



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Providing volunteering experience for Health Science students

Transition(s) the practice supports: This example is part of the 'moving on from there' focus on the transitions map, and is aimed at helping students make the transition to employment

Abstract: This initiative recruits student volunteers via a Facebook group, word of mouth and other university communication methods who then design, plan and run activities focusing on health and science at QMU and elsewhere for children of school age.

Description: This began as a project funded by the widening Participation and Student Retention initiative and initially recruited 12 students from the division of dietetics, nutrition and biological sciences to create a list of activities which they could deliver to school goes in the local area, mid-Lothian. This project has now expanded to include over 200 volunteer students, delivering programmes to children in mid-Lothian, East Lothian and Edinburgh – reaching over 6,500 people in the last two years. Within in the university, the Jobshop, Careers service and Students' Union are all now involved in publicising the programme and referring students who are interested in participating.

Examples of activities that volunteer students have designed, planned and run include:

- Running a stall at the Midlothian Science Festival where, among other things, children could test their knowledge of animal xrays
- Presenting interactive sessions on 'The human body and the food we eat' to primary 3 to 7 children in local schools
- Attending Science Gala days and running activities such as 'build the human body' and 'pin the bone on the skeleton'
- Presenting CSI:Feet and creating a working model of the digestive tract at the Dunbar Science Festival
- Taking groups of children (such as the local Brownie troop, QMU's own Academies pupils, the Dunbar school science club and an after-school initiative called SocialBall Kids) on laboratory tours at QMU and organising activity days on campus.

Not only have these activities contributed to the community engagement and outreach activities of the university, they have allowed students to develop employability skills and gain experience at designing and delivering different types of events and engaging with a variety of people from different backgrounds. The student volunteers have now also become major contributors to the teams delivery QMU's Children's University and Academies. As a

result of these activities, one local school has offered students who are interested in teaching opportunities for placements in the school.

A full programme of events is planned for the coming year, with students not only attending science festivals, but also going out to high schools across Scotland (including in many cases, returning to their old schools) and presenting activities for children, as well as adult activities in the evenings. Student volunteers now also attend careers evenings in schools alongside staff from registry, introducing QMU and talking about course requirements, and so on. Besides providing students with further opportunities to develop their communication skills, this allows school pupils to speak to current students closer to their age and also ensures that every person interested in courses at QMU can speak to someone in person, rather than just picking up a prospectus.

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All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map.