VOLUNTEERING

Approaching the end of your degree? In the midst of your post-degree job search? Or are you interested in being involved in your community while you are a student? Many university students and graduates consider adding to their experience and portfolio of skills by undertaking volunteer work, in Australia or overseas.

If you are a currently enrolled Flinders University student you can participate in the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre’s WorkReady Internship Program. If this is no longer the case, consider approaching the types of agencies discussed here.

There are several web sites where you can search for volunteer opportunities and we list some starting points in this article. These Australian and International sites will allow you to source opportunities that will build on your University experience.

You can also search the links from the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre website.


Plus check with your local council for any volunteering opportunities they offer, and for any information they may provide on volunteering opportunities in their area.

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

The ‘Volunteering Australia’ organisation cites the ABS Voluntary Work, Australia Survey (2006) as indicating that the total annual hours volunteered was 713 million and 34% of the adult population (5.4 million people), volunteer (these figures were released in July 2007).

‘People volunteer for many reasons. Volunteers:

• Enjoy the contact they get with other people.
• Have the opportunity to develop new skills.
• Can increase confidence and self-esteem.
• Thrive on a new challenge.
• Find it opens new job networks.
• Find that volunteer experience looks good on a job application.’

www.volunteeringsa.org.au

Volunteering shows commitment, interest, motivation and energy. It makes a vital contribution to all aspects of community life – but it can also be both personally and professionally rewarding in enhancing your confidence, skills, sense of achievement and so much more.

Many university students from all disciplines get involved with an incredible variety of volunteering involvements. These could range from fundraising, Breakfast Club Volunteers, coaching sports, Country Fire Service, Learning Assistance Programs at schools, assisting with major events (Bicycle SA, City to Bay Fun Run, University Games, First Aid etc.), mentoring and more. These efforts make a tremendous difference to the communities that they serve.

Getting involved with volunteering can happen at a corporate level too. Many organisations reflect their corporate social responsibility through partnerships with various charities with the aim of giving back to the communities where employees live and work. Some organisations’ values regarding Corporate Volunteerism see them providing employees with the opportunity to spend one work day each year participating in volunteering assistance to community organisations.

Your volunteer involvements can demonstrate an alignment with these organisational values. The United Kingdom ‘Directgov’ website states that over 70 per cent of employers would hire a candidate with volunteering experience over someone who has never volunteered (www.direct.gov.uk).
GENERAL AUSTRALIAN 
VOLUNTEERING WEBSITES

Volunteering SA
Volunteering SA can link people seeking voluntary work in the Arts, Education, Environment/Conservation, Health, Recreation/Sport, and Welfare/Community Services & Emergency Services. They also provide links to International Volunteering opportunities.
www.volunteeringsa.org.au

Seek Volunteer
SEEK Volunteer is a non-profit initiative designed to bring volunteers and the organisations seeking them together.
www.volunteer.com.au

Go Volunteer (an initiative of Volunteering Australia)
www.govolunteer.com.au

Australian Volunteer Search (an Australian Government Initiative)
www.volunteersearch.gov.au

Pro Bono Australia
Volunteer Match is Pro Bono Australia’s specialised service matching Skilled Professional Volunteers and Not for Profit organisations.

SECIALISED VOLUNTEERING WEBSITES

Environmental Volunteering
Today’s employers are seeking students with experience that complements their degree studies, and this is particularly so for the Environment Sector.

Conservation Volunteers International
There are opportunities to become a conservation volunteer across Australia & overseas.
www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

Australian Conservation Foundation
www.acfonline.org.au

Community Volunteering
Many community organisations, including charities have well-established volunteering programs, and some may provide training. Here are a few examples.

Anglicare SA
www.anglicare-sa.org.au/anglicare-volunteers/

UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide
www.ucwesleyadelaide.org.au/volunteers/volunteer_services.htm

Drug Arm Australasia
www.drugarm.com.au

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING
‘Undertaking volunteer work overseas is a great way to experience living in a different country/culture and gaining work experience at the same time. You also have the opportunity to contribute your time and skills for a cause, a community or an issue that is important to you on a personal level. Not only can the whole experience contribute to your own personal development and self-confidence, overseas volunteering looks great on a resume. Employers recognise valuable character traits that OS work experience indicates, such as initiative, passion and sense of ethics.’
www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/volunteerin_g_os

Requirements for skills, experience and qualifications will vary, plus some organisations have age requirements, while others don’t. Always check what expenses are involved.

GENERAL WEBSITES

Smartraveller - Tips For Working Overseas
This Australian Federal Government site provides tips for living and working overseas.
www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/working_os.html

Graduate Opportunities – the international career resources include: Overseas Options, Volunteering Overseas (includes a number of web links) and Studying overseas.
www.graduateopportunities.com
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING WEBSITES

Australian Volunteers International
Australian Volunteers International manages people-centred development projects and programs in a wide range of countries. They comment that through volunteering with their organisation you:

- make a hands-on contribution to the fight against poverty
- work with local people on projects requested by their communities and form friendships that can last a lifetime
- learn about another culture, by being immersed in it
- face challenges that help you develop personally and professionally
- gain valuable career development experience
- are fully supported by an organisation with over 50 years of experience.

www.australianvolunteers.com

International Exchange Programs (IEP)
Provide a range of working holidays overseas, as well as volunteer programs in a number of countries (e.g., Peru, Cambodia, Costa Rica, South Africa). Project options include: community development, social work, medical, environmental, education, and many more.

www.iep.org.au

World Youth International
World Youth International Australia (WYI) is a not for profit, non-religious & non-political international development organisation that offers people over the age of 18 the opportunity to volunteer overseas in a meaningful way. They offer a range of programs and placements to countries including Kenya, Uganda, Nepal, Cambodia, Laos and Peru. Some Programs are available for people of all ages.

www.worldyouth.org.au

i-to-i Australia
Each year they place over 6,000 volunteers on projects to assist in the development of overseas local communities: www.i-to-i.com

GVI Australia (Global Vision International)
Global Vision International (GVI) offers volunteers the opportunity to make a genuine difference through its expeditions and projects while having an amazing hands-on experience

Opportunities range from 1 week to 6 months in over forty countries worldwide and include conservation and humanitarian projects

www.gviaustralia.com

Projects Abroad Australia
You can volunteer on a tremendous variety of projects in twenty exciting destinations. The projects are based around care, teaching, conservation, sports, community programs, medicine and physiotherapy. Other projects in human rights law, journalism and others, offer unique work experience with the chance to make a contribution to the community within which you live.

www.projects-abroad.com.au

Volunteering for International Development from Australia (VIDA)
VIDA places skilled Australian volunteers in developing countries in the Asia Pacific region. VIDA volunteers work with local counterparts and Host Organisations to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in the communities in which they work through skills exchange, institutional strengthening and capacity building.

www.vidavolunteers.com.au

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development program (AYAD)
AYAD places skilled young Australian volunteers, aged 18-30, on short-term assignments of between 3-12 months, in developing countries throughout the Asia Pacific region.

www.ausaid.gov.au/youtham

Travellers Worldwide
Travellers Worldwide is an international provider of voluntary placements overseas. They provide over 300 voluntary projects abroad in 21 countries, including Care and Community projects, Teaching, Sports coaching, Work Experience (Medical, Journalism, Law, Tourism and Adventure Tourism, research programs, etc), Conservation, Marine, Language Courses and Cultural Courses, Drama, Dance & Music, plus some study abroad courses and projects abroad. All ages and nationalities welcome.
www.travellersworldwide.com

Involvement Volunteers Association Inc. (IVI)
IVI is helping volunteers from over 16 countries to participate in the many and varied volunteer placements available in an increasing number of lands around the world.
www.volunteering.org.au

Global Policy Forum (GPF)
GPF has a large internship program, welcoming students and young professionals from all over the world.
www.globalpolicy.org

Great Orangutan Project
The Great Orangutan Project (GOP) is a collection of projects designed to save the orang-utan and help local communities that you can get involved in. You can do this in two ways - by volunteering to work on a GOP project or by holidaying on a GOP ecotour.
www.orangutanproject.com

Idealist.org
This website lists many volunteer opportunities, that can be browsed by location.
www.idealist.org

Ecoteer
Projects range from conservation, ecotourism, teaching, farm and humanitarian aid.
www.ecoteer.com

Frontier
Opportunities include conservation, teaching abroad and more.
www.frontier.ac.uk

International Humanity Foundation
Their mission is to educate the poor and educating the educated about the poor.
www.ihfonline.org

COMMENTS FROM FLINDERS GRADUATES

“Do volunteer work where possible, the more experience you have the more employable you are. I highly recommend volunteer work as you can put this on your CV and it’s looked upon very favourably with most organisations when you pursue employment. … I have only worked for two organisations since leaving university but volunteered for both NGO’s and government organisations.” Veronica, Health Sciences – Education and Promotion Northern CAFSS Coordinator, DRUG ARM Australasia.

‘Anna Lewkowicz (Flinders Graduate) is very excited at the prospect of working for 12 months as a project research adviser in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Working in a developing country has been a personal dream of hers since completing her Honours Degree, and subsequently a Master’s Degree, in international relations. Based in the Department of Higher Education at Maharishi Vedic University, Cambodia’s only rural university, Anna will work in conjunction with her Australian Partner Organisation, the Australian Aid for Cambodia Fund. Her assignment involves training local counterparts in database management and identifying and approaching donor agencies and corporates, including writing project proposals.’ AusAID Australian Youth Ambassador for Development. This profile is used with the permission of AusAID.

‘Eddie will spend twelve months working in Hikkaduwa, southwest Sri Lanka with the Arthacharya Foundation as a field officer in environment and waste management. … Eddie is very excited to be involved in this project that addresses the needs of the local community with a broader aim towards the conservation of the natural environment and establishing sustainable development.’ Environmental Science: Field Officer in environment and waste management in Sri Lanka (Australian Youth Ambassador for Development) This profile is used with the permission of AusAID.

‘After graduating from Flinders University I participated in a Summer Scholarship project at SARDI Aquatic Sciences in Seagrass Ecology. This enabled me to consolidate my studies for a several months before undertaking a Youth Ambassador for Development position as the Fisheries Statistician for the Vanuatu Department of Fisheries.’ Heidi, Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology, positions have included Coastcare Facilitator, Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Board.