



Service-Learning Manual

Oklahoma City University

2024-2025

Our humble gratitude to Vivian Wimberly for her ongoing support of the Service-Learning tradition at Oklahoma City University. Thanks also to Mark Davies for his development of the program under the auspices of the World House. Current material directly adapted from the manuals and programs at St. John Fisher College and Duke University.

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I. Mission Statement: Definition of Service Learning

Oklahoma City University requires all students to complete service learning for the undergraduate degree. We believe this is vital to preparing and motivating our students to make meaningful contributions in the Oklahoma City area and beyond.

Beginning with the application period for Spring 2024 Service Learning courses, requirements for course designation approval have been reaffirmed. Conversations with faculty members from across the campus have led to the following standards being affirmed:

- All Service Learning courses must have learning objectives specific to their Service Learning status clearly outlined in the syllabus.
- All Service Learning courses must include a common reflection assignment. Assignment formats are up to the individual instructor's discretion, as long as they are reflective in nature.
- All Service Learning courses must include a minimum of 12 Service hours.
 - These hours are preferably completed outside of class time, as Service Learning is a requirement in addition to the typical Undergraduate course load.

Our goal is to help all stakeholders achieve the following goals:

- Students will meet course and College-wide learning goals in the context of applying academic skills, civic and cultural awareness, and professional skills.
- Faculty will enjoy professional development and cross-disciplinary scholarship through community avenues of teaching and learning.
- Community partners will benefit from shared resources and expertise; partnerships will lead to solutions to identified issues facing local and global communities.

We start with the following foundational definition of service-learning:

Service-Learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students apply academic knowledge and skills from academic courses to client support or capacity-building projects, to meet identified needs of a community partner and enhance student academic learning and civic and professional development. This service moves beyond the traditional understanding of community service, charity, or volunteerism through its integration in academic courses and focus on mutually beneficial outcomes.

- St. John Fisher college Service-Learning Advisory Board

At Oklahoma City University, service-learning gives students opportunities to apply what they are learning in the classroom through service in a community-based setting. Since the inception of the service-learning program in the 2002 spring semester, OCU has offered over 600 service-learning sections. Service-learning became a part of the general education requirements for all undergraduates in the fall of 2003, and we have worked with over 60 community partners. The program is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Vivian Wimberly.

II. Pillars of Service-Learning

**from St. John Fisher College's Service-Learning Faculty Manual*

The Service Component

The project is collaboratively developed and reciprocally beneficial to strengthen community engagement or meet an identified community need. This project moves beyond the traditional understanding of community service, charity, or volunteerism. The project takes the form of client support or capacity-building. Students apply course content and skills to create a product of value and/or provide effective client support. [**Time Guideline: 12-30 hours**]

Intersection of Service & Learning

Students link the community-based project to the academic course content through integrated course assignments. The project is designed to enhance academic knowledge, problem solving, cultural competence, and communication skills. Reflection assignments enable students to address questions, check perspectives, and reflect on professional, civic, and personal development.

The Service-Learning Project

➔The SL Project strengthens community engagement or addresses an identified need that can't be met because of lack of resources (time, people, information)

➔The SL project enhances students' accomplishment of course specific and department-wide learning goals

➔The SL project results in a concrete product or outcome that will be valued and used by the Community Partner

➔The SL project builds on identified assets of individuals
Service hours are between 12 and 30 hours

The Community Component

➔Community partners (CP) will be a non-profit, school, or small business ideally located in the OKC metro

➔CPs identify their organization's needs in advance of and work collaboratively with the faculty

➔CPs participate in the pre-semester project planning and help orient the students

➔CPs oversee students' work in ways that are feasible, including providing feedback and returning communicating quickly (ideally within 48 hours)

➔CPs serve as a coeducator

The Academic Component

➔Students apply course content to a community based project

➔ Students explicitly relate to the experience in the community to academic content through a common reflective assignment

➔ Students have opportunities to be exposed

to diverse experiences that expand perspectives

➔ Students enhance professional skills including communication and problem-solving

➔ Faculty collaborate in the development of project, orientation of students, and regular communication with CP

III. Service-Learning Course Checklist & Project Plan

We believe it is important for each Service-Learning course to reflect the same set of Student Learning outcomes -- complimentary to the Learning Outcomes of the specific disciplinary focus of the course - - and to ensure this we encourage the outcomes below. Your syllabus should address all items in the checklist below, whether by explicitly addressing them in the course policies and/or responding to them via assignment design and calendar design. You can use the checklist as an exercise to help you think through your course in both big-picture and practical ways; your Syllabus and the subsequent Project Plan should work together.

Please note that all faculty must apply for Service Learning course designation. Applications are required for each semester the instructor wishes to teach the service learning course. Information on application requirements and due dates will be communicated from the Office of Academic Affairs each semester. Should you have questions or concerns about the designation process, please contact Assistant Director of Academic Services Cady Lewis at cllewis@okcu.edu.

Course Checklist: Outcomes & Time-Table

1. **Project Development:** Identify community partner and project that requires a minimum of 12 volunteer hours.
2. **Application of Knowledge:** Please describe the ways your SL project will help students apply content from the course to issues in the community and service experience to content.
3. **Intellectual Engagement:** Please describe the ways your SL project will help students understand a problem, generate solutions and evaluate the final outcome.
4. **Communication:** Describe/explain the ways SL project will help students tailor communication strategies, understand audience, and collaborate with others.
5. **Diversity and Cultural Understanding:** Describe/explain ways SL project might help students understand/engage with diversity and cultural differences.
6. **Civic Development:** Describe/explain the ways SL project will increase students' awareness and concern about the needs in the community.
7. **Statement of Project:** Please write your SL assignment description as it would appear on your syllabus including learning and service goals and expectations.
8. **Use the following Time-Table as a general guideline to construct a rough calendar for your course:**

Week 1: Introduce course goals and definitions, procure Agreement Form

Week 2: Provide background information on Community Partner and issue

Week 3: Make initial contact. Outline goals, hopes, concerns.

Week 4: Begin working onsite; initial work done for CP.

Week 5-8: Discussion of course concepts, ongoing work, and reflection on experience.

Week 9-13: Challenges should be faced and resolved, feedback should be collected.

Project should be completed.

Week 14-16: Finalize requirement of service assignments and reflection.

Note: We recognize that each course will be slightly unique and that the above functions only as a guideline; categories attributed to the taxonomy found in St. John Fisher College's Service-Learning Faculty Manual. Good reasons for doing things differently are always welcome.

PROJECT PLAN

Service-Learning integrates community projects in academic courses to meet community needs and enhance student learning. We work with non-profits, neighborhoods, and small businesses to provide specific community support and/or address an identified need that can't be met because of a lack of resources (time, people, information). Completion of this Project Plan will help ensure a well-coordinated and communicated project that all participants understand. We understand that plans can change and partnerships require flexibility; yet in the spirit of transparency, we ask for a commitment to what is below in good faith. Thank you for taking this extra step. Items below are to be completed by faculty person; Community Partner should sign in the space provided. Stipend applications without the Community Partner signature will not be reviewed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION: (Name, Title, Department, Phone, Email)

COMMUNITY PARTNER NAME: (Name, Title and/or Position, Phone, Email)

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

PLEASE SELECT ONE:

- New Service Learning course that is open to all majors (e.g., no prerequisites, during university sanctioned class times)
- New Service Learning course (never received SL stipend before)
- Existing Course with new feature (new project/new partner)

COURSE INFORMATION

- Course delivery (in person or online):
- Course length (semester or 8-week):
- Course day and time:
- Estimated number of service hours (as distinct from traditional in-class contact hours):
- Estimated number of students:

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**SL courses require a sustained service component. Courses that include one-time volunteer opportunities are not eligible for stipend consideration.*

Please provide a short description of the Service Learning project.

COMMUNITY PARTNER BACKGROUND

**Courses that include OCU entities as the community partner are not eligible for stipend consideration.*

Organization/Program: Please provide a short description of organization and/or program, including mission and vision, relevant program details.

COMMUNITY GOALS:

Please provide a description of how the project outcomes will:

1. Fulfill an identified need of the Community Partner *and/or*
2. Strengthen or advance an area of growth or goals for the CP's future

Please be sure to include a copy of the Time-Table for the Community Partner to review before signing.

SIGNATURES

We, the undersigned, recognize the inherent risks in service-learning and acknowledge the right of either instructor or Community Partner to terminate the arrangement in light of negligence or harm. We also grant permission to Oklahoma City University to use photographs or video, along with testimonial material.

Faculty Person: _____ Date: _____

Community Partner: _____ Date: _____

Additional Comments:

IV. Application for Stipend, Award Tiers, & Rubric

To receive a stipend, please submit a full syllabus and project plan (pg. 6). Applications should be sent to Lesley Black and are due on the third Tuesday of September/February for the following semester. Funds are competitively awarded until they run out.

The timeline portion of the Project Plan may be an estimate and can be finalized collaboratively in consultation with your community partner at a later date. Actual hours of service should be noted (12-30).

Please see the chart below for amounts awarded. If selected for an award, faculty recipient agrees to serve as a reader of future applications. Stipends will be distributed after the course is complete and the Faculty Impact and Assessment Form (and accompanying items) (pg. 15) have been submitted to Lesley Black.

New Service Learning Course that is open and accessible to all majors	\$3000
New Service Learning Course	\$2500
Repeated Service Learning Course, New Feature (new project/new partner)	\$1000

SERVICE-LEARNING STIPEND APPLICATION RUBRIC
Semester 20XX

Applicant: _____ Course: _____

Reviewer: _____

Please check boxes as appropriate:

- New Service Learning course that is open to all majors (e.g., no prerequisites, during university sanctioned class times)
- New Service Learning Course (never received SL stipend before)
- Repeated Service Learning Course w/New Feature (new project or community partner)

Please use the questions below to award points. Space is provided for qualitative feedback in the NOTES section below; this may be especially useful for applications in need of development.

Application Components (1-5 points for each component)

1. Does the applicant include a full **Syllabus** and **Project Plan**? (5 pts each)
2. Does the applicant provide a signature from a specified community partner (CP)? (5 pts)
3. Does the Syllabus/Project Plan include a minimum of 12 volunteer hours spread across multiple occasions? (4 pt)

Qualitative Assessment (1-3 points for each answer)

4. Does the Syllabus and Project Plan describe the SL assignment(s) (for both committee and student audience) in a way that includes learning and service goals/expectations?
5. Does the Syllabus signal how the course will apply subject knowledge for CP's benefit?
6. Does the Syllabus explain how the course will provide experiential learning for the student, including reflection as part of that process?
7. Do the Syllabus and/or Project Plan address the need for communication strategies that can help the students understand their CP audience, and the CP communicate with teacher/students?
8. Do the Syllabus and/or Project Plan address communication strategies for students collaborating with each other and/or providing feedback to the instructor?
9. Does the application include a Time-Table that seems feasible?
10. Does the Syllabus address a need for sensitivity and appropriate interaction with CP related to diversity and cultural differences?

TOTAL: _____
possible points: 40

NOTES:

V. Safety Guidelines

Oklahoma City University takes great pride in our campus values of responsibility and integrity. At the same time, while students may consider themselves prepared to take on a high degree of responsibility, it is important for faculty to play a leadership role in anticipating issues of safety, sensitivity, and logistics. Whether in your syllabus or through handouts or assignments done throughout the course, we require that you address the following somewhere, *in writing*:

Transportation, Technology, and Access: Have you provided a plan for the necessary transportation, technology, and general access that your course will require? Is it possible for students to effectively meet their community responsibilities given the resources at their disposal?

Examples: Have rides been arranged and/or coordinated? Have maps been provided? Has parking been accounted for? Have you provided a phone tree for contact once out in the community? Does everyone need a key to get in?

Sensitivity and Social Training: Have you discussed and prepared everyone for your expectations of their behavior when working with a Community Partner? Have you consulted the CP about their explicit expectations of behavior? Are you clear on the preferred naming and terminology of your CP? Will students feel safe in this environment (whether for perceived or apparent reasons)?

Examples: Have you asked your Community Partner point person how she would prefer to be addressed by the students? Have you outlined how to handle a community member with mental illness? Have you provided basic practice scripts for appropriate communication?

Supervision and Community Partner Feedback: Have you outlined for both students and Community Partner a plan for supervision? Do you have regular moments of supervision and feedback outlined for students in terms of course participation? Do you have a formalized agreement and/or plan with your CP that allows for feedback on student interaction?

Examples: Are students working in groups that keep a log of site visits? Is each student keeping a journal of reflection for their experience, submitting for regular review? Do you have an opportunity for feedback from your Community Partner midway through the project?

VI. Additional Resources

Links to online resources

Campus Compact:

<http://www.compact.org/>

Service-Learning Syllabi by Discipline:

<http://www.compact.org/syllabi/>

Rochester Institute for Technology's
Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement:

<https://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/lead/connect-with-community/into-the-roc>

Brockport American Democracy Project:

<http://www.brockport.edu/adp/>

- Student Agreement and Permission Form
- Student Impact and Assessment Form
- Community Partner Impact and Assessment Form
- Faculty Impact and Assessment Form

Oklahoma City University Service Learning Student Agreement and Permission Form

Student Name: _____ Email: _____

Course: _____ Semester: _____

Local Address: _____

Preferred Phone: _____

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I, _____ agree to the following as a participant of Service-Learning at Oklahoma City University:

- I understand the responsibilities of my service project, deadlines, and related course assignments. I will be graded on the learning outcomes and not solely for service hours.
- I acknowledge that there are inherent risks in service-learning.
- I understand the course instructor and Community Partner reserve the right to terminate my service work in cases of negligence or harm.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Permission to Use Photographs and/or Video

I grant Oklahoma City University the right to take photographs or video of me in connection with my service work. I authorize OCU to use and publish photographs, with or without my name, for lawful purposes for advertising, evaluation, or other publications in print and/or electronically.

I have read and understand the above:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Permission to Use Student Work

I authorize Oklahoma City University to use and publish copies of my coursework related to my service assignment (reflections, final products, Power Points, class evaluations), without my name, for advertising, evaluation, or other publications in print and/or electronically.

I have read and understand the above:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone#: _____

**Oklahoma City University Service Learning
Student Impact and Assessment Form**

Please reply to the questions below, referring to specifics to help illustrate your answer.

1. Please describe how your service-learning experience provided an opportunity to **apply course content** within the community. We are especially interested in how the service-learning project provided a chance to understand problems, generate solutions, and then evaluate outcomes and adjust or prepare for the future.
2. Please describe or explain how your service-learning experience afforded opportunities to practice and tailor **communication strategies**, understand different audiences, and collaborate with peers and community members. What professional or personal abilities did you develop?
3. Please note and reflect on any ways in which the project afforded opportunities to understand and engage with **different cultural/community perspectives**.
4. Consider the pace of the course and the development of your involvement with the Community Partner. How did the **course timeline** set up the needs of the community and create your sense of expectation and responsibility?
5. Do you feel you the support/project you provided **met an identified need**? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. What else should we know? What questions have we not asked that you would like to answer?
7. What advice can you give to future service-learning students?

**Oklahoma City University Service Learning
Community Partner Impact and Assessment Form**

We are grateful for your willingness to partner with us in a service-learning experience, and we value your feedback. We invite your feedback on the following; please provide specifics when available to help illustrate any input and concerns.

To what extent were our students able to meet an identified need and/or strengthen a capacity for your organization? Were students able to help contribute in an area that was lacking in resources (time, ability, etc.)?

How was your experience of the timeline for the course's interaction and development of the service-learning project? What changes might you make?

Do you feel students generally produced professional and high-quality work?

In your general experience, were students reliable? Did you experience a constructive attitude and/or a general openness to learning new things and making adjustments when needed?

Do you feel that students' presence resulted in any other benefit, such as contributing new ideas, building relationships for future contribution, etc.?

Is there any other feedback you would like to offer us?

**Oklahoma City University Service Learning
Faculty Impact and Assessment Form**

Please address each question below in no less than a paragraph, and no more than 1-page, single-spaced page. Feel free to attach sample rubrics, assignments, communications from the Community Partner, etc. as needed. This form is to be submitted electronically to Lesley Black at the end of the course along with photos, videos, testimonials, or other course materials that may be utilized on the SL webpage.

1. Please describe the value service-learning added to students' learning and/or your professional development.
2. Please describe the value service-learning provided to your Community Partner. This should include a description of the most impactful capacity-building or strengthening product/service students produced, noting in what ways the outcomes were beneficial.
3. Reflect on your design of the course in global and surface-level ways. What assignments were most effective in helping students link course content with the service experience?
4. Were there any outcomes that were not beneficial or less effective than desired? Which ones and why? What are the areas you might change for next time?