

How to Volunteer Meaningfully

Consider your current skills and your career goals:

1. What skills and abilities are in demand in your field?
2. What skills are missing from your current work experience?
3. Do you have experience in higher-level skills: responsibility for people, money or other resources? In short, decision making roles?
4. Does your future career plan include a field in which volunteering is part of the corporate practices?
5. What organizations have the need for the skills you want to develop?



Identify skills and experiences you wish to have.

Sources of information for this include:

- job ads for current jobs in your field
- informational interviews with people who do similar jobs
- discussions with Human Resource staff
- other students like yourself who are volunteering
- Community agency directories (visit the Career Development Centre to see ours.)

Skill sets to consider

Leadership

Mentoring, teaching, facilitating, guiding,

Presentation

Public speaking, creation of publicity materials

Administration

Office work and professional reception skills

Coordination

Putting together materials and people, organizing groups

Computer or Technical skills

Data entry, creation of programs to help organize information

Support/Care of others

Meeting clients and taking information, providing companionship, assisting in the work of other therapeutic workers



What if your strengths are not one of the more common skills in demand by organizations?

They may have needs within their organization that they do not advertise, such as:

- Data entry
- Treasury and financial duties (especially smaller societies and agencies)
- Office reception
- Public relations work
- IT work: webpage design and maintenance, for example
- Research
- Physical work on sites
- Other work closely related to skills you have studied or developed on your own time.



Contact agencies who are involved in aspects in which you are interested. State your goals and ask for relevant roles.

This may take some time. Agencies need to know you are in fact equipped with the knowledge about them and the skills to do the job before they let you speak for them or represent them.

Some agencies need security checks done because of their clientele or the sensitivity of their information.

Indicate the time you have available and the length of time you will have to volunteer. Some areas like to have volunteers be consistent for a number of months.

If you are not able to guarantee a specific amount of time, try working for an event. Work up to the event and if necessary make sure you are there on the day.

Use your volunteering as part of your networking- keep a record of the people you worked with, who you supervised, or who supervised you. Talk to the people you volunteer with and see if anyone there has some knowledge of or participation in the field of your choice.

Would you like some help getting to know some of your volunteering options?


Please contact us at the Career Development Centre to view our volunteer opportunities through our webpage (insert page here) or our hardcover resources.

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We can help you develop the list of skills needed and provide input on relevant opportunities.




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CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Career Information • Resources • Résumé & Cover Letters

Please call to make an appointment to talk to us or drop by our office to view our resources.

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CAREER SERVICES

Career Counselling • Assessments • Career Development Centre

Starting your career?

Do you want to build your professional skill range?

Unsure how to meet many people in your chosen field?

Don't know how to communicate and prove your skills?



Volunteer!

Volunteering is often seen as working for free. In reality, it is a chance to demonstrate the skills and interest in the types of activities for which you are looking. Employers often look for community awareness and proven professionalism



Benefits of Volunteering

- Gain people to act as referrals outside of the classroom atmosphere
- Gain opportunity to network with people and find sources of information or people of influence in your field
- Demonstrate your professional attitude and personal initiative to work.