Mission statement
The Volunteering Service helps students enhance their university experience by connecting them with the local community as well as UK-based volunteering opportunities with Third Sector organisations, primarily by engaging students in rewarding volunteering opportunities. The Service offers an online volunteering brokerage, student-led volunteering societies, organises events, as well as advice, resources, funding, awards and recognition to students.
Total volunteers: 913

- Total female: 526
- Total male: 221
- Unspecified gender: 166

Unspecified degree status:
- Undergraduate: 615
- Postgraduate: 125
- Non-students: 16

Hours volunteered: 11,689

Partner organisations: 51

Beneficiaries: 2,550

- Female: 1,402
- Male: 1,022
- Unspecified gender: 126
- Disabilities: 10

Total Spend of Volunteering Societies: £9,593.08
Here are some examples of exciting things that our Volunteering Societies are getting up to:

▲ Arts & Heritage Volunteer Group – connecting students to sector opportunities. Held a workshop about how to shape up a CV for the sector, a careers fair with the University’s Careers Service, helped facilitate an event for ‘Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites’ at the National Museum of Scotland

▲ Best Buddies – social club for adults with learning disabilities. Provided a weekly social club to connect students with adults with learning disabilities from the wider community

▲ Children’s Holiday Venture (CHV) – activities for disadvantaged local children. Held regular CHV night outs, Kids Camp and day trips for children have fun and make new friends

▲ Dirty Weekender Conservation Volunteers – practical conservation work. Cleared a section Figgate park in preparation of planting a fruit border, removed Salmonberry from Costorphine Hill, improved the pond at Blairgowrie, helped develop a community garden in Duddingston

▲ Edinburgh Archaeological Outreach Project (EAOP) – bringing archaeology to children. Attended 4 primary school classes in Leith to do a short talk on archaeology and facilitate 3 activities, including looking at ancient animal bones and sites

▲ Foreign Language Outreach (FLO) – early learning of French and Spanish. 7 students facilitated teaching French or Spanish to children in primary schools in and around Edinburgh

▲ Lloyds Scholars – 56 students took on varied activities in the community

▲ Mandarin Language Project – learning of Mandarin language and culture. Facilitated teaching Mandarin to children in primary schools in East Lothian and Midlothian

▲ NEW! Edinburgh Music Outreach Society – connecting music students to local hospitals and care homes. Facilitated bi-weekly visits to Liberton Hospital to provide music for patients

▲ Patient Outreach Project (POP) – interacting with elderly patients. Visited patients on a regular basis and engaged with volunteers

▲ Teddy Bear Hospital – teaching children about health and healthcare. Educated children about health, the importance of physical activity and staying safe, through a variety of fun activities
Volunteering Hub

In 2016 we launched the online volunteering system which acts as a brokerage between Third Sector organisations and students, where students can search and apply for volunteering roles. It functions as a platform for students to capture their volunteering experience and achievements, including: activities, hours, skills obtained and awards gained. These tools support CV building for employability, encouraging long term thinking for post-university life. The system has been renamed Volunteering Hub to provide transparency.

615
NEW volunteers

1,831
Total volunteers

92
NEW Organisations

254
Total organisations

906
Applications made

142
Opportunities

Projects funded:

The Dirty Weekenders Conservation Volunteers received £500 and travelled to Davie Park in Blairgowrie, Perthshire, to help with park maintenance including the removal of pondweed to increase biodiversity.

The Dirty Weekenders Conservation Volunteers received £228 and helped remove litter from Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park.

The Dirty Weekenders Conservation Volunteers received £640 and travelled to Fort William to work on path maintenance, habitat management and tree planting in Glen Nevis.

Best Buddies Edinburgh received £250 and organised a Christmas meal to bridge gaps, combat loneliness and create social cohesion for those in the community with learning disabilities.

Edinburgh Archaeological Outreach Project (EAOP) received £500 and attended 4 primary school classes in Leith to do a short talk on archaeology and facilitate 3 activities, including looking at ancient animal bones and sites.

Edinburgh University Mental Health and Wellbeing Society received £500 and organised a Mental Health First Aid course to tackle issues in the student community.

Student group, Cooking for Health received £222 and taught cooking skills and basic nutrition to elderly and isolated individuals.

Edinburgh University Classics Society received £424 and put on an event for two local schools, introducing primary school students to Classics and Ancient History and building awareness.

Edinburgh Music Outreach Society received £235.79 and organised visits to Liberton hospital by student musicians.

Lloyds Scholars received £315.40 to cover volunteer travel costs.

Mandarin Language Project received £20 to put on a social event for volunteers.

Foreign Language Outreach received £48 to cover travel costs of their volunteers.

Training

For the first time, the Volunteering Service ran a skills training course open to any student who uses the Service. The course, Building Confidence and Assertiveness, was chosen based on demand from students to improve this skill. 9 students attended.

Tips from the training are applicable to daily life and specific situations
Edinburgh Award for Volunteering

This year, we expanded the Award from one to three intakes. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for students who either missed out enrolling in October, or for those who arrive in January to study for one semester and for students who undertake UK summer volunteering to work towards recognition.

▲ Intake 1 (October – March)
△ 97 students registered. This number dropped from last year (2016-17: 169)
△ 25 students completed the Award. This number dropped slightly from last year (2016-17: 29)

▲ Intake 2 (January – June)
△ 44 students registered
△ 11 students completed the Award
△ Students who completed the award attended 1 training session

“The Edinburgh Award was a very worthwhile experience. I was able to recognise a whole host of skills that I could gain, talk about, and use to promote myself on my CV and in interviews. It gave me the room to focus on my chosen skills and develop them. I think this is a really good opportunity to offer students.”

Areas for improvement

▲ Feedback was sought for each stage of the award programme about training sessions, inputs, communications and the way the programme runs

▲ A few students found navigating through the course material for the Input on LEARN confusing and couldn’t find materials or where submissions were to be made. As a result, the provision of course material will be streamlined for next year

Key Achievements

Volunteering Service Visual Identity and Campaign

In collaboration with our internal Marketing department, a visual identity for the Volunteering Service and new campaign were developed and launched to promote the Volunteering Service.

Awards and Recognition

The Edinburgh Award for Volunteering expanded from one to three intakes in recognition of students who volunteer throughout the year and not just during term time: Semester 1 intake, Semester 2 intake and summer intake. This allowed for greater participation.

For the first time, the Edinburgh Award was run through the Volunteering Hub. This enabled a streamlined process for students to submit and staff to review their work.

For the first time, students who were not able to complete the Edinburgh Award for Volunteering were issued certificates in recognition of the number of hours they volunteered this year.

The Spotlight on Volunteering blog was launched to share stories of our Volunteering Societies, volunteers and inspire other students.
Team Volunteering

We launched one-off volunteering projects to benefit the Edinburgh community and offer students a way to volunteer without a long-term commitment.

- No. of Team Leaders: 3
- No. of Projects: 10
- No. of volunteers: 91
- Total hours volunteered: 472.9

Target Ovarian Cancer Walk
Helped out with Target Ovarian Cancer’s event in the centre of Edinburgh. Marshalled the route and encouraged runners, and celebrated with finishers by handing out medals.

Friends of the Bruntsfield Links and Meadows
Helped the Meadows Team to keep the area beautiful and sustainable by assisting with path maintenance and creating new wildlife habitats in the community garden.

Edinburgh Charity Dad’s Rock
Assisted with clearing and brightening up their outdoor garden and play area.

Friends of Burdiehouse Park
Assisted Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park to protect erosion of one of their paths via innovative Willow Weaving techniques.

Broomlee Outdoor Centre
Assisted with renovating and repainting some of their ageing classrooms. This event was part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Week.

Edinburgh Christmas Charity Appeal
Helped by being a race official for their annual fundraising event. Marshalling crowds and runners, handing out goody bags, and setting up marquees.

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
Decorated an Activity Room used by blind and partially sighted groups.

Feedback from a Team Volunteering project

“Having a clean and renovated classroom will be a huge benefit to the hundreds of children who will use the room next year: We are delighted with the group... really hope that we can have Edinburgh University Students’ Association Volunteers again.”

*Broomlee Centre*

Careers Fair: Volunteering and Third Sector Jobs
For a second year we collaborated with the University’s Careers Service to showcase paid and UK volunteering opportunities in the Third Sector for students.

“I have been doing recruitment fairs for many years and this has been the best yet. Very busy, interactive and lots of genuinely interested students. I will recommend it to other volunteer coordinators across the city.”

*Exhibitor quote*
Testimonials

“All of the Activities staff are really lovely and really helpful when you need them!”
– Edinburgh Archaeological Outreach Project

“[The Activities Office] are happy to meet, friendly, and they give good advice.”
– Music Outreach Society
Future Developments

▲ Developing a skills development programme suitable for all students who use the Volunteering Service
▲ Building new community partnerships
▲ Expanding the recognition and award offer
▲ Expanding promotional campaign to cover more digital ground, including video
▲ Expanding the Spotlight on Volunteering blog to feature more articles
▲ Continuing to build relationships with schools at the university
▲ Creating a community for volunteers
▲ Expanding outreach to include resident slots at satellite campuses
▲ Building relationships with societies whose activity includes community work but is not their core activity
▲ Develop a Volunteer Champion role for students to raise the profile of volunteering and support their peers
▲ Building a volunteer alumni network
▲ Continuing to support Volunteering Societies
▲ Continuing the Team Volunteering programme
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