

Developing Volunteering

Innovating in student volunteering opportunities

Volunteering exists across a host a breadth of students' union activities and traditional community volunteering has continued to grow with interest from students. Innovating volunteering provision is key to maintaining interest and sustaining activity.

Ensuring that we continue to innovate and adapt service provision is imperative to keep activities fresh and exciting.

Student volunteering is key to this and the changes that we've seen in recent years surrounding students motivations to volunteer and perceptions of the value of volunteering have resulted in much development.

Innovation can seem scary, time consuming and daunting however it can provide a fantastic way to deliver activity in a different way to a different audience.

How to innovate

When thinking about how to innovate NESTA outlined some key phases to go through:

- Exploring opportunities and challenges
- Generating ideas
- Developing and testing
- Making the case
- Delivering and implementing
- Growing, scaling and spreading
- Changing systems

More detail can be found on the [NESTA open workshop site](#).

Innovation could be a whole scale change in your activity, perhaps moving from brokerage to student led activity or something smaller to changing how you attract student volunteers.

Strategic consultancy agency Uscreates talks about innovation in four different stages:

- Revolutionary work - working with entirely new audiences, on entirely new issues, while creating entirely new offerings within Uscreates
- Evolutionary work - two novel territories, and one existing territory (for example the issue could be something we have worked on before, but we're now approaching a new audience and creating a new offering)
- Incremental work - two existing territories, and one novel territory (for example the audience and type of offering is familiar to us, but we're tackling a new issue)
- Minimal work - working with existing audiences, on existing issues, while creating similar offerings.

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest any amends please contact studentopportunities@nus.org.uk