

Using Voluntary work to get ahead in the job market



Using Voluntary work to get ahead in the job market



OpenLearn

Free learning from
The Open University

This item contains selected online content. It is for use alongside, not as a replacement for the module website, which is the primary study format and contains activities and resources that cannot be replicated in the printed versions.

About this free course

This free course is an adapted extract from an Open University course.

This version of the content may include video, images and interactive content that may not be optimised for your device.

You can experience this free course as it was originally designed on [OpenLearn](https://openlearn.open.ac.uk/), the home of free learning from The Open University: www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses.

[Using Voluntary work to get ahead in the job market](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/human-resources/using-voluntary-work-get-ahead-the-job-market/content-section-0)

www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/human-resources/using-voluntary-work-get-ahead-the-job-market/content-section-0

There you'll also be able to track your progress via your activity record, which you can use to demonstrate your learning.

The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

Copyright © 2015 The Open University

Intellectual property

Unless otherwise stated, this resource is released under the terms of the Creative Commons Licence v4.0 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en_GB. Within that The Open University interprets this licence in the following way:

www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/frequently-asked-questions-on-openlearn. Copyright and rights falling outside the terms of the Creative Commons Licence are retained or controlled by The Open University. Please read the full text before using any of the content.

We believe the primary barrier to accessing high-quality educational experiences is cost, which is why we aim to publish as much free content as possible under an open licence. If it proves difficult to release content under our preferred Creative Commons licence (e.g. because we can't afford or gain the clearances or find suitable alternatives), we will still release the materials for free under a personal end-user licence.

This is because the learning experience will always be the same high quality offering and that should always be seen as positive – even if at times the licensing is different to Creative Commons.

When using the content you must attribute us (The Open University) (the OU) and any identified author in accordance with the terms of the Creative Commons Licence.

The Acknowledgements section is used to list, amongst other things, third party (Proprietary), licensed content which is not subject to Creative Commons licensing. Proprietary content must be used (retained) intact and in context to the content at all times.

The Acknowledgements section is also used to bring to your attention any other Special Restrictions which may apply to the content. For example there may be times when the Creative Commons Non-Commercial Sharealike licence does not apply to any of the content even if owned by us (The Open University). In these instances, unless stated otherwise, the content may be used for personal and non-commercial use.

We have also identified as Proprietary other material included in the content which is not subject to Creative Commons Licence. These are OU logos, trading names and may extend to certain photographic and video images and sound recordings and any other material as may be brought to your attention.

Unauthorised use of any of the content may constitute a breach of the terms and conditions and/or intellectual property laws.

We reserve the right to alter, amend or bring to an end any terms and conditions provided here without notice.

All rights falling outside the terms of the Creative Commons licence are retained or controlled by The Open University.

Head of Intellectual Property, The Open University

Designed and edited by The Open University

Contents

Introduction	5
Learning Outcomes	6
1 Why do it?	7
1.1 Introduction	7
1.2 Standing out from the crowd	7
1.3 Essential 'voluntary' work experience	8
2 What can I offer?	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Identifying skills and personal qualities	11
3 What would suit me?	13
4 Getting started	15
6 Impressing employers	17
7 FAQs	20
8 Sources of references	22
Keep on learning	24
Acknowledgements	25

Introduction

Any local newspaper describes the latest achievements of volunteers in the community: hospital fund-raising, a wildlife pond created. The advantages to the community are obvious, but this unit explores how engaging in voluntary work can enhance your employment opportunities.

It will focus mainly on how voluntary work can improve job prospects, for those actively job seeking or considering a career change. Employers are impressed by volunteering, but many volunteers don't appreciate what relevant skills they've gained or know how to present them in applications and interviews. We will explore practical strategies to make the most of your voluntary experience and give you the edge in the job market.

1. Why do it?
2. What can I offer?
3. What would suit me?
4. Getting started
5. Next steps
6. Impressing employers – how to articulate the benefits and value of voluntary experience
7. FAQs
8. Sources of references

By the end of this free course, you should have a full appreciation of the range of voluntary work possible and an awareness of the different ways it can help you meet your objectives whether personal or job related.

This unit is from our Open University archive. If you want to study formally with us, you may wish to explore other courses we offer in [this subject area](#).

This unit is also available in Welsh on [Openlearn Cymru](#).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this free course, you should be able to:

- identify your objectives;
- assess what you have to offer;
- balance these against a practical framework of your personal circumstances;
- explore a range of reference sources to select what is most relevant;
- prepare an action plan, including evaluation of achievements;
- produce ongoing strategies to develop your voluntary work;
- understand employers' requirements and match the skills you acquire;
- articulate and present the evidence of these skills effectively in job seeking.

1 Why do it?

1.1 Introduction

Recent findings show that volunteers report higher ratings on the measures of life satisfaction, happiness, and feeling that the things they do in life are worthwhile. Last year the number of people volunteering at least once a month rose to 29%, which may be thanks in part to the high profile volunteering received during the 2012 London Olympic Games. Jennie Rayner, CSV Communications Officer, 2014

Volunteering is clearly a major concern, and can contribute to the development of skills to enhance employability.

The opportunities for volunteering can be very varied. The 2012 Olympics depended on 70,000 volunteers, and volunteering can also involve for example doing gardening for an old lady once a week.

Any voluntary work will help develop the skills to enhance your employability, but if you're not already involved it's worth taking time to assess what you've got to offer and what would suit you best. The more enthusiastic and committed you are, the more likely you are to improve your job prospects.

If you are already doing voluntary work, but want to explore how to use it to improve your job prospects, then just use Sections 4–7.

1.2 Standing out from the crowd

'Volunteering looks great on your CV....It's the perfect way to get a taste of working life and gain skills and experience'
CSV website

Employers are impressed by voluntary work, but what are the hard facts about this? Research carried out by Reeds Recruitment agency for the charity Timebank found that:

- 73 per cent of employers would employ a candidate with volunteering experience over one without;
- 94 per cent of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills;
- 58 per cent of employers say that voluntary work experience can actually be more valuable than experience gained in paid employment;
- 94 per cent of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary, or being promoted.

There is clearly little doubt about how employers see the benefits of voluntary work. Although all voluntary work can be interesting to them there are some careers where relevant work experience is a prerequisite.

1.3 Essential 'voluntary' work experience

For entry and progression into many careers, voluntary work experience is essential. Teaching, Law, Environmental/Conservation and Social Work are common examples but there are many others. Positions in the Arts, Media, Publishing, Development and Charitable sectors are rarely advertised and are also difficult to enter without a network of contacts, direct practical experience of the industry and enormous enthusiasm.

For more details on any of these look at the Prospects website, which gives excellent job profiles, and contacts and resources to get you started.

Initial experience in any of these careers is usually unpaid, and so counts as voluntary work. The boundaries between this type of volunteering and others are a bit blurred, because although it is a necessary career strategy it can still benefit the community, especially in the areas of teaching and social work. Even in the Arts and Media, volunteers can build up invaluable work experience in projects such as writing for Charities' Facebook sites, local radio broadcasts, 'Street Art' projects etc.

Activity 1: Think about

Whatever your objectives, look at the comments below to help you assess what you want from voluntary work. A range of volunteers give their reasons for wanting to get involved. Try and think which voluntary activities might meet their needs, then look at the answers to see what they ended up doing. You may identify with some of them, but this should at least demonstrate some of the huge variety of options available.

'I was bored, with time on my hands while the kids were at school. I just wanted to feel useful, but preferred something helping children. I realised my own were very privileged.'

Answer

Took part in a pioneering CSV project that matches volunteers with families where there are children on the child protection register, working alongside social workers who don't have time for frequent visits to all homes of children on 'at risk' register.

'I wasn't happy with what was going on at my son's school, so I decided to try and make things change.'

Answer

He became a school governor. This was a serious commitment, but he later used the understanding he gained in finance, personnel and strategic planning to apply for a management-level position.

'I was shocked at an article about the number of young offenders in my town and decided to get involved.'

Answer

She became a mentor with NACRO and worked with two young offenders before and after their release, helping them get training and eventually a job.

'I believe passionately in human rights and wanted to make things happen.'

Answer

They wanted to make their views known, so apart from helping with publicity campaigns for Amnesty International, they are now writing for an online magazine *News Channel*. Both of these activities allow them to be really flexible with their commitment, and work odd hours at home. This is vital as they travel for their job a lot.

'I've always been good at sport and my boss suggested I try coaching. He said it would also look good on my CV, but I don't know how when I'm in a banking job.'

Answer

Mike became a leader and coach with a disability sports group, as well as coaching martial arts at a local youth club. After two years he realised he had experience in teaching and mentoring, and had also developed skills in organising, promotions, managing a budget and team-building. He'd demonstrated commitment, enthusiasm and great communication skills. All of this contributed to a promotion to training manager in his department.

'I knew I wanted to work in environmental conservation, but found out you don't get anywhere without a background of relevant voluntary work.'

Answer

For Jo, weekend stints as a voluntary warden for the RSPB turned into longer periods at a reserve in Scotland during her summer vacation. She is now applying for a full-time post as a reserve warden with special responsibility for events and promotions. (Note: this is an example of essential work experience, mentioned earlier in Section 1, even though it also counted as voluntary work.)

Finally, two common concerns and an encouraging message ...

'I didn't think I was good at anything, and nearly didn't even bother to apply anywhere.'

Answer

Jess saw an article in the local press about the 'befriending' scheme for housebound elderly people. She now realises that she could offer commitment, an interest in people and a friendly but practical approach. She visits two old men and does their shopping and gardening. She is currently looking to get more involved in community work and is visiting schools and local organisations to encourage more volunteers.

'I've just been made redundant and have been advised to try some voluntary work to get me out of the house, and maybe help my job prospects. I'm also hoping it will cheer me up.'

Answer

David had been trying to get a job without success and decided to volunteer with CSV to gain experience. He volunteered for eight months at a residential care home for people with learning disabilities and now has been given a full-time job at the project – case study, CSV website.

Listen to what some OU volunteers say about why they started voluntary work.

Video content is not available in this format.

2 What can I offer?

2.1 Introduction

'All experiences count and are valuable and no one should push those aside. It really doesn't matter where that experience was gained. It's about what you learnt from it... don't devalue yourself. Recognise the importance of what you've done.'

Ruth Stokes, KPMG on the voluntary work section of the OU Careers Advisory Service website

Many people are indeed unaware of just how much they could offer the community or a good cause, and underestimate their strengths and experience.

You need to assess your skills, experience, interests and then balance all of this against your practical circumstances and any possible constraints. The worksheets have lots of suggestions and prompts and you should find this an encouraging exercise.

2.2 Identifying skills and personal qualities

There are several ways to approach this:

Reflective

It's a great opportunity to reflect about yourself and to ask others, your friends, family or colleagues just what they think as well. Be realistic about your strengths and your weaknesses. Ask them to be honest; weaknesses can be just as important as strengths here!

Look at the 'Know yourself' section of the OU Careers Advisory Service website, which covers personal strengths and skills.

Activity 2

Use Worksheet 1 as a prompt for ideas, and to record your conclusions.

Worksheet 1

File attachments are not available in this format.

[View document](#)

Practical

You might also like to try accessing websites such as Do-it or the websites of any of the major charities. They describe the personal qualities needed for any of their vacancies e.g. being non-judgmental, patient, flexible. Check out how you match up. These sites will

also say if there are any specific skills required for a post, such as IT, driving etc. and give an idea about practical considerations, like time commitment.

Activity 3

Use Worksheet 2 as a prompt for assessing how your voluntary work might be shaped by issues such as mobility, time available, location etc. There are some suggested solutions for any potential problems, e.g. virtual volunteering for those who can only offer irregular time slots or those with a lack of mobility.

Worksheet 2

File attachments are not available in this format.

[View document](#)

3 What would suit me?

You should now have built up a realistic picture about what you want to achieve and what you have to offer and be able to match up all of these against some possible activities.

Here are some different ways to get you started:

Have another look at some of the statements in [Section 1.3](#). These are just to get you thinking but you might identify with some of the volunteers.

There are excellent websites to help you match your interests, experience and personal circumstances to actual vacancies, so you might find it helpful to try inserting your personal specifications into any of the following websites using their drop-down menus.

There are other suggested sources of volunteering opportunities in this unit's [references section](#).

1) Do-it

You can insert preferred geographical area and availability, and select from drop-down menus of your type of interest and the kind of activity you would like to do, e.g. befriending, buddying, driving, legal work, artistic, etc.

2) Volunteering England

Volunteer Development Scotland

Volunteering Ireland

Volunteering Wales

The sites list the main categories of voluntary work, such as animal welfare, arts and heritage, community development and campaigning, and health and social care (including sections relating to young people, elderly, disabled, etc.). There are also subcategories, e.g. for campaign volunteering, these include discrimination/human and civil rights, environment and conservation, and political parties. The Volunteering England site also contains volunteer blogs.

3) Directgov

Search volunteer opportunities, mainly community-based. The drop-down lists of activities range from finance to entertainment and lists of interests from heritage to homeless and housing.

4) Charities

Websites of many charities also have drop-down lists of skills/interests, commitment level, location, and preferred role type, e.g. Sue Ryder Care and the RSPCA. Other charities such as CSV provide a range of activities to select from, for example supporting an at risk family or helping at a local school.

Most are very informative and user-friendly. They also widen your horizons about what type of work you can do. Many people never think beyond the fundraising aspect, but at the RSPCA, for example, volunteers can walk dogs at the local shelter, home-visit prospective adopters or do home-based computer work (updating the web or databases, etc).

5) Other organisations

Register your skills directly on an organisation's database and they'll select appropriate activities for you. For example, the Rotary volunteers database includes individuals with a broad range of skills such as radio operators, solicitors, beekeepers, natural resource managers and plumbers.

There are opportunities to volunteer both locally and internationally. The Rotary Foundation has 32,000 clubs in 200 countries with 1.2 million members. Their role is to 'serve communities both at home and abroad'.

6) Volunteer centres

You can visit your local volunteer centre to chat about what you might like to do with one of the volunteer coordinators, who will know all the opportunities in your area.

7) Case studies

You can find these on most large charity websites and the websites given above. They give a real insight into the volunteer's activities and achievements. The Open University's Careers Advisory Service website includes John Pierre-Madigan's story, which mentions the value of volunteering.

4 Getting started

Here's a seven-point action plan to help get you started and activities to give you ideas about creating development opportunities and monitoring the progress you make.

- 1) Review your objectives/wish list (see [Section 1](#)). Be clear about what you want to achieve and how much time you can offer (it could be quite small!).
- 2) Review your own interests, and what you have to offer, including any possible constraints. Be realistic (see [Sections 2](#) and [3](#)).
- 3) Shortlist the organisations that are the closest fit to your needs.
- 4) Check opportunities on their websites, general websites (see sources of reference) or at your local volunteer bureau. Find your nearest at Do-it.
- 5) Apply – preferably to just two or three.
- 6) Prepare for interviews, if necessary (see section 5). Usually, there will be no formal interview – just a quick chat to introduce you to what's going on.
- 7) Complete training and induction, if necessary. Again, for many posts a five-minute induction chat is all you'll need.

Activity 4

Once you have commenced volunteering, use Worksheet 3 to record the details and create a volunteering log.

Worksheet 3

File attachments are not available in this format.

[View document](#)

You can also use the log for jotting down ideas about further volunteering possibilities, so you have an easy format to compare what's involved with different organisations.

If you really want to impress employers it's crucial that you continually review your achievements and look at ways to enhance your voluntary experience. Many large charities are very proactive in helping you develop the range of your activities and involvement, but you might need to take the initiative yourself and create your own opportunities to improve your employability.

Activity 5

Continue your volunteering log (Worksheet 3), unless you are very sure that everything is just for the purpose of enjoying the new experiences for their own sake and for the sake of those you're helping. You'll need to review and record:

- what you did while volunteering and what you have achieved
- what you learned and what skills you developed
- what training or induction you received

- how you want to improve from here.

This leads on to next steps, with strategies to develop your work and improve job prospects even further.

6 Impressing employers

'69 per cent of employers have done voluntary work in their lifetime, with over half stating that volunteering gave them people skills which helped them get to where they are today. Half of employers say that job candidates with volunteering experience are more motivated than other candidates.'

James Caan, *Dragons' Den*

There is no doubt that the 'soft' skills you can develop in your voluntary work will serve you well when job-seeking, but how to convince the employers you have what they want?

If you examine job advertisements, they will usually specify exactly which 'transferable skills' they want, in addition to any formal qualifications or experience. For example, 'must have excellent communication skills, and ability to work on your own or as part of a team' is a very common requirement.

The trick is to analyse them carefully, and then, using the right words, give hard evidence that makes the employer want to meet you to find out more. So when they ask for 'communication skills', don't just take the phrase at face value. Think about all the different ways you can communicate – for example:

- listening and empathising
- conveying information clearly and accurately
- good written expression in reports, articles or letters
- adapting style and content of communication appropriately, depending on the audience
- using language persuasively to negotiate, convince, mediate, sell, etc.
- public speaking or presentations.
- understanding information.

Don't just present employers with a random list of all your skills; you must convince them that they are exactly what they want. They will appreciate that you've analysed what their post requires and matched relevant examples of your experience.

How do you convince them you are the right person for the job?

Before you can convince them that you're just the person they need, you first need to know what they want. There is a helpful section on the OU Careers Advisory Service website that will take you through the process.

Activity 7

Whatever skills you've developed – and you should have a good record if you've been keeping up your volunteering log – you need to put them in a relevant context of evidence to present them in job applications.

Test your knowledge about what employers are looking for by naming at least six transferable 'soft' skills that are wanted by most employers.

Answer

The skills listed on the Prospects website cover most of the popular ones:

- **Communication:** The ability to communicate orally, in writing or via electronic means in a manner appropriate to the audience.
- **Teamwork:** Being a constructive team member, contributing practically to the success of the team.
- **Leadership:** Being able to motivate and encourage others while taking the lead.
- **Initiative:** The ability to see opportunities and to set and achieve goals.
- **Problem-solving:** Thinking things through in a logical way in order to determine key issues, often also including creative thinking.
- **Flexibility/adaptability:** The ability to handle change and adapt to new situations.
- **Self-awareness:** Knowing your strengths and skills, and having the confidence to put these across.
- **Commitment/motivation:** Having energy and enthusiasm in pursuing projects.
- **Interpersonal skills:** The ability to relate well to others and establish good working relationships.
- **Numeracy:** Competence and understanding of numerical data, statistics and graphs.

Activity 8

Read the case study in Worksheet 4. Jack evaluates his voluntary experience and what action was taken, by using a STARE grid and 'action words' (see also Worksheet 5 in Section 6).

Try completing the blank grid provided in Worksheet 4 using examples of your own activities to demonstrate your skills and how you acquired them. The information in your STARE chart will be invaluable for those situational type questions that often crop up on application forms, such as 'tell us about a time when you worked in a team; describe what you were trying to achieve and what your role was'. The STARE chart will cover all three aspects of this question. To give your evidence the most impact, use strong 'action words' (see Worksheet 5 in Section 6).

Worksheet 4

File attachments are not available in this format.

[View document](#)

Activity 9

Look at Worksheet 5, select some words that seem relevant to what you've achieved and introduce them to an entry in your volunteering log (Worksheet 3) as appropriate.

You might want to look again at the case study in Worksheet 4 to see the developments that Jack initiated and recorded.

Worksheet 5

File attachments are not available in this format.

[View document](#)

7 FAQs

These questions represent general issues about 'getting started', but they have a particular focus on special requirements, whether it's about volunteering for particular age groups or virtual volunteering for those with a lack of regular time to commit, or problems with mobility.

Will volunteering affect my benefits?

Answer

The benefits regulations are clear that you can volunteer and it will not affect your benefit payments, as long as you meet the conditions of your particular benefit. However you should let your benefits office know if you start volunteering. For more information and contact information, read 'Volunteering while on benefits'.

Source: Directgov

How many hours a week do I need to volunteer?

Answer

As a volunteer you are in control of how much or how little time you can spare. As you think about volunteering, be realistic about how much time you can regularly commit to. Far better a weekly commitment of an hour or two that you can fit into your life than trying to offer an unrealistic amount of time that you can't keep to. There are opportunities to match all levels of time commitment.

Will I need a police background check and what does it involve?

Answer

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously CRB checks) in England and Wales or Disclosure check in Scotland is usually required for any role where you will be working with children or vulnerable adults. You will be asked to fill out the form that will then be processed (usually at the organisation's expense rather than your own). It is a method to ensure that you do not have any relevant criminal convictions that prevent you from working with such groups. Checks usually take only a few weeks to process and you should normally have nothing to worry about. The Northern Ireland equivalent to a CRB check is known as a POCVA (Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults) and is carried out by AccessNI. In the Republic of Ireland the process is known as Garda vetting; responsibility for organising this lies with the organisation.

What skills/experience do I need?

Answer

This very much varies according to the kind of role you are looking for. You may be surprised to discover that many volunteering roles do not need any specific skills or experience – enthusiasm and a willingness to learn often count for much more.

For some roles you will require particular skills or experience, but you probably have more to offer than you may think. For example, if you have reasonable literacy or numeracy, then you can volunteer as a tutor for children or adult learners. Likewise a driving licence, cooking skills or parenting experience are all valuable assets that you can bring to volunteering roles. However, in many cases organisations are simply looking for your time and goodwill, as well as a willingness to ‘muck in’ and get involved. Often any training you need will be provided on the job.

See Section 3 of this unit.

How do I find out about voluntary opportunities?

Answer

Your local volunteer centre is a good place to start. There are also organisations such as CSV and the Rotary Club that offer many different voluntary activities in the community, or organisations like Do-it or Volunteering England and Volunteer Centre Network Scotland.

You can find more details on the OU Careers Advisory Service website.

I am retired but still fit and active. Are there any upper age limits for volunteering?

Answer

Most voluntary activities have no upper age limit, but if you want details about specialist programmes, check out RSVP, the retired and senior volunteer programme.

I'd like my voluntary work to give me a social life with other young people. Are there any specialist organisations catering for under 30s?

Answer

The vinspired website, for young people up to 25, has a helpful list of a range of possible activities, e.g. befriending, buddying, driving, practical work, etc.

Finally, many voluntary organisations have their own FAQs, relevant to their particular areas of activity.

8 Sources of references

Virtual voluntary work

- Voluntary Worker: virtual volunteering
- NABUUR, a comprehensive information site, suggesting a wide range of opportunities. A 'global neighbour network, but everything done online'.
- Horsemouth, an online coaching and mentoring network.
- TheSite.org: what can a virtual volunteer do? A good description of a range of virtual possible activities, from media and publicity, campaigning, information and administration, to pen-pals.
- Do-it: virtual volunteering. Everything from writing to inmates on Death Row to giving your advice as an eBay expert.

General volunteering information sites (linked to searching actual opportunities)

As above:

- Do-it
- Volunteering England
- Volunteer Scotland
- Volunteering Wales
- Volunteer Now (Northern Ireland)
- gov.uk/volunteering

Information centres for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland

- Volunteer Centre Network Scotland, the gateway to volunteering opportunities in Scotland.
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action supports the volunteering and voluntary sector in Wales.
- Volunteering Wales is an information and brokering service matching volunteers with organisations and groups.
- Volunteer Development Agency is the centre for Northern Ireland.
- Volunteer Centres Ireland is the national organisation responsible for developing volunteering in Ireland.

Websites of some of the UK's largest volunteering and training organisations

- Community Service Volunteers
- Rotary International Club (55,000 members in UK)

Local volunteer centres

Find the nearest one to you on Do-it.

Local press, local radio

Find out what's going on in your area – contact details are usually supplied.

The Open University's resources

The voluntary work section on the OU Careers Advisory Service website.

Your local library

You can often find details of local voluntary agencies, or copies of reference books such as:

- *Voluntary Agencies Directory*, published by NCVO.
- *Charity Choice*, the 'encyclopedia of charities', published by Watermans (and also available online.)
- *Charity Digest*, also published by Watermans.

Keep on learning



Study another free course

There are more than **800 courses on OpenLearn** for you to choose from on a range of subjects.

Find out more about all our [free courses](#).

Take your studies further

Find out more about studying with The Open University by [visiting our online prospectus](#).

If you are new to university study, you may be interested in our [Access Courses](#) or [Certificates](#).

What's new from OpenLearn?

[Sign up to our newsletter](#) or view a sample.

For reference, full URLs to pages listed above:

OpenLearn – www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses

Visiting our online prospectus – www.open.ac.uk/courses

Access Courses – www.open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/access

Certificates – www.open.ac.uk/courses/certificates-he

Newsletter –

www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/subscribe-the-openlearn-newsletter

Acknowledgements

This content is made available under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 Licence](#). See [Terms and Conditions](#).

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources for permission to reproduce material in this unit:

Sally Pawlik, Careers consultant for the Open University for her authorship of the unit , to the OU Careers Advisory Service for their contributions and critical reading, to the OU in London for their contribution to the video footage and original material taken from their student volunteering site, funded by the HE Active Community Fund and to the Centre for Professional Learning and Development in the Open University for their financial support and encouragement.

Don't miss out:

If reading this text has inspired you to learn more, you may be interested in joining the millions of people who discover our free learning resources and qualifications by visiting The Open University - www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses