

## **v's position on changes to HEFCE funding for student volunteering**

**November 2008**

1. **v** believes that volunteering has a powerful role to play in meeting priorities for higher education but that its impact and potential is not widely recognised. **v** is investing in building a compelling case for the role that student volunteering plays, particularly in public engagement in higher education and skills development. To ensure that universities capitalise on the potential of volunteering to meet their strategic aims, volunteering has to become part of the fabric of every higher education institution.
2. In light of the upcoming changes to funding for student volunteering **v** urges HEFCE to work with key stakeholders such as Volunteering England and the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement to **issue a strong statement on the role of volunteering** in meeting HEFCE and universities' own strategic aims. Since 2002 an excellent student volunteering infrastructure has been built bringing benefits to students, universities, communities and wider society. If individual higher education institutions are to make the decision to continue to support this work through their core grant from 2009, a strong message from HEFCE will add significant weight to the case.
3. **Volunteering and public engagement in higher education**  
**v** is investing £1million in a project to build a robust evidence base of the impact of student volunteering and to explore its potential. The project aims to position volunteering more strategically within the higher education sector. The work is being carried out by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement.
4. **Skills development and employability**  
**v** recently published a report 'Discovering Talent Developing Skills: the contribution of volunteering'. The report calls on universities to take pro-active steps to embed an ethos of voluntary action within their institutions, and provide practical opportunities during term time for students to volunteer. Over the coming months **v** will be working to raise the currency of skills gained through volunteering amongst employers as our recognition scheme of **v** awards is rolled out.

In 2008 CBI/EDexcel Education and Skills Survey found that 86% of employers ranked positive attitudes and 'employability' in their top three demands when recruiting graduates. Research carried out by the National Youth Agency on behalf of the former Department for Education and Skills showed that employability skills such as team work, communication skills and problem solving are the main skills that young people identify as gaining through volunteering. In addition volunteering can provide skills directly linked to students' courses and broader skills such as leadership and enterprise.