


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Student Learning Support Assistant
Assignment Modality	In Country - UniVol
Assignment Number	42009
Country	Cook Islands
Location	Rarotonga
Partner Organisation	The University of the South Pacific, Cook Islands
Duration	10 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

The University of South Pacific

Established in 1968, the University of the South Pacific is one of only two universities of its type in the world. It is jointly owned by the governments of 12 member countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The USP Cook Islands (USPCI) Campus was officially established in 1975, and the current campus buildings were opened at Takamoa in 1979 and extended in 2012. USP is an internationally acclaimed institution with a distinctly Pacific character that promotes academic excellence, innovation and research, responsible leadership, and community service. It prepares students for lifelong success, graduating degree holders with work-ready skills and confidence. A USP education is both academically rigorous and highly rewarding; its quality has been affirmed through international accreditation processes, making the USP degree "portable" and useful for those graduates who plan to travel overseas. USP Cook Islands offers the citizens of the Cook Islands the ability to 'stay home and go far' with their under and post graduate studies. To learn more about the University of the South Pacific, please see: www.usp.ac.fj

2. Assignment Overview

The focus of this assignment is to deliver Student Learning Support (SLS) to provide academic support to USP students so that their learning experience is easier and worthwhile. SLS equips students with the necessary academic and study skills to assist students to achieve their goals while they are studying at USP. USPCI would like to offer a range of services for our students to participate in. These services can be tailor made to help students tackle and manage the requirements of tertiary education. In addition, our hope is that students will be able to download and/or use the learning resources provided by the SLS assistant. By providing these sorts of opportunities, tools and expertise for learning, teaching and research students will experience a higher success rate and this then encourages them to stay on with their studies. SLS will include providing mentoring, academic skills workshops, online resources and drop in consultations to give advice for students to develop academic skills.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

Students at the University of South Pacific have access to high quality academic support, enabling them to become confident learners, thereby maximising their academic potential and improving educational outcomes.

Outcome 1

The University of the South Pacific's academic skills development and support practices for students are more effective and tailored to meet individual student learning needs.

Working collaboratively with teaching and library staff:

- Assist with reviewing and evaluating current academic support practices, and develop solutions or problem solve improvements as required.
- Assist students to build and improve their academic research skills using electronic learning resources (for example, electronic databases, and Google Scholar).
- Conduct academic skills workshops, including Moodle navigation, note-taking, referencing, time management, academic vocabulary, writing, and effective presentation.
- Provide one-to-one academic skills development assistance, support, and guidance to students.

Outcome 2

The University's academic staff are effectively supported in their preparation and delivery of course materials, and associated student support services.

- Support and assist academic staff with the use of e-learning tools, and with providing and maintaining of electronic teaching and learning resources (for example, through sourcing of relevant open-source journals, and multimedia learning contents).
- Effectively support academic staff with the development and application of learning materials, including the creation of electronic teaching and learning resources, and database management.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will work alongside USPCI Office staff (3) and students on day-to-day basis and report to Tureheni File: Office manager.

The volunteer will be engaged in capacity building activities for the duration of their assignment.

- Capacity strengthening (on-the-job training) of staff and students where appropriate
- Transfer of knowledge and skills through role modelling including the development of resources

The volunteer and the University of the South Pacific 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

Education and Experience

- Experience in academic research and writing skills
- Experience in using information and communications technology
- Experience in coaching or mentoring others

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Strong ICT skills
- Demonstrated leadership qualities
- Patience

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 the Cook Islands, see vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/cook-islands

Additional Information

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

Partners or dependent children cannot accompany UniVols.

Fundraising

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers 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. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a rest and respite grant after a specified period of active service in-country to encourage the volunteer to take a break away from the immediate assignment location. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
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 NZD \$1,300

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.