

Volunteering Service

Annual Review 2018-19



Introduction

The Volunteering Service exists to connect UCL with other communities across London, primarily by engaging students in enriching volunteering opportunities. We are a service of Students' Union UCL, directly funded by the UCL Office of the Vice Provost (Education and Student Affairs).

We have three main services:

- Community Partners – we place UCL students with volunteering opportunities at our network of around 350 community organisations.
- Student-Led Volunteering Programme – we support students to set up and run their own community projects.
- Community Research Initiative for Students – we help create research collaborations between Postgraduate Taught students and community organisations.

In addition we provide advice and support to UCL colleagues on issues relating to volunteering, and help them build links with London's voluntary and community sector.



Volunteer Numbers

In 2018/19, we recruited and supported 2209 UCL student volunteers, a slight decrease on the previous year. However those volunteers gave, on average, more of their time – collectively they contributed 63400 hours, slightly up on 2017/18.



Impacts on communities

Community Partners

We surveyed our community partners, asking them about the difference that UCL students had made. The most common impacts were strengthening bonds within communities, improving health & wellbeing and improving access to educational opportunities.

‘Thinking about the academic year since September 2018, and only about your UCL student volunteers, to what extent would you agree with the following statements? Our UCL student volunteers have helped to ...?’ (n=116)

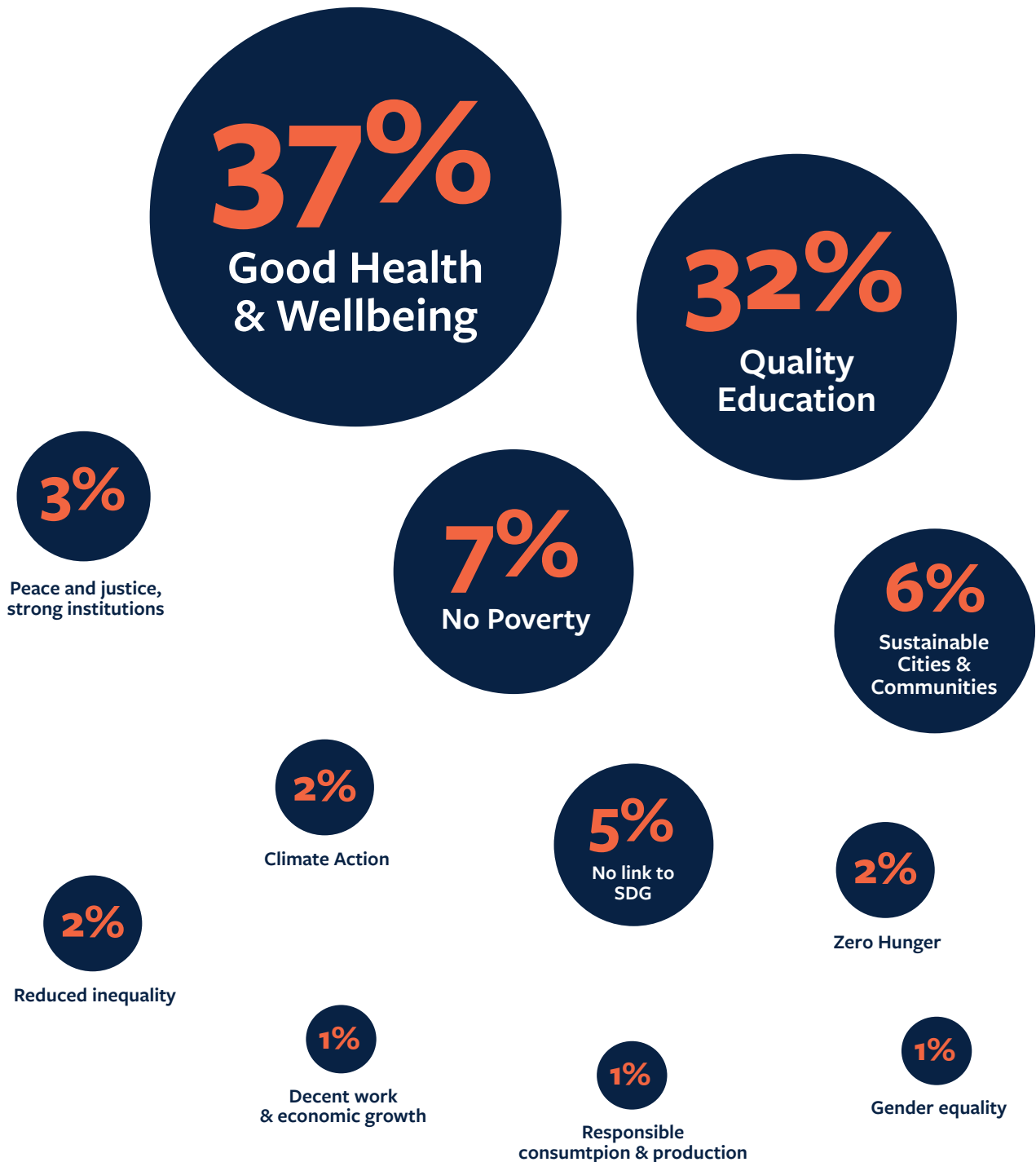
Impact	Agree strongly + Agree
Strengthen bonds within the community	77%
Improve the health and wellbeing of others	69%
Improve access to educational opportunities	56%
Improve people’s access to the labour market	44%
Improve participation in sport or cultural activities	43%
Improve gender equality	43%
Combat the effects of poverty	38%
Create safer neighbourhoods	25%
Improve the physical environment	23%
Influence local or national government, or public opinion	23%

“The support and contribution UCL students have provided Caris Camden Families has proved invaluable, they have built great relationships with our children, staff and parents and helped out managing our art and craft activities and taken part in sports and outside games. We only ask our volunteers to commit to six sessions but some of our UCL volunteers have stayed with us for up to one year and become so involved they almost feel like a CCF staff member. Their contribution has had a great, positive impact for CCF and we am very grateful and appreciative of their support and look forward to welcoming more students in 2020.”

Roy Normile, Caris Camden Families

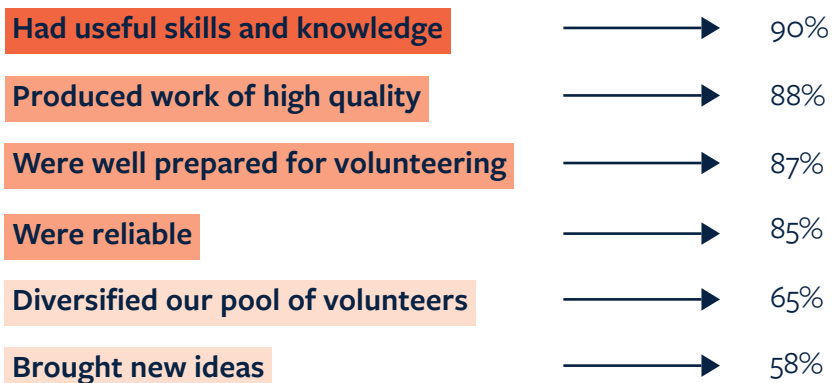
UN Sustainable Development Goals

Separately to the survey, we also analysed volunteer roles against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with 95% of them having a relationship to one of the goals. 'Good Health & Wellbeing' and 'Quality Education' were the most common areas of impact.



Community organisations generally think highly of UCL student volunteers, with 90% saying they have useful skills and knowledge, 88% produced work of high quality.

‘Thinking about the academic year since August 2018, and only about your UCL student volunteers, to what extent would you agree with the following statements? Our UCL student volunteers ...’ % agreeing or agreeing strongly, n=86.



“At Holborn Community Association we love working with the UCL Volunteering Service and with the UCL students who volunteer with us. We love your commitment to working with the community and to finding new and innovative ways of working that are of maximum benefit to the students and partner organizations.”

Kate Blackshaw, Holborn Community Association, Camden.



By Students' Union UCL Volunteering Service

Student-Led Volunteering Programme

We supported 68 student-led projects in 2018/19. Each was asked to submit an evaluation report, and we used these to analyse their impact.

Percentage of SLPs reporting specific impacts



Overall, the groups benefited 4880 people who were not UCL students.

“Working with students has been a joy. The most important things an organisation like us need are partners who are flexible, supportive, adaptable, sense of humour and patience. UCL students have all of the above in abundance. Looking forward to 2020 and the two projects we have planned so far.”

Linda Kelly, One Housing

Case Study

Politeach aim to sow the seeds of future political engagement by teaching British Politics and democracy to primary school students across London. They worked in 8 schools, engaging 280 children. 96% of teachers felt the sessions had helped them meet requirements to teach British values, and 100% wanted Politeach to come back for more sessions. The group also gathered feedback from the children themselves, with 86% giving the sessions a smiley face.

Read More

studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/articles/volunteering-with-politeach-has-made-me-want-to-become-teacher

You can read the community impact report at:

studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/about/impact#communities



By Students' Union UCL Volunteering Service

Where UCL Students Volunteer

Camden remains by far the most popular borough for UCL students to volunteer in, though there has been a drop compared to the previous year. This is largely due to the relative increase in students volunteering with community organisations, who tend to be a bit more evenly spread over London compared with those on Student-Led Projects.

Borough	Number of volunteers	% of volunteers
Camden	987	36%
Westminster	368	13%
Islington	250	9%
Hackney	220	8%
Newham	166	6%
Tower Hamlets	129	5%
Kensington and Chelsea	126	5%
Lambeth	87	3%
Southwark	86	3%
Haringey	52	2%

Students volunteered in 27 boroughs in total. Boroughs with less than 2% of volunteers not shown

UCL East

The number of students volunteering in one of the 5 east London Olympic boroughs increased – they now represent 21% of our volunteers, giving 13100 hours of their time. We have been building more partnerships in east London in advance of the opening of the new UCL East campus on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

“Wow! What a fantastic group of volunteers that came from UCL. The guests at the shelter were so thrilled to be supported by such lovely and enthusiastic students. We are very grateful for the support that we received from UCL and it made such a valuable impact to some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Thank you UCL.”

Nikki Barnett, C4WS Homeless Project

Read More

You can see more information about where our students volunteer studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/about/impact#boroughs

“UCL Student volunteers are an important and valuable element of the services provided by Community Links Trust Ltd. They make a profound difference, both to the staff they work alongside and - crucially - act as a bridge between Community Links and the service users they support.”

Jules Morgan-Bert,
Community Links,
Newham.

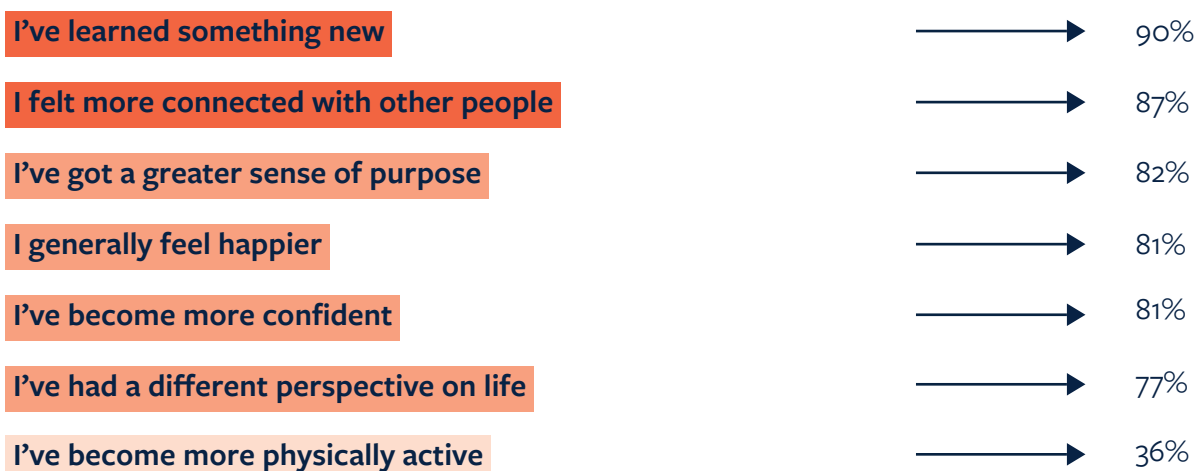


By Students' Union UCL Volunteering Service

Impacts on Students

In our annual student survey, we took an in-depth look at the impact of volunteering on student wellbeing. Significant numbers said that through volunteering they'd learned something new, felt more connected with other people, and had got a greater sense of purpose, amongst other impacts.

“To what degree would you agree with the following statements? Because of my volunteering ...% agreeing or agreeing strongly, Volunteering Service volunteers only, n=276



We also asked students about the impact on employability and on their studies:

- **55% of volunteers felt that their participation had improved their chances of paid employment.**
- **50% said that their volunteering had given them insights into their degree.**

Experience of volunteering

We asked students to rate the quality of their volunteering experiences, comparing responses from those who'd engaged with our projects with those who had volunteered elsewhere. Students who volunteered on projects supported by the Volunteering Service reported higher satisfaction than students volunteering elsewhere – this is consistent with the results from 17/18. The gap is widest when looking at training, feeling supported, and emergency procedures.

“Looking at your overall experience with the organisations/projects you volunteered with in the last year, how much would you agree with the following statements?” Shows % of volunteers agreeing with “This is TRUE for ALL of my volunteering”, responses for Volunteering Service volunteers (n=377), compared with students who'd volunteered in other ways (n=44).

	VS	Non-VS
I felt welcomed	90%	79%
I was satisfied with the application/registration process	84%	79%
The organisers showed their appreciation of my efforts	84%	81%
I felt like I was making a difference	82%	79%
I felt supported by the supervisors/leaders	81%	67%
I received the training and/or information I needed to be an effective volunteer	80%	65%
The leaders were open to my ideas	79%	69%
I knew what to do in an emergency	70%	58%
I knew how to claim travel expenses	52%	44%

Read the full student survey report at studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/about/impact#students

Case Studies

Arina Al Rhosky, Engineers for International Development (EFID) Outreach

“I joined EFID in my first year, to give back to society the knowledge I’ve learned as a STEMM student. I knew I wanted to continue being a part of this Project, after seeing how excited and committed the students were in building their recyclable roller coasters: the focus of our outreach lessons. Along the way, we imparted our engineering knowledge on the structure and strength of the roller coaster. The best part of sharing engineering tips is hearing young students say ‘I didn’t think of that!’ or ‘I want to build roller coasters when I grow up’. It’s heart-warming knowing that some of the students you’re teaching might actually end up taking up engineering or a STEMM related career as well in the future.”

Clara Lim Jing Tian, Dancelt!

“Dance It! is UCL Dance Society’s Student-Led Volunteering Project, which centres on the desire to share our passion for dance and give back to our community. I cannot even begin to describe the joy and fulfilment I experienced during my first time leading one of the workshops. The energy and engagement the students brought to the session truly surpassed my expectations. I was initially nervous about whether they would enjoy the routine I prepared but, like a lot of things in life, it all worked out in the end. Whenever I look across the room and see people of any age grooving to the music, I am reminded of why I volunteer, and it brings about an amazing feeling that I still cannot put into words.”



Impacts on UCL

In 2018/19, we provided 80% of academic departments with information about volunteering opportunities relevant to their students' courses.

We also provided advice and support about volunteering issues in general and helped build links with London's voluntary & community sector.

In 2018/19 we supported 41 colleagues in 38 different departments with 49 distinct requests.

Faculty	Number of requests
Professional Services	18
Social & Historical Sciences	5
Arts & Humanities	4
Brain Sciences	4
Medicine	4
Built Environment	3
IOE	3
Life Sciences	2
Maths & Physical Sciences	2
Engineering	1
LAW	1
Pop Health Sciences	1
SSEES	1

“The Students’ Union UCL Volunteering Service has been a great help to staff and students on the Education and International Development Cluster of four MA programmes. We have around 180-200 students on the programme and they are often looking for ways to enhance their professional development. The Volunteering Service provides them with opportunities to do just that. Moreover, we have explored with the Service how we might work together to develop a new professional development module. It has been very helpful sharing with them ideas about how we might best frame the module conceptually and clarify the practical and ethical issues involved.”

Dr Ian Warwick,
Department of
Education, Practice and
Society, UCL Institute of
Education.

The nature of the support was as follows:

Nature of support	Number of requests
Advice about own volunteering programme	11
Publicised event / activity to our partners	9
Advice - other	8
Advice about student placements	5
Advice / support with curriculum development	4
Assistance in finding research participants	3
Practical support with own volunteer programme	3
Providing content or data	2
Advice about staff volunteering	2
Assistance in finding participants for public engagement projects	1
Publicised event / activity to UCL students	1

In addition to this one-to-one support, we co-organised two ‘Creating Connections’ networking events in partnership with UCL Public Engagement Unit, bringing together UCL staff and representatives of community organisations.



By Ondre Roach of Mediorite

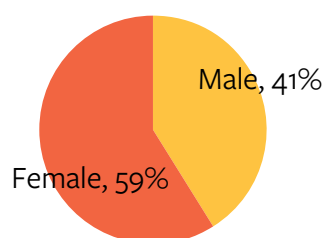
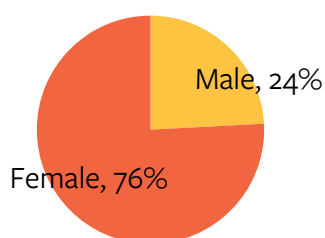
Who Volunteers?

As in previous years, Women, Undergraduates, and students from outside the EU/EEA were more likely to volunteer.

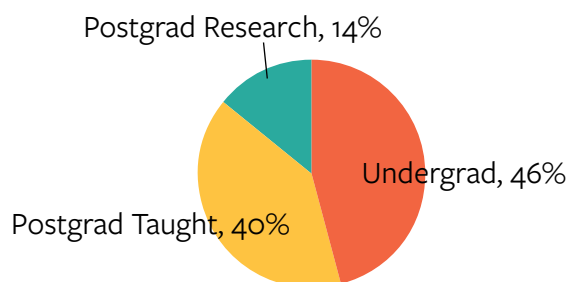
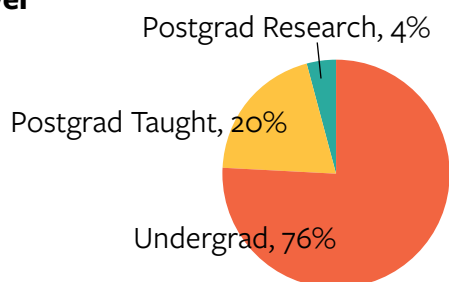
Volunteering Service

UCL

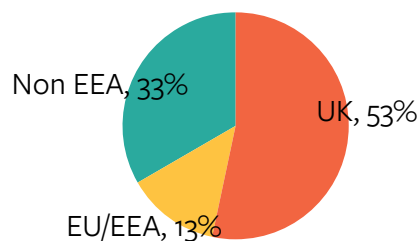
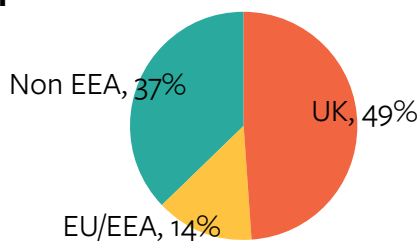
Gender



Study Level



UK/International



The following groups of students were also more likely to volunteer:

- Students with disabilities.
- UK students of non-white ethnic origin.
- International students of Indian ethnic origin.
- UK Undergraduates from neighbourhoods with lower participation rates in higher education.

The departments with the highest participation rates in volunteering with us were:

Department	Faculty	Number of volunteers	% of students volunteering	% of undergrads volunteering
Institute for Women's Health	PHS	17	18%	100%
UCL Medical School	MDS	285	15%	17%
Arts and Sciences BAsc	ART	67	14%	14%
Laws	LAW	131	12%	19%
Institute for Global Health	PHS	26	11%	12%
Division of Biosciences	LIF	205	10%	12%
Natural Sciences	MAP	44	10%	11%
Institute of Cardiovascular Science	PHS	9	10%	58%
Geography	SHS	61	9%	14%
Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care	PHS	23	9%	22%
English Language and Literature	ART	36	9%	10%
Medical Physics and Bio-medical Engineering	ENG	31	9%	18%
History of Art	SHS	22	8%	8%

Looking at all faculties, participation rates were:

Faculty	Total VS Vol-unteers	% of students volunteering	% of under-graduates volunteering
LAWS	131	12%	19%
Medical Sciences	350	10%	17%
Life Sciences	273	8%	11%
Population & Health Sciences	98	8%	34%
Arts & Humanities	236	6%	8%
Social & Historical Sciences	327	6%	7%
UCL	2208	5%	9%
Brain Sciences	140	5%	13%
Maths & Physical Sciences	220	5%	7%
Engineering	206	3%	5%
Inst of Education	177	3%	10%
Built Environment	50	1%	1%

Read More

Read the report on volunteering participation at

studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/about/impact#participation

Community Research Initiative for Students

The Community Research Initiative for Students (CRIS) exists to enhance the experience of UCL's postgraduate (taught) students (PGT) by supporting them to undertake their dissertation in collaboration with a not-for-profit organisation. CRIS formally started on 11 November 2018 when the Community Research Manager took up her post. The rest of 2018/19 focussed on developing the programme infrastructure, establishing links with UCL departments and relevant community organisations, and engaging with a trial cohort of PGT students.

For the trial cohort, 24 students were supported. 14% of full time students from the initial cohort went on to undertake fully collaborative dissertations with a community partner. Our feedback from students who completed other stages was that their interaction with CRIS had still helped to enrich their experience of their dissertation.

Community research initiative stage	Student numbers
Advice and guidance via email	7
Face-to face consultations	4
Engaged with Community Organisation	10
Dissertation	3

A short service evaluation of 2018-19 students and community partners took place in January 2020. Key findings are that for student participants, the community research initiative resulted in increased skills, increased feelings of belonging in the UCL and London communities, and offered support that filled perceived gaps in programme provision.

“Thanks for all your work on this, it is turning what I assume would otherwise be dissertation dread into research excitement.”

MSc Public Policy student

“I think the benefits of the CRIS are help in the idea generation stage, help making a conceptual topic specific to a real world problem, potentially getting additional guidance and data for one's project, and of course, making a clearly defined positive impact on the world through the dissertation by partnering with a charity.”

MSc Smart Cities & Urban Design student

The community organisation respondent reported that the community research initiative represented the opportunity to dedicate time and space to intellectual activities otherwise impossible during busy day-to-day activities and to receive intellectual input by world-class researchers.

Read More

You can read the full CRIS year 1 report at studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/cris/year-1-evaluation

“I knew I wanted to do research on behalf of a socially focused organisation for my master’s dissertation, but before I came across CRIS I lacked the connections and inspiration. Straight after meeting with CRIS I felt energised to start my research. From the initial meeting they provided advice and connections based on my research interests and were very encouraging of my abilities as a researcher. I highly recommend the program.”

MSc Public Policy student



Read More

The full survey reports and the demographic/course data are available at:
studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/about/impact

January 2020

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