



Student volunteering is a practice adopted by universities to enhance student learning, yet little is known about how and why this learning takes place. As student volunteering is increasing it has been identified as a priority area by both government and universities.

The *National Volunteering Strategy* identifies volunteering as important to students and urges educational institutions to develop and provide programs that not only increase graduates' employability but also their connection to community and leadership.

There is limited research to date on the university and host organisation perspectives of student volunteering. Accordingly, there is a clear imperative to examine the breadth of university student volunteering experiences to capture what constitutes good practice, and identify the potential impact of well-managed, and well-structured programs. This collaboration across the four Western Australian public universities, and invited partner Macquarie University, along with Volunteering Western Australia and Volunteering Australia, aims to do just that.

This project, "Volunteering to Learn: Enhancing learning in the student volunteering experience in Australian universities", has been funded by the Office for Learning and Teaching to research learning in student volunteering by investigating the experiences of the student, the university and the host organization. The aim is to identify models of good practice and provide Australian universities with clarity about a range of elements that facilitate good learning outcomes. These elements include:

- the nature and goals of student volunteering programs;
- the learning outcomes achieved and desired by students who volunteer;
- the available options for locating programs within universities;
- expectations from both universities and host organisations about outcomes; and
- ways to enhance student learning outcomes.

Other elements also requiring examination are:

- student workloads associated with programs;
- staff time requirements associated with programs.

The project aims to add rigour to student volunteering programs in universities, and to establish a Good Practice Guide that addresses the needs and issues inherent in student volunteering. The project team will do this by:

- establishing a framework, definitions and mapping of student volunteering activity across Australian universities;
- investigating forms of university student volunteering currently in use; and
- developing guidelines and a framework which identifies program types and models for university volunteer programs and host organisation that will enhance the learning experience.

To ensure that this work extends beyond the life of the project, dissemination of information will occur throughout the project, we invite universities across the sector and communities to become involved. You will be able to find further information on the project website, where the Good Practice Guide will be made available later in the project along with a presentation schedule. To discuss this project further, please contact project leader Dr Megan Paull, Senior Lecturer, School of Management and Governance, Murdoch University on (+618) 9360 6040 [M.Paull@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:M.Paull@murdoch.edu.au)

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### Project Partners:

Volunteering Western Australia - [www.volunteeringwa.org.au](http://www.volunteeringwa.org.au)  
Volunteering Australia - [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)

### Deliverables:

#### Year One August 2013 - August 2014

1. A comprehensive review of studies completed, and in progress, on student volunteering globally, with particular attention to institutional and host organisation roles.
2. A comprehensive map of the alternative models of student volunteering operating in Australian universities.
3. Interim Website.

#### Year Two September 2014 - August 2015

1. Good Practice Guide
2. Comprehensive website
3. A series of workshops to disseminate the outcomes with the materials for these to be made available via the website.
4. Findings presented to the university and not-for-profit sectors via conferences and through publications as well as the website.
5. A final report and discussion paper. The report will include the set of models for student volunteer programs.
6. Publications based on the project to further disseminate

Further information and briefings will be available from the website:

[www.murdoch.edu.au/projects/volunteeringtolearn/](http://www.murdoch.edu.au/projects/volunteeringtolearn/)

*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.*

