Evans C & Yusof ZN, Volunteering: A viable alternative work experience for university students?, *Industry and Higher Education* (Forthcoming). Copyright © The Authors, 2022. Reprinted by permission of SAGE Publications. Reuse is restricted to non-commercial and no derivative uses. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/09504222221093180

**Article type: Article** 

Volunteering: A viable alternative work

experience for university students?

**Authors:** 

**Carl Evans** 

University of Plymouth, UK

Zatun Najahah Yusof

University of Stirling, UK

## **Corresponding author:**

Zatun Najahah Yusof, Stirling Management School, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA,

UK. Email: z.n.mohdyusof@stir.ac.uk

#### **Abstract:**

The Covid-19 pandemic reduced the availability of work placements in commercial organisations for university students and potentially changed the nature of placements in the future. Similarly, charitable organisations who were already suffering budget restrictions have been financially affected by Covid-19 due to reduced revenue on trading activities, with financial sustainability predicted to be an ongoing issue. The opportunity, therefore, for charities to entice university students to volunteer to support their work, with the lure of developing their employability skills, seems irresistible at this time. The purpose of this paper is to examine the content of job advertisements for volunteer positions to determine the extent to which they specify transferable skills desired of the candidates, or state that they can be developed once employed in the post. The underlying assumption is that, to attract students volunteers, job advertisements will need to explicitly state the transferable skills resulting from the post. The paper offers originality by conducting a content analysis of volunteer jobs and assessing the specified criteria against recognised employability skills. It concludes by challenging charities, students and universities to embrace the opportunity for students to develop transferable skills through volunteering by modifying current practices.

## **Keywords:**

Volunteering, student work placements, employability

### Introduction

Students' work experience: an emerging problem

As a mechanism to improve student employability and address the demands of industry more effectively, a placement period with a company to gain work experience has become prevalent in UK degree programmes in recent years (Brooks and Youngson, 2016). Indeed, some form of work-related learning is increasingly deemed a mandatory element during the study period at university (Highfliers, 2019). Work placements are seen by students as valuable, not only in providing some experience of the world of work as distinct from classroom-based learning (Walmsley et al. 2006), but also in assisting the development of transferable skills (Paisley and Paisley, 2010) – that is, those skills that can be seamlessly transferred from university to workplace and between different employment contexts (Bennett, 2002).

Yet the placement process faltered due to Covid-19, with placement and internship opportunities either cancelled (Brown, 2020) or restricted (Blackwell, 2021; Greaves, 2020). Even in more buoyant economic times, gaining an appropriate placement, at the right level of responsibility to support the development of appropriate employability skills, is a perennial issue for students (Hutchinson, 2009). It therefore remains questionable how students will gain suitable work experience not only at this time but in the future. Taylor (2020), although describing an alternative e-based placement activity for university students, feels that the time is right for a review of placements in higher education.

*Student volunteering: the viable alternative?* 

Non-profit organisations were already suffering budget restrictions (SVCO, 2019) when the impact of Covid-19 significantly reduced revenue streams (Akingbola, 2020). There are indications that financial sustainability will continue to be an issue for charitable organisations in the future (Rao, 2021). Nonetheless, at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, record numbers of people volunteered for the National Health Service (NHS) Response Service (Butler, 2020), although volunteering in general decreased at the peak of the infection rate because of lockdown restrictions (YouGov, 2020).

Building on this raised awareness of volunteering and given the ongoing scarcity of good placement and work positions to university students, charities could seize the opportunity and seek to recruit students to volunteer posts with the lure of providing them with a chance to develop the transferable skills vital to their career aspirations.

Student volunteering in non-profit organisations is not a new phenomenon, and the motivation behind such activity has been subject to academic scrutiny. The resulting conclusions indicate a complex web of reasons underlying students' motivations for volunteering (Allen and Shaw, 2009; Ghose and Kassam, 2014). This is confirmed by Haivas

et al (2014) who, applying self-determination theory (SDT), recognised the differing needs and therefore motivations of those volunteering. Smith et al. (2018) focus on person-centred aspects, such as improving self-esteem, personal wellbeing and life-satisfaction, and Carpenter and Myers (2010) examine altruistic factors, such as wanting to contribute to the wellbeing of others or the community. Gronland et al. (2011) take a wider perspective in examining the influence of national culture on volunteering, while Ling and Chui (2016) concentrate more on the individuals themselves, finding that previous experience of undertaking community or voluntary activities can have a positive influence on volunteering decisions in the future. Lee and Won (2011) indicate that a charity's mission can be a key factor in attracting individuals, and this is extended by Gage and Thapa (2012) who highlight the need for an individual to gain a greater understanding of issues connected with the charity in order to empathise and connect, and therefore volunteer. Moreover, an overwhelming desire to engage with a charity's fundamental vision through volunteering can lead to enhanced personal wellbeing (Stukas et al. (2016).

Various other studies in this area have examined the impact of volunteering on individuals' learning (Edwards et al. 2001), life-skills (Anderson and Green, 2012), personal development (MacNeela and Gannon, 2014) and also employability (Barton et al. 2019; Gevorgyan and Galstyan (2016). While employability as a concept is complex, with numerous perspectives and theoretical bases (Andrews and Higson, 2008; Boden and Nedeva, 2010), it is generally perceived to embrace the notion of an individual as 'being employable' (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). This perspective has been extended by Pan and Lee (2011) to incorporate knowledge, experience and character. Employability has subsequently been considered to be concerned with more than merely obtaining a job (Cole and Tibby, 2013), with Matsouka and Mihail (2016) providing a broader view that it is

related to the possession of skills and characteristics that not only enable an individual to secure employment but also to be successful in it.

As a consequence, universities have had to adapt to improve employability among their graduates (Frankham, 2017; Tomlinson, 2012). This has resulted in a greater focus on incorporating some form of work activity in the degree proposition (Saunders and Zuzel, 2010), such as offering work placements and internships (McMurray et al. 2016). It is this 'real-world' work experience that Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough (2009) find improves an individual's employability credentials, and that, in a survey by the UK's Commission for Employment and Skills, was deemed important by 74% of employers (UKCES, 2014). In addition, universities have also broadened their approach to encourage part-time working (Martin and McCabe, 2007) and volunteering among students as means of gaining work experience (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010).

Volunteering is not only found to enhance students' learning (Crumpton, 2013) but is also felt to support the development of softer skills, such as communication (Khasanzyanova (2017), which are demanded by employers (Teng et al 2019). Nonetheless, even though career was one of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) factors applied by Clary and Snyder (1999), Holdsworth (2010) found that employability and improving the CV were not universal reasons for volunteering by university students (Rothwell and Charleston, 2013). While Holdsworth and Quinn (2010) suggest further investigation into the drivers of student volunteering, as well as the anticipated benefits to be derived, other researchers argue that universities should take a more strategic approach to the volunteering activities of students (Darwen and Rannard, 2011), aligning students' expectations with charities' activities (Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014; Paull et al., 2017).

It is perhaps easy to recognise the value that undertaking charity work might have to an individual who wishes to pursue a career in the not-for-profit sector. Similarly, it has been found that in the healthcare sector volunteering is deemed to provide a base of knowledge and relevant skills on which to base a prospective career (Williamson et al. 2018). However, for students who are pursuing degrees in non-relevant disciplines, such as history, business, geography, etc., the relationship between volunteering and the development of employability skills might seem more tenuous. With this in mind, to what extent are charities geared to attracting university students on the basis of improving their career prospects?

## Research focus

Francis (2011) suggested that non-profit organisations needed to revise their recruitment strategies to attract greater numbers of university students to volunteer. To what extent are advertisements for charity volunteering jobs targeting university students? In particular, are the transferable skills that support an individual's employability explicitly cited in job advertisements?

While de Cooman and Pepermans (2012) acknowledge the difference between advertised job criteria for commercial and non-profit organisations, with the latter focusing more on altruistic and extrinsic values, Feldman et al. (2006) find that providing specific information in job advertisements impacts potential applicants. This is particularly important in terms of softer skill requirements (Calanca et al., 2019).

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the content of job advertisements for volunteer positions in order to determine the extent to which they specify transferable skills desired of the candidates, or state that they can be developed once employed in the post. The underlying assumption is that, in order to attract student volunteers, job advertisements need to explicitly state the transferable skills resulting from the post. This will provide a means for students to assess whether volunteer jobs represent a viable alternative to work

placement or paid part-time employment with regard to helping them to develop the employability skills desired by graduate employers.

As a preliminary study, the paper offers originality by conducting a content analysis of volunteer jobs and assessing the specified criteria against recognised employability skills. In doing so, it extends existing work on employability by considering it in the context of the charity sector, and at the same time broadens the literature on the work of charities in recruiting volunteers.

## Research approach

Volunteer jobs listed on a general, UK jobs website were analysed and the specified person criteria for each job noted. This task was conducted in one day. While there were 1,020 volunteer jobs initially listed on the website, 389 were deemed by the website host to be duplicates and not shown. There were a number of advertisements from large, not-for-profit organisations for the same post but in different parts of the country, and therefore these were also discounted. Additionally, any jobs paying a salary were deemed to be full-time or part-time employment, and therefore not voluntary: these were not included in the analysis. Jobs that required a specific skill or qualification (e.g., a sports coaching award) were ignored and trustee jobs, albeit voluntary, were similarly not included. This left a total of 219 volunteer jobs. Only the advertisement on the jobs website was analysed – no further level of analysis was conducted – for example, of the job description or tracing back to the organisation's own website for additional information.

The content of the volunteer job advertisements was assessed against employability skills (listed below) to provide a quantitative measure of the number of mentions or references for each skill. The mentions were recorded, whether or not the advertisement stated that the skill could be developed on the job. The skills criteria demanded by graduate employers have been

listed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2019, p.5), Totaljobs (2020) and confirmed by numerous academic works (see, for example, Pan and Lee, 2011; Saunders and Zuzel, 2010; Wellman, 2010; Wilton, 2011). On this basis we considered 12 employability skills criteria:

- Communication
- Collaboration/teamworking
- Interpersonal working/networking/negotiation/empathy
- Problem-solving
- Leadership
- Organised/self-management/ability to work under pressure
- Confidence
- Managing ambiguity/willing to learn
- Resilience/perseverance/flexibility
- Analytical/critical thinking skills
- Innovative/enterprising/entrepreneurial/creative
- ICT literacy/digital media literacy the ability to select and use digital tools and software, and innovate using digital skills (QAA, 2019)

Allowance was made for semantic differences for each skill criteria and flexibility in what might be included; for example, 'communication' could include verbal, written, telephone, etc.

## **Findings**

Job advertisements were initially grouped into six categories, as displayed in Table 1. From the 219 voluntary jobs advertised, nearly 42% were in 'care and support services'. This category includes jobs such as mentoring, health care support, independent visitor, wellbeing

and family support. A quarter of the jobs were in the 'retail/shop/events' category and included positions such as retail or sales assistant, kitchen helper, café assistant and event support. This is an important category, since retail is a typical sector for recruiting students to work part-time. Voluntary jobs that fall under the 'general management' category accounted for 17% of the total jobs advertised, which makes it the third largest jobs category in the advertisements. This category includes jobs such as team leader, administrative support, outreach or marketing assistant, project assistant and recruiter. Meanwhile, both transport and education/learning categories contributed a small number of the total voluntary jobs advertised, at 5%. Education/learning jobs included teaching assistant, education trainee and facilitator, while the transport category mostly included jobs associated with vehicle driving and delivery.

# [Table 1 – insert about here]

Among the 219 voluntary jobs advertised, 92 (42%) did not explicitly indicate any transferable skills (Table 2). The emphasis in these advertisements was more on detailing the vision and scope of the respective charity, or providing a description of the post or a list of duties attached to it, leaving the potential applicant to determine whether they had the necessary skills to perform the job effectively. One charity, advertising a retail position, specified nine listed criteria, but in contrast a total of 36 (16%) advertisements mentioned only one skill. A further 27 (12%) advertisements mentioned two employability skills and the remaining ones (n = 60) mentioned from three to five skills/attributes. This is an interesting finding and could indicate that voluntary jobs are focusing more on benefits to beneficiaries or the community (Volunteer Scotland, 2020) and less on the skills needed by volunteers. This might render advertised volunteer posts less attractive to students, especially when the need to maximise transferable skills to aid graduate career aspirations is deemed of the utmost importance.

With only 58% of the voluntary jobs advertised highlighting the required relevant skills, it seems that non-profit organisations are potentially placing less importance on promoting to and attracting students. The twelve employability skills were further analysed to identify any association with the voluntary jobs.

# [Table 2 – insert here]

Matching voluntary jobs with employability skills

The descriptive analysis results (see Figure 1) show that communication is the most mentioned employability skill with 21.1% of the advertisements making reference to it. This is probably to be expected, given that the majority of jobs advertised were in 'care/support services', but it also reflects the importance of communication for voluntary jobs across all categories, including 'management' and 'retail/shop/event' (see Table 3).

Collaboration/teamworking was also considered important, with 12.9% of all mentions from the 219 jobs advertised and was especially cited (n = 18) in the 'retail/shop/event' category. The need to be able to work collaboratively in a team is consistent with the nature of charity work, which typically requires a number of client interventions by different people and agencies together with the support of colleagues. It could be that the volunteer jobs may actually develop leadership, numeracy and problem solving skills, but that these skills were not being included in advertisements.

#### Table 3 about here

This skill was followed by ICT/digital literacy (7.9%), which was mostly mentioned in the 'management' category jobs (n = 10) (see Figure 1). The other skills mentioned were interpersonal/networking (7%), organised/self-management (7%) and confidence (6.7%). These top six employability skills identified in this study confirm previously cited employability skills research (CBI/Pearson, 2019; QAA, 2019). Consequently, the results

highlighting employability skills suggest that university students would benefit from working as volunteers in order to enhance their transferable skills, such as confidence (Hirst, 2000), especially when the number of work placements is reduced due to a crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, in a recent survey by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), ICT/digital literacy was among top three skills highlighted by businesses (CBI/Pearson, 2019). This could also apply to charitable organisations, which are moving towards e-business in order to remain competitive, and indeed this skill was mentioned in 8% of the 'management' category of jobs advertised. This, again, may be attractive to students, since these volunteer posts could help the development of ICT skills to support their career aspirations and progression.

The descriptive analysis interestingly revealed that some skills, although deemed important for commercial businesses (see CBI/Pearson, 2019), were less frequently mentioned in voluntary job advertisements. This includes leadership (2.3%), which was only mentioned in the job category of 'management' (n = 7) and 'retail/shops/events' (n = 1). Leadership was not mentioned in any other job categories, including 'care/health services'. Skills such as numeracy (n = 5), time management (n = 1) and problem-solving (n = 5) were also scarcely mentioned. This may suggest that the charity sector can contribute less towards supporting university students in developing their key employability skills of leadership, numeracy and problem solving and, as a consequence, that such volunteer work might potentially restrict future graduate opportunities, especially where employers are seeking those particular skills.

# [Figure 1 – insert here]

Other than the twelve employability skills used in this study, a further ten skills and attributes were repeatedly cited in the advertisements. These included: passionate/dedicated

(n = 19), energetic/enthusiastic (5.3%), reliable (4.4%), compassionate/helpful/friendly (1.2%) and trustworthy/honest (1.8%).

The passionate/compassionate criterion clearly requires that applicants should care about the charity and 'buy in' to its work. Similarly, the need to be "enthusiastic" goes to the strength of desire in an applicant to support the charity in its activities. Moreover, these attributes indicate the quality of positive traits and behaviour that are recognised as best skill practices in health and care services (Skills for Care/Skills for Health, 2013) rather than recognisable employability skills that university students would seek to develop.

The mention of 'reliability' together, with being "dedicated", also implies the need for applicants to be committed to the volunteering activity. One of the problems associated with managing volunteers is a lack of commitment (Warburton et al., 2017), and clearly including this in the job advertisement is an attempt to pre-empt such a problem prior to application. Surprisingly, given that the majority of posts advertised required direct connection to clients/customers, the need for customer service/focus skills received only 15 mentions. Perhaps, 'customer service' suggests a more commercial approach, rather than the empathetic approach typically demanded in the charity sector?

The lack of specifying skills such as problem-solving, analytical skills and being innovative suggests that post-holders will not be required to think creatively to solve issues, either because of the nature of the job or because they will need to adhere to tightly established procedures. However, most client-facing roles will bring novel problems that will require creative solutions, again leaving potential applicants to make the link themselves between the job and the skills needed to perform it effectively.

There was an acknowledgment that potential candidates might not be knowledgeable about the charity or its mission or the specific requirements of the job; hence the number of mentions for "willingness to learn". This could also be an attempt to attract as wide a number

of applicants as possible, recognising that individuals not previously employed in the third sector might have skills to bring to the role.

Although 'care/health services' was the most cited job sector found in the advertisements, the overall number of skills mentioned (104) was similar to that in the 'retail/shop/event' category (79) — see Appendix 1 for further details. This suggests that university students who are volunteering in 'retail/shop/events' and 'management' may possibly gather as many skills as those volunteering in 'care/health services', with volunteering in 'education/learning', 'legal/finance' and 'transportation' jobs being of less value in terms of skills developed.

#### Future orientation?

In addition to the job advertisements specifying required skills for the volunteer post, there were 25 advertisements which stated that the post would develop transferable skills, be of benefit to the holder's CV or support the transition into employment. Yet these advertisements were typically vague with regard to what skills might be developed: only seven of them stated the specific skills that could be developed or enhanced once in post, mainly focusing on improving communication skills. In addition, only two of these 25 advertisements mentioned that the post might be attractive to students, and therefore students seemed not to be an explicit target group for the volunteering posts.

## **Conclusion**

Akingbola (2020) warned that the adverse impact of Covid-19 would reduce already stretched resources of non-profit organisations. This is in addition to the already predicted worsening future financial position of third-sector organisations, with budget cuts impinging on service provision (SCVO, 2019; CPWO, 2020) and predictions of financial difficulties

(Rao, 2021). The opportunity to utilise student volunteers should therefore become irresistible for charities. As Smith et al (2010) suggest, non-profit organisations should seek to recruit new volunteers by reconciling voluntary activities with individuals' career opportunities. To embrace this, however, will require significant changes for all stakeholders involved. The greatest challenge in convincing university students that volunteering is a viable alternative to placement or part-time employment will be with respect to the lack of income, since previous research has indicated that students work primarily for financial gain (Crockford et al. 2015; Richardson et al. 2009). Therefore, not only will charitable and volunteer organisations need to target students more aggressively, with job advertisements written specifically for them, but students will need to take a more long-term outlook by focusing on their prospective graduate career rather than on short-term earnings.

On this basis, it is likely that students will select the volunteering jobs that will develop the most transferable skills so that they can improve their job prospects and achieve their career aspirations. Charities will need to be mindful that university students will volunteer to obtain employability skills and not because of a connection with charitable aims and should seek to support students in this endeavour. The starting point will be to identify the skills, traits and behaviours that could be developed through the volunteering post and explicitly promote this aspect of the job. Most of the volunteering job advertisements viewed in this study either described the mission of the respective charity and the needs of the client group, or listed job-related tasks in great detail without stating the necessary skills.

These advertisements appear to be prioritising a detailed job description more than a person specification. A more balanced approach is needed, combining job-oriented and person-oriented approaches, in order to attract the appropriate talent to the organisation (Beardwell and Thompson, 2014). While several advertisements noted that the post would allow the incumbent to develop new skills, they failed to specify precisely what skills could

be developed. It is this lack of specificity regarding skills that can be developed that is currently lacking in volunteer job advertisements. Job advertisements, including those for volunteering work, need to compete for the attention of potential applicants and stimulate individuals to apply (Armstrong and Taylor, 2017). If students are to be attracted to advertisements for volunteering jobs, the associated employability skills will need to be more explicitly stated.

Even though university careers departments will encourage student volunteering, it has been long felt that universities have neglected the voluntary sector (Palmer, 2015), and therefore the opportunity to connect and work with charitable organisations in order to support the development of students should be considered. Ishengoma and Vaaland (2016) and Ferns et al (2019) feel that university-company linkages and partnerships help to stimulate employability. Here, charities could be a rich source of organisational case studies for students to apply learning within their respective disciplines, rather than using commercial businesses and textbook-based case examples. Simon (2019) suggests an online platform to inform students of volunteering opportunities, and certainly this would at least highlight available charity positions. While managing volunteers is notoriously challenging, the commitment of students should be enhanced if they feel they are benefiting from the activity in gaining employability skills. A method of formally recording those skills and embedding the learning process within the degree programme, in the same way as placements are currently treated, will probably be necessary. However, it may be that volunteering will become an additional activity rather than a replacement for placement, since it has been found that even a short period in-company can be beneficial in terms of individuals' skills development (Thompson, 2017). It may be useful for charity managers to undertake short coaching/mentoring courses to better accommodate student placements.

This study has been positioned as a preliminary one with the intention of raising awareness about the relationship between graduate employability and volunteering. It also provides a challenge to current thinking regarding employability, not only as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also to question existing assumptions of students and the attitudes of universities towards developing relationships with non-profit organisations. In doing so, it is hoped that the employability skills of students may be increased through exposure to a broader range of organisations, not just the usual large commercial enterprises. The study does, however, raise questions that will require further research – in particular, what are the perceptions of students, whether charities want large numbers of university students volunteering and whether they could manage them effectively, and whether universities have the resources and systems to network, and manage, a portfolio of third-sector organisations in addition to commercial enterprises.

However, the analysis presented in this paper does not seek to examine the relationship between the presence of transferable skills identified in the job advertisements with actual student motivations towards volunteering. Further research exploring actual data on student volunteering at the respective charitable organizations or via an experimental approach in which students are exposed to different charity job advertisements and questioned about their volunteering motivation would seem an appropriate next step.

Moreover, the transferable skills identified in the literature and the job advertisements have not been ranked in order of importance from the perspective either of the charities or of students, and this again prompts further research.

### References

Akingbola, K. (2020). COVID-19: The Prospects for Nonprofit Human Resource

Management. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, 11(1), 16-20.

<a href="http://doi:10.22230/anserj.2020v11n1a372">http://doi:10.22230/anserj.2020v11n1a372</a>

Allen, J. B. and Shaw, S. (2009). "Everyone rolls up their sleeves and mucks in": Exploring volunteers' motivation and experiences of the motivational climate of a sporting event. *Sport Management Review*, 12(2), 79–90. <a href="http://doi:10.1016/j.smr.2008.12.002">http://doi:10.1016/j.smr.2008.12.002</a>

Anderson, P. and Green, P. (2012). Beyond CV building: the communal benefits of student volunteering. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 3(2), 247–56.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1332/204080512X649388

Andrews, J. & Higson, H. (2008) Graduate employability, 'soft skills' versus 'hard business knowledge': a European study. *Higher education in Europe*. 22(4), 411-422.

Armstrong, M. and Taylor, S. (2017). *Armstrong's Handbook of HRM Practice* (14<sup>th</sup> Edition). Kogan Page.

Barton, E., Bates, E.A. and O'Donovan, R. (2019). "That extra sparkle": students' experiences of volunteering and the impact on satisfaction and employability in higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43(4), 453-466.

https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1365827

Beardwell, J. and Thompson, A. (2014). *Human Resource Management: A Contemporary Approach* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). Pearson.

Bennett, R. (2002) Employers' Demands for Personal Transferable Skills in Graduates: a content analysis of 1000 job advertisements and an associated empirical study, Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 54(4), 457-476.

Blackwell, A. (2021) 'I feel robbed': the disruption, disorder and delays faced by social work students under Covid. Workforce, March 5 2021.

https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2021/03/05/feel-robbed-disruption-disorder-delays-faced-social-work-students-covid/

Boden, R. and Nedeva, M. (2010) Employing discourse: universities and graduate employability, Journal of Education Policy, 25(1), 37-54.

Brooks, R. & Youngson, P. L. (2016). Undergraduate work placements: an analysis of the effects on career progression. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(9), 1563-1578.

https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.988702

Brown, J. (2020) Three in five employers have cancelled work experience because of Covid-19, research reveals, People Management, July 29 2020,

https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/three-in-five-employers-have-cancelled-work-experience-because-of-covid-19#gref.

Butler, P. (2020, April 13). A million volunteer to help NHS and others during Covid-19 outbreak. *The Guardian*. <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/13/a-million-volunteer-to-help-nhs-and-others-during-covid-19-lockdown">https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/13/a-million-volunteer-to-help-nhs-and-others-during-covid-19-lockdown</a>

Calanca, F., Sayfullina, L., Minkas, L., Wagner, C. and Malmi, E. (2019) Responsible team players wanted: An analysis of soft skill requirements in job advertisements, EPJ Data Science, 8(13), 1-20.

Carpenter, J. and Myers, C. K. (2010). Why volunteer? Evidence on the role of altruism, image, and incentives. *Journal of Public Economics*, 94(11-12), 911–920. https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:eee:pubeco:v:94:y:2010:i:11-12:p:911-920 CBI/Pearson (2019) Education and learning for the modern world, November.

https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/3841/12546\_tess\_2019.pdf

Clary, E. G. and Snyder, M. (1999). The Motivations to Volunteer: Theoretical and Practical Considerations. *Current directions in psychological science*, 8(5), 156-159. http://repository.upenn.edu/spp\_papers

Cole, D. and Tibby, M. (2013) Defining and developing your approach to employability: A framework for higher education institutions. York: Higher Education Academy.

Cooman, R. D. and Pepermans, R. (2012) Portraying fitting values in job advertisements, *Personnel Review*, 41(2), 216-232.

CPWO. (2020) *Respond, Recover, Reset: The voluntary sector and Covid-19*, Centre for People, Work and Organisational Practice at NTU. November 2020. <a href="http://cpwop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/11/Respond-recover-reset-the-voluntary-sector-and-COVID-19-November-2020.pdf">http://cpwop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/11/Respond-recover-reset-the-voluntary-sector-and-COVID-19-November-2020.pdf</a>.

Crockford, J., Hordósy, R., & Simms, K. S. (2015). "I really needed a job, like, for money and stuff": Student finance, part-time work and the student experience at a northern red-brick university. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 17(3), 89-109. https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.17.3.89

Crumpton, M. A. (2013). Having a student volunteer program is a win-win. *The Bottom Line*, 26(2), 55-58. http://DOI10.1108/BL-05-2013-0011

Darwen, J. and Rannard, A. G. (2011). Student volunteering in England: a critical moment. *Education* + *Training*, 53(2/3), 177-189. http://DOI10.1108/00400911111115717

Edwards, B., Mooney, L. and Heald, C. (2001). Who Is Being Served? The Impact of Student Volunteering on Local Community Organizations. *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 30(3), 444-461. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764001303003

Ehiyazaryan, E. and Barraclough, N. (2009) Enhancing employability: integrating real world experience in the curriculum, Education + Training, Vol. 51(4), 292 – 308.

Feldman, D. C., Bearden, W. O. and Hardesty, D. M. (2006) Varying the content of job advertisements: The effects of message specificity, *Journal of Advertising*, 35(1), 123-141.

Ferns, S., Dawson, V. and Howitt, C. (2019) A collaborative framework for enhancing graduate employability, International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, Special Issue, 2019, 20(2), 99-111.

Francis, J. E. (2011). The functions and norms that drive university student volunteering. International *Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 16(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.390

Frankham, J. (2017) Employability and higher education: the follies of the 'Productivity Challenge in the Teaching Excellence Framework, Journal of Education Policy, 32(5), 628-641.

Gage, R. L. and Thapa, B. (2012). Volunteer Motivations and Constraints Among College Students: Analysis of the Volunteer Function Inventory and Leisure Constraints Models. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 41(3) 405–430.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011406738

Gevorgyan, V. and Galstyan, M. (2016). Why volunteer? Understanding Armenia's experience. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 7(3), 325–332.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1332/204080516X14722016138748

Ghose, T. and Kassam, M. (2014). Motivations to Volunteer Among College Students in India. *Voluntas*, 25(1), 28–45. http://DOI10.1007/s11266-012-9327-4.

Greaves, L. (2020) Graduating into a pandemic: the impact on university finalists, Prospects Luminate, May, <a href="https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/graduating-into-a-pandemic-the-impact-on-university-finalists">https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/graduating-into-a-pandemic-the-impact-on-university-finalists</a>.

Grönlund, H., Holmes, K., Kang, C., Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., Brudney, J. L., Haski-Leventhal, D., Hustinx, L. Kassam, M., Meijs, L. C. P. M., Pessi, A. B., Ranade, B., Smith, K. A., Yamauchi, N. and Zrinščak, S. (2011). Cultural Values and Volunteering: A Cross-cultural Comparison of Students' Motivation to Volunteer in 13 Countries. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 9(2), 87-106. http://doi.10.1007/s10805-011-9131-6.

Haivas, S., Hofmans, J. and Pepermans, R. (2014). "What Motivates You Doesn't Motivate Me": Individual Differences in the Needs Satisfaction–Motivation Relationship of Romanian Volunteers. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *63* (2), 326–343.

DOI: 10.1111/j.1464-0597.2012.00525.x

Highfliers (2019). *The Graduate Market in 2019*. Highfliers Research Ltd. https://www.highfliers.co.uk/download/2019/graduate\_market/GMReport19.pdf

Hirst, A (2000). Links between Volunteering and Employability. Department for Education and Skills Research Report RR309. <a href="https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4618/1/RR309.pdf">https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4618/1/RR309.pdf</a>

Holdsworth, C. (2010). Why Volunteer? Understanding Motivations For Student Volunteering. British *Journal of Educational Studies*, 58(4), 421-437. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2010.527666

Holdsworth, C. and Quinn, J. (2010). Student volunteering in English higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(1), 113-127. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070903019856

Holdsworth, C. and Brewis, G. (2014). Volunteering, choice and control: a case study of higher education student volunteering. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(2), 204-219. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.815702

Hutchinson, P. (2009) Work ethics: A bad experience. *The Guardian*. 13 January. https://www.theguardian.com/money/blog/2009/jan/13/work-experience-placement

Ishengoma, E. and Vaaland, T. I. (2016) Can university-industry linkages stimulate student employability? Education + Training, Vol. 58(1), 18 – 44.

Khasanzyanova, A. (2017). How volunteering helps students to develop soft skills. International Review of Education, 63(3), 363-369. <a href="http://DOI10.1007/s11159-017-9645-2">http://DOI10.1007/s11159-017-9645-2</a>

Lee, Y. and Won, D. (2011). Attributes influencing college students' participation in volunteering: a conjoint analysis. *International Review of Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 8(2), 149–162. DOI: 10.1007/s12208-011-0074-9

Ling, W. H. and Chui, W. H. (2016). Students' Willingness for Future Volunteering in Hong Kong. *Voluntas*, 27(5), 2311–2329. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9700-9

MacNeela, P. and Gannon, N. (2014). Process and Positive Development: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of University Student Volunteering. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(3) 407–436. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558413510968

McMurray, S., Dutton, M., McQuaid, R. and Richard, A. (2016) Employer demands from business graduates, Education + Training, Vol. 58(1), 112 – 132.

McQuaid, R.W. & Lindsay, C. (2005) The concept of employability, *Urban Studies*, 42, 197-219.

Martin E and McCabe S (2007). Part-time work and postgraduate students: developing the skills for employment? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 6(2): 29–40. http://DOI10.3794/johlste.62.133

Matsouka, K. & Mihail, D. (2016) Graduates' employability: What do graduates and employers think? *Industry and Higher Education*. 30(5), 321-326.

Paisley, C. & Paisley, N. J. (2010). Developing skills via work placements in accounting: students and employer views. *Accounting Forum*, 34(2), 89-108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.accfor.2009.06.001.

Palmer, P. (2015, February 17). Academia must support the voluntary sector to embrace change. [online]. *The Guardian*. <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2015/feb/17/academia-support-voluntary-sector-embrace-change">https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2015/feb/17/academia-support-voluntary-sector-embrace-change</a>

Pan, Y. and Lee, L. (2011) Academic Performance and Perceived Employability of Graduate Students in Business and Management – An Analysis of Nationwide Graduate Destination. Survey. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 25, 91 – 103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.531 Paull, M., Omari, M., MacCallum, J., Young, S., Walker, G., Holmes, K., Haski-Leventhal,
D. and Scott, R. (2017). Matching expectations for successful university student volunteering.
Education + Training, 59(2), 122-134. 10.1108/ET-03-2016-0052

QAA (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) (2019). *Focus on graduate skills: Students' views on graduate skills*. QAA. <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaas/focus-on/focus-on-graduate-skills-student-views-on-graduate-skills.pdf?sfvrsn=8c16c981\_8">https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaas/focus-on/focus-on-graduate-skills-student-views-on-graduate-skills.pdf?sfvrsn=8c16c981\_8</a>

Rao, P. (2021) The Top 10 Risks facing the charity sector in 2021.

https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/the-top-10-risks-facing-the-charity-sector-in-2021/.

Richardson, M., Evans, C. and Gbadamosi, G. (2009). Funding Full-Time Study through Part-Time Work. *Journal of Education and Work*, 22(4), 319 – 334. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080903277394

Rothwell, A. and Charleston, B. (2013) International volunteering: employability, leadership and more, Education + Training, 55(2), 159-173.

Saunders, V. and Zuzel, K. (2010). Evaluating Employability Skills: Employer and Student Perceptions. *Bioscience Education*, 15(2), 1-16. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3108/beej.15.2">https://doi.org/10.3108/beej.15.2</a>

SCVO (2019). Third Sector Forecast January 2019. SCVO.

https://scvo.org.uk/p/30032/2019/02/20/third-sector-forecast-2019

Simon, M. C. (2019). Volunteering for the students in Brasov, *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov Series VII: Social Sciences*, 12(61), 139-146.

https://doi.org/10.31926/but.ssl.2019.12.61.1.13

Smith, K., Holmes, K., Haski-Leventhal, D., Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., & Brudney, J. L. (2010). Motivations and Benefits of Student Volunteering: Comparing Regular, Occasional,

and Non-Volunteers in Five Countries. Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research, 1(1) 65-81.

Smith, L., Callaghan, J. E. M. and Fellin, L. C. (2018). A qualitative study exploring the experience and motivations of UK Samaritan volunteers: "Why do we do it?". *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, http://DOI10.1080/03069885.2018.1546378

Stukas, A. A., Hoye, R., Nicholson, M., Brown, K. M. and Aisbett, L. (2016). Motivations to Volunteer and Their Associations With Volunteers' Well-Being. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(1) 112–132. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764014561122

Teng, W., Ma, C., Pahlevansharif, S. and Turner, J. J. (2019) Graduate readiness for the employment market of the 4th industrial revolution: The development of soft employability skills. Education + Training, 61(5), 590-604.

Thompson, D. W. (2017). How valuable is 'short project' placement experience to higher education students? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 41(3), 413-424. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2015.1117601

Tomlinson, M. (2012) Graduate employability: A review of conceptual and empirical themes. Higher Education Policy, 25 (4) 407–31.

UKCES (2014) *Not just making tea*...*Reinventing work experience*. London, UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Walmsley, A., R. Rhodri Thomas, and S. Jameson, S. (2006). Surprise and Sense Making: Undergraduate Placement Experiences in SMEs. *Education* + *Training*, 48 (5): 360–372. 10.1108/00400910610677063

Warburton, J., Moore, M. and Oppenheimer, M. (2017). Challenges to the recruitment and retention of volunteers in traditional non-profit organisations: A case of Australia Meals-on-

Wheels. International Journal of Public Administration, 41(16), 1361-1373.

https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2017.1390581

Wellman, N. (2010). The employability attributes required of new marketing graduates. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 28(7), 908 – 930.

http://DOI10.1108/02634501011086490

Williamson, I., Wildbur, D., Bell, K., Tanner, J. and Matthews, H. (2018). Benefits to University Students Through Volunteering in a Health Context: A New Model. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66(3), 383-402.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2017.1339865

Wilton N (2011). Do employability skills really matter in the UK graduate labour market? The case of business and management graduates. *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(1): 85–100. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017010389244

Totaljobs (2020) What are the top 10 skills that will get you a job when you graduate? *Targetjobs*. <a href="https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/career-planning/273051-the-top-10-skills-thatll-get-you-a-job-when-you-graduate.">https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/career-planning/273051-the-top-10-skills-thatll-get-you-a-job-when-you-graduate.</a>

Skills for Care & Skills for Health (2013). *Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England*. <a href="www.skillsforcare.org.uk">www.skillsforcare.org.uk</a> & <a href="www.skillsforhealth.org.uk">www.skillsforhealth.org.uk</a>, <a href="https://www.thebls.com/public/uploads/documents/documents/99221507851651.pdf">https://www.thebls.com/public/uploads/documents/d

Smith, K., Holmes, K., Haski-Leventhal, D., Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., & Brudney, J. L. (2010). Motivations and Benefits of Student Volunteering: Comparing Regular, Occasional, and Non-Volunteers in Five Countries. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, *I*(1) 65-81.: <a href="http://repository.upenn.edu/spp\_papers">http://repository.upenn.edu/spp\_papers</a>

Taylor, L. (2020) Placements post Covid-19 – time for re-evaluation? Advance HE, July 12 2020, <a href="https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/placements-post-covid-19-time-re-evaluation">https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/placements-post-covid-19-time-re-evaluation</a>

Volunteer Scotland (2020) *Benefits of volunteering*. <a href="https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-volunteers/why-volunteer/benefits-of-volunteering/">https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-volunteers/why-volunteer/benefits-of-volunteering/</a>

YouGov (2020) Covid-19 and charity volunteering declines.

https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2020/05/05/covid-19-and-charity-volunteering-declines-brits-w. [accessed on 5 August 2020].

Appendix 1

List of total skills mentioned based on type of jobs

Employability Skills	Care/ Support Services	Retail/ Shop/ Event	Management	Education/ Learning	Legal/ Finance	Transport	Total
Communication	29	15	16	4	4	4	72
Teamworking	8	18	11	4	3	0	44
ICT/Digital literacy	9	4	10	1	2	1	27
Interpersonal working/Networking/Negotiation/Empathy	11	4	6	1	0	2	24
Organisation	8	3	9	1	2	0	23
Confidence	6	6	7	1	3	0	23
Passionate/Dedicated	8	8	2	1	0	0	19
Energetic/Enthusiasm	7	6	1	3	0	1	18
Reliable	5	5	1	2	2	0	15
Customer service	3	9	2	0	0	1	15
Resilience	2	4	1	3	2	1	13
Leadership	0	1	7	0	0	0	8
Managing ambiguity	1	2	2	0	2	0	7
Trustworthy	1	5	0	0	0	0	6
Problem solving	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Numeracy/Budgeting	0	3	1	0	0	1	5
Neat/Attention to detail	1	4	0	0	0	0	5
Innovative	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Helpful/Friendly/Compassionate	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
Time management	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sensible	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Analytical	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Covid-free	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	105	104	79	22	21	11	342

Table 1. Type of volunteering jobs.

Type of job	Frequency	Percentage		
Care/Support services	91	41.55		
Retail/Shop/Event	55	25.11		
Management	37	16.89		
Legal/Finance	14	6.39		
Transport	11	5.02		
Education/Learning	11	5.02		
Total	219	100		

Table 2. Employability skills mentioned in job advertisements.

Number of skills mentioned	Care/ support services	Retail/ Shop/ Event	Management	Legal/ Finance	Transport	Education/ Learning	Total
0	45	23	10	5	5	4	92
1	18	5	5	4	2	2	36
2	13	5	6	0	3	0	27
3	11	11	4	1	1	1	29
4	2	5	6	1	0	3	17
5	4	3	4	2	0	1	14
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
9	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	93	55	36	13	11	11	219

Table 3. Employability and transferable skills cited by job category.

Skills	Care/Support services	Retail/Shop/Event	Management	Education/ Learning	Transport	Legal/ Finance	Total
Communication	29	15	16	4	4	4	72
Teamworking	8	18	11	4	0	3	44
Interpersonal/Networking	11	4	6	1	2	0	24
Problem Solving	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Leadership	0	1	7	0	0	0	8
Organisation	8	4	9	1	0	2	24
Confidence	6	6	7	1	0	3	23
Managing Ambiguity	1	2	2	0	0	2	7
Resilience	2	4	1	3	1	2	13
ICT/Digital literacy	9	4	10	1	1	2	27
Innovative/Enterprising	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Analytical	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	77	61	71	16	8	19	252

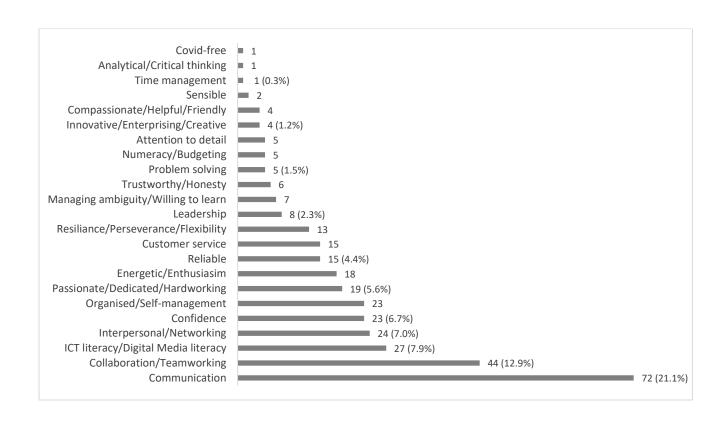


Figure 1. Skills mentioned in voluntary jobs advertisement.