Nomination Guidelines for UNSW Advantage

Are you a UNSW Faculty, School or Division currently offering a co-curricular activity or program to students? Are you a Student Organisation with an executive committee, or offering professional development or volunteering opportunities for your members?

We encourage you to nominate your opportunities and programs for accreditation under UNSW Advantage. Accreditation through UNSW Advantage enhances the prestige of what you offer. UNSW Advantage also authorises the activity or executive position(s) to be listed on participating students' official AHEGS.

Below are guidelines and information on best practice which detail the UNSW Advantage requirements in nominating and administering your opportunities.

Once you've read the guidelines below, complete the relevant nomination form to get started.

What is UNSW Advantage?

UNSW Advantage is the official accreditation body that assesses co-curricular activities and professional development opportunities undertaken by students throughout the university, for inclusion on participants' Australian Higher Education Graduate Statement (AHEGS).

In so doing it helps create standards of excellence in the non-academic learning experience available to students throughout the university.

Advantage also serves to promote the importance of this kind of development to UNSW students, as well as increase the visibility of over 450 different activities it has endorsed to date through promotional activities.

The key objectives of UNSW Advantage are to:

- Ensure all university volunteering and professional development activities and positions undertaken by students are recognised on their AHEGS.
- Widen student participation and engagement in quality co-curricular activities.
- Support all areas of the university in developing and promoting volunteering and professional development opportunities for students.
- Create a vibrant and world class non-academic learning experience for students.

There are currently over 400 co-curricular opportunities recognised through UNSW Advantage, and over 70 different providers from across the university.

What is the AHEGS?

The Australian Higher Education Graduate Statement (AHEGS) is a kind of secondary transcript issued to students when they graduate, and providing a snapshot of their graduate achievements. It aims to enhance graduate mobility and employability in the global marketplace.
Section 4 of the AHEGS contains a list of any co-curricular opportunities that have been recognised under the UNSW Advantage umbrella and completed by the graduand at any stage of their degree. Listed on the AHEGS is the name of the opportunity, the position held by the participant as well as short description of that position's responsibilities.

See AHEGS for more information.

Why nominate an opportunity or position for AHEGS?

It is really important to students that their co-curricular achievements are recognised alongside their formal degree, so they can demonstrate to future employers their competitive standing amongst graduates. The university encourages all staff members engaging students in volunteering to be part of a university wide effort to support and recognise our students through this the process.

UNSW Advantage recognition also demonstrates to students the calibre of your program as a professional development opportunity. It helps you attract those students who are interested in developing skills and strengths and enhancing their graduate standing. It also incentivises students to complete programs they commit to, in order to gain the recognition on AHEGS.

UNSW Advantage will also help increase students’ awareness of your own co-curricular activity through the additional promotion through the UNSW Advantage online quiz and online directory, relevant newsletters, events and social media marketed by Student Development.

UNSW Advantage also provides full and ongoing support to any staff or student wanting help in nominating an activity, as well as offering consultation in how to develop, promote or deliver a high quality volunteering program effectively.

UNSW Advantage also assists in the sharing of best practice through quarterly newsletters and networking events each year for UNSW Advantage Providers delivering co-curricular program across campus.

Who can nominate an opportunity or position?

Any University Faculty, School or Division offering a volunteering or professional development program are eligible to nominate the activity or positions with it for inclusion within UNSW Advantage.

Constituent Clubs (affiliated with a faculty) are also entitled to nominate their executive positions, and any volunteer opportunities or professional development programs they run for members. However they must first find a faculty staff member who is willing to support the nomination to ensure it meets the criteria, and to maintain contact with the students undertaking the activity to be able to verify their hours and activities. The staff is also required to update the student records via the online database (CCOS) several times a year, for which they will be given administrative access. Any staff wanting information or guidance concerning the supervision of students within a constituent club or student led activity, should contact UNSW Advantage.

Several executive positions within Arc clubs and societies are now eligible for inclusion within UNSW Advantage through Arc’s Executive Recognition Initiative. To be eligible, executive members will be required to attend professional development training run by Arc, and submit a log book detailing their activities, in order to be eligible for recognition. The society will also need to submit a simple form to Arc. Constituent Clubs who are unable to find a faculty staff member to act as the Activity Sponsor/Administrator may also be eligible to participate in Arc’s Executive Recognition Initiative. More information about this scheme is available at https://orgsync.com/96288/custom_pages/11288 or contact clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au

Opportunities to volunteer or undertake professional development within external organisations are not currently eligible for inclusion under UNSW Advantage, unless they are part of a university program such as the Volunteer Army or the UNSW Leadership Program.

Please note that whether an activity or position is deemed eligible for inclusion under UNSW Advantage is ultimately at the discretion of Advantage and the Director of Student Life and Learning. All factors are taken into consideration, including the nature of the activity or position, how it contributes to the university community, how well structured and professional it is, how it helps develop a student's skills, the training involved, and also the level of support and supervision it receives from a university staff member. Detailed information is gathered through the nomination process, and carefully evaluated in order to maintain the integrity of AHEGS recognition for the university and students. Additional
information may be requested and support can be provided with the nomination form and process, to ensure a fair process and appropriate decision is made.

Contact Advantage at the details below if you would like help in assessing whether you are entitled to lodge a nomination.

How do I nominate an opportunity or position?

To lodge a nomination, Providers must complete the appropriate nomination form depending on whether they are a Faculty/School/Division, or a Student Organisation, and whether they are nominating a new activity, additional roles within an approved activity or executive positions.

All nominations are appropriately and equitably reviewed by the Manager, UNSW Student Development, against the criteria outlined, and the outcome of the application is emailed to the Provider soon after.

Approved activities are then added to the CCOS database and listed on the UNSW Advantage online directory as soon as possible following approval, and access to CCOS is organised for the Activity Administrator by Academic Administration.

Contact the UNSW Advantage team at the details below if you would like assistance with lodging an effective nomination.

What opportunities and positions are eligible?

Currently over 400 activities are recognised under UNSW Advantage, and listed on participant's AHEGS on completion. These are run by over 70 different faculties, units and organisations within the university.

For opportunities or positions to become accredited, they must demonstrate to meet the following UNSW Advantage Eligibility Criteria:

- Be a university run volunteering or professional development activity
- Involve practical activities that contribute to the university or wider community
- Be well organised and structured to support participants’ development of one or more of the UNSW Graduate Outcomes
- Involve mandatory training to sufficiently prepare participants to undertake the tasks
- Have a minimum total commitment of 20 hours (excluding training)
- Be coordinated, supervised or monitored by a university staff member who can verify the hours and activities undertaken and update the online database (CCOS) periodically.

The activities generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Clubs and Societies
- Committees and Councils
- Peer Mentoring and Tutoring
- Student Media and Publications
- Student Ambassadors
- Student Led Teams
- Competitions
- Student Exchange
- Internships
- Leadership and Professional Development Programs
- Community Volunteering

For a full list of what's currently included visit the UNSW Advantage search.

Please note merit awards for academic excellence, including Deans’ Lists, are not co-curricular achievements and are not eligible to be part of UNSW Advantage. All academic awards, prizes or acknowledgements should be directed to UNSW Prizes.
What responsibilities does a Provider agree to?

A Provider is the university organisation delivering or supervising a UNSW Advantage accredited opportunity, and the staff involved in that process.

Each provider does an outstanding job in helping offer an exceptional co-curricular experience to our students, that genuinely supports their development into competitive graduates and engaged citizens with professional skills and the potential to be leaders of the future.

To ensure the quality of the experiences offered to students, and maintain the integrity and calibre of AHEGS recognition, all activities are carefully assessed through the nomination process as per the eligibility criteria outlined above.

As a provider of a UNSW Advantage accredited opportunity, the following responsibilities and duties will apply:

- All providers should ensure they are running an effective recruitment process, providing training to fulfil the role, and supervising students to support them in their professional development.
- An Activity Administrator must be appointed to help coordinate the activity. They are responsible for ensuring all students have met the minimum 20 hour requirement, and completed the activities congruent with the original nomination. They agree to help administer the student validation process, by uploading the student ID for each participant when requested in time for graduations.
- All providers should ensure their UNSW Advantage web listing has relevant, resourceful and current information for students. As applications for opportunities open and close, staff movements and any changes to an activity occur, a provider must contact the UNSW Advantage team to ensure information is updated online timely.
- To support the uni-wide effort to educate students about professional and skills development, providers are also asked to promote their UNSW Advantage status when marketing their opportunity to students. Postcard flyers promoting skills development through UNSW Advantage are available to promote in student-facing centres and front counters. Digital assets are also available, including the online quiz, imagery and slides for training sessions - all upon request.

Contact the UNSW Advantage team at the details below to discuss this further.

How does a Provider administer student records of an opportunity?

When the Manager, UNSW Student Development approves a nominated opportunity, Academic Administration is alerted to automatically set up CCOS access for the Activity Administrator. Academic Administration then email the Administrator to notify them that access has been created.

The Activity Administrator will receive an email from Academic Administration, prior to each round of Graduation Ceremonies, requesting they log onto CCOS and enter the student zID for each participant who has completed their program. It is vital that the Administrator meets their responsibilities in validating the involvement of all participants by the given deadline. If the deadline is missed, it is possible that graduating students may not have their activity printed on the AHEGS they receive at their coming graduation ceremony. Providers can still upload the details of non-graduating participants past the deadline.

CCOS is available here or via myUNSW > Academic Admin tab > Online Services menu > Co-curricular Statement link.

If you are a new Provider needing access for your approved activity please email ahegs@unsw.edu.au to request system access.

Need further help or information?

Please contact the Advantage team at advantage@unsw.edu.au to:

- Get assistance with the nomination form and process
- Receive guidance on meeting your requirements as a Provider
- Gain support or advice in getting the best outcomes from your students through effective training, supervision and
feedback processes
- Follow up on your lodged nomination
- Receive UNSW Advantage promotional items including the logo, website descriptor and flyers.

Please contact Academic Administration at ahegs@unsw.edu.au for:
- Gaining access to the CCOS system
- Guidance in how to use the CCOS system and assign student records
- Issues related to validating student involvement
- Questions regarding your activity details on CCOS.