

Working as a Volunteer

Volunteer work is unpaid work that can act as a bridge between study and work, giving you on-the-job experience, the opportunity to apply the skills learnt, develop new networks, and even get more referees. If you can afford to, working as a volunteer for a short period is worthwhile.

What kinds of jobs do volunteers do?

Volunteers perform a wide range of tasks. Typical activities include:

Hospitality: customer service, gift wrapping, meet-and-greet, courtesy driver

Food: preparing and serving food, kitchen assistant, barista, meal deliverer

Tourism: information officer (e.g. Tourist Information Centres), retail assistant at a tourist attraction

Events: fundraising, events marketing, marshalls, ticket-selling, set up and pack down

When volunteering as part of a job search strategy:

- ▶ Only work voluntarily (without pay) for places that have coordinated volunteer programs: these include charities, Not-For-Profit organisations, sporting and community events, and some government agencies. Working without pay for commercial businesses is risky (often called 'unpaid trial work'*). If you are unsure, you can talk to **Job Watch** (<http://www.jobwatch.org.au/>) about it.
- ▶ Don't choose volunteering over course attendance (unless it has been discussed with your teachers/Program Leaders); work at times when you are not studying or during term breaks or once you have completed your course, while you are working towards getting a paid job.
- ▶ Engage volunteer work that is similar to the kind of work you want to get, or is in an organisation you would like to work for.

- ▶ If the work is not for a single event, set yourself a time limit that is reasonable (say 2-3 months), it is important that you see this as temporary. Some volunteer roles are for specific events, which makes it easier to know the start and finish times of your commitments.
- ▶ Do not volunteer for 'clinical trials'; these are for medical research only and you will not develop any skills or experience.
- * This is where employers test out people before deciding whether to hire them or not (this is usually illegal). A good way to tell if the organisation has a 'real' volunteer program is to look at its website. See if there is a formal training program and information about specific roles.

Where to find work as a volunteer

- ▶ Check WAI's online jobs noticeboard **CareerHub** (<http://careers.angliss.edu.au>) for volunteer roles.
- ▶ **GoVolunteer** (<http://govolunteer.com.au/>) has a large range of one-off, short-term and long term volunteer roles.
- ▶ Look around your local area: hospitals, sports clubs, charities, and your local council. Photos are not usually required on a resume (but you should have one on your social media sites); if you are asked to provide a photo, it is usually best to send it as a separate file.

Information also available on <http://careers.angliss.edu.au>

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