not allow students to know their (paid) work schedules in advance. Performance management is not just about managing poor performance. It is important to recognise volunteer service. As discussed above, transcripts, references, award ceremonies, t-shirts, and parties are some of the formal and not-so-formal ways of rewarding student volunteers. Record keeping is important to the success of managing recognition.

**Risk management** – Procedures need to be documented and monitored, including: health and safety issues; duty of care responsibilities; arrangements for students with medical conditions; and personnel checks such as police clearances and requirements for working with children. In some circumstances, group volunteering programs are easier to organise compared to individual arrangements, as a result of economies of scale.

**Timing** – Indications are that the timing of volunteer activity needs to take into consideration other demands on student time. Universities can assist with establishing expectations about student availability during exam periods and other high demand times. Some programs find that activities run early in semester are more successful due to lower student workloads.

**Communication** – Constant and open communication is necessary with students and with host organisations, especially in activities occurring outside the university both nationally and internationally. There is also a need for proper documentation for continuity, for example relating to appropriate handover provisions.

**Social support** – There is a requirement for social support for students as well as program managers and coordinators, especially in dealing with delicate matters such as refugee issues as the emotional labour associated with these types of volunteering can be stressful. It is also important to note, however, that students undertaking many volunteering activities can be exposed to new experiences or difficult situations where they may feel the need for support. Information about student counselling services should be included in induction and training.

**Health issues** – In addition to the requirement for social support, there can also be health issues experienced by staff and students. Our evidence is that burn out in students and associated staff is relatively common, and is detrimental to programs as well as individuals. There is a need to balance

various competing priorities. Information should be provided on risk factors, and there should be careful monitoring of both staff and students, and the way they respond to the activities.

**Equity** – Two different equity issues emerged from our data. In some cases external students may feel excluded due to their inability to be directly involved in promoted activities. Finding ways to engage off-campus students is challenging but not impossible. Students can volunteer online and many universities have volunteer programs at their offshore campuses. In addition, University program managers need to be aware of the issues associated with volunteering for students on limited budgets who may not be able to afford to spend time on unpaid work, or who may need to be able to access reimbursement for expenses incurred while volunteering.

**Evaluation and feedback** – Provision of feedback and evaluation and building quality loops to review and tighten arrangements is required at a number of levels. Host organisations observed that often they hear no more once a student volunteer has departed, and university program managers and staff in volunteer hubs and referral services also made similar observations. This is another example of an issue that improved communication can assist. While not all university student volunteering activities include assessment and or credit bearing activities – and these are more often associated with service learning and other activities – two further factors for program managers emerged from the data:

**Assessment** – For credit bearing units, consistent criteria is needed so that students are being assessed in a comparable manner. There is also a requirement to ensure the equivalence in terms of scope and range of activities.

**Shell/generic units** – It may be useful to have shell/generic units for service learning. These units can create a structure and framework for student activities, and allow consistent evaluation and assessment of activities.

Program level managers face a range of challenges, which are compounded once a university seeks to increase the activity beyond volunteering into a required format. One of these is finding suitable opportunities for all students. As one program co-ordinator put it:

*Some of the other barriers would be trying to place international students, trying to place students with disabilities and trying to get employers to realise that students that don't have HDs can be pretty good as well. University program manager*

## Strategies

Interviews with university representatives, volunteer referral services and hubs, host organisations and student volunteers identified a range of strategies which can improve the outcomes for all parties. The strategies identified in Table 4.1 are generalised and would need to be tailored to suit the particular situation but our evidence is that many of these strategies will assist with the formation and communication of expectations.

**Table 4.1 University student volunteer programs: Strategies for universities**

<b>Policies, structure and funding:</b>	Ensure appropriate policies are in place and the structure and funding are appropriate for outcomes sought.
<b>Strategic partnerships with clear expectations:</b>	Seek out strategic partnerships and ensure all stakeholders are aware of expectations, their rights, and specific requirements.
<b>Senior champions:</b>	Seek out one or more senior champions for the program. Support from above leads to buy-in at lower levels as well as assistance with sustainability.
<b>Planning:</b>	Ensure appropriate planning has taken place to avoid demarcation issues and conflict.
<b>Constant communication:</b>	Communication will need to be constant and open between all stakeholders, including feedback on the performance of the volunteers.
<b>Feedback and evaluation:</b>	Ensure appropriate feedback loops are put in place to evaluate activities of the program.
<b>Risk management processes:</b>	Risk management procedures will need to be fully documented and duly followed.
<b>Induction and training:</b>	All stakeholders should receive an induction and training as necessary for the tasks they are to undertake. This will include supervisors in some situations.
<b>Social support:</b>	Allowance should be made for the provision of formal and informal social support as required, especially in difficult and emotive volunteering placements and settings.
<b>Scheduling acknowledges study commitments:</b>	The scheduling of volunteering activities will need to take into consideration the competing priorities of students (including their paid work), and semester and study requirements (in terms of periods where assessments are due).
<b>Realistic promotion:</b>	Advertising and promotion material need to present a realistic view of volunteer activities and associated requirements. Volunteers need to be very clear as to what is expected from them during the placement.
<b>Equitable access:</b>	For credit bearing units, there will need to be provisions put in place to ensure comparable placements and equitable assessment of activities for consistency, to meet academic requirements, and possibly accreditations. Provision should be made for possible alternate activities for students who may be solely studying online and possibly remotely and/or overseas who may not be able to participate in some volunteering or service learning activities. Consideration should be given to those who may not be in a financial position to give unpaid time.

## Host considerations

### Volunteering to learn or learning to volunteer?

Not all university student volunteering is undertaken to enhance the learning associated with the degree or qualification being studied. Where the activity is undertaken for credit, there will be specific learning objectives or statements of skills to be developed. Students take up volunteering of their own volition, for a range of reasons. Even those students who volunteer for reasons other than learning benefit and learn from the activity. This learning could include a range of life skills, such as leadership, time management and organisational skills, and an appreciation of what it is like to be an active volunteer and give back to the community. This type of learning is as valuable as the learning associated with courses of study, and it contributes to university goals of developing engaged citizens. For more on the learning aspect of university student volunteering see Chapter 5.

Our data provided evidence that student volunteers' experiences with host organisations who actively engage them by providing encouragement and feedback can, at times, lead to their staying on with the host organisation. Further, even when they don't stay on they can be good ambassadors for the organisation and its work.

As discussed above, a process of expectation matching will assist in the development of a good host/student volunteer relationship. Clarification of the expectations of all parties, based on good communication at the start of the relationship will lead to better outcomes.

Table 4.2 below outlines a series of questions host organisations might ask in setting up the relationship. If you are unable meet the expectations, these questions indicate there are a number of

options, including declining to involve the student, seeking to change your arrangements to meet the expectations, seeking to change the student/university expectations before the student volunteers, or some combination of these. Expectation matching is a key component of a successful volunteering experience.

**Table 4.2 Interviewing potential student volunteers**

<b>Credit</b>	If the volunteering is for academic credit, what is the student expected to do/complete/submit? What is expected of you as a host organisation? If the volunteering is to gain experience, what type of experiences are sought?
<b>Supervision</b>	What level of supervision of the project/activity will come from the university? What level of supervision of the project/activity is expected from you?
<b>Time availability and length of commitment</b>	What will happen when major university assignments are due? When are exams? Will the student need a reduced commitment at that time? Is the student committed indefinitely? Until they graduate? Until the end of the year? – The semester?
<b>Reasons for Volunteering</b>	Has the student been “required/recommended” to volunteer by their university? Why – for academic credit? To gain experience? To learn English? Why did they come to your organisation? Does it fit with their studies? Is it to enhance their resume? Is it because their friends are volunteering here? Are they passionate about your activities?

## Student considerations

As discussed, three types of student volunteer were identified in the data and we have developed the following terminology associated with those types:

- **Academic student volunteer** – student volunteer undertaking assessable course work for academic/course/unit credit associated with their volunteer activity in the host organisation
- **Facilitated student volunteer** – student volunteer associated with the host organisation because of a relationship between the university (or the guild hub, referral service or some other agent) and the host organisation or host university program
- **Independent student volunteer** – self-organising student volunteer giving their time independently of the university. The volunteer activity may or may not be related to their university studies but, nevertheless, their studies make demands on their availability.

## Academic student volunteers

In the instance of students undertaking assessable work for the degree or course of study, there are certain requirements placed on them whether or not they have a choice in relation to the activity. The receipt of credit or recognition, and in some cases the obligation placed on the student, may take this type of volunteer outside “volunteering” in some cases. The issue as to whether “volunteering for credit” is a contradiction in terms is discussed later in this report. The student who is undertaking volunteering, or service learning or some other related activity for credit, by choice or otherwise, may have particular requirements that need to be met in terms of supervision, being able to write up their experiences, submitting a report or project or presenting an outcome to the host organisation or university, and may have a time requirement or expectation associated with their volunteering. Often there is an academic supervisor or contact associated with this volunteering.

## Facilitated student volunteers

Increasingly universities have instituted systems that recruit, manage or otherwise provide the structures from which students may volunteer. In addition, there are volunteer referral services operated by other parties (such as the student guild or other volunteer referral services or clubs) that assist students to find volunteer activities, or assist host organisations to find volunteers. These include university-organised activities, such as course-specific activities organised by lecturers or other staff; and volunteer activities organised by students, such as from the volunteering hub, referral service or student guild. Volunteer activities which are facilitated by a third party can include those undertaken on campus with university events, such orientation-related activities, or off-campus activities usually in collaboration with host organisations.

Volunteering hubs or referral services promote themselves to students who might wish to volunteer but don't know how to go about it, or students who ask to be put in touch with organisations they may be hesitant to approach themselves without some referral. In the case of courses or units which support or promote volunteering, there may be some overlap with the previous type of volunteering, in that there may be an expectation of a course requirement or arrangement whereby students receive credit for the volunteering they undertake.

*Every single program or project that we run has a program or project leader. So they're the ones on the ground. So usually, in terms of the initial set up and talking to community partners and stuff, that's sort of done by the staff members and [by] senior student management. So people such as myself. But once that's set up –... because we want to make sure that all fits into our guidelines, risk and all that is cared for - ...but once the operational things behind [are set up] it is then handed over to the student program leaders and directors. So there's the program leaders who like go on the ground. ....There's always a program leader. So someone who's sort of in charge. They're the ones who will mainly liaise with the community partner on the ground and receive any volunteer feedback, positive or negative, during the volunteering session. That's sort of how we make sure about what's happening on the ground. **Student leader volunteer referral service***

## Independent student volunteers

The third category of student volunteer is the person who finds their own volunteer opportunity and undertakes it quite independently of the university or student volunteering system such as the hub. (Although we have found that some students find out about a volunteering opportunity via the hub or referral service but then independently take up the process of finding out about the opportunity and making contact with the host organisation). It is not possible to say at this point that students who have a pre-university volunteering career are more likely to be independent volunteers, but our evidence is that many students who involve themselves in volunteering independently continue to do so and take up a range of volunteering activities.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> At a meeting of our reference group a particular type of university student volunteer who puts their hand up for lots of volunteering was referred to as a “chronic volunteer” in an affectionate way.



### Vignette: University life introduces volunteering

K did no volunteering at school before university and became involved in a large student-run organisation in a large Faculty *“because of people in the years above me who I became friends with and who I thought were pretty excellent”*. K was involved with this society for several years through the degree and after returning from a year off became even more involved.

*And then this year, I ended up in this role because I think the society has been incredibly central to my experience at university. I think that not only has it given me a fantastic personal experience, but from my experiences in the education portfolio, I gained a lot of insight into how well integrated we are into the faculty and how much influence we have over the educational direction of our own degree.*

K also worked in a particular area with marginalised people and saw through the organisation and some of its activities that it would marry those interests with social interests, which *“was a fun thing to be involved in”*.

The first motivator for involvement was through friends, but other aspects involve a positive culture which attracts other people.

*People want to be involved in it because it looks like everyone’s having a great time and they all have these fantastic connections and these fantastic relationships through it. And I think that was really important, is that it wasn’t volunteering for the sake of altruism or filling boxes on CVs or things. It was because you wanted to be involved in this very positive organisation.*

K is now president of this organisation, which involves not only overseeing the volunteer and social activities, but also contributes to the academic activities in collaboration with the university for accreditation purposes and course direction. It is a large organisation with oversight of large amounts of funds and responsibilities. Because of the size of the student group, the society itself is very structured and necessitates a level of bureaucratic management, which provides good training for those involved but can also distance the organisers from the students to some extent. It also affects the study capabilities of the organisers. K’s advice is to participate at the level best afforded by the stage in the degree because some years are more intense than others.

*I don’t expect people to commit more than, to put a number on it, if they work efficiently five hours a week for a lot of the roles. Some of them a lot more. The executive role’s definitely more, 10 to 15 hours a week minimum really. But yeah, five to 10 hours a week maximum for most of the roles, or less. I’d rather see everyone pass and be happy than run a really good event and have to repeat the year, which will cost them \$10,000 and make them never want to be involved in anything ever again.*

The society has:

*a focus on social justice and on providing opportunities for students to volunteer in terms of fundraising, raising awareness on issues that we think are important, and we also run academic events as well to up-skill our students and give them the opportunity to sort of experience things that are outside of the core curriculum that they’re taught.*

As a university-based host organisation, this society provides opportunities for skill development and other learning, socialising and having fun with friends, contributing to important causes and providing the basis for continued volunteering. As K says:

*I think overall the best choice I made while at university has been becoming involved in student representation and volunteering, because it’s added a huge amount of diversity to my learning, it’s given me a chance to develop skills that I wouldn’t have had otherwise, and it’s also opened up such a huge number of opportunities for me over the last seven years that I wouldn’t have had were I not involved and were I not contributing.*



## What volunteering activities do students do?

Student volunteering activities take many forms as discussed in Chapter 2 (See Table 2.2). In addition these forms of volunteering include a very wide range of activities. Our study identified that the range is extensive and the matrix (see Appendix 3) showed that this variety is Australia wide. Examples of the types of activities undertaken by student volunteers in this study include:

- helping at events organised by the student guild/union or activity clubs
- internal university activities, such as orientation week or open day
- fundraising for charities, both as individuals or in groups
- working in second-hand book or opportunity shops
- serving on committees
- running student academic events
- mentoring either in university or in the community (school students for example).

The types of volunteering taking place in community organisations ranged from fundraising to marshalling at events, and from preparing marketing plans or documents to assisting with conferences and other programs. Tree planting, gardening, preparing food, befriending, mentoring and handling money were roles identified by other interviewees as activities undertaken by student volunteers. Reference was made to students who were volunteering in areas related directly to their areas of study, and those whose volunteer roles took them outside this sphere.

### Vignette: An eye-opening experience

*Volunteering in a community centre op shop was a world away from my own privileged life. It was fun and I loved the funky retro clothes, but it wasn't long before I was confronted with the realities for those who shopped there. One day a lady came in and was trying clothes on but not buying anything. So after a while we enquired only to find out that she couldn't afford them. I was taken aback because the clothes were really cheap – I had no idea. To think my friends and I worry about what to wear when we don't even do our own washing. "Oh my god! What are we going to wear Saturday night." My mentor whispered to me that she was probably homeless, pointing to her bags of scanty possessions. She walked up to the lady saying encouragingly "You can have these, its fine."*

*I was touched by her warmth and understanding of the bigger picture as she explained later that the old lady needed them more than the centre needed the money – after all, it goes to the homeless anyway. It was a take-home experience that opened my eyes to the situation of others and one that has changed my perspective on how I work with the new students I now mentor.*

*After all, you don't always know their situation and you can't assume to know without understanding their experience.*

## What helps?

Students reported that there were some conditions or circumstances which supported their volunteering. These differed according to the student. For example, some students required clear structures and good information, while others were much less concerned about these matters and were more interested that the volunteering opportunity was of interest to them. One student reported that

she was not entirely satisfied that what she wanted to do existed in an organisation and so she started her own.

From the evidence offered by the students who participated in the project, we developed a summary

*I didn't see any existing way to mobilise a lot of university students to get involved and support high school students, so I started [the organisation]. **Student leader***

of what students who were considering volunteering may think about by way of preparation. Having students give some thought to their preferences and expectations is likely to increase the possibilities for expectation matching. This can also be facilitated by host organisation recruiters and by university facilitators, managers and referral services.

**Table 4.3 Thought-provoking suggestions for potential student volunteers**

- Your **life goals** and what you would like to achieve when graduating – consider the way that volunteering can help you achieve these goals
- How important it is to **challenge** yourself – get out of your comfort zone, become more independent, be confronted by something new and challenging?
- Your **time and other resources**: what can you reasonably fit into your schedule?
- Your **social goals**: how important is it to you to contribute to developing networks, making new friendships, helping others to develop a sense of connectedness and community?
- Your **employment goals**: what additional skills and knowledge do you want to acquire, or new directions to pursue?
- Your **personal goals**: how important is it for you to have the satisfaction of helping others and to your own happiness in doing so, as well as having fun and enjoying yourself in the process?

### What hinders?

When asked about challenges in volunteering, student reports again varied according to the personal characteristics of the student. There were some common challenges students faced, identified not only by students but by those with experience in managing or referring student volunteers. As with many of the other findings in this study, planning, communication and expectation matching play a role in reducing some of the challenges presented by volunteering.

**Table 4.4 Challenges for students in student volunteering**

<b>What are some common challenges?</b>	<b>And how do I deal with them?</b>
<b>Not having clear guidelines or structures to support your volunteering</b>	Ask for a schedule, timetable or other specifics about, for instance, the activity, your role, expectations.
<b>Time commitment</b>	Assess realistically how much time you have and match your volunteering to that – it is better to increase your volunteering if you find you have more time than pull out altogether because you are over committed.
<b>Culture shock or not feeling part of the culture of the organisation</b>	This is common for all people on joining an organisation. Find out as much as you can about the organization before you start and allow yourself time to “settle in” and make connections there.
<b>Reality check – we are not going to change the world</b>	No, but the little that you do will make a big difference
<b>Ungrateful/angry clients/recipients when things go wrong</b>	It is usual for people who are already experiencing hardship or disadvantage in some way to be angry or negative in their responses. Understanding their situation can help, as can training and supervision in the organisation.
<b>The “bad” volunteer experience</b>	Sometimes things don’t turn out the way we hope or expect. Take the learning from it and engage in a new experience. The vast majority of volunteering experiences are positive.
<b>The cost</b>	There will be some cost, even if only in time. Some organisations can help with bus fares, for example. But again, choose a volunteering activity that is within your resources – close to transport, easy to access from work or study – to minimise any out-of-pocket expenses.
<b>Different motivations for volunteering (e.g. volunteering for the hours on a transcript)</b>	Not everyone volunteers for the same reasons. Accepting that there are different roles people can and do play, and therefore contribute, can make the experience less tense.
<b>Transport (living off campus)</b>	Choose a volunteering activity that fits within your schedule and availability. If you live off campus you may choose to volunteer for one-off events rather than sign up to a semester-long activity.
<b>Lack of interest from volunteering or university structures or services</b>	If you find the service unresponsive, there are plenty of places who will welcome you – try your Guild contact, or Hub or Referral service.
<b>Getting “stuck” in the same role</b>	Many students volunteer for one activity over a period and then move to another in the next semester, but there may be benefits in staying in the same activity – for example, getting to know a stable network, demonstrating stability, developing skills to a greater depth.
<b>Few young people in some organisations</b>	It depends on what you volunteer for, but extending your networks can be of immense benefit and pleasurable too.

## Getting started

During the course of the interviews with stakeholders, the issue of getting started was explored from a range of perspectives. In many cases, university programs had commenced with one staff member seeking to establish something to assist students, either with university life, or with the learning that would assist them beyond university. Host organisations identified that often they were looking for ways to engage with young people and to foster their volunteer program. Students were recruited by word of mouth or by stumbling across a call for volunteers, or because of a requirement in their course. Some students started their own organisations. One outcome of this research, which was repeatedly apparent, was the notion that there is no “one size fits all”: approach, and that programs and experiences grew and changed as the needs of universities, organisations and individuals changed. As a result, our advice about getting started is somewhat general. It involves talking to people, and finding out what might work in particular settings.

Local or state volunteer centres, other experienced university program managers, careers and volunteer hubs or referral services on campus can provide good advice on where to start and who to talk to. There are some good tools which can be employed, modified and adapted for different universities, organisations or individuals. These include the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* released by Volunteering Australia in 2015. Our guides have collated much of the wisdom of individuals who have wide-ranging experience of student volunteering. Primary to all of this is clarification of the reasons for getting started, and the expectations as to what might be achieved.

## Keeping it legal

Experienced program managers in universities highlighted the importance of the legal requirements during interviews and in follow up consultation sessions on the Good Practice Guides. Their concerns highlighted that an important element of the relationship between the university, the student and the host organisation is the legal framework within which they operate.

*We've all got different kinds of legal contracts and some of them are quite legalistic, including our own, although more and more people are signing them, they're getting used to them. **University program manager***

Legal elements include occupational health and safety and insurance provisions, elements of equal opportunity legislation including sexual harassment, and elements associated with employment law such as those covered by fair work provisions. Host organisations with experienced managers, and those who set up the student volunteering arrangements via a peak body or volunteer hub, tend to address the legal requirements in agreements and during induction and orientation.

*They still go through the enrol process like everybody else does. We do police checks, reference checks. There's basically an HR process involved for volunteers that come through so they're committing to that and they're committing to working within our policies and procedures and following the code of behaviour that we work by. **Host organisation representative***

Establishment of good legal frameworks is a key component of setting up any program, even if only because aspects associated with insurance are then clarified. University program managers in particular were very keen to ensure that all of the legal aspects of university student volunteering were clear to all parties.

### Vignette: International student to volunteer manager

N came to Australia as an international student ten years ago “without networks, without anyone and without anything”. He had to make his own friends and find out what was in his new community. And volunteering was the way he started. It opened up a whole new world of networks, friends and courses, and knowledge of his new city. He thinks that volunteering is a tremendous opportunity to gain more than a degree,

*It adds a whole new dimension to your university experience, and it forms so much of your future decisions as well. Like, I studied accounting, I’m not doing accounting now ... I thought “hang on a second, there’s other stuff out there that’s pretty interesting”.*

He thinks that it is very important for the university to provide a place for students, especially international students, to find out about volunteering,

*It’s so important to be able to provide a place that people feel comfortable coming in, participating and meeting new people and so forth ... I’ve studied before at places where you go in there for your class and you go home, and that’s it. And there’s nothing more depressing than not feeling an attachment or connection to the place you’re spending a lot of your hours at.*

Now, as a Volunteer Manager, N works to bring students to volunteering, provide volunteering opportunities and guide student leaders in their roles to support volunteers.

He likes the way that his university offers students a range of ways to volunteer. He has noticed that some people prefer one-off volunteering and “it’s a great opportunity to get out and see things and still contribute”. He thinks it’s a great introduction to volunteering as well. Others want to make a semester-long commitment, like working with a school student over a semester or with a community organisation, and doing that “you get to explore different areas and develop different skills, actually build the relationship with that kid or the community partner, and therefore strengthen your networks, your relationships, open up a few more doors perhaps”.

N says his volunteer referral service tries to ensure there is “mutual benefit” – for the students and the community partners – but that that is a very subjective thing, “different people take different things”. In explaining this he said,

*Some students might find, working at a triathlon station and handing out drinks for athletes, that’s not beneficial for me. But then to an international student who has never seen the country, and doesn’t have friends, and hasn’t socialised and has no networks, going on the trip itself [to a picturesque regional location], and not necessarily the task, could be the most amazing experience.*

## 5. Learning from volunteering

### Learning

Our evidence is that the learning associated with university student volunteering is wide and varied. Partly, this relates to the type of volunteering activity and the different expectations of participants. It may also vary with the student and their relationship with the host organisation. Analysis with respect to learning from volunteering is still underway. However, the volume of data from this project indicates learning takes place in all forms of university student volunteering, and the nature and types of learning appear to be both those related to the curriculum, concerning explicit aims and goals, as well as those which are beyond the curriculum, including tacit learning and personal development. This chapter discusses some of the expectations about learning which emerged from the project, and considers the early evidence about learning from volunteering. It also identifies key challenges in capturing or documenting learning, and highlights evidence from the data about facilitating and encouraging learning.

### University expectations about learning

University staff who are encouraging (or requiring) their students to undertake volunteering or volunteering related activities identified a range of expectations. These included academic- or discipline-related learning applied to a community or workplace setting; with

*Some [learning from volunteering] fits broadly under emotional intelligence ... how to get on with people, show up on time, all those sorts of things, how to be a team player, through to more difficult stuff like problem solving in teams, project management as well, how to pitch ideas, how to persuade people, how to negotiate, how to get on with people who are different from you and don't do what you expect. All those things that you encounter in your workplace that no one actually teaches you. **University administrator***

expectations of employability and leadership skills being almost universal. What was also important, however, was the identification of an expectation that students could gain “soft skills” through their volunteer activities, for instance communication, problem-solving, listening, and following instructions. Also identified by university interviewees were expectations of relating to other people, building relationships with the local community, becoming informed about community issues, and acquiring cultural competence and learning about other cultures. The latter were often related to international students volunteering locally, and/or local students volunteering internationally.

Much of the learning reported from volunteering relates to graduate attributes, which can be developed in a multitude of settings – not necessarily in a discipline-specific context. Some data suggested that a context not related to the discipline of study might be more beneficial and offer new insights for students. This kind of learning is reported for a range of volunteer activities, whether for credit or extra to the curriculum, but is learning that is not easily provided in a classroom setting.

*Firstly leadership skills, it gains my confidence and getting in touch with working in real life and dealing with real people ... and it's also for a great cause, that's another drive for me. **Student volunteer***

### Student expectations about learning

As with universities, student expectations for learning from volunteering are a subset of their reasons for volunteering. Across the student interviews, data indicated different expectations for different students but there were some common factors. These included learning new skills, which may or may not be directly related to their studies; identification of their skills and limitations with respect to particular activities; and confidence in their abilities. Many identified that they expected their volunteering to provide practical experience for employability, which would be useful on their CVs

*There's a personal motivation of wanting to develop myself and who I am as a person, ...there are also other benefits, as on your transcript it looks really great ... but the people most involved in volunteering don't do it because of that, they do it because they get satisfaction, they like seeing other people be happy and satisfied. **Student volunteer***

*I've always seen the value of volunteering because it gives you a lot of experiences; it allows you to interact with a lot of people who can potentially give you opportunities in the future, and also a sense of belonging, which I think is really important in any kind of community, in many different kinds of communities and the bigger community as well. **Student volunteer***

*You can talk about leadership all you want and how you should best go about doing it, but it's not until you actually do it, is how you learn. **Student leader***

and therefore advantageous in job seeking. Students also identified that they expected to make a difference, confirm their values, gain experience of helping others and make new friends and networks. Many of the interviewees also identified expecting to enjoy their volunteering experience.

### Host organisation expectations about learning

Some individuals in host organisations, had not really thought about the formal learning associated with hosting student volunteers, and instead provided a picture of students learning about life and the community. They identified that volunteering was an opportunity for students to think about things in a different way, to extend their book learning to the world and learn about responsibility. One interviewee referred to students having the opportunity to learn *all the things that employers say that they want over and above a specific discipline*. Host organisations identified that they hoped that student volunteers would learn the enjoyment of volunteering, helping others, contributing to the community, and building new relationships and networks.

It is not only the student volunteers who learn through the volunteering experience. Members of host organisations reported learning from colleagues, often related to innovative or different ways to tackle an issue, and learning from beneficiaries of the volunteering (especially in a school or community setting). Organisations also learn about the capabilities of future graduates, and some have offered jobs to those who have volunteered in their organisations.

### Are learning expectations met?

One of the biggest challenges associated with university student volunteering is identifying whether learning expectations are met. Data collected in this project obtained confirmation from academic staff in universities that where assessment is taking place by methods such as use of a reflective journal there is some evidence of learning occurring. Similarly, student presentations on projects or reports to host organisations indicated the same. Host organisations reported changes evident in students over the course of their volunteering activity, including changes in behaviour towards clients or activities. Examples were as small as becoming more cognisant of manner of dress, or as large as learning how to interact with clients with a disability. Capturing the nature of the learning is, however, an area where the need to do so, the benefits of doing so, the dangers of trying to do so, and the difficulties associated all coalesce, producing a muddy picture making examination protracted. The indicator used by this project was the students' self-reported learning from their previous volunteer experiences.



## Learning identified as emerging from volunteering

Students and alumni interviewed identified that, more often than not, it was the intangibles which had the biggest impact in terms of learning from their volunteering experiences. Often, they referred to the opportunity to apply what they had studied or to try out new skills, particularly technical or professional skills; but they talked more about communication skills, soft skills, self-awareness, self-efficacy and leadership skills, and experience they had gained from their volunteering.

*So it's a massive learning experience. I've learnt so many things. Project management, communication – how to communicate to a team, how to work in a professional environment. **Student volunteer***

*[Student volunteers are] getting some guidance and advice outside the academic world – they're getting it from the real life world that they're going to step into when they finish their studies. **Host organisation representative***

Host organisation representatives also identified that students were learning from their volunteering.

**Table 5.1 Are learning expectations met?**

University learning expectations	Students learning expectations	Host organisation learning expectations
Applied knowledge Employability skills Cultural competence Leadership skills Soft skills Relationships and network building Informed about community issues	Making a difference Developing new skills Employability skills New friends and networks Confidence Know skills and limitations Enjoyment Practical experience for CV	Employability skills Life experience Thinking about things differently New relationships and networks Responsibility Enjoyment Informed about causes and communities
<b>Students say that they learn/gain –</b>		
Good feelings, satisfaction Soft skills Communication skills New networks and friends	Self-awareness Self-efficacy Professional skills Career opportunities	Leadership skills, experience Informed life perspectives Community involvement

Our evidence is that even those students who volunteer for reasons other than learning, benefit and learn from the activity. The learning which takes place includes a range of life skills, including leadership, time management and organisational skills, and an appreciation of what it is like to be an active volunteer and give back to the community. This type of learning is as valuable as the learning associated with

*What they're doing in a real life situation is, in fact, learning something which is to do with service within a community, or it's to do with integrating their study and project work. **Host organisation representative***

*Independence, developing personal resilience skills, developing cross-cultural communication skills, developing leadership and teamwork skills, just the ability to try to adapt to a new culture, learn new things. Because of my degree ... there were direct benefits. **Student volunteering internationally***



courses of study, and contributes to university goals of developing engaged citizens.

Students indicated that they had received an opportunity to think about their future careers and learned how to think critically about their lives and future decisions. Their experiences in volunteering had developed them as a person by providing perspectives not available in other ways. This applied whether the volunteering was in a community organisation providing a service, or in a leadership role in a university club or organisation. It is difficult to quantify whether learning expectations are met, as many of these were not captured at the time, and some students indicated that they had not previously reflected on what learning had taken place when they volunteered. This leads back to the question of capturing the learning.

*Students learn about themselves and the world of work and a way they can use their skills in the community. **Host organisation representative***

## Challenges documenting learning

As universities encourage more students to experience volunteering or build volunteering into their courses, the greater the need to develop partnerships that offer “quality” volunteering experiences and effective ways of documenting outcomes. The most usual method of documenting volunteering is in hours completed, although even this is a challenging process and only captures those hours included in facilitated volunteering activities where records are kept and reported back.

Many universities don’t have a formal process for documenting learning outcomes, especially when volunteering is extra-curricular. In the past, anecdotal evidence or surveys during the volunteering experience have been the main methods of documenting the volunteering experience and any learning.

One university has developed an online survey, which includes closed and open-ended questions covering skills gained as well as positive and negative aspects of the experience. As with any online survey, the difficulty is getting all students to complete them and consequently response rates can be low. Nevertheless, with a systematic approach, learning outcomes can be linked to particular student cohorts and types of volunteering.

In another university, an academic has set up a forum resembling Facebook, to which students are required to make a number of posts. Moderating this is time-consuming for staff.

## Staff involvement

Program managers and student leaders are often more involved when volunteering is outside the curriculum, whether it is related to a student’s discipline interest and is co-curricular, or not related to the student’s studies and extra-curricular. They report that what students learn is often related to how much they engage with the experience.

Academic staff are more involved in volunteering related to their discipline area. They learn about the current realities of the workplace through feedback from student volunteers. Others further develop partnerships for research or on-campus guest speakers.

*For every activity and placement we do, for every activity that we do, we're trying to make sure that it meets the learning outcome of the unit because obviously if they are doing it through a discipline-based unit we have to make sure that it is actually contributing towards what they should be learning.*

**Academic staff member**

## Encouraging and facilitating learning

All types of volunteering can lead to student learning. From this project it is evident that there are a number of factors that may contribute to learning and level of learning:

- having organised volunteering activities, rather than ad hoc arrangements
- allowing student choice of volunteering experiences, type of volunteering and level of commitment
- clarifying expectations, with a clear understanding about the role for university and host organisation in assisting students, whether for credit or not
- encouraging self-reflection, either formal or informal, so that students can articulate the learning gained through volunteering, and its impact
- host organisations providing feedback to students on their volunteering.

*There isn't capacity [in most universities], and it surprises me, there doesn't seem to be an understanding, to be able to track what they are doing and actually report on what they are achieving, and I don't see how they can grow what they are doing or demonstrate the value of what they are doing, if they are not tracking it. Not producing the hard data that is needed and not just lovely anecdotal stories. You still need these.*

**Manager, external program across multiple universities**

In summary, there is evidence in our data that there are a variety of types of learning which take place for students involved in university student volunteering. These include discipline-based learning for those who undertake activities associated with their degree across three forms - academic, facilitated and independent volunteering. It is also clear that students involved in university student volunteering can learn about the community, gain life and employment skills, and, in short, can learn to volunteer (or at least about volunteering). The analysis has focused on learning across the range of student volunteering activities. A finer grained analysis is required to identify whether some learning outcomes are more likely from particular types of volunteering. It is also evident that capturing the learning is an area requiring further investigation. One question which arises, and which is discussed in the next chapter, is whether or not it is important to capture the learning that takes place in facilitated and independent student volunteering.

### Vignette: Volunteering for professional development

Volunteering is a large part of Y's life. She has been a volunteer from the age of 16 as a youth leader at interactive adventures – an adventure, leadership, and motivation program. Y has since been involved in multiple opportunities across a variety of interest areas including tree planting, food drives, remote communities and festivals. As a student and guild staff member, Y has been instrumental in driving volunteering on campus and encouraging a culture of volunteering and social justice. Volunteering is such a large part of her life that she even completed her honours thesis on the impact of community service involvement with at-risk populations.

When asked, "How do you think volunteering interacts with learning?" She replied:

*I tend to use volunteering to expand my own professional experience and expand my skill set. Often there will be events or short-term volunteering opportunities that are of interest because I get to up-skill, and give back and work with populations or demographics I have not worked with before.*

She described one of her favourite volunteer moments:

*A few years ago, I had the opportunity to volunteer in a remote community in the Northern Territory [in] a sport and rec program for the kids there; it was the first time I had been to a remote community. I didn't know what to expect, but it was just incredible.*

*One of the really beautiful days was when there was a big two-metre crocodile on the far bank of the river. All the kids took us down to show off this giant croc. Later that day we were taken on a quad bike with one of the women and it was just like a scene from a movie, the stretching flood plains as far as I could see, and there were wild horses galloping along, and these birds in the sky and it was one of the most spectacular things I have ever experienced in my lifetime.*

A takeaway message for anyone thinking of taking up university student volunteering from Y is:

*Being involved with volunteering really could take you anywhere, you could make new friends, have new experiences and, most importantly, it changes the way that you think about the world that you live in and gives you a better understanding of different causes and cultures in your own community.*

## 6. Grey areas in university student volunteering

Over the course of the *Volunteering to Learn* project, a range of controversies and contradictions, myths and mysteries emerged, some of which could be explained by further analysis, and others of which require further investigation. A further set were conundrums that puzzled the research team but which are merely that – puzzles. This chapter considers some of those issues already raised in earlier chapters in this report, while others are raised here for the first time.

### How voluntary is voluntary?

One of the oft-debated areas in this project relates to terminology. One recurrent question was the notion of “voluntary” in university student volunteering. It was apparent that in many universities and host organisations, compulsory activities such as service learning and community participation – that is, they are required in order to pass a unit or obtain a qualification – are still referred to as volunteering, or at least the students are referred to as volunteers. This has caused controversy and many universities are not using the term voluntary or volunteering in their program name, but they still say that students “volunteer” with particular organisations, even when the activity is compulsory. As discussed, host organisations don’t always make a distinction between students undertaking compulsory activities and other volunteers. Peak organisations such as Volunteering Australia and government agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics don’t classify compulsory activities as volunteering but do recognise these as pathways to volunteering and important contributions.

There was also evidence, at times, that some students felt that in order to get ahead and be competitive in the job market at the end of their degree, it was necessary to ensure that they had some experience included in their portfolio, including volunteer experience. The “voluntariness” of doing something because you felt you had no choice – even if it was a self-imposed compulsion, or one suggested by university staff or others assisting students towards employability – was an area discussed by the research team.

### Who benefits?

Many universities state as part of their volunteering publicity that students will improve their employability through gaining skills, have the satisfaction of knowing that they contribute to the community or a cause, and increase their social networks. This, primarily, is focused on what the student will gain. Our research indicates that these are some of the benefits to students. It is less clear in the literature and from our study that the community organisations receive additional benefits from the practice of students volunteering with them, other than that the volunteering activity generally is valued as contributing to the organisations’ service delivery. How well the service users benefit from the student volunteering activity is also unclear (Cnaan et al 2010).

We have not interviewed clients of host organisations, and have not measured the level of input from students. Many organisations say the community benefits but this is always questionable, especially if students are given “busy work” (work which just looks busy, rather than being of value) or the student program becomes the focus not the program for the clients. As has been identified, the long-term impact of volunteering activities is an area for further research. One comparison that has been made is of university student volunteering activities to volunteer tourism. In fact, some universities offer programs which are similar to volunteer tourism in that a group of students travels to another country to participate in a project or activity.

Volunteer tourism – that is, individuals travelling to another country to participate in a volunteer project – has grown substantially in popularity over the past 15 years, particularly among young people and students (Holmes, 2014). Many students participate in volunteer tourism projects during a gap year before or after university; universities organise volunteer tourism programs for their students both within the curriculum or as an extra-curricular activity, and universities also host both nonprofit organisations (e.g. AIESEC) and commercial organisations (e.g. STA) on campus that promote volunteer tourism.

Much research on the individual volunteers has identified that the experience can result in a range of personal benefits, including the development of new skills, increased confidence, and increased cultural awareness. Indeed, many returning volunteers spoke of a life-changing experience (Wearing, 2001). However, more recent research has been concerned with the impact of the volunteer project on the host community (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). There has been increasing criticism of effectively using unskilled young, white, Western, volunteers to try and address the long-term, complex problems associated with development (Simpson, 2004).

Shorter, travel-oriented volunteer tourism programs have received the most criticism, particularly over whether the volunteers can make a difference given the limited time spent volunteering (Devereux, 2008). The question remains as to who the program is designed to benefit: the volunteer or the host community?

### **At what point is it exploitation?**

The next level of the “who benefits?” discussion is the question of exploitation. Theoretically, activities associated with university student volunteering should provide some benefit or return for the efforts of all parties. But one of the questions the research team began to explore was the notion of exploitation. This was evident in two ways – potential for exploitation of students (and by extension universities and their staff), and potential for exploitation of host organisations and their clients/service recipients. It is important to identify that there did not appear to be evidence of exploitation in our data, although this was not a theme explicitly explored in the data collection process. At this stage, therefore, the issue is explored with a view to raising questions rather than providing evidence one way or the other.

#### **Potential for exploitation of students (and universities)**

Discussions at workshops highlighted that a recent report from the Fair Work Ombudsman about internships and unpaid work had drawn attention to the possibility that some organisations had been involved in exploitative practices to receive free labour from students in the guise of work experience or placements (Steward & Owens, 2013). This raised the possibility of similar situations arising for student volunteers. Discussions among members of the research team, and by participants in workshops, identified that nonprofit organisations sometimes hoped to source unpaid labour from students working on projects for them, rather than employ someone to do the work. This practice might be exploitative when the organisation could afford to pay someone, when the hours required were extensive and when the organisation hoped to benefit from a university staff member providing supervision. This has not yet been explored in any depth but was identified as an area for development. The potential for exploitation is likely to be reduced when awareness is raised of the possibility.

#### **Potential for exploitation of host organisations and their clients/service recipients**

Exploitation of host organisations or of their clients/service recipients is an area often raised in relation to what is known as volunteer tourism, discussed above. The research team discussed the idea that in some cases host organisations might take on students when, in fact, the cost to them is greater than the benefit and what they are teaching students is actually the responsibility of the university. This possibility was not evident in the data, but the idea arose from surprise expressed by some host organisation representatives that they felt the need to educate the student volunteers about some aspects of professional behaviour and or presentation. Such instances point towards the risk of exploitation of the service recipient or the client of the host organisation. The research team discussed the parallels with volunteer tourism in relation to the notion that students might be paying the university for their course, but the client (or the host organisation) was providing the learning. This too was not explored in any depth but was identified as an area for exploration and discussion which the research team will develop

## A question of ownership

Development of a grass roots idea, organisation or program into a successful, recognised and in some cases award-winning product is an area where success can lead to the product being adopted or taken over due to its success. The evidence in our data was that this adoption or takeover can be successful and productive, but if not handled carefully can also lead to resentment or disappointment on the part of the original developer of the idea, organisation or program. Successful examples can be where the originator, or “heavy lifter”, in the early days is given credit and recognition as part of the adoption or takeover. Less successful examples are where the originator or “heavy lifter” is left feeling as though someone else has taken the credit, or at least that no recognition had been given by the parent organisation or the adopter. This latter example may be a product of a lack of organisational memory or, potentially, organisational politics. This was not pursued in any depth in our analysis, but is an area worthy of consideration, not least because satisfaction and productivity of staff and volunteers are interlinked. Adequate recognition of those who take the initiative to develop a new idea, organisation or program, and acknowledgement of the “heavy lifters” is an area where organisations, including universities, might yield loyalties, satisfaction and productivity. It was also postulated that this scenario might arise where a partnership is formed to facilitate a particular program, but one or other party takes over and takes ownership, even transferring the program to another partner or partners without due credit to the original partner.

## Student government, politics and activism

University students volunteer for many reasons, among them to make a difference. This may mean that students select volunteer activities that have a political or activist function. Students should be clear that this may bring them into conflict with certain sections of the community and the university, and, if representing either an organisation and/or the university, that they undertake this activity with respect and professionalism.

In the examination of the types of activities undertaken by student volunteers, the role of student clubs and societies in campus life emerged as an important part of the volunteer life of students. What next emerged were questions about political activities and activism. The same sorts of questions arise in community volunteering, and the boundary between volunteering and these activities is blurred.

Student government, the student union or guild and similar sorts of activities are made up of volunteers. Many of the student clubs and associations fit in with this notion, and the leaders, office bearers and organisers of these clubs and associations are volunteers in the same way as the office bearers of sporting and leisure clubs in the community are volunteers.

Some of those clubs and societies are formed for a political purpose. In the community, some volunteer referral services will not recruit for political purposes, preferring instead to remain unbiased in their approach to political activity. Broader political activism is also an area where questions arise about student involvement. The United Nations has identified that the notion of harm and benefit is part of the consideration as to whether something is considered to be volunteering or not, identifying that activism, which is of a peaceful nature, is still volunteering. The UN position is that activities that are harmful or incite violence are not volunteering (UN, 2011); thereby returning the discussion to the requirement for volunteering to be of benefit to the community. The question arising for university student volunteering is whether activism, advocacy or activities that the university does not agree with, such as campaigns for a change of policy, are still forms of volunteering.

## Myths and mysteries

Data collection for this project identified a number of areas where myths were developing or had developed, in part based on previous bad experiences, and in part based on a lack of knowledge or unmet expectations. As a result, the project team developed a list of the more common of these myths and sought to dispel them. Table 6.1 below presents the myths as found in our data, and our response, with a brief discussion to follow.



**Table 6.1 Countering the myths of student volunteering**

<b>Myth – Students are unreliable</b>	Our evidence is that they can be dedicated, enthusiastic, skilled and loyal. Matching expectations helps with this.
<b>Myth – Students are hard work</b>	There might be some additional work to coordinate, supervise or train but if these are set up for one they can apply to others.
<b>Myth – I don't have the skills/time to supervise</b>	It is possible to set up teams of student volunteers to self-supervise, or assign a more experienced volunteer to help.
<b>Myth – Volunteers are not as good as paid employees</b>	Volunteers are as committed, as hard working and can be as professional as paid employees. They do, however, require training and supervision like paid employees.
<b>Myth – Volunteer work on a CV is not as good an indicator of potential as paid work</b>	Skills and experience gained from volunteer activity can be as good, or even better, than experience gained in paid employment.

### Reliability

As discussed previously, host organisations had sometimes experienced disappointment when students had abandoned their volunteering activity in favour of assignments or exams, or at the end of a semester or their studies.

Our evidence is that this is possibly due to mismatched expectations at the outset, either because no conversation was initiated about expectations, because students had not clearly articulated their expectation that the organisation would accommodate their studies, or because, when asked, the student had not necessarily understood that they would need to take time for their assignments or exams. Academic staff are aware of how much time students need to invest in these activities but, often, students don't have a sense of how long things will take or how much studying they will need to do. Our recommendation is that this is an area for frank discussions at the outset, but can also be facilitated by university staff helping to set realistic expectations.

It is also the case that students may see their volunteering commitment lasting until the end of a semester or until they get a fulltime job at the end of their degree. It cannot be automatically assumed that a student who is happy volunteering somewhere while they are studying will have the time or the intention to continue to volunteer once they are working. Once again, clear communications will assist here, as will referral services and facilitators assisting host organisations to understand this. Hosts should be aware, however, that the student volunteer who loves their organisation, while they may no longer volunteer after graduation, is likely to be a great ambassador, advocate and possibly even donor once they are in the workforce.

In talking with many host organisations both on and off campus, we found that students are very much like other volunteers: they can be enthusiastic, dedicated, loyal and skilled. They have a great deal to offer an organisation. Moreover, student volunteers tend to be interested in worthwhile causes and can often be relied upon to contribute over and above what is required of them. Being clear about expectations on both parts can assist here. Both the organisation and the student need to acknowledge that there are constraints, such as exam times, which will affect students' availability. These need to be built into the volunteering schedule. Our evidence is that many student volunteers are reliable, professional, dedicated and at times sacrifice other aspects of their lives to give time and skills to their volunteering, especially when they love it and feel that they belong.

### Supervision

Host organisation representatives sometimes express concern to university representatives or to others in their host organisation that supervising student volunteers is hard work, that they don't have the skills or the time to supervise students. Certainly, the interview data indicates that there is a

requirement for an investment of time to set up the arrangements associated with hosting student volunteers. In many cases, independent student volunteers would be managed or supervised as part of the larger volunteer cohort in the organisation. In the case of facilitated volunteers, the facilitator, university representative, program manager or referral service can provide advice and assistance in setting up the program. Where the requirement for supervision is part of the activities of an academic student volunteer, advice can be sought from the program manager.

One of the sources of the notion that supervision of students might be hard work may come from a comparison with other volunteer managers who host student volunteers. Our evidence is that some of the host organisations have successful programs because the volunteer manager puts in extra effort and works outside their paid working time to accommodate such programs. This does result in an excellent program for the students, but should not be expected by host organisations of their volunteer managers.

The creation of successful programs can include setting up systems whereby students largely self-supervise, or are supervised by other volunteers. Unlike secondary school students, university student volunteers are usually over 18 years of age, and can therefore require less supervision in terms of being responsible for their own behaviour. This is another area where the assistance of those facilitating the arrangement can be sought, and if clear expectations are set at the outset, the returns to the organisation can be beneficial. Self-organising teams of student volunteers can bring knowledge, skills, abilities, energy and a willingness to learn, which host organisations can capitalise on.

## Mysteries

### Differentiating student volunteers in the employment environment

*Q: Why wouldn't employers consider the volunteering activities undertaken by students as evidence of their skills and knowledge base?*

One of the mysteries identified from one of our student volunteers was that during an interview for employment she felt the potential employer dismissed her volunteering experience as not relevant to the workforce. There has been the view in some quarters that voluntary activity is not the same as paid work, perhaps not performed to the same standard with the same oversights or requiring the same training. Yet, universities promote student volunteering as a method of improving employability.

Many organisations and student-led volunteering associations treat the activity with the same seriousness as paid work, with the same expectations and standards. Skills and knowledge developed through volunteering, therefore, can be expected to be similar in many ways to those of the trained, paid work applicant. Students who present for employment with volunteering activities on their resume can demonstrate competence as well as educate employers who are not familiar with the skills and knowledge developed through volunteering. By presenting in a professional and substantiated manner, they also demonstrate the validity of the volunteering experience. This includes demonstrating in their CV both the duration of their commitment and why (e.g. semester-long project) and the knowledge, skills and experience gained. Often, the experience of volunteering has required more skill and expertise than traditional student jobs such as shelf stacking or burger flipping. Most universities have career divisions that will assist in the development of selection criteria and curriculum vitae to present the students in a competitive light. Volunteering hubs and referral services in some universities can also assist here.

*Q: If all students volunteer, then what will cause them to stand out and will that cause some of them to not think it worthwhile to volunteer?*

Our evidence is that not all students volunteer. At present, those who volunteer, particularly independent student volunteers, are often student leaders and high achievers offering dedicated passion to their voluntary activity. In addition, it is their volunteering which can make them stand out from others when they are seeking work at the end of their degree. Not only does their volunteering give them knowledge, skills and experience, but it also shows a potential employer that they are self-organising and community minded.



An unresolvable question arising during the course of our work, but which still needs to be asked, can be stated as follows: If the move by many universities towards encouraging volunteering and other related activities, such as service learning and community participation, leads to the majority of graduates listing such activities on their CV, what *will* make individual graduates stand out?

Students who undertake the same university degree can all be expected to have access to similar knowledge and expertise. Not all volunteering experiences are the same and each will develop different skills and knowledges – meaning not so much that a student volunteer will be any better in one area or another but that the volunteering helps them to develop particular skills that can be valued by employers. Our group did consider, however, that the enthusiastic and active students seeking to distinguish themselves from others may choose to pursue other avenues rather than volunteer, if volunteering becomes an activity undertaken by all. This is a question yet to be answered.

## 7. Conclusion and future directions

The *Volunteering to Learn* project was designed to investigate an under-researched, emerging and important issue in higher education, that of volunteering by university students. It included a specific focus on identifying the learning gained from various forms of volunteering taking place in universities and aimed to develop an understanding of good practice in university student volunteering.

The project was undertaken against the backdrop of a period of rapid change in the university sector, particularly in relation to the broader learning undertaken by students to prepare them for work and employment. At the same time, the volunteering sector in Australia was also undergoing change with the Volunteering Australia definition of volunteering and the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* being reviewed by separate steering committees, and changes in government policy leading to change in nonprofit organisations across the country.

The project developed a set of Good Practice Guides to support further development of student volunteering. The guides were developed from data collected from universities, students and host organisations, and connect with the broader literature on volunteering, community participation and service learning. The tensions evident in the literature and in our data are used here to summarise our findings and propose future directions.

Kezar and Rhoads (2001) identified four tensions which apply to student volunteering activities, which may be either based in the curriculum, extra-curricular or non-curricular. Articulated by four questions, these tensions provide a sound basis for examination of extant student volunteering programs:

- **The learning question** – What central learning outcomes do universities and other stakeholders expect from student volunteering?
- **The locational question** – What are the different options available for location of programs within universities, including allocation of responsibility to staff members?
- **The organisation of work question** – How is student volunteering factored into expectations associated with learning, including student workload?
- **The implementation question** – What are the different options for structuring student volunteering and evaluating its outcomes?

A further key to the examination of the learning arising from student volunteering was identified as its relationship to Work-Integrated-Learning, community engagement and service learning; to broader elements of graduate attributes such as global citizenship, and civic responsibility (Einfeld & Collins, 2008); and to the core skills for employability, now a primary concern for universities and governments. Kezar (2002) asked a further question “Are we identifying the right outcomes?”, arguing that in order to realise the potential of service learning and related activities, it is necessary to have an understanding of what outcomes are achievable, and how these may best be approached.

In addition to the tensions identified by Kezar and Rhoads (2001), it was identified that there was a necessity to examine the impost on host organisations, the third stakeholder in the student volunteering experience. Work undertaken on service learning by Blouin and Perry (2009) had indicated that at times undesirable student conduct, poor communication between institutions and organisations, and a bad “fit” between expectations and outcomes lead to poor results in both learning outcomes for the student and value of service to the organisation. Nevertheless, student volunteers had been identified as providing a valuable service to community organisations if they are provided with appropriate training and support (Edwards, Mooney and Heald, 2001).

Previous research had suggested that students, like all volunteers, take up voluntary activity for a range of reasons (Francis, 2011; Gage & Thapa, 2012). Passion for a cause, and feelings of obligation had been found to underpin volunteering across all types of volunteers. Students may also undertake

volunteering to enhance their resume, seek employment, or to find out if their chosen profession or pathway will suit them (Handy et al., 2010).

The questions raised at the commencement of the *Volunteering to Learn* project of are now briefly examined in light of the findings in this Companion Guide.

### The learning question

It is clear from the evidence of this study that the expectations with respect to learning from student volunteering are myriad. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the learning which takes place ranges from life skills and “worldliness” to self-awareness and self-efficacy, as well as skills which can be identified as leading to employability. The expectations, however, of universities, hosts, students and the community differ, and the establishment of clear understanding about expected outcomes is one of the pillars of quality programs.

### The locational question

While each of the universities in which interviews were undertaken operates with a different locational model, it was also clear from the desk audit that the variety of options is great. What is also evident is that universities do not adopt a single model, in part because not all of the student volunteer activities belong to the university administration. University-driven or established models operate alongside student-driven and host organisation–driven programs with success being derived from all of these. The nature of each program is dependent on the nature of the volunteer activity, the operation of the particular university, and on the policies and procedures in place for these. What is evident, however, is that where staff are allocated responsibility, this needs to be clearly articulated, recognised and supported – in universities and in host organisations. Locating a volunteering program with a staff member as an additional responsibility without consideration for workload or support is likely to create pressures for that staff member.

### The organisation of work question

The issue of differing expectations of all parties regarding students’ workload needs careful management. Host organisations who take on students believing them to be a time-rich resource will be disappointed, and students who sign up at the commencement of semester may find themselves unable to meet their volunteering commitments at exam and assignment time. Our evidence is that clear agreements about expectations are needed, but also that universities and referral services/hubs have a role to play in facilitating the formation of expectations by reminding students of the workload question, and assisting host organisations to plan for times of increased student workload or setting up short-term or periodic volunteer opportunities.

### The implementation question

The options for implementation vary depending on the reasons for doing so, and on the expected outcomes, but they also depend on who is establishing the program, the budget available and the level of commitment of the establishing party. Models adopted by the universities in this study include:

- **Formal program of community participation** – which is embedded in courses, includes volunteering and related activities, such as service learning, and is university wide, well funded and highly structured with key personnel appointed across the university.
- **Separate, parallel and clearly demarcated programs of volunteering** – which operate alongside service learning and leadership programs, funded and supported by the university.
- **Separate volunteering referral services/hubs** – operated by the guild with support such as office space and some infrastructure support, and which can refer to volunteer opportunities both within and outside the university.

The matrix developed during the desk audit, included at Appendix B, revealed the extent and complexity of the various models in operation across Australian universities at a point in time, but did

not reveal the level of success or otherwise of the various models. Evaluation of the various models is currently ad hoc and relies on different markers in different programs. One common lament of the interviewees was that while they can keep statistics and identify “good news stories”, no measures of impact on students, universities, hosts or the community were available.

### **The outcomes question**

Kezar’s (2002) further question on identification of outcomes for university student volunteering and related activities is linked to the range of activities which all form part of the work being undertaken in universities to develop well-rounded graduates who possess core skills for employability, graduate attributes related to global citizenship, and civic responsibility. The evidence in our work is that student volunteering does contribute to all of these outcomes, as do the related activities of Work Integrated Learning and other programs. Perhaps the key element which should emerge in relation to this question is that all parties need clarity in terms of what outcomes are sought. Particular attention should be paid to what activities are recognised as learning opportunities and what are not, but also that the expectation formation and matching process should take these into consideration. It is also important to note that the development of graduate attributes and skills for employability is not dependent on volunteering activities, nor can volunteering activities be seen as a panacea for achieving these outcomes.

### **The impost question**

A question which was considered as this study progressed relates to the imposition student volunteering places on organisations and individuals. It is clear that the capacity of host organisations varies, as does the capacity of the staff within them. Many host organisations benefit from the opportunity to include students in their volunteer force, and their work is enhanced by this inclusion. It is evident that student volunteers also benefit from the opportunity to volunteer. The impost on host organisations is increased, however, when expectations are not clarified or met, and that there is a need to seek to ask host organisations to invest time and effort in setting up their student volunteer programs. It is also important to identify that sound volunteer management practices produce better outcomes for community volunteers as well as for student volunteers. This is in keeping with the *National Standards for Volunteer Involving Organisations* (Volunteering Australia, 2015b).

### **Enhancing the learning in university student volunteering**

Five key elements have been identified with respect to good practice. These can assist with enhancing the learning in university student volunteering. The elements are:

- Preparation and Planning
- Relationship Building
- Expectation Formation and Matching
- Communication
- Feedback and Evaluation.

Key to these elements is the notion that development of university student volunteering programs and activities is an iterative process. If formal learning outcomes are being sought, then early establishment and communication of all of these is likely to lead to enhanced outcomes.



**Figure 7.1 Key elements in enhancing university student volunteering**

Our evidence is that students are likely to be able to learn from their volunteering, and to learn to volunteer; however, this is more likely where their volunteer activity is extra-curricular or independent.

### How does this project benefit universities?

Universities were identified as a primary stakeholder in university student volunteering. As the project has evolved, rather than identifying models of good practice, key elements of good practice have emerged; and the importance of establishing good communication, and tailoring programs and activities to fit circumstances has been identified. The role that universities can play in the expectation formation and matching process has also been highlighted. With regard to the volunteering activity goal of learning, there are a number of elements that can assist in meeting this goal including organisation, choice, expectations, and inclusion of feedback and self-reflection mechanisms.

There is evidence in the data that there are a variety of types of learning which take place for students involved in university student volunteering. These include discipline-based learning for those who undertake activities associated with their degree across three forms - academic, facilitated and independent volunteering. It is also clear that students involved in university student volunteering can learn about community, gain life and employment skills, and can learn to volunteer, or at least about volunteering. It is also evident that capturing the learning is an area requiring further investigation

### How does this project benefit students?

Understanding the motivations of students to volunteer has enabled a clearer set of guidelines to support and promote volunteering. Students can be supported to volunteer according to their circumstances. This requires that transparent structures are put in place, that the expectations of students and host organisations are negotiated, and that the connections and differences between academic, independent and facilitated volunteering are clearly articulated. Such understandings will contribute to how universities engage with university student volunteering and will benefit students at whichever stage they enter the volunteering activity.

### How does this project benefit host organisations?

Expectation formation and matching has emerged as a crucial element for host organisations which may be considering hosting student volunteers. Host organisations will benefit from understanding the demands on university students and the potential for valuable contributions, as well as the challenges associated with fitting volunteering into already demanding student lives.

## What can volunteer referral services, on campus and off campus, do to help enhance the university student volunteer experience?

Volunteer referral services, in the form of volunteer hubs and volunteer coordination services on campus, and volunteer resource centres and peak bodies off campus, can assist in the enhancement of university student volunteering by developing and communicating the importance of good communication, and expectation formation and matching in the establishment of volunteering arrangements. This is in keeping with the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*, which have recently been reviewed and were released in National Volunteer Week in 2015 (Volunteering Australia 2015b). The *Volunteering to Learn* website, Good Practice Guides, Concept Guides and other resources are available via the project website, and will provide support for volunteer referral services in this role. Key to the aims of this project is the need for clarity about the goals of the volunteering activity when it is intended that learning is a focus.

## Further research

The *Volunteering to Learn* project has advanced understanding of student volunteering in Australian universities. The analysis of the data in this project will continue and further discoveries will continue to be reported. At the time of the development of this Companion Guide there were two key areas where additional research needs have been identified: pathways to employability; and the long-term impact of student volunteering for organisations and the community, and whether university student volunteering leads to volunteering and citizenship behaviours later in life for students.

## Long-term impact

One of the questions currently being debated by the reference group for this project – the Tertiary Community Engagement Committee at Volunteering Western Australia – is the capacity to capture and/or measure the long-term impact of student volunteering on host organisations and the community. This includes whether academic student volunteering, facilitated student volunteering and independent student volunteering have differing outcomes for graduates in terms of their community activities and citizenship behaviours beyond university.

## Pathways to employability

This project did not seek data from graduate employers. The data about employer responses contained in this report were derived from students, hosts and university representatives. It is recommended that a project that further examines the relationship between student volunteering and employability should also consider the related activities of service learning and community participation, as well as looking at the three types of student volunteer: academic, facilitated and independent. Elements requiring examination include the increased employer interest in the graduate who includes such activities on their resume and is able to provide evidence in the selection process to the potential employer, and then employer perceptions as to whether volunteering experienced graduates are better prepared for the workplace.

## Volunteering to learn and learning to volunteer

This Companion Guide is intended to provide depth to the Good Practice Guides and Concept Guides developed over the course of the *Volunteering to Learn* project. The evidence is strong that university student volunteering is a dynamic, complex and vibrant activity taking place across Australian university campuses. There are a variety of approaches to university student volunteering, and this project has identified three types of university student volunteers, four types of host organisations, and eight different models operating in Australian universities. It has also identified that the interest in university student volunteering is widespread. There is still work to be done to investigate further the learning which occurs and the impact of volunteering while at university on post-university propensity to volunteer. What is clear, however, is that university student volunteering offers students the opportunity to learn, *and* enables them to learn about volunteering.

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## Appendix 1: The project (includes methodology)

### Overall research approach

The VTL project has relied on a qualitative approach within the interpretivist paradigm to develop an understanding of the different perspectives on university student volunteering from a range of stakeholders. The use of an emerging qualitative approach sought to collect data in a way that allowed for inclusion of the voices of the three stakeholders identified at the outset: Students, Universities and Host organisations. Both inductive and deductive analysis was undertaken to establish patterns and themes (Creswell, 2013). The multi-stage data collection has involved familiarisation with the extant literature, a mapping exercise to capture the publicly available information on university student volunteering from all of the Australian university websites at one point in time, and on an extensive suite of interviews conducted with key stakeholders.

### Desk audit and development of the matrix

A comprehensive exercise was undertaken to seek out the alternative models of student volunteering operating in Australian universities. This was designed to establish the current state of student volunteering in Australia and identify patterns and trends. It took the form of a matrix, which mapped out the student volunteer programs at every university in Australia.

The initial matrix took the form of a spreadsheet, which represented the diversity of student volunteering across Australia. A distilled matrix was then developed to enable the project team to analyse the data and to communicate the findings with stakeholders. Both the full spreadsheet and the distilled matrix were presented to the reference group for discussion.

The matrix identified eight models of student volunteering programs, which informed the later typology of student volunteers developed as a result of the interviews. However, while the models of university programs and the types of student volunteers overlap, the different data sources mean that there are key differences. For example, independent student volunteering is difficult to identify via a university's website. The matrix showed that there is a mixture of programs at each university. Most universities have at least two models of volunteer programs, which creates diversity within student volunteering across the sector. The models are also changing as universities develop new modes of volunteering and discontinue programs. Hence the matrix captures student volunteering in Australian universities as at December 2013.

### Literature review

A literature review was conducted in several stages. An initial scan of the literature identified that there was limited Australian research on university student volunteering. A more comprehensive review identified that terminology was a significant area requiring further consideration, and this informed the work on terminology which built on the data collected in the project. Three other themes were identified in the literature: motivation to volunteer, multi-dimensional benefits of student volunteering for a range of beneficiaries, and the challenges associated with university student volunteering.

A systematic review was undertaken to identify the terminology in use in the literature. This review identified that there were 75 terms in use in the current English language literature about student volunteering and related activities. This review was present to a conference audience and has been submitted for peer review in an academic journal.

### Pilot study

A pilot study, funded by the state government Department of Local Government and Communities was also undertaken during this initial phase of the project. The pilot study involved two workshops conducted in Perth and in Adelaide to open discussions on university student volunteering. These

workshops were documented and their content analysed. The findings of the pilot were made available on the project website.

## Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis by members of the project team, who developed and used a set of interview frameworks to ensure some level of consistency across the various interviews. The interview frameworks were informed by the literature, by the mapping exercise, the pilot study and by the pooling of knowledge and experience of the research team. In the development of these frameworks it soon became apparent that there needed to be considerable overlap between the interview questions to allow for comparison and data analysis.

The interview guides were designed to encourage interviewees to talk expansively about their experience, perspectives and opinions, to allow probing to follow lines of inquiry, and to elicit responses which would inform further development of the study as the interviews progressed.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed with the informed consent of participants. In order to ensure that no conflict of interest could arise, team members did not interview staff or students at their home university, and ethics clearance was obtained at all of the universities represented in the project team. Transcripts were de-identified and retained for data analysis.

## Sampling for interviews

A theoretical sampling method (Birks & Mills, 2011) was applied in recruiting individuals for interview for this project. Members from stakeholder groups were invited to participate from each of the participating institutions: Murdoch University, Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, the University of Western Australia and Macquarie University. In addition, due to its unique nature as a private and faith-based university, members of the same stakeholder groups at Notre Dame University were invited to participate. Stakeholder groups were identified as students, host organisations, and universities.

An initial list of potential interviewees was drawn up across the participating universities, including Notre Dame University, with the assistance of project team member and reference group contacts at each of the universities.

In keeping with the theoretical sampling approach (Birks & Mills, 2011), a snowball method was used to identify additional individuals who were "likely to know" more, and be able to provide more depth of understanding or knowledge with respect to the themes that began to emerge from the data. This meant that interviews were also conducted with representatives from "peak" organisations who were identified as being able to provide unique overviews of university student volunteering. Peak bodies were identified as organisations whose goal is to develop university student volunteering or related activities. These included volunteer centres and cross-university membership-based organisations. Peak body representatives were included as belonging to their stakeholder group.

Interviews were not conducted with non-volunteers, with clients, or with employers.

**Table A1.1 Interviews by stakeholder category**

Stakeholder	Interviews	Notes
Students	18	Data about students and student experiences were also obtained from representatives of host organisations who were also students (i.e. student-run host organisations), from university representatives who were also studying, and from alumni now employed in either host organisations or universities.
Universities	25	Data about the university perspective was sought from both program-level managers and more senior staff with responsibility for policy and decision-making. Peak body representatives were included here for organisations whose membership is university program managers.

Host organisations	17	Some of the program managers in universities were classified as university representatives but were also considered to be host organisation representatives. Peak body representatives were included here for organisations whose membership is volunteer involving organisations.
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## Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted by the research team in a methodical and systematic manner. An interpretive approach was used to organise themes from the analysis conducted on the data gathered from the interviews. In this study, interview data were analysed in three stages:

Firstly, a within-case analysis was conducted to gain familiarity with the data and for preliminary theory generation (Eisenhardt, 1989). Next, a cross-case search for patterns was conducted to decipher the main themes. Members of the research team were asked to familiarise themselves with transcripts of interviews they had conducted, followed by those associated with their home university. To increase the validity of the data analysis, each researcher then conducted an analysis for one sub-group of interviews: students, hosts, universities. Themes, patterns, trends, issues and curiosities were identified by the project team. This process was followed by an intensive collective analysis by the entire team. A two-day data analysis session was held in early September 2014 to compare notes, debate and share insights on emerging themes, as well as to identify dilemmas, controversies and conundrums. It was during this session that the range and number of Good Practice Guides and their audience was discussed and the need for other accompanying information and concept guides emerged. The team began the development of draft Good Practice Guides and Concept Guides according to the areas for which they had taken the lead in transcript analysis.

## Good practice guide development

Dissemination, discussion and refinement, was conducted at a number of levels to subject the data and theories to scrutiny, and to ensure that the outcomes were both practically grounded and theoretically sound (Birks & Mills, 2011). At the first level, an iterative process of development of Good Practice Guides and of drafting the findings for both reporting and publication involved the whole team. Team members led theoretical and conceptual analyses with the various stakeholder views in mind.

At the second level, the draft guides were presented to the reference group associated with the project, to an ACEN workshop conducted at Curtin University, and to the critical friends for feedback and refinement. The reference group members had been frequently updated on the progress of the project, and members invited to contribute to data collection. The ACEN workshop offered an opportunity for different groups to discuss the content of the draft guides with each other and compare ideas. The wider group of critical friends worked independently of each other and were invited to provide feedback based on their acknowledged expertise in the field. The feedback from these groups provided a sound basis for the next round of revisions of the Guides. The inclusion of elements associated with the legal requirements was discussed at the ACEN workshop as a priority, but it was also considered to be a changing area, with the team unable to provide legal advice. It was also apparent at this stage that an additional guide – that of Learning from University Student Volunteering was required.

At the third level, the penultimate drafts of the Good Practice Guides were presented to a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties at a series of workshops conducted by team members around Australia both in the university sector and in the wider volunteering sector. Feedback from those workshops was incorporated into the final versions of the guides.

The analysis was given rigour by the iterative process of drafting and redrafting based on the consultation processes. In some areas the outcome was identification of a debate or controversy rather than emergence of an area of consistency or saturation, with those areas requiring extra discussion and further literature search, and some being considered appropriate for further research in the future.

## Finalisation of guides

Finalisation of the guides was a process that included incorporation of feedback from all of the workshops, from a review of their content by the project team, from the process of developing the Companion Guide, and from feedback from such sources as the project evaluator. Once the guides were in print-ready form a process of proofing and checking was undertaken.

The content for the Good Practice Guides, Concept Guides, Companion Guide and website were drawn from the data. These data are being further considered while deeper data analysis continues.

The final five Good Practice Guides, and two Concept Guides were developed by the team working both individually and together in a series of team meetings, both face-to-face and via telephone.

## This Guide

This Guide was developed by the project leader with contributions from all team members. Examples for the vignettes were found within the data. The website was aimed at developing easy-to-access pathways to the Good Practice Guides and the other resources developed during the project.

## Appendix 2: Literature review

This section led by Debbie Haski-Leventhal and Simone Faulkner

### Abstract

In the literature review we examine student volunteering from various perspectives. We begin by defining student volunteering and explaining why it is important to study student volunteering and its multi-dimensional impact. We then detail the literature on motivation to volunteer in general and on motivation to volunteer by students in particular. We show how students are motivated by altruistic, self-enhancing and social motivations and how these motivations also vary by gender. Next we examine the extended literature on the multi-dimensional benefits of student volunteering, to the students, the universities and the service recipients. We show that students gain personal and life-skills development, learning outcomes and professional development, which enhance their employability. In addition, they develop their citizenship, empathy and cross-cultural understanding. We also detail the benefits to the universities, including addressing key goals, creating “good citizens” and building university–community partnerships. Further, we discuss the benefits to service recipients, including nonprofit organisations, from the services they receive and the partnership they build. Finally, the literature review also examines the related challenges to the students, the universities and the service recipients. The literature review will assist in writing additional publications based on this study and serve as a guide for students, universities and nonprofit organisations, who consider student volunteering or aim to improve it based on existing knowledge.

### Student volunteering

University students, like all volunteers, take up a range of voluntary activities for a range of reasons (Francis, 2011; Gage & Thapa, 2012). Universities increasingly expect students to participate in activities referred to as “student volunteering”, “service learning”, and “community service”. There is, however, a lack of clarity about the term “student volunteering” and how it relates to activities such as service learning and Work Integrated Learning. Further, there is debate on the sorts of activities encompassed by the term “student volunteering”. It has been used to refer to a range of activities, including: service by students to their university, and service to clubs and associations from environmental groups to photography, business and sporting clubs; placement in volunteer positions in community organisations; and volunteering through university and guild organised programs such as a volunteer hub or centre.

Work Integrated Learning is an increasing feature of university activities for student learning. Many academic courses include skills and knowledge directly related to the workplace, and providing learning and teaching opportunities off campus at the workplace allows the inclusion of context-relevant activities. The terms “work experience” and “internship” are also used. Universities are also increasingly extending their expectations of the student experience to include “service learning”, “community service”, and “community engagement”, as well as encouraging volunteering activities for students, and frequently offer structural and practical resources. These experiences may overlap. For example, some internships arranged by universities receive credit, but often expect voluntary attendance and participation outside the for-credit period. These activities may be called Work Integrated Learning and incorporate service learning or community engagement, but could also be termed volunteering.

For definitions on student volunteering and terminology, please see Chapter 2.

### Motivations to volunteer

The study of volunteers and their motivations is one that has interested researchers for decades, and scholars usually divide such motivations into altruistic, self-directed and social (Cnaan & Goldbedg-Glan, 1991). Van Til (1988) found that people volunteer for multiple reasons, among which are their own personal and social goals and needs. The individual who volunteers typically does so only after weighing alternatives in a deliberate fashion. The author also asserted that the realm of voluntary

action itself is a complex and many-faceted one, in which different organisational tasks appeal to different motivational forces, and that concerns for others, while not always purely altruistic, remains an important motivating force for much voluntary action. Haski-Leventhal (2009) showed that many disciplines based their study of altruism on a utilitarian approach and the idea of a rational and economical human (*homo economicus*). As a result, the study of volunteering was too focused on the motivation to volunteer, with some scholars dismissing the concept of true altruism (Smith, 1981).

Clary and Snyder (1998) suggested that people volunteer in order to satisfy one or more of six needs (or functions). The authors developed the Volunteer Functions Inventory, which resulted in six primary functions served by undertaking a voluntary role: Values, Understanding, Enhancement, Career, Social, and Protective. The significance of their study to volunteer motivation research is important, as it has expanded the number of motivations to volunteer and also led to further research by other scholars and practical implications for volunteer-involving organisations. For example, Esmond and Dunlop's (2004, pp. 7-8) research led them to extend the six functions into 10 categories in their Volunteer Motivation Inventory, functions that represent both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. These functions performed by volunteers are linked to the fulfilment of their needs or motivations and, with the exception of the first, they are all self-centred, egoistic motivations.

### Motivations of student volunteers

Many studies point to a shift in primary motivations for student volunteering; from altruism to gaining experience that will assist future employability. For example, Auld, (2004) found that in a sample of tertiary students, those who were current volunteers (36.1%) indicated that they did so in order to gain experience that might help with future paid employment. Therefore, students look to volunteer in order to build their résumés, which will enhance professional/career prospects (Handy et al., 2010; Holdsworth, 2010; Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010). Holdsworth and Quinn (2010, p. 120) explain that

*the close identification between participation and future employability is not just a feature of volunteering, but reflects the growing emphasis on “economies of experience” in a global, knowledge-based economy, where qualifications are no longer sufficient to confer advantage in the labour market.*

However, it is still clear that one core motive of student volunteers is driven by the satisfaction of helping others (Astin & Sax, 1998; Auld, 2004; Gage & Thapa, 2012; Hyde & Knowles, 2013). In Gage and Thapa's (2012) study, college students were motivated to help others and give back to society more so than for other reasons. That is, that the “values” and “understanding” functions of the Volunteer Functions Inventory were more important motivations for student volunteers than enhancement, career, social and protective functions. These findings corroborate Clary and Snyder's (1998) initial findings.

While the Volunteer Functions Inventory has been replicated in many studies of student volunteers (Burns, Reid, Toncar, Anderson, & Wells, 2008; Gage & Thapa, 2012; Hyde & Knowles, 2013, Switzer, Switzer, Stukas, & Baker, 1999), Francis (2011) found that in her sample of university students, the Volunteer Functions Inventory was not useful. She suggests that the behaviour of youth volunteers has changed dramatically. Similarly, Holdsworth (2010) suggests that student motivations for volunteering change over time.

### Gender and motivation

Gender differences have been found in student volunteer studies with many studies finding that females volunteer for different reasons than males. Switzer, Switzer, Stukas and Baker (1999) predicted that female medical students would be more inclined to volunteer due to their concern for others than male medical student. This was based on Eagly and Crowley's (1986) social role theory, which posits that females and males are socialised to help differently. Using the Volunteer Functions Inventory, Switzer et al. (1999) found that females were significantly more likely than males to volunteer out of concern for others (values) as well as striving for personal growth and self esteem (enhancement). The other four subscales did not produce significant results; however, females rated each of them more highly than males, indicating that they are slightly more motivated to volunteer.



More recently, the results from a study conducted by Burns et al. (2008) showed that females were also more highly motivated to volunteer than males. They showed that, as well as the values and enhancement motives found in the previous study by Switzer et al. (1999), females were significantly more likely to be motivated by escaping from negative feelings (protective) and learning new skills (understanding). What both studies indicate is that there are gender differences in motivations of student volunteers.

## Summary

Dekker and Halman (2003) note that many studies on volunteering provide only weak correlations between socio-demographics and motivation and therefore it is most likely that motivation is affected by personal values. This literature review has found instances where demographics (gender) have influenced motivation based on a difference in values. In many studies on volunteering, this is a mix between altruistic and egoistic values, and according to the literature, this mix is quite evenly distributed. It is acknowledged in motivational theory that humans display more than one motivation at any given time. The research presented in this section corroborates this and shows that there is not a single motivation that is more common among young student volunteers.

## Benefits of student volunteering

Volunteering research has moved beyond a focus on motivation to examining the likely benefits received (Hustinx, 2001). Volunteering benefits include gaining networks, perks, increased status, job experience, educational or vocational qualifications and skill or experience recognition (Wilson & Pimm, 1996). Wilson and Pimm (1996, p. 27) point out that the “list of possible benefits is so long, complex and far from complete” and this aligns itself closely with early cognitive theories.

The benefit received by the volunteer is only one half of the exchange. Volunteering usually holds a multi-dimensional impact to include the volunteers, service recipients, the community and the organisations (Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx, & Handy, 2011), and student volunteering also has an impact on the universities. As such, the following sections explore the benefits on those who are engaged in student volunteering: the student, the recipients or hosts, and the facilitating organisation – the university/institution.

## Benefits to student volunteers

Clary et al. (1998) found that if the benefits from volunteering match the volunteer’s initial motives to volunteer, he/she is more likely to indicate their preference for volunteering in the future. There are a number of positive outcomes for university students who volunteer. These include personal and life-skills development, learning, professional development and employability, developing citizenship, and self-fulfilment, which align to the literature on student volunteer motivation. These outcomes are explored below.

## Personal and life skills development

Much of the research on the benefits to student volunteers reports that students gain valuable life skills and personal development (Konidari, 2010). Astin and Sax (1998) found that participating in community service during the undergraduate years substantially enhanced students’ leadership ability, critical thinking skills, self-confidence and conflict resolution skills. Crawford, Simpson and Mathews’s (2013, p. 143) study on volunteer student mentors showed that their work with children helped to build interpersonal communication skills. As well, students “reported that they had developed skills in team working, setting personal and professional boundaries and problem solving”. Interestingly, Anderson and Green (2012) explained that the community organisations place more value on these “soft skills” than the semi-professional or technical skills so beloved of the Job Shop model.

Gaining self-confidence is an important outcome for students who perhaps have had little interaction with people beyond their peers and family. The types of volunteer projects that much of the literature reports on allow the students to engage with members of the community. Additionally, students may

be working in the wider university environment or with professional organisations. Cunningham, Tunch, and Gallacher's (2013, p. 10) research found that students were able to gain "confidence in presenting themselves in different event (sic), overcoming barriers and 'thinking on their feet'".

The results of a study of student volunteers at London Metropolitan University found all respondents perceived an increase in their personal development in several areas, most notably, 87 per cent indicated they had a greater sense of making a difference while 85 per cent indicated a greater confidence in their own abilities (Konidari, 2010). Similarly, after completing a service learning component with a nonprofit organisation, the majority of students in Madsen's (2004) human resource management class spoke about newfound confidence, with comments such as "I have more confidence now", and, "experience gives me confidence". This led her to conclude that "if the educator carefully designs a meaningful academic service-learning project with direction and focus, business students should be able to benefit substantially from the opportunities provided from interaction with the community and real-world experiences" (p. 332).

### Learning outcomes

The learning that occurs through student volunteering has been found to be self-reflective and academic. Some research has pointed to the fact that students learn a lot about themselves while volunteering (Anderson & Green, 2012; O'Brien & Sarkis, 2014; Primavera, 1999; Sydnor, Shu-Mei Sass, Adeola, & Snuggs, 2014). As such, Anderson and Green (2012, p. 252) recognise that a value change occurs due to the chance students had "for reflecting on, confronting and challenging their stereotypes and preconceptions". O'Brien and Sarkis' (2014, p. 54) research goes further to say that the experiences can be life changing for student volunteers. They believe that "the higher order learning and involvement in community and service activities, have aided students and strengthened their social consciousness perspectives".

The literature suggests that there are valuable learning outcomes from Work Integrated Learning internships, service learning and capstone projects at universities, which can assist further learning (Billett, Sweet, & Glover, 2013; Kuh, 1995; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005). In a study conducted by Prentice and Robinson (2010, pp. 12–13), students reported that the greatest learning outcomes were in the areas of career, teamwork, academic development and educational success. This led them to conclude that "service learning provides students with opportunities to learn information that is important not only in acquiring specific curricular content, but also in developing skills beyond the curriculum that are necessary for their academic development and preparation for professional success". Further research has shown that these learning opportunities can arise from volunteering outside of the curriculum. For example Kuh (1995) found that students who volunteered with student government could use those skills to progress their academic work. Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) found that the experience could benefit the students through to at least five years after the volunteering occurred. For example, the student may then go on to attend graduate school or complete a higher degree.

The learning experience conducted outside of the classroom is thought to be engaging, fun, interesting and relatable to reality (Anderson & Green, 2012; Prentice & Robinson, 2010). Much research has also been done to show that this learning experience increases a student's human capital, which then aids future career prospects (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010). This is taken up in the following section.

### Professional development and employability

Students have many volunteer opportunities available to them to further their professional development. Being a student mentor offers "students a valuable professional developmental opportunity through which they could enhance their academic studies and develop relevant skills, qualities, confidence and knowledge which could potentially increase their employability" (Crawford et al., 2013, p. 145). Additionally, service-learning encounters aid professional development. This is because the student is able to undertake tasks that are directly related to future careers. For example, in a study of pharmacy students, Dy, Trueg, Mulvaney, and Williams (2013) found that the work experience the students were receiving built professional confidence as future pharmacists. They were



able to undertake the roles of technician or pharmacist for which they were training. Additionally, Sheu et al. (2011) found that 62 per cent of students volunteering at health clinics found practical procedural skills to have been a valuable outcome. Their follow-up study concluded that system-based practice experiences enable learning opportunities beyond those available in the formal curriculum (Sheu, O'Brien, O'Sullivan, Kwong, & Lai, 2013). Consequently, the disciplinary knowledge gained by students complements university teaching (Yarwood, 2005).

All of the previous benefits discussed above have a role to play in fostering employability and have been found in the results of many studies (Cunningham et al., 2013; Konidari, 2010; Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Scott & van Etten, 2013; Spalding, 2013; Tymon, 2011). That is, communication, teamwork, flexibility, adaptability, hard work, planning and organising are the types of skills that students perceive future employers will look for (Tymon, 2011). It is unsurprising that Work Integrated Learning experiences have great employability outcomes, which has been acknowledged by the students themselves (DeClou, Sattler, & Peters, 2013). The types of skills that were found by DeClou et al. that are valued by employers included problem-solving skills, ability to adapt to situations, becoming a life-long learner, ability to work with others, numeracy and data skills, and communication and presentations skills. These outcomes are also noted by student volunteers in non-Work Integrated Learning programs (Crawford et al., 2013; Qian & Yarnal, 2010).

The skills described above do no harm in creating a well-rounded student. These are skills that would attract future employers and therefore it is unsurprising that enhancing a CV has been found by students in many studies to be a very valuable outcome of volunteering (Holdsworth, 2010; Qian & Yarnal, 2010; Yarwood, 2005). Holdsworth calls it an unintended consequence. Similarly, volunteering can help to build professional networks for students as they look to future careers (Konidari, 2010).

### Developing citizenship

Student volunteering enables the development of positive citizenship values, including becoming more socially responsible, serving communities and greater value for and commitment to education (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 1999). "Clearly, forming a habit of volunteerism is critical to the long-term development of citizenship" (Sax, 2004, p. 78). Further, Anderson and Green (2012, p. 252) recognise that it "develops students' understanding of social issues in local communities and fosters a critical mass of students who are keen to give something back to the community. It also opens up an appreciation of the voluntary sector and ideas about graduate careers in the sector". (Myers-Lipton, 1998) found that civic engagement was more prominent amongst students who were involved with community service through comprehensive university service-learning programs than students who did not formally integrate community service with their university studies. This finding points to the importance of universities providing opportunities to students.

Crawford et al.'s (2013, p. 144) study of volunteer student mentors found that "the students also gained in terms of citizenship and in the understanding of others which was, in part, evidenced by the students' motivation and keenness to volunteer in the future". Many students feel like furthering their work as volunteers after their placement/period has completed: "their desire to continue to volunteer either at the placement organization or at another community organization as a result of the initial experience, and of their interest in sustaining a personal commitment to furthering their contributions as volunteers and sometimes as activists in the promotion of social justice and the development of civil society" (Allahwala et al., 2013, pp. 49–50). Primavera (1999, p. 137) argues that this is due to the fact that volunteerism is a "source of personal growth and efficacy".

Sheu et al. (2011) found that even those preclinical students who cited professional development as a valuable outcome of volunteering at health centres considered their community engagement to be even more valuable. Some students in these types of programs also indicate greater likelihood of volunteering in the future (Yarwood, 2005). Anderson and Green (2012, p. 251) conclude that the student volunteer becomes an important intermediary, not only in establishing and embedding links between the university and community but also in helping raise aspirations in local communities.

## Empathy and cross-cultural understanding

As a result of their engagement with the community, including many disadvantaged groups, students have been found to have higher levels of empathy (Primavera, 1999; Sydnor et al., 2014). Students' experiences of simultaneous wealth and poverty were difficult and yielded a heightened sensitivity to the needs of the poor (Sydnor et al., 2014). Similarly, Primavera (1999, p. 137) found that 57 per cent of students had heightened understanding "of important social issues such as poverty, illiteracy, unequal educational opportunities, community violence, etc... as a result of their volunteer experience. Consequently, student volunteering can increase students' multicultural understanding and issues of diversity (Astin & Sax, 1998) and promote racial understanding (Astin et al., 1999).

## Summary

There are many benefits that students receive from volunteering. Studies also show that these same benefits are paralleled with non-volunteering experiences such as curriculum-designed service learning projects (Mobley, 2007; Myers-Lipton, 1998).

The evidence demonstrates that student volunteering, when experienced as part of the curriculum, has the potential to move beyond "skills acquisition", enriching students' learning and understanding about themselves, their values, their communities and the way they want to "be" in society (Anderson & Green, 2012, p. 252).

Although there have been few longitudinal studies, there is evidence to suggest that volunteering during university study can have lasting effects on students (Astin et al., 1999). Additionally, the students feel like they have contributed to the institution by being actively involved in campus or community engagement (Qian & Yarnal, 2010). Benefits to the institution are discussed next.

## Benefits to universities

Cooper (2014) explained that it is the institution's interest in community engagement and responsible citizenship that encourages them to get involved in service learning and support volunteer programs. The benefits of these programs to universities are: fulfilling their own agenda and supporting community, improving student outcomes including the creation of good citizens, and creating partnerships that help to reduce the barriers between university and community. These are discussed below.

## Addresses key goals

Universities are encouraged to incorporate volunteer and service-learning programs in order to build well-rounded citizens (Cherwitz, 2005; Cooper, 2014; Wittmer, 2004) and develop graduate capabilities (O'Connor, Lynch, & Owen, 2011). This is often a core goal of tertiary education institutions. Service learning and volunteering can challenge faculties to re-think their pedagogy and develop values such as leadership and ethical responsibility (Zlotkowski, 1998).

It has also been found that these types of programs can improve teaching quality and the morale of teaching staff (Cooper, 2014; Pribbenow, 2005). For example, a key theme to emerge from Pribbenow's (2005, p. 28) qualitative study of faculty staff at a US university was "more meaningful engagement in and commitment to teaching". She explained that "recognizing the sense of self-efficacy that service-learning fostered with students led to a sense of satisfaction for most faculty and, in turn, enhanced their own engagement in teaching". The teaching staff also found that there were deeper and more meaningful relationships built with students as well as community organisations, which facilitate their teaching of theoretical concepts.

Finally, there are also some benefits noted for supervisors or coordinators of volunteers who engage with external communities. For example, Cooper (2014) learnt that it could be beneficial to promotion and tenure. Having committed university staff can create flow-on effects for university in terms of greater external engagement and more positive universitycommunity engagement.

## Creating “good citizens”

There are many benefits to student volunteers, which have flow on effects to the institutions (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002; Cooper, 2014; Hammond, 1994). O'Connor et al. suggest that, “Research clearly indicates that learning and teaching which is engaged within communities provides a range of opportunities of building graduate attributes in areas of citizenship, employability, resilience, problem-solving and self-motivation” (2011, p. 111). Abes et al. (2002) found that by far, the student learning outcomes were the primary motivator for faculties to employ service learning.

Further research has suggested that students are proud to be part of the university as they may be more involved on campus through campus volunteering activities (Qian & Yarnal, 2010). In a study of student volunteers at London Metropolitan University, (Konidari, 2010) found that due to the students increased understanding of different cultures (76%), sense of being part of the community (70%), and part of the university (58%), “Respondents felt that volunteering had made them feel more part of their community and the University which is important as this could have a direct impact on student retention at university”. This is an important outcome for institutions which can use volunteering opportunities to retain students.

## Building university–community partnerships

There is a perception that university is disengaged from communities (Cherwitz, 2005; Madsen, 2004). Supporting volunteer programs and service learning can combat this perception and build a positive reputation in the community (O'Brien & Sarkis, 2014). Anderson and Green explained that if student volunteering is placed in a broader context of community initiatives that seek to move beyond the narrow “Job Shop” model to an approach where university resources are deployed for the benefit of local communities, then there is the potential to develop more critical, empowering and sustainable community–university relations (Anderson & Green, 2012, p. 254).

Many studies have shown that universities are able to develop new and deeper relationships with the community organisations, including corporations, non-profits and municipalities (O'Brien & Sarkis, 2014). These new networks can lead to permanent volunteer positions for students to fill all year round (Simon, Yack, & Ott, 2013), reducing the need for faculty staff to source new positions for students and more focus can be put into in-class education.

Several studies have found that it is challenging to build university–community partnerships (Baum, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Prins, 2005) because “reciprocity has not always been emphasized as a core principle of community–university collaboration. Particularly, the community side often finds that the university’s engagement is not based on a long-term commitment to the wellbeing of the community” (Allahwala et al., 2013, p. 54). The work undertaken by Allahwala et al. (2013), however, has found that the role of the student is important in fostering university–community partnerships because they usually engage within formal structures such as service-learning courses. Additionally, longer-term engagement with community organisations can improve relationships as can institutional support at all levels.

## Benefits to recipients

There are several benefits to the recipients of student volunteering. Primarily, the labour and resources are the most important benefit they receive by hosting volunteers (Blouin & Perry, 2009).

Additionally, community partners receive volunteer support from the students; the opportunity to further develop their own leadership and mentoring skills and nurture future commitment to civic engagement of students (Allahwala et al., 2013). Non-profit organisations have been found to enjoy hosting students for a number of reasons, including the energy and idealism of the students, the flexibility of the students’ schedules during the daytime, and the large number of them available (Gotlib & Ellsworth, 2013). In addition, there is sometimes a financial incentive for the organisation for hosting student volunteers (Sydnor et al., 2014). Gotlib and Ellsworth (2013) explained that hosting organisations “willing to invest more time and energy into training students will reap increased benefits from the relationship (p. 13).

Student engagement can increase an organisation's capacity to do their work (Anderson & Green, 2012; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennett, 2012; Stoecker & Beckman, 2009). In their research on university sustainability projects, O'Brien and Sarkis (2014) found that nonprofit organisations may not have the latest academic knowledge, best practices and practical insights, nevertheless student volunteers left the organisation with a feeling of excitement that they could utilise this expertise. Meanwhile, the students free up organisational resources to increase productivity (Blouin & Perry, 2009, p. 125).

Finally, it has also been found that a positive student–supervisor–instructor relationship can maximise project impact for community organisations (Campbell & Lambright, 2011).

## Summary

This review has considered a number of benefits of student volunteering to the institutions, students and recipients of the volunteering. However, there are also some challenges in implementing these programs, which are explored in the following section.

## Concerns and challenges with student volunteering

The literature has identified several challenges faced by students, institutions and recipients when it comes to volunteering and service learning at the tertiary level. These are explored below.

### Challenges for students

While many benefits are received and acknowledged by the student volunteers, there have been some studies to suggest that volunteering can be constraining in terms of time spent, lack of financial assistance and family obligations (Burke & Bush, 2012; Gage & Thapa, 2012). Phillips (2013) showed that students would like more opportunities to volunteer at university. However, they would especially like these activities to be organised for them and set during class time. Outside of these hours, students are overcommitted and conduct their own volunteering.

To address this issue, Beehr, LeGro, Porter, Bowling, and Swader (2010) suggested that it is important to “manage service learning programs to enhance students’ experience of freedom in their choice to volunteer”. For example, greater flexibility in time and range of activities could be given to students (Simon, Yack, & Ott, 2013). Simon et al. (2013, p. 366) argued that service learning may be more appealing for students than an internship: “Service learning does include a time commitment out of class, but it is more doable than internship requirements and allows students to engage with a class and a community partner simultaneously”.

Stewart and Owens (2013) questioned whether student volunteers were being exploited. Rubin (1996, p. 305) found that community organisations exploiting students: ‘community organizations fail to acknowledge the important roles they could play in educating students, instead using students to do menial and repetitive tasks’. Similarly, Edwards, Mooney, and Heald (2001) indicated that student volunteers are given more menial tasks than community volunteer counterparts.

Another study (Allahwala et al., 2013, p. 49) found that not all students engage with the volunteer placements because all that they are interested in is receiving a grade for the course. Additionally, “some students note that they were unable to fully contribute or make a marked difference in a community over such a short period of time”. Holdsworth and Brewis (2013) recognise therefore that these types of experiences have the potential to devalue student engagement.

### Institution challenges

Understandably the institutions have several concerns with student volunteering. Boles and Peach (2013) explored the impact of Work Integrated Learning on learning outcomes and found that it is unsustainable. Institutions can find the implementation of service-learning time consuming and difficult to implement without proper understanding of the benefits (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002; Cooper, 2014).

Service learning, when incorporated into the curriculum effectively, is challenging and time-consuming work for faculty. While the issue of time commitment related to service learning has long been identified in the literature, with higher education's renewed focus on teaching and learning, it can be argued that any pedagogy that emphasises effective teaching and learning will require more time (Cooper, 2014, p. 23).

Occasionally, the set-up and timescale of the host/recipient does not fit in with the university teaching period (Yarwood, 2005) and, generally, the initial effort of getting the course up and running or making those initial relationships could be difficult (O'Brien & Sarkis, 2014). There can also be poor-fit relationships between the student/institution and community organisation (Blouin & Perry, 2009)

Further, there may be philosophical or political challenges to the implementation of service learning programs (Cooper, 2014). Hall, Hall, Cameron, and Green (2004) explained that while some students become committed to volunteer after their project ends, for others the activity is very brief. Therefore, the challenge is to embed volunteering opportunities into the curriculum so that a continuous relationship can be built up between departments and voluntary organisations.

### Recipient concerns

There has been much research to suggest that volunteering in any capacity may not be as beneficial to the recipient as it aims to be and that the volunteer generally benefits more through their learning and development. This has been supported in some of the literature that examines student volunteering. For example, Gotlib and Ellsworth (2013) found that nonprofit administrators experienced scheduling conflicts, interruptions during the holidays or semester breaks, quick turnaround times, and low reliability from student volunteers, which would often lead to the administrators reconsidering training and hosting student volunteers. Some of them believed that the students were only there to enhance skills and build resumes. Yarwood (2005) and Blouin and Perry (2009) had similar results as they noted that students can lose interest part-way through, are unreliable or do not have a strong work ethic. In addition, there may also be risks to the vulnerable communities in which students volunteer (Blouin & Perry, 2009).

### Concluding remarks

The existing body of knowledge on student volunteering includes definitions and rationale for the involvement of education institutes in the volunteering of their students. There is a vast amount of existing research on students' motivation to volunteer (showing how students are motivated by altruistic, self-enhancing and social motivations, and how these motivations are also varied by gender), as well as on the multi-dimensional benefits of student volunteering – to the students, the universities and the service recipients. Finally, the current literature on student volunteering also examines the related challenges to the students, the universities and the service recipients. Our research builds on the existing body of knowledge and adds to it by conducting a multi-stakeholder analysis of student volunteering in Australia and by demonstrating how important student volunteering is, not only for the students and the universities, but also for host organisations, potential employers and for the wellbeing of our society.

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## Appendix 3: The models of Australian university student volunteering matrix

This section led by Kirsten Holmes and Gabrielle Walker

### Desk audit and development of the matrix

The literature review was followed by a comprehensive map of the alternative models of student volunteering operating in Australian universities. This was designed to establish the current state of student volunteering in Australia and identify patterns and trends. This took the form of a matrix, which mapped out the student volunteer programs at every university in Australia. The matrix included the key dimensions identified in the literature review, such as terminology, location within institution, curricular and extra-curricular activity.

The method involved developing a matrix of university student volunteering by first conducting a mapping exercise, which involved a desk audit of the publicly available information on all of the Australian university websites. The desk audit was undertaken during the period of November 2013 to January 2014. The audit was designed to use a number of markers to examine how each of the Australian universities communicated volunteering via publicly available information on official university websites; when linked directly to the website social media was also examined where available. The approach was to visit the official university website and to search for the term volunteering in the first instance. This yielded a range of policies, calls for volunteers, write ups of student activities, and details of programs and activities being established, promoted or facilitated by universities. The search was then extended to look for activities for which students could “volunteer” and to identify alternative terms such as community participation, student clubs, student life and service learning. We also examined the promotion of volunteering and objectives of volunteering.

The initial scope was to fill in the pre-determined matrix with a simple yes or no answer by each university to each of the following items:

1. Volunteering for credit in courses/unit
2. Volunteering for credit in courses additional element
3. Developmental transcript / Volunteering transcript
4. University activity (student support, professional staff (careers centre) / recruitment
5. Student Guild (Union) activity
6. Student Guild (Union) hub
7. Faculty (academic) -driven volunteering (non-hub / careers / recruitment or student support)
8. International Volunteering
9. Promoted not acknowledged [UN]
10. Separate activity [SA]
11. Cross university collaboration, e.g. AIME
12. Cross-university student society volunteering.

The publicly communicated support or messages to students and the greater public was also examined. For example, did the university have a:

13. Policy document / Procedure / Insurance
14. Social media
15. Alumni Volunteering
16. Volunteer Expo
17. Funding Opportunity / Award?

The audit found that the terminology used to describe volunteering at the different universities was extremely varied. At the initial search, universities were systematically examined by university name and the word “volunteering”, subsequent searches were then undertaken with the terms: Work Integrated Learning, work experience, service learning, industry/field placement, overseas volunteering, practicum, internship, community service, and service learning course.

The initial matrix took the form of a large spreadsheet, which represented the diversity of student volunteering across Australia and included over 300 entries. Programs can be organised within a specific school and only available for those students or can operate across the university. Students can volunteer on campus, assisting fellow students or the university and off-campus with nonprofit organisations, and external organisations can operate on campus, organising volunteer programs for students. As this was challenging to work with, we re-classified all student volunteer programs based on who manages the program as part of the distillation process. These categories were:

- faculty-managed from within a school or faculty
- centrally-managed and open to students across the university
- managed by students both within the union or guild and outside of this framework
- organised by someone else, such as an external organisation that operates on campus.

We also noted where volunteer programs were compulsory, for credit (whether they are awarded a grade or not), and voluntary. While the project team do not consider “compulsory volunteering for credit” to be a form of volunteering, this is the language used at many universities. Further classifications in the distillation process were whether the volunteering was to help students with their learning; assist the university, for example in orientation events; was a form of mutual aid for student clubs and societies; or benefited a third party locally or internationally. We also noted whether the university provided formal recognition through a secondary transcript, and the benefits of volunteering that the university used to promote the activity.

The distilled matrix (included here at Table A3.1 enabled us to identify eight models of student volunteer programs based on the way they were organised at each university. We classified these as:

- Student-driven programs including student-run volunteer hubs
  - In these programs, a student-centred guild, union or organisation facilitates the volunteering opportunities.
- Student–university partnership programs
  - In these programs, students work with paid university staff to deliver volunteer programs. These programs often began as student-driven.
- Faculty-based program linked to a specific discipline
  - The faculty, independent from the central volunteer hub, facilitates or promotes volunteering within their school or area.
- Centrally-administered programs, with little or no input from students
  - Volunteer programs across and external to the university are organised centrally by paid university staff.
- Integrated model across faculties and university
  - This model coordinates all volunteer opportunities both on and off campus within the same administrative framework.
- Independent (one-off) project
  - Volunteer projects that are organised occasionally by the university, faculty or students but not on an ongoing basis.

- Information-only model
  - The university encourages students to volunteer and provides information about off-campus opportunities but does not organise any programs or engage in any formal partnerships with volunteer-involving programs.
- External program operating at the university
  - A volunteer-involving organisation or broker organisation operates on campus and provides volunteer opportunities to students. Examples include ENACTUS (<http://enactusaustralia.org.au/>) and AIME (<https://aimementoring.com/>).

The models identified in the desk audit informed the later typology of student volunteers developed as a result of the interviews, in particular by highlighting the difference between academic student volunteers and facilitated student volunteers. While they overlap, the different data sources mean that there are differences between the outcomes of the audit and the interviews. For example, independent student volunteering is difficult to identify via a university's website. The matrix showed that there is a mixture of programs at each university. Most universities have at least two models of volunteering, which creates enormous diversity within student volunteering across the sector. One of these is the main model but others are in evidence. Table A3.1 presents the main models in operation at Australian universities. Many universities also had external volunteer-involving organisations operating programs on campus.

**Table A3.1 Models of volunteering across Australian universities**

Model	Number of universities with primary model	Number of universities where secondary model
Student-driven volunteering	4	5
Student-university partnership	2	
Faculty-based		2
Centrally-administered program	13	6
Integrated model	6	
Independent projects	6	1
Information-only model	8	3

We found no patterns based on state, location – metropolitan, rural or regional – or type of university (Group of 8, Australian Technology Network, Innovative Research Universities or Regional Universities Network). The diversity of programs is largely historical, due to volunteer programs being established in different parts of the university for different purposes over a period of time. As a result, some universities are moving towards a more integrated approach to managing their student volunteer programs. This is driven by a university strategy that either encourages or mandates a volunteer component for all the university's students. The integrated approach also enables the university to recognise all student volunteering through a secondary, developmental transcript. Without an integrated approach it can be difficult to record all the volunteering that students do throughout their university career.

While central or integrated models dominated in the matrix, the method we used for identifying this information may have biased the findings. University websites tend to be centrally managed, so any centrally organised volunteer activity is likely to have prominence over programs housed within individual areas. However, as universities move towards more centralised forms of administration

(indicated by the substantial increase in professional staff in comparison to academics), this trend towards more centralised volunteer programs is convincing.

We did find some patterns related to the dominant model of student volunteering and whether formal recognition is offered or not. Twenty-eight of the universities offer some form of formal recognition for volunteer activity, 12 universities do not. All universities with an integrated model do provide formal recognition and universities where volunteering is through one-off projects and events are most likely not to offer this.

The matrix also identified that the language used by universities to describe student volunteer programs was primarily concerned with leadership and sustainability. This contrasts with our expectations that employability would be a key concern. Perhaps the drive towards employability skills and experience for students means that to differentiate themselves, student volunteers now need to focus on leadership. Finally, the focus of universities is on the volunteers, not the beneficiaries of the voluntary activity. The language is very much focused on how volunteering can help volunteers develop and learn skills.

**Table A3.2 The models of Australian university student volunteering matrix**

	Desk Audit of publicly available information <i>as at December 2013</i> – we are aware that some universities have changed their volunteering models or certificates since this audit.												
<b>Primary University Volunteer Model</b>	<b>Secondary Volunteer Model</b>	Service learning	Faculty model	WIL*	Mentoring	International volunteering opportunities	Information only model	Student driven volunteering	Integrated volunteering information	Alumni or Staff	Key word Used within the university (Volunteering, WIL, Service learning)	Official Recognition	Minimum hours required for recognition
<b>Student-Driven volunteering</b>													
Murdoch University, WA	Centrally administered programs (models) – centrally – without student input in admin / organisation	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		.	Community service	Community and career skills development transcript	40 hours: 1 year
Swinburne University,	Centrally administered		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			Leadership advocacy	The Student Leadership and Volunteer Program (SLVP)	15+ hours
Uni of Melb	Information only model	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Leadership opportunity	The Leaders in Communities award (AHEGS)	Volunteer Ventures: 80 hours (min requirement) • Uni action: 20 hours • Professional skills: 4 activities + Reflection: 600 words–full degree

USC	Information only Model			✓	✓		✓	✓		Alumni	Real-life work experience	Volly Dollars (Guild driven)	20 hours = A gift certificate
<b>Student / University Partnership approach</b>													
Curtin			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	Alumni	Leadership	Curtin Extra Certificate	20 hours: 1 year
UWA					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Staff		Services Transcript - roll out phase	N/a
<b>Centrally administered programs (models) – centrally – without / little student input in admin / organisation</b>													
ECU			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Staff	Conservation Community		
ND		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	Alumni	Service delivery, Catholic responsibility Community		
UTS			✓	✓			✓		✓	Staff & Alumni		SOUL Award	100 hours (90 Vol + 10 training): entire degree



CSU	Independent, one off project (Mixture)			✓		✓	✓						
La Trobe					✓	✓				Alumni	Community Engagement Leadership Sustainability	La Trobe Award	40 hrs: Leadership) 50 hours: Community Engagement; 40 hours: Sustainability: 1 year + reflection
UniSA	Information only Model				✓	✓	✓		✓	Alumni	Global International	The Global Experience	120 points – various options of activities
RMIT	Faculty Model		✓		✓	✓		✓				LEAD Accredited Volunteer ing Program. Learn, Engage, Aspire, Develop	15 Vol + 5 training
UCAN			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		Alumni	Academic Employment Volunteer	The Canberra Award	100 points domestic 80 points international
JCU		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		Mentoring Leadership Community Engagement Cultural Competency	JCU Profession al College	Tafe Cert IV Accreditation

UQ			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	Alumni	Global and Cultural Engagement Research and Entrepreneurship Social Responsibility and Leadership	Community Engagement Program (CEP)	3 primary activities; 3 secondary activities; 6+ symposia events: Full degree
USQ	Work Integrated Learning			✓	✓					Staff & Alumni	Community Orientation Initiative Motivation		
UTAS	Independent		✓	✓	✓					Alumni	Leadership	The Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Award	40 hours; 8 reflective pieces; 6 seminars: 10 months
ACU		✓	✓	✓					✓	Staff	Community Engagement		
<b>Integrated model (incorporates faculty, coordinated across the whole university)</b>													
MQ	Student Driven volunteering			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Staff	Innovative Education	Participation and Community Engagement (PACE) Initiative	
UNE	Faculty Model		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		Social, cultural, sporting	New England Award	1 to 51+ hours: 1 year + reflective journal

UNSW	Student driven Volunteering		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Leadership	UNSW Advantage  The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS)	?
UoW			✓		✓					Alumni		Leadership Program ALIVE (Active Leadership Igniting Vision & Education)	<b>BRONZE:</b> 10 sessions + 10 hours vol <b>SILVER:</b> 12 sessions + 20 hours vol <b>GOLD:</b> 14 sessions + 30+ hours
Monash	Centrally Administered	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Alumni	Sustainability Wellbeing Social Inclusion Leadership	Monash Passport Co-curriculum program	?
Griffith		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Fun Diverse Network	Community Internship Course	Free-Choice Elective

Independent, one off projects or events (Mixture)													
SCU	Work Integrated Learning Focus		✓	✓			✓						
UWS		✓			✓	✓	✓				Alumni Social Engagement Leadership	SELP Social Engagement and Leadership Program (SELP)	16 hours
Deakin	Work Integrated Learning		✓	✓	✓	✓				Alumni	Global Citizenship		
Bond	Information only Model			✓		✓		✓		Alumni			
QUT	Work Integrated Learning			✓			✓	✓		Alumni	Student driven		

Information-onle model													
UoN	Student-driven volunteering <sup>8</sup>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		Alumni & Staff	Civic engagement Research intensive	International Leadership Experience and Development (iLEAD) AHEGS	100 Lead points  25hours+
UOB (Now Fed Uni)					✓	✓	✓				Leadership Volunteering	Student Leadership & Volunteer Program	Bronze: 10 hours, 1 training; Silver: 20 hours, + 2 training; Gold: 30 hours, + 3 training, 1 year
USyd	Student-driven volunteering				✓		✓	✓		Alumni			
Vic Uni					✓	✓	✓	✓				Students Leadership Qualifications	20 hours + reflection
Flinders			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						

UA	Centrally Administered		✓	✓	✓		✓			Alumni & Staff		Student Leadership Certificate Program	?
CDU	Work Integrated Learning		✓		✓							Aspire Lower SES High School	
ANU	Centrally Administered		✓	✓			✓	✓		Alumni		Student Ambassador Program (independent)	10 hours
CQ	Centrally Administered		✓	✓	✓	✓				Alumni	Civic Awareness Engagement		

This table is based on publicly available information on the university and affiliated student organisations such as guilds and unions that hold the university name.

**Student-driven volunteering** = A student-centred guild, union, or organisation facilitates volunteering opportunities.

**Student-university partnership** = In these programs students work with paid university staff to deliver the volunteer program.

**Faculty model** = The faculty, independent from the central volunteer point is promoting volunteering through their school.

**International volunteering opportunities** = The university provides or actively facilitates international volunteer opportunities.

**Centrally administered program** = Volunteering is facilitated by a central point at the university, such as a career centre, with little or no input from students.

**Integrated model** = The university actively promotes and visually coordinates volunteering across the various organisations at the university. Volunteering is fluid and integrated throughout the university, i.e. the student centre will link to student or faculty volunteering.

**Independent volunteering** = The university does not appear to have a central volunteer model, instead occasional projects pop up.

**Information-only model** = Volunteer opportunities are not facilitated by the university, or an obvious partnership does not exist.

**Alumni volunteering** = The university is promoting volunteering opportunities for alumni. This is primarily contributing to the university community.

**Service learning** \* see Terminology guide.

**\*Work-Integrated-Learning (WIL)** = The university has Work Integrated Learning.

URLs have not been included as university programs are constantly adapting and changing; however this provides a snapshot of data as at December 2013.

## About this Companion Guide

This Companion Guide provides information derived from the Volunteering to Learn project conducted between 2013 and 2015 about University Student Volunteering in Australia. The Guide provides more detail to supplement the Good Practice Guides and Concept Guides developed during the project. It is one of the outputs of a project funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. See also the project website at [www.murdoch.edu.au/projects/volunteeringtolearn/](http://www.murdoch.edu.au/projects/volunteeringtolearn/)

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