

# Volunteering Certificate

## Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education

### Introduction

The **Volunteering Certificate** aims to provide university recognition for informal learning and personal development gained through a portfolio of volunteering activities. This Guide introduces the Certificate, explains the requirements and the procedures for making your informal learning explicit to yourself and to others. **The skills you develop and gain recognition for can be incorporated into your CV and you can include the learning and development you gain in a portfolio for the Lifewide Learning Award [www.surreylifewideaward.net](http://www.surreylifewideaward.net)**

### Volunteering as a worthwhile and valuable enterprise

Volunteering is driven by personal belief, values and commitment that it is important to help other people and try to make a difference. Research has shown that young people can and do increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, develop a range of communication and practical skills and improve their ability to work with other people through volunteering. Volunteering throws you into situations where you are dealing with 'real world' challenges on problems for which there may not be a simple solution working with people who may be difficult to work with. The qualities, values, attitudes and capability developed through volunteering are valued by employers and they are also what is needed to be an effective and compassionate professional.

Volunteering is also a great away to make new friends and develop personal networks. Volunteering can also be used as a strategy to develop useful employability skills and gain valuable work experience and insights into a specific areas of employment or professional activity to help people decide what it is they want to do when they have finished university for example:

- Thinking about becoming a vet? Volunteer at a local pet hospital, humane society, or animal rescue organization.
- Considering a career in teaching – why not volunteer on the student ambassador scheme?
- Thinking about a career in retail? Why not volunteer at a Charity shop. You'll learn the basics of sorting inventory, salesmanship, helping customers, and ringing up sales.
- A career in journalism? Why not volunteer to write for STAG or a local newspaper, newsletter or non-profit organization's monthly bulletin? You'll receive help on selecting topics, editorial feedback, and how to approach your stories, and as a bonus, you'll have some starter pieces for your portfolio.
- What about the office environment? Non-profit agencies are a great place to volunteer - you will have the chance to learn about computer software, operating basic office equipment, answering the phone, organizing files, and interacting with people in an office setting.

### Volunteering at Surrey

When you look across your life you will probably be able to identify many areas in which you have given your time, energy and skills voluntarily to help others. There are many possibilities while you are at University to help other people either at the University or in the local community or perhaps in a community close to your home in the holiday periods.

The Surrey Students' Union website lists many examples of opportunities  
[http://www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/volunteer/volunteering\\_information\\_for\\_current\\_students.htm](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/volunteer/volunteering_information_for_current_students.htm)

The Lifewide Learning Award on-line Directory of Opportunities also highlights volunteering opportunities  
<http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/content/directory-opportunities>

## Certificate requirements

The Volunteering Certificate is part of a family of Certificates developed within the Lifewide Learning Award.  
<http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/>

To join the programme you will be making a commitment through a learning agreement to evaluate and make explicit the learning, personal and professional development you gain through a minimum of 100 hours of activities and experiences that involve you in being enterprising. This may sound a lot but we anticipate that you will create a portfolio of experiences over a period of time – for example 6 -12 months including holiday periods. There is no upper limit to the amount of experience you can include.

In order to receive University recognition for your learning and personal development, you will need to document your experiences and your evaluation of the learning and personal development you have gained in a **Reflective Diary (hand written or word document) or online Blog**.

Four techniques are used to help you understand, evaluate and reveal your learning and personal development.

- 1) Completion of a skills and experiences self-evaluation questionnaire and personal development plan
- 2) Reading using the on-line resources provided to help you appreciate the nature of informal learning (in contrast to learning in an educational environment)
- 3) Construction of an ongoing reflective diary or blog to record and make sense of your experiences and the learning and personal development you are gaining from them
- 4) Production of a reflective account – to connect, synthesise and integrate the learning you have gained from your experience.

You may include other methods of recording your experiences and demonstrating your learning such as digital images or audio or video recordings for example. **The Certificate encourages you to focus on key aspects of personal development that are generic to all informal learning situations. These are incorporated into a capability statement (page 3- 4). The Certificate also recognises more specific skills and dispositions that are a necessary part of your enterprising activities.**

### 1 Skills and experiences questionnaire, life map and personal and professional development plan

At the start of your engagement with the Certificate you will be invited to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire, voluntary service life map (Appendix 1) and personal and professional development plan (Appendix 2). This process will help you reflect on and evaluate the skills and capability you have gained or are gaining through your involvement in voluntary activities and help you plan your further development. Your completed voluntary service life map, questionnaire and development plan should be attached to your Learning Agreement with the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education. Once you have completed this questionnaire you can register for the Certificate.

### 2 Reflective diary or blog

Your reflective diary or blog is the means by which you will:

- Demonstrate the self-reflective habits necessary to be an effective professional
- Reveal how you have managed your personal and professional development
- Document the experiences and specific situations through which you have developed yourself

You can create your reflective diary as a handwritten notebook, a word document or a blog. Hand written diaries are good if you have to work in the field (for example if you are in a place where it is difficult to use a computer or has no internet access) but the material is not so accessible and there is always the chance it might be lost. **We strongly recommend that you make regular (at least weekly) entries to your reflective diary. You will not meet the requirements for the Certificate unless you demonstrate that you have developed the habits of a reflective learner and show how you have practised what you have learnt.**

### 3 Summary reflective account

The reflective account (of about 2000 words) provides you with an opportunity to integrate the learning and personal development you have gained through your portfolio of experiences. Your account will draw upon your reflective diary and any other documents, media or artefacts you have used to illustrate and illuminate your personal and professional development process. Further guidance together with example accounts will be provided on the Enterprise Certificate webpage.

## Capability and values statement

The Certificate encourages you to maximise the learning, personal and professional development you gain from your experiences of being enterprising. We are particularly interested in how you develop your capability for dealing with situations and creating new situations in a creative and enterprising way. Because being able to deal with situations is at the heart of everything we do no matter what the context. The capability and values statement is the same statement that underpins the Surrey Lifewide Learning Award which means that you can utilise the learning gained through the Certificate in a portfolio for the Award.

***The Certificate encourages you to develop and demonstrate your capability for managing and evaluating your own development***

- 1 Managing your own development :in order to be enterprising** - the attitudes, skills and behaviours that motivate and enable you to take responsibility for, plan and engage in experiences that enable you to develop yourself. In successfully completing the Certificate you will have demonstrated that you have:
  - taken responsibility for, thought about, planned for and engaged in your own personal and professional development, taking advantage of the opportunities available to you
  - reflected on and evaluated the learning, personal and professional development you have gained through your work experiences
  - documented your experiences and what you have learnt from them, and gathered and organized evidence of your learning and development in your reflective diary or bog.

***The Certificate emphasises the importance of developing capability to deal with situation, particularly new and challenging situations, in a creative and enterprising way***

- 2 Being able to deal with situations: solve problems work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity in a creative and enterprising way:** your reflections will show how you have worked with challenge and uncertainty, engaged with problems in a range of *work* situations. These stories will reveal how you have understood and analysed a situation, decided what to do, found things out in order to decide what needs to be done, done things and learnt through the experience. In short, how you have made things happen. Your stories will not necessarily reflect success, in some cases stories may reveal how you have had to overcome significant setbacks and demonstrate your resilience in the face of failure.

***The Certificate encourages you to think about these important generic dimensions of capability to deal with situations and make things happen.***

- 3 Being able to develop the knowledge you need to deal with the situation:** to be able to find out what you need to know in order to do what you need to do.
- 4 Being an effective communicator :** to make things happen you need to be an effective communicator, to be able to communicate in ways that are appropriate to the situation, to be able to communicate to different audiences using different media.
- 5 Being able to work with and lead others:** your reflections will reveal how you have worked and developed relationships with other people and taken the initiative in helping others make good decisions and actions.
- 6 Behaving ethically and with social responsibility:** your reflections will provide a vehicle for showing how you have dealt with ethical issues – how you have decided what is right or wrong, considered the values of others which are relevant in your activities, and tried to do the right thing.
- 7 And any other capabilities that you feel you need to be effective in your work role.**

**Through your engagement with the Certificate you will also have the opportunity to demonstrate qualities and dispositions that are important to being an effective professional including:**

- **Your will to be who you want to be or become**
- **Your values:** your reflections will reveal the values you invest in the enterprises you contribute to and the value you add to the enterprise. The Volunteering Certificate will demonstrate how an individual, working with others, who have similar commitment to helping others, has made a difference.
- **Your confidence:** your reflections will reveal how your confidence has developed as a result of encountering and dealing effectively with situations, accomplishing new things and coping with significant challenges

## Your voluntary service life map

Take a few minutes to think about your life and ask yourself the question, *what are the main areas in my life where I have my everyday experiences through which I am able to be enterprising*. Typically people recognise between about 4 and 7 distinct areas in their life, although the boundaries between different areas may be a bit blurred. In each area there are imperatives and opportunities for being enterprising. Using the Enterprise life map (Appendix 1) label and make notes in each box to show the sorts of activities/experiences you are involved in, which necessitate or encourage you to be enterprising.

## Your personal and professional development plan

Creating a plan helps you organise your thinking about your own development and how you might access and integrate the opportunities available to you. The **Personal Development Planning Framework** (below) identifies the full range of capability that are being developed through the Certificate, with particular emphasis on **dealing with situations in a creative and enterprising way**. The other elements of the capability and values statement are however likely to be present in any situation that you deal with in this way and you will also recognise that they are important elements of capability for performing in an enterprising way.

### Personal & Professional Development Planning Framework

Aspect of Capability & Values	Current activities/experiences in my work through which I can develop and demonstrate my capability and values	Additional activities I could undertake in my workplace to develop and demonstrate my capability and values
<b>Managing your own development :in order to be enterprising</b>		
<b>Being able to deal with and create new situations, solve problems, work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity from a volunteering perspective</b>  <b>Includes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to find out what you need to know to do what you need to do</li> <li>• Being a good communicator</li> <li>• Being able to work with and lead others</li> <li>• Behaving ethically and with social responsibility</li> <li>• <i>Any specific capability necessary to fulfill a particular volunteering role</i></li> </ul>		
Your will to be who you want to be or		

become Your values – making a difference to others Your confidence -		
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## Reflecting on your experiences and what you have learnt

The Volunteering Certificate is given for learning gained and explained. To do this you have to make explicit what you have done, how you have done it and how you have developed through the process. Thinking about these things is called REFLECTION and you make your thoughts explicit by writing about them in your diary entry/blog and personal accounts.

You will use a simple framework for recording your experiences of dealing with and creating new situations. It comprises four bits of information.

**1 situation** – describe the situation (an ideas, opportunity, challenge, problem). What you decided to do to engage with situation and why?

**2 action** – What did you do to try to turn your ideas into reality? And why did you do it? Examples:

- inventing something or a new or adding value to something that already exists
- organizing and managing new solutions to problems
- selling /pitching your ideas: persuading others of their value
- identifying market opportunities
- selling goods or services – persuading others to buy
- identifying and securing the financial capital resources needed
- building a team / working with us to deliver the enterprise
- willingness to assume personal economic risk
- determination, perseverance to make something work
- and many other things

**3 results** – what happened and what did you achieve and why?

**4 insight** – what do you now know that you didn't know before? And what would you do differently next time?

**5 attitudes and capabilities** – from this analysis you will develop a deeper understanding of the attitudes and capabilities required to be an effective and successful entrepreneur.

## Nature of reflection

In writing about your personal experiences, reflecting on what happened and how you felt, it is important to think critically and try to analyse and evaluate reasoning, actions, feelings, responses and emotions in a way that helps you to benefit and grow from the experience. All too often when writing about life experiences we tend towards describing the situation or to describing the situation and how we felt about it, without analysing the processes taking place and reflecting on why we feel the way we do. Here are some examples of different levels of reflection:

In order to make our perceptions of learning explicit we have to:

- Be aware of what we are doing and if possible record (usually in words but photos, videos are also suitable) the incidents and stories that illuminate different aspects of the experience and what you have learnt.
- After the event, think about the particular situation to reflect on it and make better sense of what happened recording what you have learnt in your portfolio

**Purely descriptive.** "I went to a meeting today which was complete garbage, there was really no point in my going, what a waste of time, I should have gone to the pub instead."

**Descriptive with some feelings about the occasion.** “I went to a meeting today and found it very exasperating to say the least. My team have not made any decisions about job changes and I am really stressed as we have to give a presentation soon. I had some ideas which I really tried to put across but they just kept interrupting, going on about how well the Test Match is going. I just got fed up in the end there was really no point in my being there, what a waste of time, I should have gone to the pub instead.”

**Stepping back and reflecting on the dialogue.** “I found the total lack of any attempt at decision making by the team totally exasperating. I guess because I am a little fixated about deadlines it concerns me more than it does others that we are rapidly running out of time before we have to present our findings. I had come up with a great idea to get us moving forward then failed to make myself heard over the two or three loud members of the team that can be quite intimidating when they are together. I am actually a bit shy and had I not been so stressed about the approaching deadline I probably would not have even said anything at all.”

**Learning from the event through critical reflection.** “Because meeting deadlines is important to me I found today’s team meeting banter exasperating. I was also very annoyed with myself for not being more assertive in putting forward my ideas which I am sure would have progressed our decision making. With such a self-assured group it takes a lot of effort for someone like me who is much less self-assured to get my point across, and my natural inclination in such circumstances is to withdraw into the background and let them get on with it. Having sat and thought about it I think my strategy will be to email each member of the team and suggest that at the next meeting we go around the table and get ideas from each person before we start discussing options and those with the loudest voices take over.”

#### **Perhaps you can think of another strategy for dealing with this situation?**

An employer who read this story said I would have responded differently, ‘I would circulate some thoughts before hand and go into the meeting being prepared to hold my own after preparing well for the discussion.’

Sometimes sharing your possible solutions to a situation with someone else will help you develop another perspective on the situation and help you make a decision about what to do.

#### **These simple prompts may help you reflect on any situation.**

- What was the situation and what is significant about it?
- How did you respond to the situation and why did you decide to respond in this way?
- What happened and why?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What might I have done differently?
- Have you shared the situation with someone else to gain other perspectives and possible ways of dealing with it? If you did, what did they think?

After thinking about the situation and your response in this way, and recording your thinking about your informal learning you will have become more aware of your learning and made your learning visible to yourself and others. This enhanced self awareness of your own abilities and the way you deal with situations is valuable personal knowledge for your enhanced CV and for discussions with future employers. Its also valuable knowledge for encouraging you to try something different next time you encounter a similar situation.

## **Registration procedures**

When you have read and familiarised yourself with the guidance:

**1 Complete the Registration Form** (Appendix 1). You will find a word version of this Form on the Enterprise Certificate webpage <http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/content/enterprise-certificate>

**2** Send your completed registration form to [sceptre@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:sceptre@surrey.ac.uk). **Mark your email ‘Volunteering Certificate’.**

## Procedure for submission and review of your evidence of learning and personal development

When you created a portfolio that embraces at least 100 hours of experiences through which you can demonstrate your enterprise capability, your **reflective diary** and your **reflective account** you can submit them to the scheme organiser for assessment.

The reflective account needs to be submitted as a word document.

Your reflective diary can be submitted either as:

- 1) a word document
- 2) a hard copy handwritten diary or scrapbook
- 3) or you can provide access to an online blog

After scrutiny by the scheme organisers the following judgements will be made.

**Pass** sufficient evidence to demonstrate capability development

**Fail** insufficient evidence to demonstrate capability development

In the event of a fail decision feedback will be given on how to improve the submission.

### Further information

If you have any questions about the Certificate please visit the '**Volunteering Certificate**' webpage at: [www.surreylifewideaward.net](http://www.surreylifewideaward.net) or contact : Professor Norman Jackson [norman.jackson@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:norman.jackson@surrey.ac.uk). You will find podcasts which provide more information about the scheme on the same webpage.

## Volunteering Certificate

*Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education*

# REGISTRATION FORM

You need to complete this Form to register for the Certificate.

For the purposes of research into the effectiveness of this way of learning, the results from lots of questionnaires may be aggregated anonymously into a report. No individual will be identified in this report.

**Name**  
**Email address**  
**Mobile**  
**Department**  
**Course/Subject**

### 1) Type(s) of volunteering experiences you are involved in or are planning

	√	Comments
A few hours over several days of the week		
One or more full days within the week		
One or more days at the weekend		
Mainly evening work		
Intensive work during the vacation		
Other (please describe)		
Approximate number of hours you are working each week		

### 2) Your reasons for volunteering. Please tick all the boxes that apply.

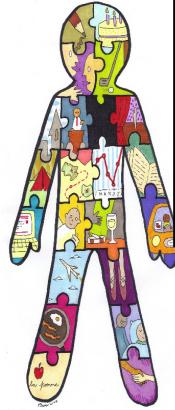
	√
My parents expected me to	
For the experience	
Good for my CV	
Because I want to give something to or be of service to others	
The activities relate to my interests/passions	
I would like to pursue a career in this area	
Other (please describe)	

### 3) My Life Map: The Recent Past and Present

Reflecting on the recent past and present (last 6-12months) and complete the life map pg 9 showing where in your life you have had opportunities to develop yourself highlighting any experiences where you have been able to give service to others

**My course** *how are you learning and developing?*

**Home/looking after myself** *how are you learning and developing?*



**Hobbies** *how are you learning and developing?*

**Co-curriculum experiences eg training courses/ university events outside the course** *how are you learning and developing?*

**Travel** *how are you learning and developing?*

**Part-time work/volunteering** *how are you learning and developing?*

**Other stuff** *how are you learning and developing?*

**Other stuff** *how are you learning and developing?*

## 4 My Personal Development Plan: The Present & Future

**Please show how you intend to develop the capabilities that are promoted through the Certificate through volunteering activities**

Aspect of Capability & Values	Current activities/experiences in my work through which I can develop and demonstrate my capability and values	Additional activities I could undertake in my workplace to develop and demonstrate my capability and values
<b>Managing your own development :in order to be enterprising</b>		
<p><b>Being able to deal with and create new situations, solve problems, work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity from a volunteering perspective</b></p> <p><b>Includes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to find out what you need to know to do what you need to do</li> <li>• Being a good communicator</li> <li>• Being able to work with and lead others</li> <li>• Behaving ethically and with social responsibility</li> <li>• <i>Any specific capability necessary to fulfill a particular volunteering role</i></li> </ul>		
<p>Your will to be who you want to be or become</p> <p>Your values – making a difference to others</p> <p>Your confidence -</p>		

**5) What are the main experiences and skills you believe you will gain from your volunteering?  
Please tick  a box and add comments** Personal & Professional Development Plan

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>1 No new learning</b>	<b>2 Some new learning</b>	<b>3 Much new learning</b>	<b>4 Capability and values statement</b>
Finding and applying for a volunteering position				<b>4</b>
Experience of being interviewed				<b>5</b>
Learning about how an organization/business works				<b>3</b>
Dealing with challenging situations at work				<b>2 &amp; 3</b>
Applying classroom learning				<b>4</b>
Gaining valuable work experience				<b>1</b>
Developing valuable technical skills eg computer systems at Travis Perkins				<b>8</b>
Learning professional behaviors				<b>2</b>
Developing communication skills Verbal/oral skills Listening Written eg reports/ Design eg posters Use of media eg photographs/video				<b>5 5</b>
Develop and use IT skills				<b>8</b>
Learning how to work with colleagues or in a team				<b>6</b>
Learning how to interact with customers or clients				<b>1, 2 &amp; 6</b>
Learning about being managed				<b>2</b>
Learning how to manage others				<b>6</b>
Learning how to manage yourself eg turning up on time				<b>1</b>
Learning about business skills and practices.				<b>1 &amp; 2</b>
Coping with and managing emotions				<b>9</b>
Learning how to negotiate with and persuade others				<b>5</b>
Clarifying future career goals				<b>1</b>
Being given challenging responsibilities				<b>4</b>
Being creative and resourceful to make things happen				<b>4</b>
Experience of being enterprising				<b>4</b>
Self-confidence				<b>10</b>
Other – please explain				<b>8</b>

## REGISTRATION

**Please register me for the Volunteering Certificate**

**Name** .....

**Date** .....