

The Student Consultancy Final Report

Devising a successful engagement strategy
for the London chapter of “Asha for
Education”

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Content



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The Problem: Unsteady Volunteer Numbers



- Ups and downs in Asha's volunteer numbers impede the organisation's ability to support project partners in India
 - Finding and training new volunteers costs time
 - An effective engagement strategy needs to be developed



Previous Findings



- Focus events on fundraising and explore new forms of marketing
- People have moved on mostly for personal reasons and not dissatisfaction
- Past volunteers should be kept engaged
- Asha's organisation and structure are amendable
- Engaging students should be investigated



Two Main Goals

Answer the following questions:

1. What are potential volunteers trying to get out of a volunteering experience?
2. Which factors could encourage potential volunteers to commit for a longer period of time?

→ *Focus research on university students*

Large student population available in London



In 2013/2014, more than **350,000** university students were enrolled in the region of London.*

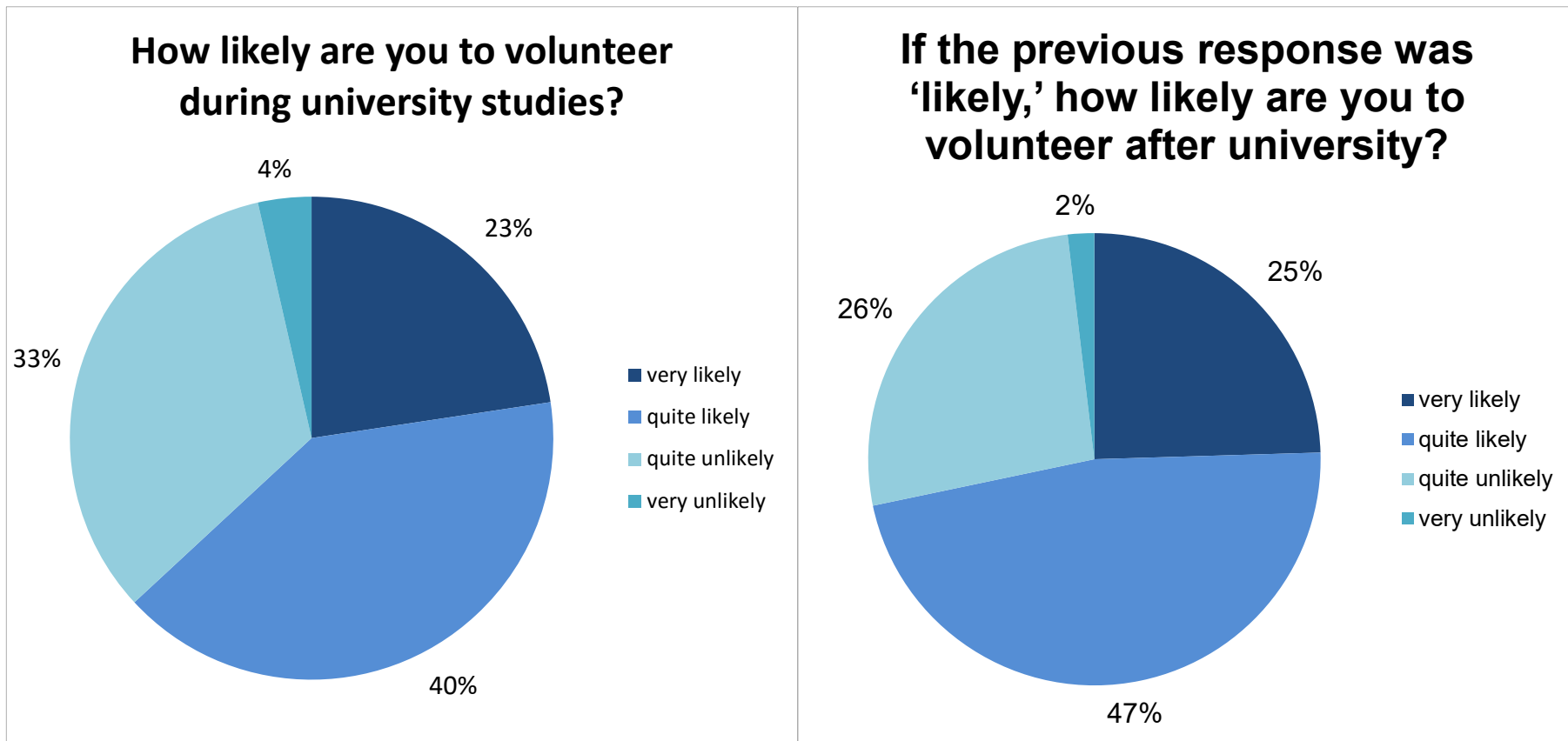
We conducted an anonymous survey with 84 students as well as personal interviews with 16 students at the following universities:

- University College London
- London School of Economics
- King's College London
- Imperial College London
- University of Oxford



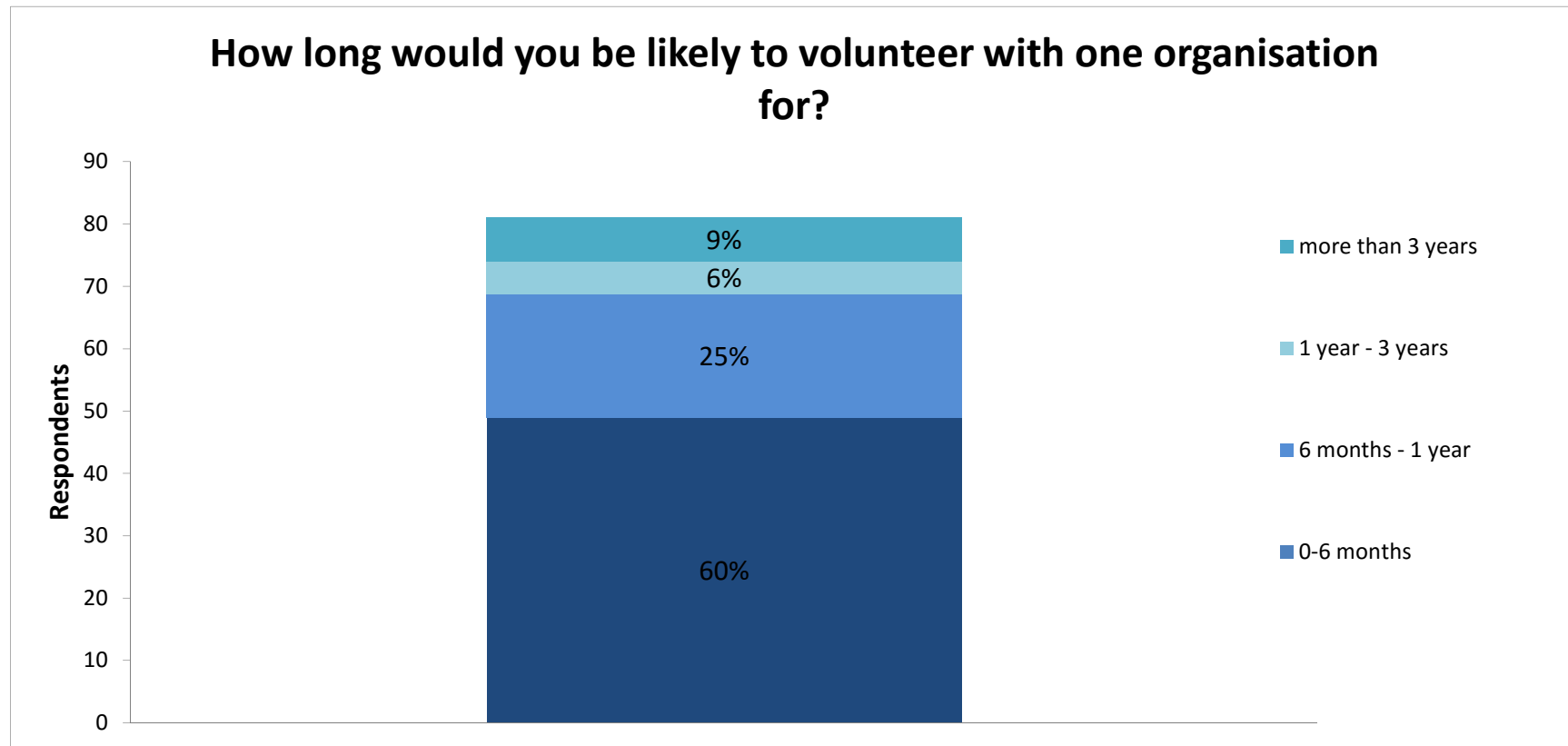
*Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Students are likely to volunteer both during and after university



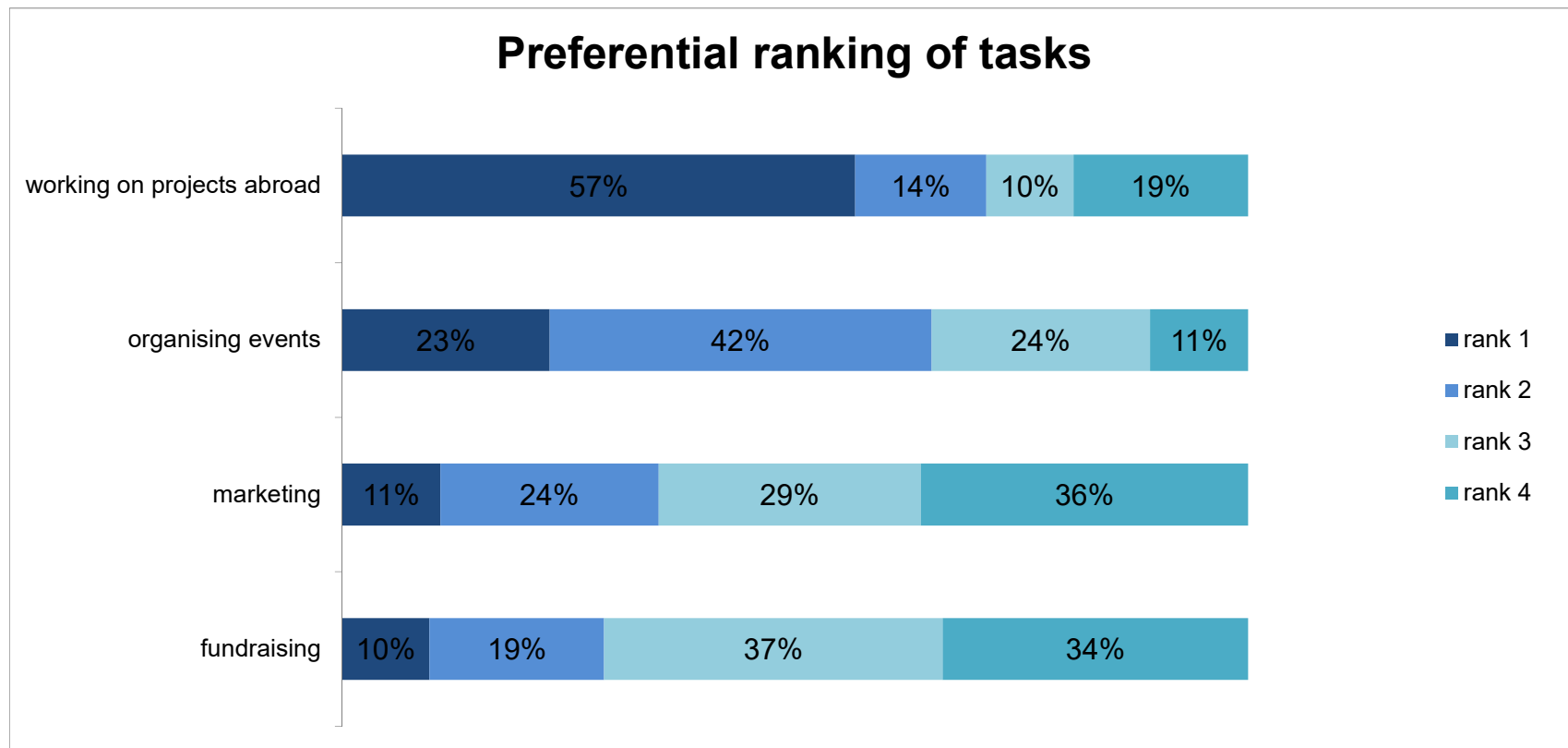
Almost 3/4 of students who are likely to volunteer during university are likely to volunteer after university as well.

However, students are more interested in shorter projects



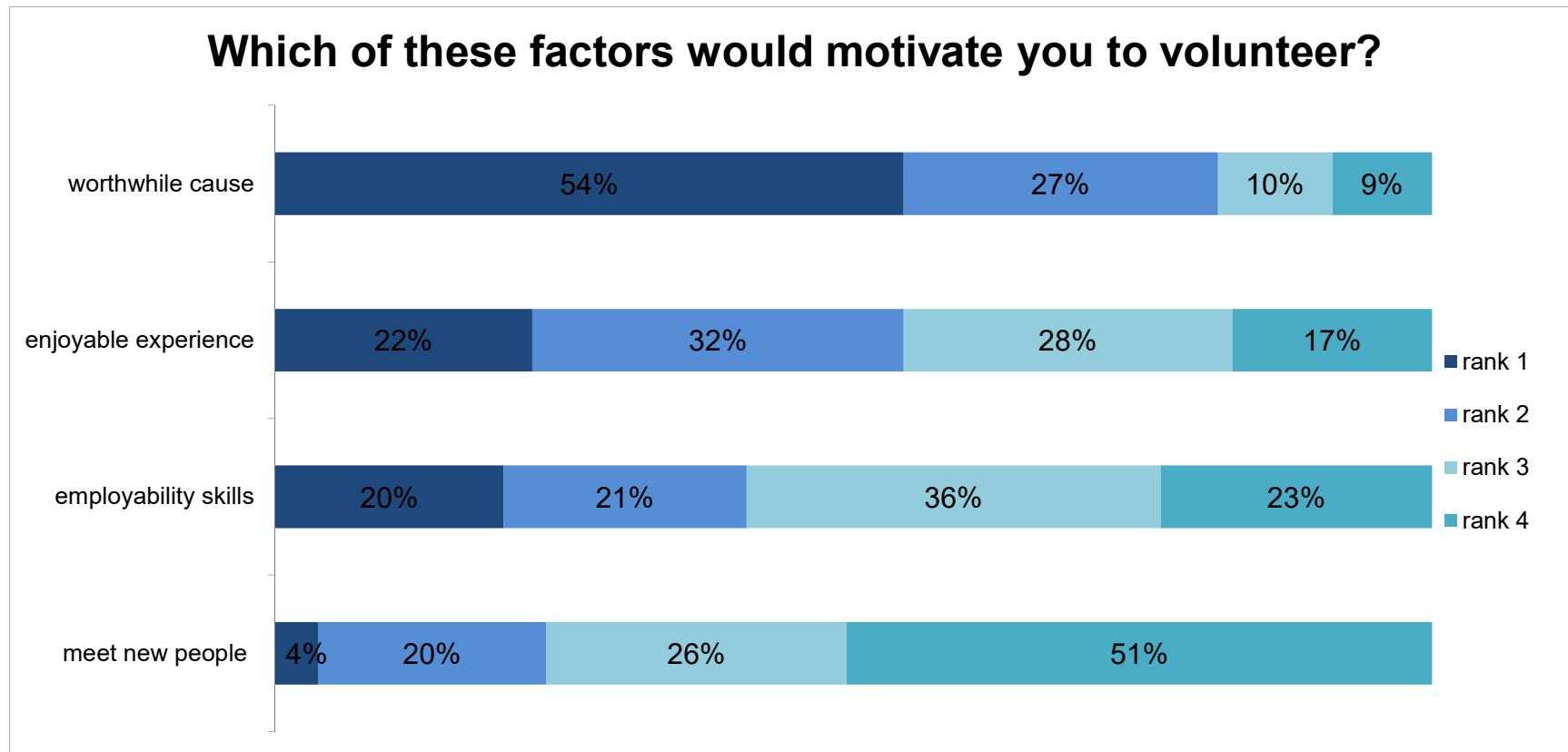
→ Find ways to engage students long-term.

Priorities for distinct projects reflect this interest



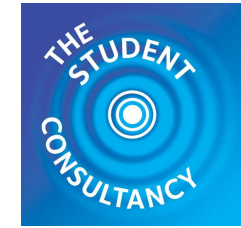
“When volunteering, I would like to get my hands dirty.”

Worthwhile cause as the most important motivational factor



"I believe that I can make better use of my free time than just having tea."

Showing tangible results key to keeping students engaged



“I don’t want to waste my time if I see that nothing changes.”

**What measures
can be taken?**



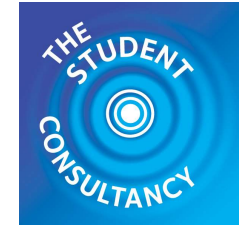
Creating short-time opportunities generates interest



- Allow students to get involved in a short project, such as organising an event or working with partners in India, to make them interested in Asha
- Keep offering long-term opportunities to progress within the organisation
- Create a fixed training scheme for new volunteers in order to minimise the cost



A structured experience keeps students involved



- Make plans for events and opportunities in advance, e.g. annually or biannually
- Inform potential and existing volunteers about the opportunities available
- Publically inform about all tangible results

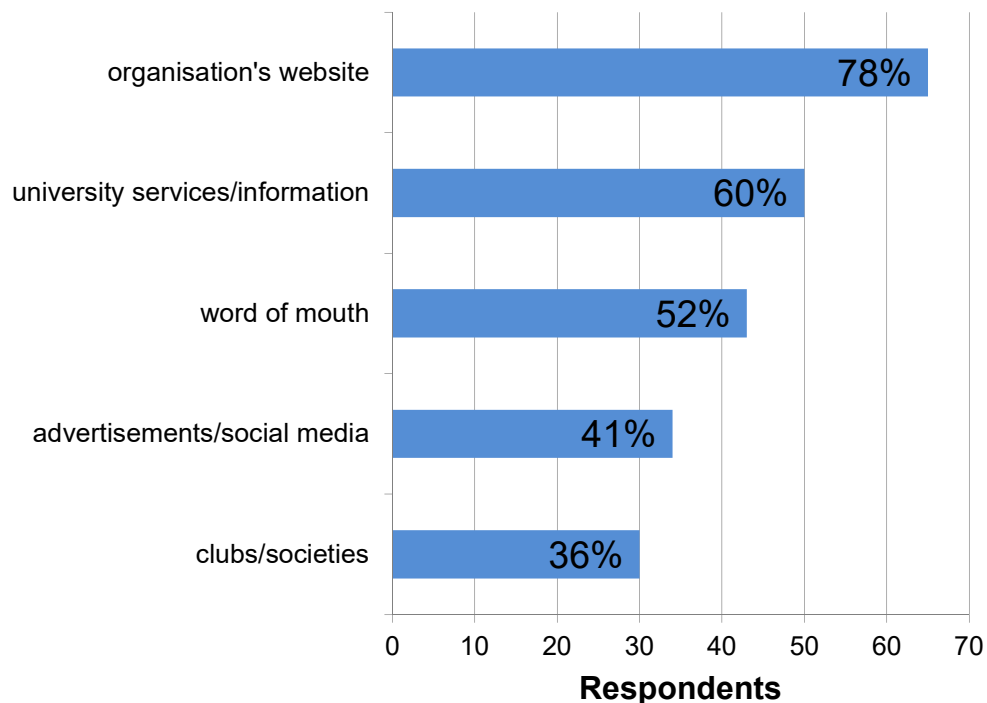


“A good organisation needs to be organised: It needs to clearly lay out its plans, expected outcomes, and how they can be measured.”

Effective advertisement keeps volunteers coming



Where would you go initially to find out more about possible volunteering experiences?



- Reorganise the website and update it regularly; advertise what students want
 - Make website easier to navigate
 - Advertise projects available
 - Highlight the good cause
 - Refer to employability skills

Effective advertisement keeps volunteers coming



- Contact universities to approach students directly
 - Fresher's Fairs
 - Volunteering Fairs
 - Student unions / Volunteering societies/services
 - UCL: Volunteering Services Unit (VCU)
 - LSE Volunteer Centre
 - KCL student union – widening participation
 - Imperial Community Connections
 - ...

“If I got an email, there’s a bigger chance I would do it.”



Limitations of our findings

Responses might not be completely representative:

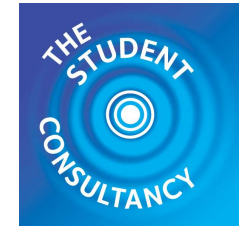
- Only 84 online responses
- Majority of responses were from undergraduate students
 - But: Open interviews show no significant differences between undergraduate, Master, and PhD students
- Responses only from Russell Group universities

Suggestions for future work



- Compare findings to the motives and views of professionals
- Work out suggested solutions in greater detail
 - Training program for new volunteers
 - Specific marketing channels
 - Changes to the website





Thank you for your cooperation and best of luck for the future.

The Student Consultancy is a programme of learning and development activities for University of Oxford students. It provides employability skills training and work-based experiences to students whilst at the same time giving free consultancy to local businesses, charities and community organizations (Clients).

After an initial induction period facilitated by the University of Oxford Careers Service, teams of students undertake short, limited scope projects for Clients.

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In particular:

- a) The University and the students do not warrant the accuracy of any information, written or spoken, provide by the student teams, and Clients should not rely on its accuracy to make decisions.
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- c) In general, teams should not be expected to spend much time on a client's site; however, if they do, then the health and safety responsibility rests with the Client.
- d) No commitment can be made as to the amount of time students can or will spend on a project as it is understood that this work has to be fitted around their academic obligations that take first priority. Clients and teams will be expected to clarify timing and scope at the start and from time to time during the project.

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