

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Landscape and Planning Adviser
Assignment Modality	In country
Assignment Number	41922
Country	Samoa
Location	Upolu Island
Partner Organisation	Planning Safety & Maintenance Division (PSM) National University of Samoa (NUS)
Duration	6-12 months
Sustainable Development Goals	



1. Partner Organisation Overview

The National University of Samoa (NUS) was established in 1984, to cater to increasing demand for higher education, initially beginning with only 45 students that kickstarted the University Preparatory Programme. Since then, the University has seen substantial progress and development in academic, vocation and technical training programmes.

In 2022, the NUS corporate went through a restructure which resulted in the establishment of the Planning, Safety and Maintenance (PSM) Division in July 2022. This Division merged three sections: Property Maintenance, Occupational, Health and Safety (OHS) and Planning Unit. Property Maintenance (PM) is responsible for the maintenance and management of physical facilities, OHS is responsible for the safety and health of employees, by providing sound advice with regards to the infrastructure and systems in place. The OHS also houses the cleaning staff, ensuring the sanitation and hygiene of spaces at NUS. Lastly the Planning Unit is responsible for infrastructural projects to further support and develop the University. Ensuring these projects are guided by existing tactical plans and sub-plans in place.

The purpose of the PSM Division is to ensure a strategic management and operation of NUS' physical assets and provide facilities and equipment that are functional, sustainable and support successful learning, teaching and research outcomes. PSM Division supports its purpose stated above by ensuring there is an effective management of physical assets via asset acquisition, maintenance, refurbishment and disposal. Any infrastructural project proposed at the NUS, PSM monitors that it is designed and developed to meet the University's objectives of sustainability and responsiveness. The bulk of work implemented by PSM, is to ensure that there is substantial support for delivering NUS overarching purpose of delivering excellent education, training and research.

2. Assignment Overview

There are many challenges that NUS face, particularly pertaining to financial support, as there are often fluctuating student numbers, and limited international students enrolled. The NUS also faces state influence and intervention that may impact significantly on NUS decision-making.



In the PSM Division, we face ongoing challenges such as lack of necessary skills/capacity to develop relevant documents such as plans (ie. landscaping, maintenance plan) to provide a uniformed direction on effective delivery of these services for the NUS. In addition is the lack of clear communication due to the large number of staff, which contributes to the lack of teamwork and effort amongst the staff. There is a significant gap in the staff of the right skillset to effectively carry out the job, or unfamiliarity amongst the staff. This will hopefully become better with time and focus on building the morale of the team. The Division is often limited financially or in terms of resources in delivering outcomes, which is the constant challenge, in finding potential funding for projects.

The PSM in collaboration with their ground's men team, aim to develop a landscaping plan to guide and provide direction for their PSM Division in terms of landscape design, maintenance and development. The grounds men team have a basic work program but there is a lack of planning to guide future actions or initiatives. Including further improvement in the landscape aesthetic and design of the NUS.

The VSA volunteer can contribute to the achievement of the organisations purpose and long-term goal of sustainability. In the NUS Strategy 2030, the University aims to provide safe and sustainable campuses by integrating sustainability principles in our planning, governance and decision-making. Environmental sustainability has become a large part of any project, research, training and education programmes conducted at the NUS. Creating a landscaping plan also contributes greatly to the management and maintenance of our campuses' environment.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The assignment goal projects to ensure effective building capacity of current PSM team responsible for maintaining NUS grounds, and developing an effective plan and work programme that will guide current and future developments of the landscape of NUS.

Outcome 1

Develop a Landscape Maintenance plan and manual for the NUS (maintenance of gardens around campus and plans to guide future projects).

Alongside the local team;

- Conduct a site assessment of the campus grounds and landscaping.
- Carry out consultations with relevant stakeholders with a vested interest.
- Develop a landscaping plan and maintenance manual for NUS.

Outcome 2

Conduct training for relevant staff (groundsmen team) on landscaping methods and maintenance.

Alongside the local team;

- Carry out capacity building workshops and training on the job for grounds men on landscaping techniques.
- Upskill grounds men on sustainable skills for maintenance of the grounds.

Outcome 3

Assist with the development of a Work Program schedule for groundsmen to continue with beyond the assignment - ongoing mentoring is provided, giving advice and guidance when required.

Alongside the Manager;

- Develop an ongoing and effective work program beyond the assignment to guide the grounds men team to efficiently manage and maintain NUS campus gardens/landscaping.
- Develop user-friendly guidelines for the local team to refer to in the future.



4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will work with the local team to deliver the outcomes of the role through on-the-job training, building their capabilities and skills on landscaping (inclusive of safety, use of equipment and recommendations on areas of improvement). Development of a landscaping plan will be in close collaboration with the planning unit. Potentially working in collaboration with the Tropical Horticulture Programme here at the NUS.

The volunteer will report directly to the Manager of the Planning Safety and Maintenance (PSM) team and will be accountable to the Director of PSM the division. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with;

- Planning Manager
- Grounds men Team Leader
- Grounds men staff members
- Planning Officer: Campus Projects
- Development Planning Officer

The volunteer and the Planning Safety & Maintenance Division at NUS will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description **on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.**

5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

Professional Specifications

Essential

- Minimum of a Bachelor in Landscaping / Horticulture or relevant qualification (Planning, Architecture etc)
- At least 3-5 years' work experience in a relative field
- Experience developing plans relevant to their field of study pertaining to required qualification/ work experience

Desirable

- Competency in relevant technical design applications (Geographical Information Systems)
- Technical and analytical skills
- Project management skills

Personal Specification

Essential

- Effective communications skills
- Strong work ethic and commitment
- Leadership skills



Desirable

- Time management
- Team work

6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

7. Country Context

For more information about Samoa, see [VSA in Samoa](#).

Refer also to the following links;

- Samoan government website: <http://www.samoagovt.ws/>
- Economic overview: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/samoa>
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Samoa: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-work-in-the-pacific/aid-partnership-with-samoa/>

General Security

Samoa has very minimal security concerns in comparison to other parts of the Pacific. However, volunteers are required to be security conscious and adhere to the advice of their partner organisations, VSA and the NZ Embassy in Apia on security matters. If there is a major emergency or should security deteriorate, VSA has established evacuation procedures and volunteers will be fully supported by staff in Wellington. Volunteers will go through security measures on arrival in-country and develop an individual security plan.

8. Living and Working Situation

The volunteer will live in suitable and safe accommodation near the town area which will be organised by VSA staff, in which they will communicate with the volunteer about closer to deployment. The workplace is located at the main campus of the University. The University is approximately 3km from the Apia Township, providing ease of access to potential accommodations, amenities, required by the volunteer. There is also a bus stop here at the NUS that travels into Apia, including a taxi stand as means of transportation if required. NUS also have registered vehicles that can drop off volunteer at their place of stay.

The Planning Unit have an accommodating office space that can cater to 4 people. As of now, there are currently 2 staff who utilise this room. There is already an existing office desk, chair, A/C and internet access available in the office space. Including stationary, and amenities.



9. Additional Information

ST2 Volunteer Assignment (6-11 months)

Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

Pre-departure briefing

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

Family status

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

Fundraising

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers and accompanying partners to fundraise to help cover the cost of sending volunteers throughout the Pacific and beyond. Fundraising can be as simple as doing something you enjoy with a group or friends, and our Fundraising team is available to help you every step of the way.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be vaccinated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

Children's Act

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014. The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children, and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

Reimbursements and grants

1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$375 to help them set up in their country of assignment.
2. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
3. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of \$1900 SAT.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. In some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.



Airfares and baggage allowance

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

Insurance

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

Utilities

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.

