

# Volunteering Service

## Student Survey 2018-19

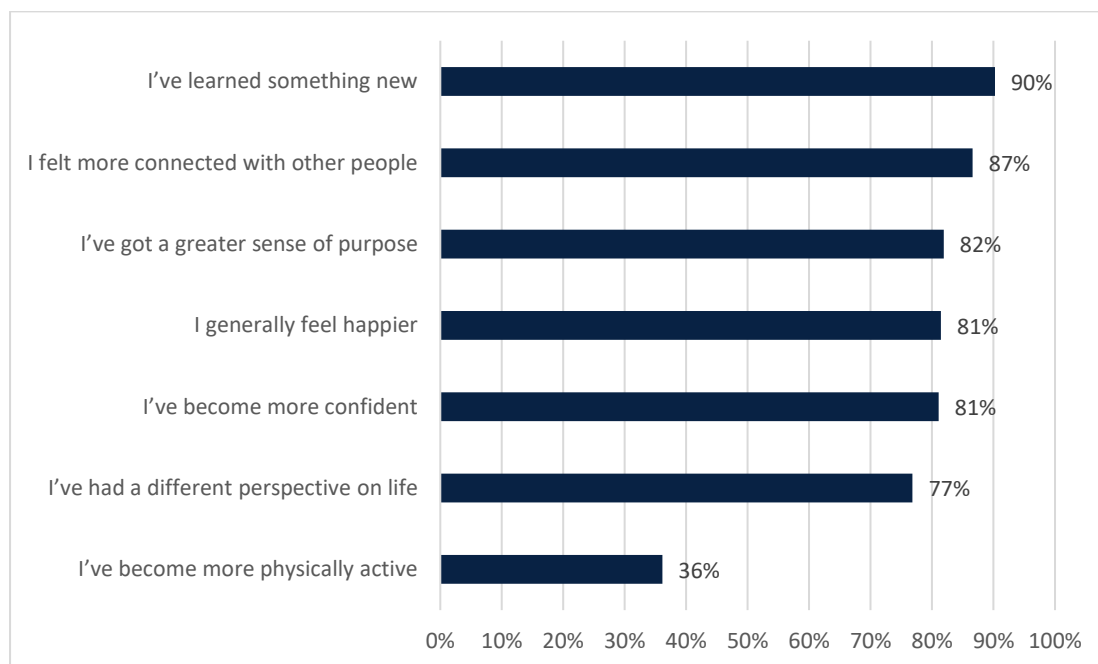
Between June and September of 2018, the Volunteering Service conducted its annual online survey of subscribers to our newsletter. We received 536 completed responses: 280 had volunteered on one of our projects (representing 13% of our volunteers), 94 had volunteered elsewhere, and 162 who had not volunteered at all.

### Impact of volunteering

In our 2017 survey, 96% said they had had developed new skills, 76% of volunteers felt that their well-being had improved, 55% of volunteers had gained insights into their academic studies.

This year we looked specifically at the impact on student wellbeing, asking students in what way it may have been improved. We generated a list using data from the open questions in the 2017 survey.

“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 volunteers whether they felt volunteering had improved their chances of paid employment, with 55% answering positively. This is interesting – in our 2018 survey, we asked students about whether they'd developed specific skills useful for employment, and 99% said they had. The gap between these two results suggests that there is much more to be done to help students reflect on their skill development and how they might talk about their volunteering when applying for jobs.

We also asked students if volunteering had given them insights into their degree – 50% said that it had, a decline on the 2017 figure of 55%.

## Experience of Volunteering

We also asked students them to rate their experiences of volunteering against a range of indicators used to measure the quality of volunteer management. We compared responses from those who'd volunteered on our projects, and those who had volunteered elsewhere.

“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%

Students who volunteered on projects supported by the Volunteering Service reported higher satisfaction than students volunteering elsewhere – this is consistent with the results from last year. The gap is widest when looking at training, feeling supported, and emergency procedures.

## The Volunteering Service

We rate satisfaction by looking at the percentage of students saying a particular service is ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Student satisfaction is generally on a par with previous surveys – ranging between 62% and 84%, with an average of 79%. Students have an option to say that they haven’t used a service, so numbers rating the services from 421 (general publicity) to 237 (leading your own community project).

“How would you rate our following services?” % answering ‘good’ or ‘very good’, n=237 to 421, depending on usage of service



For the first time, we asked students how they rated us on ‘supporting you to lead your own community project’, which was by far our lowest rated service. However, probably the majority of those answering wouldn’t have actually led a project. The result perhaps indicates that we need to better communicate to all students about the Student-led Volunteering Programme.

A small survey of 19 project leaders attending a networking event in May 2019 indicated good levels of satisfaction with the support they had received. 88% rated admin support, 90% rated support in building partnerships, and 94% rated support meetings as good or very good.

Finally, we asked two open questions about what students liked and disliked about our service.

**What do you like most about the way the Volunteering Service works? Open question, % of answers falling into category, n=330, top 10 categories**

Category of response	Number of responses	% of responses
Newsletters	90	27%
Range of opportunities	83	25%
Supportive / helpful / friendly	55	17%
Communication	44	13%
Ease of use	37	11%
website / directory	26	8%
One-off volunteering	19	6%
Well organised	17	5%
Student-led Projects	13	4%
Volunteering Fairs	13	4%

These results are in line with those from 17/18, with positive comments about the newsletter the most common (though the percentage of comments on this topic has declined). The range of opportunities, the supportiveness / helpfulness of the team, and quality of communications were the next most frequently cited likes.

Some typical comments:

So many options, the newsletter comes frequently

Easy to find opportunities, very helpful newsletter

Frequent emails that provides you with up to date volunteering opportunities

There's such a huge variety of volunteering available in every category for all different lengths of time! And the VSU seem really interested in getting students much more involved than previously, as well as listening to our opinions to constantly improve

Easy to find a variety of volunteering opportunities which caters towards a wide range of skills so very easy to find a role that suits you.

The huge range of opportunities available and the support throughout the volunteering period

The office team are very friendly and helpful. There is funding available to help volunteers host events.

The communication and reminders and updates - ensuring i stayed connected through my time at ucl and it was clear where to go if I wanted to find voluntary roles.

Very good at keeping in touch and supportive

Easy access - all information was provided online

The volunteering fairs, especially for me the museums and heritage one, was very useful in finding a specific volunteering role in a sector that I really wanted to work in. It made the whole process of finding volunteering work so much easier.

Its possible to do a one-off opportunity in different fields, no matter the degree course.

Feels official and enables the student-led projects to run smoothly.

**'What do you like least about the way the Volunteering Service works?'** Open question, % of answers falling into category, n=298, top 10 categories.

Category of response	Number of responses	% of responses
Nothing!	86	29%
Not enough choice of roles	25	8%
Not a personalised service	23	8%
Need more support in finding volunteering	22	7%

Category of response	Number of responses	% of responses
Need to improve publicity	21	7%
Too many emails	20	7%
The process for signing up to volunteer roles	16	5%
The support for Student-led Projects	16	5%
Need to improve communication	15	5%
Don't know!	11	4%

Again, this list is fairly consistent with last year, with 'Nothing' by far the most popular response. Beyond that, lack of choice or personalisation, poor publicity, and a need for more support were the most commonly identified issues. Interestingly, the percentage of people mentioning the newsletter dropped from 7% last year (4<sup>th</sup> most frequent comment) to 3% this year (11<sup>th</sup> most frequent comment).

Some typical responses:

Not enough variety of volunteering place/type. E.g. Lots of volunteering in medical sector, but not much in others.

Volunteer works are limited. I hope UCL volunteering service can offer more interesting and meaningful works for more people.

Regarding the volunteering fairs, I believe that they should be better advertised, as few people find out about them.

The website should be better publicised on campus as many people I know weren't aware that you could find roles through it.

Although I like the breadth, more ads specific to my degree should be immediately visible.

I'd prefer if there were more volunteering jobs closely related to this field of work I am interested in.

Not many courses specific options of neuropsychology. would be nice to have some volunteer work at the nearby hospitals.

Not much support with applications once you have registered interest.

It is hard to go from the browsing stage to actually picking a volunteering opportunity and starting. There needs to be some more support given to help choose the best opportunity and to get started.

Something the mails get overwhelming and flood my inbox.

The registration process could be simpler.

Lots of admin work when you are running an organisation of your own!

Some more clarity would be helpful- should I have arranged my volunteering directly with the organisation (as I did ) or should I have contacted them through you?

The overlap between the likes and dislikes is noticeable – particularly in breadth of choice, level of support offered, quality/quantity of our communications, and support for Student-led Projects. This suggests there is a large cohort who we’re serving well and a smaller but significant one which we are not.

## Non-volunteers

We also asked those respondents who hadn’t volunteered whether there was anything we could have done to help them.

Is there anything we at the Volunteering Service could have done to help you volunteer? Open question, % of answers falling into category, n=102, top 10 categories.

Category of response	Number of responses	% of responses
Nothing you could have done – other reason	21	21%
Nothing you could have done – I just don’t have enough time	19	19%
Better publicity	15	15%
More events	10	10%
More relevant volunteering roles	10	10%
Support in applying for roles	10	10%
Something related to my degree	8	8%
Better newsletters	6	6%
Improve administration	6	6%

The two largest group of comments were that the Volunteering Service couldn’t have done anything. However, a fair number of these said that they didn’t have enough time. This suggests we have much more to do in promoting our one-off volunteering programme.

The other comments align with the list of ‘dislikes’ – improved publicity, choice, communication and support.

Students’ Union UCL Volunteering Service

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