Why volunteer?
There are a number of reasons why people decide to volunteer. For some, volunteering will add experience to their CV and thus improve their job prospects and employability; for others volunteering is fun, fulfilling and a good opportunity to network and make new friends; or you may view it as making a contribution to society through working with a non-profit organisation. Some people feel that by the end of their time studying for A-levels or a degree they need a break, and the idea of taking some time out appeals as a result. Volunteering during this time is a good way of building up experience, and ensuring that there isn’t a large period of inactivity on your CV.

Benefits of volunteering
There is a lot to gain from volunteering as it is regarded as valuable work experience which can provide you with skills and knowledge such as:

- Employability skills or competencies
- Commercial awareness
- Understanding of different types of work and what they involve
- A clearer idea about what type of job appeals to you
- Practical examples to support applications for graduate jobs
- Networking opportunities and the chance to make useful contacts
- The opportunity to apply academic knowledge and skills in the workplace

What sort of volunteering is there?
Volunteering can take many shapes and forms, and there are numerous opportunities to get involved in. You can volunteer alongside your course, or during your vacation. You can take time out and volunteer during a gap year, or you can go on expeditions and support field research. As a volunteer you should have some flexibility to tailor your commitment to your circumstances.

A few words about unpaid work
Unpaid work is often seen as a pre-requisite for some entry to areas such as environment and conservation, media, charities, social work. In some cases expenses are offered but no salary.

In the UK only charities (and a few other special exceptional cases) are allowed to use unpaid volunteers – otherwise note that, strictly speaking, it is illegal for organisations to give you regular duties without paying at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW). You may judge that the experience on offer is worthwhile working unpaid for a short time but wherever possible you owe it to yourself to be paid as much as possible for your contribution to a company.

Resources and opportunities advertised through the Careers Service
King’s CareerConnect
www.kcl.ac.uk/careerconnect
King’s CareerConnect is our exclusive online career portal enabling students and recent alumni to engage with our services. Once logged in, you can access our vacancy board and search hundreds of part-time roles, placements, internships and graduate-level opportunities, book one-to-one careers or application guidance appointments, apply for exclusive King’s Internships and view our full events calendar to book attendance at our many events throughout the year.

Volunteering in the UK
If you want to volunteer in the UK, you will find that opportunities are numerous and diverse, and available everywhere. It is important to know why you want to volunteer and what you want to gain from it. If you want to volunteer alongside your course, you may want to focus your search on local opportunities. If you want to meet more like-minded people and remain very much within a student environment, you may want to see what opportunities there are specifically for students at King’s College. The following websites will provide a range of online resources you can use to research what opportunities are available to you.

Student volunteering
The following websites focus on student volunteering:
KCLSU
www.kclsu.org/volunteering
KCLSU Volunteering gives students at King’s College London the opportunity to get actively involved in their local communities. Click on ‘Getting Started’ to see what’s currently on offer.

Volunteering England
www.volunteering.org.uk
Volunteering England has a Student Volunteering Team that works with and represents the Further and Higher Education Sector.

General volunteering Websites
The following is a selection of websites that offer wide-ranging information about volunteering in the UK.
Community Service Volunteers
www.csv.org.uk
CSV is the UK largest volunteering and training organisation.

Do it
www.do-it.org
‘Do it’ has the largest database for volunteering opportunities in the UK.

Dissertations for Good
http://dissertationsforgood.org.uk/
An NUS-run project which matches students with organisations to produce dissertations into economic, social and environmental sustainability. Could act as good practice
for a dissertation in your final year, a good substitute for one if your course doesn’t require one, or generally an excellent way of gaining experience.

**Milkround**
[www.milkround.com](http://www.milkround.com)
Milkround lists a variety of work experience opportunities, including internships and placements, holiday and part-time work, gap year and volunteering opportunities, and graduate training schemes and graduate jobs.

**Oxfam**
Oxfam have a number of volunteering opportunities, from casual roles such as working at one of their shops, warehouses or as an ambassador, to more formal office-based placements. Large charities are an excellent place to look for volunteering experience; for reasons of space they won’t all be listed here, but consider the likes of Save the Children, Mencap, Scope and British Heart Foundation, amongst many others.

**Vinspired**
[www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com)
Offers volunteering and work experience placements to young people aged 16 – 25.

**Careers in Healthcare: A Guide to Working in Voluntary Organisations**
A guide on voluntary organisations as providers of healthcare services includes case studies.

**Examples of volunteering organisations recently recruiting**
Here is a list of organisations that have promoted voluntary opportunities to King’s students in recent years.

**Christian Aid**
An organisation tackling poverty, with volunteering opportunities in the UK and overseas.

**National Trust**
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)
Charitable body managing and protecting natural and manmade heritage sites. Site includes jobs and information on volunteering

**The Woodland Trust**
[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)
The Woodland Trust is the UKs leading woodland conservation charity. They have volunteering opportunities.

**International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – Restoring Family Links**
or

**British Red Cross – Finding Missing Family Members**
The Red Cross offer very useful experience in searches for missing people, ideal of anyone interested in investigative careers from journalism to law.