

ULSU Volunteering Newsletter

Spring
2011

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Investing in Volunteers

The UK Quality Standard for good practice in Volunteering Management

ULSU Volunteering are delighted to announce that we have recently achieved the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, recognising the excellent work we do with volunteers.

Volunteer Co-ordinator, Jane Kilby, commented "It is fantastic to have an industry recognised award which demonstrates that we offer a quality volunteering service based on sound principles, supported by strong processes and procedures".

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations involving volunteers. liV aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience for all volunteers and for organisations to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by volunteers.

We were assessed against a range of best practice standards and proved to excel in all aspects of working with our volunteers. Volunteer Student Reps and Student Officers as well as SU staff who support volunteers were interviewed as part of the final assessment.

liV is unique in that it is the only standard that focuses on volunteers. It is based on four areas of volunteer management; planning for volunteer involvement, recruiting volunteers, selecting and matching volunteers and supporting and retaining volunteers. Further information about the Standard can be found on www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk.

This is just the beginning for us - we now have a really good platform to build on going forwards. Our thanks goes to everyone who helped behind the scenes in the months leading up to our assessment not to mention everyone who was involved in the assessment day itself.



Case Study: Leanne Race



Why volunteer I hear you ask? Well why not?! Volunteering has so many benefits - one you are most likely to hear is that 'it is something to put on your CV'. This is very true because volunteering shows that you have something about you and that you do not just study, but you take an active interest in things. It shows that you are committed and want to do something good and that you want to get involved and more importantly, you are doing something that is not necessarily expected of you.

However, there are many more reasons to get involved in volunteering, ones that will also benefit you as an individual and through doing so you will probably find things out about yourself that you never knew.

Personally, I have been heavily involved in volunteering throughout high school and continued to volunteer when I came to university. When I look back it is surprising what one person can do!

One of the things I did during my last few years at high school was to set up a lunchtime group for vulnerable year 7s. This I did once a week for no longer than an hour, which is nothing. An hour a week, and it was the highlight of the year 7s weeks. We did nothing special, we would sit and chat, maybe play board games, made paper aeroplanes in summer and helped with homework. This seems like an easy way to spend an hour a week but these children came, even in the summer months because they felt safe, they had someone to talk to and someone who could help if they needed it. I am no-one special but this just highlights how even an hour a week of your time could mean the world to someone else. YOU could be the highlight of someone's week.

Last year I volunteered at the special needs school, St Francis, and this was so much fun. Again I got involved in the art classes, I even played table football some weeks. This placement was simply giving up a few hours a week to go into the school and help out in classrooms. This was giving the pupils another face to see that wasn't a carer or a teacher, it was someone new, someone closer to their age who they could talk to at break times etc. This also helped out the teaching staff as they could spend more time doing what they needed to do during break times.



These are just 2 examples of some of the volunteering I have done but I have other things as well, I have co-created plays to raise racial awareness and cultural diversity, I have been involved in advertising Black History Month and the Stephen Lawrence project through making posters etc and I have mentored younger children, organised a prom and a yearbook and set up the Forensic Psychology Society.

All these things have benefitted someone in some way, no matter how small the difference was. You can all make a difference too! You don't have to do anything huge, do something you enjoy. Do you enjoy photography? If so, maybe you could set something up where you could help people express their emotions through photography? Do you like reading? Maybe spend an hour or 2 a week going into a local school and helping a child read a few pages of a book. It will all be beneficial to someone as well as yourself. You may find that what you planned to do after you graduate may not necessarily be for you after volunteering in the area. Or on the other hand, you may find something that you DO want to pursue after you graduate!

I guess what I am trying to say is whether you think that what you may want to get involved in is a big thing or not, someone will think it is. It will benefit someone in some way and you WILL get something out of doing it, whether it is an insight into a possible career, learning a new skill or simply getting self satisfaction.

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My volunteering experiences have been so much fun and I have met so many different people, I wouldn't change it for anything. As a volunteer you will be showing commitment, punctuality, trust, selflessness as well as potentially showing initiative, enthusiasm and uniqueness. All are really good qualities to have for when you graduate, and if you do show these qualities you may be able to ask for references from the people you volunteer for.

I do have to point out though that volunteering is not just about doing something to put on your CV, it is about enthusiasm and passion. If you are not 100% engaged in what you have decided to volunteer for, it could equally lead to a bad reference.

People will know if you are enthusiastic, if you are running out of the door to get to your placement and they will love it!

So think about your passions, interests and hobbies and go to the SOAP centre and ask if there are any vacancies for volunteers in your areas of interest. If not, ask them if you could set something up, ask if they have any ideas of people to get in touch with, or if you know of somewhere you would like to volunteer, contact them. If you don't ask, you won't get!



My advice is to go out and get stuck into something you enjoy, or if you are adventurous and like new challenges, get involved in something completely new and you will gain an utterly new experience from it. Don't volunteer if your primary reason is to put it on your CV or because you feel obliged to do it because everyone else is, make sure you have that little bit of enthusiasm in there as well! Do it because you want to. Going for an interview with a genuine volunteering experience that you can talk about with a passion is far more valuable than something you thought you had to do to stand out from the crowd. Go out there and get involved, and have fun with it!

Leanne Race

2nd year Psychology with Forensic Psychology student

Volunteering Successes

The department have had a particularly busy year with more students than ever getting involved. We already have in excess of 230 students volunteering in some capacity—whether it be helping RAG (Raise and Give) fundraise or regular volunteering out in the community. Here is a flavour of the things our students are involved in:

⇒ 31 students regularly involved in RAG



⇒ 17 students marshalled at the Lincoln 10k Race



⇒ 36 students volunteering at 15 different schools



⇒ 15 students mentored with the JUMP scheme



⇒ 5 students are part of the Lincoln Alzheimer's Society Team (LAST)



Internal Volunteering: Sports, Societies and Reps

Roos Trampoline Club President: Rose Unwin

I've loved every minute of being President of the Trampoline Club. It's been hard work, but definitely worth it! Meeting all the fabulous new people & organising sessions, socials, competitions & other various events, has been a pleasure.



I am a big fanatic of sport & am currently studying Sport Development & Coaching. Volunteering as the President of the University's Trampoline Club was a role I gladly took on. Having participated in Trampoline for just over 8 years, the opportunity to run a club & the chance to pass on my love for the sport to students of all ability, was an opportunity I wasn't going to miss out on!

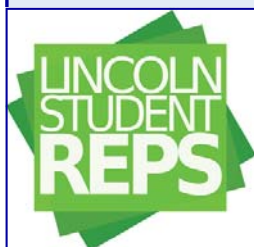
As the President I have got to work as part of a professional team, not just as a committee member but as part of the SU too. I am responsible for the Club & all activities. It is my role to maintain a safe environment for all our members & provide them with information about up & coming events. In addition to this, keeping a well oiled committee, delegating jobs & making sure everyone is enjoying themselves is key in maintaining a happy Club.

I have gained many skills from this experience, with the most important ones being organised & maintaining time management. This year, the Trampoline Club's biggest event has been the BUCs competition. I wanted to make sure that non-competitors didn't feel left out at the same time as devoting time to the competitors. This was maintained through organisation of the sessions & communication throughout the club. Following this, entering the club into the competition, ordering correct size leotards, organising a mini bus to & from the event & providing judges for the competition proved to be successful as the club & I were organised. Now we have two trampolinists representing the University at National & social level.

The valuable experiences & skills gained from being President will stay with me throughout my life. It has developed my communication, organisation, time management, problem solving, working with others, working independently & my love for the sport. Hopefully, it will also benefit me for employability, as completing a degree as well as maintaining a Sport Club is difficult-but with the right skills is manageable/achievable.

Senior Rep, Societies Council Chair & Treasurer of the Anime Society: John Conway

I wanted to volunteer for all my roles and the University because I have a huge passion for Lincoln. It has given me so much and I wanted to give back. These 3 roles fit into all aspects of my university, academic and social life.



My roles all involve increasing participation, getting societies committee's to talk about their issues or getting course reps communicating with the students we represent. I have about 3 meetings a month where I am very vocal and offer my opinions where necessary. This is very important for my roles. In the society council it is also my job to time manage and set out the agenda to make sure it's fair for all members.

The skills I have learnt or developed this year are compulsory for the jobs I want to do. Communication is a large part of health physiology and knowing someone's issues and problems with health is very important. I also think time management and speaking to a large number of people also helps. On a general scale my self confidence is very high as people have accepted me in these roles not because I'm popular but I'm the right person for the job.

Internal Volunteering: Officers

Campaigns Officer: Joe Hicks

This year I've been acting as Campaigns Officer for the Student's Union - a Part-Time Officer position within the Executive. In the past two years I've also acted as a Student Officer, School Liaison Rep for Business, Executive Student Trustee, Student Council Trustee as well as President of the Parkour Society.

Many people ask me how I manage to fit my studies in around all of this, and my usual response is 'I have no idea!' - though thinking about it now, the skills and experiences I've gained through these voluntary roles have given me the confidence, drive and ability to do it, and do it well!

As a Part-Time Executive Officer, I'm technically a Director of the Union; as well as an impressive position to have on my CV, I've gained experience in all sorts of areas...

As a business student, many of these have seriously enhanced my academic performance; I've conducted strategy reviews, created and partaken in project groups, chaired meetings, spent countless hours conducting research and getting out there talking to students.

I'm always looking for a new challenge and my confidence has increased dramatically. I ran again in the elections for 2011/2012 for the position of VP Academic Affairs - something I definitely wouldn't have had the confidence to do before taking on these previous roles...

Unfortunately I didn't get the position, but I have the confidence in myself to know I still have the ability to make a real impact on the lives of students throughout the rest of this year.



I ran for the position of HE NUS Delegate and next week will be heading off with a delegation of students to National Conference - again something I did with the confidence gained through acting as Campaigns Officer.

It's not only my character that's changed for the better through this role, but also my skills. Acting as a direct link between students and the Union, my communication skills are continually improving, I've experienced a number of different formats of meetings and have learnt the skills to adapt and act professionally within these.

Everyone comes to University with the intention of getting a degree; much time is spent deciding what type of degree to study, what course et cetera... Though the biggest impact on my time here has undoubtedly been the other things I've done; these different things I've done with the Student's Union. Friends, a better chance of employment, transferable skills, confidence and the opportunity to experience making a change to people's lives.

With our Volunteering Department, you get all the support and advice you need to succeed in whatever role you take on, and now with the Lincoln Award you can be officially accredited for doing what you enjoy!



There is nothing I can recommend higher than getting involved with the Student's Union whilst you're here... It could change your life completely.

Internal Volunteering: Media

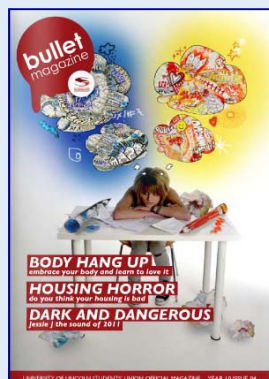
What is Bullet?

Bullet is the University of Lincoln Students' Union publication, funded by the Union and led by students, for students.

Entering into their tenth year, Bullet is Lincoln's longest running official student publication. They aim to provide students with an insight into the life here at the University of Lincoln, reporting on the activity of their Students' Union whilst providing opportunities for students to develop their skills.

They ensure the highest standard of journalism and media through investigative and balanced news, current and in-depth features to fun, sport and entertainment.

Bullet is supported by a large number of volunteers across a range of roles from editors to contributors and photographers. They recruit volunteers across a wide range of degree areas from Journalism and PR to Design and IT.



Online Editor: Charlie Marples

My name is Charlie Marples and this year I was a volunteer as online editor of Bullet Magazine.

My role including being in charge of Bullet's online media, contributing articles and managing their social networking presence.

As I'm studying for a degree in Advertising and Marketing, working in an online field has worked wonders for my CV as every employer is looking for online skills and familiarity working with social networking so the skills I've developed have helped me no end.

As I am dyslexic, writing professional content outside of academic study has also helped my confidence and ability with my writing. I'm sure this has improved the quality of my assignments and dissertation this year.

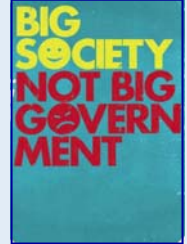
Overall I think the skills learnt in volunteering for Bullet magazine cannot just improve your skills and confidence in academic work, but also really perk up the credibility of your CV especially at this time of year where everyone is applying for jobs where differentiation and experience put you at the top of the pack.

Where we're going next year...

There are interesting times ahead in the Third Sector who like everyone else is waiting to see how budget cuts are affecting their services, staffing levels, and of course their ability to support volunteers. This comes at the same time as we are all being encouraged to get involved with the "Big Society" – the problem is that we don't actually know what this is yet.

Inevitably this has an impact on the community based volunteering that we offer to our students – sadly we are already seeing some organisations that we have provided volunteers to for many years either reduce their services or having to fold all together.

Yet at the same time there are so many new opportunities for students to get involved in their local community – all that's needed is a sprinkle of inspiration, a dash of enthusiasm and a willingness to have a go at something new. In many ways there has never been a more exciting time to get involved in volunteering.



Over the summer we'll be in discussions with local organisations to establish how our students can be involved in their volunteer programmes for the next academic year. We'll also be looking at the types of opportunities available to students who want to get involved in running their own community based projects.

Following on from achieving the liV accreditation in February we will also be doing a lot of work to ensure that the principles of this standard are applied to all our internal volunteers – we still have some work to do in order for students who are involved in things such as being a committee member for their sports team or society, or being a Student Rep to recognise that they are actually volunteers. The involvement we have in their initial and ongoing training will need to reflect this.

One of the main reasons that students get involved in volunteering now is that they recognise the need to make themselves employable when they graduate – leaving university with a degree is simply no longer enough to guarantee getting a job. Volunteering is a fantastic way for students to acquire skills that can readily be transferred into the paid workplace – whether they are involved in activities connected to their degree or doing something that they are really passionate about.



As such I will continue to work closely with Jessica Shields who runs the Student Job Shop and oversees the Lincoln Award – an achievement certificate designed to provide a framework to students who are getting involved in activities, training and workshops all of which have employability at their core. We will also build on the presentations and workshops we provide to particular groups of students to help them put this into practice

There are also about to be some changes within our department – Sarah Warren has been working part time here for the last year whilst also being a full time student – she graduates this summer and so is off to pastures new. Soon to start is our new full time Volunteer Support Worker – Emily Marshall who comes with a wealth of experience having looked after volunteers at Lincoln MIND for some time.

So as always we have challenging but exciting times ahead – the summer will see us preparing for Freshers' (it seems to come round faster each year) and building on the successes we've seen during the last 12 months.

Jane

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Access Online

We have a section on the Students' Union website. This contains details of all our current opportunities, copies of the Newsletter, volunteer support and how to sign-up for volunteering online.

This can be viewed at www.lincolnsu.com/volunteer

Drop-in Times

During these times we are available for you to come and see us with any enquiries you have about volunteering.

Monday	1pm-4pm
Tuesday	1pm-4pm
Wednesday	10am-1pm
Thursday	1pm-4pm
Friday	10am-1pm

Please check our website for any amendments to these times.

Alternatively, you are welcome to book an appointment with Jane.

New Opportunities

- Volunteer Centre - Allotment Volunteer

Help maintain a local allotment and have the chance to keep some of the produce whilst giving some to help the homeless.

- British Red Cross- First Call Volunteer

Provide emotional and practical support to service users to increase confidence and independence.

- Citizen Service Volunteer

Working with young people (age 15/16) as they participate in a four-week programme to develop confidence, new skills and to become more engaged with their community

- The Order of St John Care Trust

Befriend residents and engage in group activities and events.

- Young Enterprise Fundraiser

Work with the Board for the promotion of the Young Enterprise Company and Team Programmes by coordinating fundraising.

Useful Websites

www.studentvol.org.uk

www.csv.org.uk

www.do-it.org

www.lcvys.com

www.vinspired.com

www.volunteercentrelincoln.org.uk

vinspired



Student
Volunteering England

do-it.org.uk
volunteering made easy