

Service Learning Handbook for Students



SERVICE LEARNING

What is Service Learning?

Service Learning promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are substantively related to course content.

Through reflective activities, students enhance their understanding of course content, general knowledge, sense of civic responsibility, self-awareness and commitment to the community.

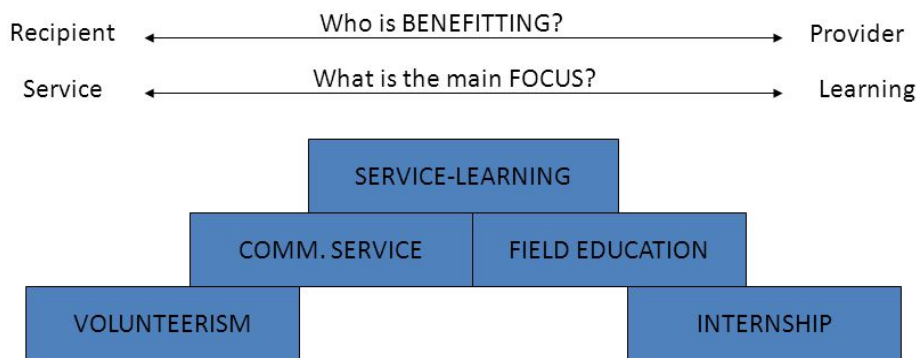
Benefits of a Service Learning Course

- **Learning outcomes**—deeper understanding of course material, positive impact on student engagement, retention, and graduation rates
- **Personal outcomes**—enhances leadership, collaboration, communication skills
- **Social outcomes**—appreciation of diversity, cultural competence, empathy, civic engagement

“Although SL students and non-SL students had similar pre-college academic characteristics, **SL students were more successful while enrolled in college. They earned more credits, had a higher average college GPA, and they graduated at a significantly higher rate than did non-SL students, despite having greater financial need while enrolled.**”

—*The Relationship between Service-Learning and Degree Completion, Lockeman, Kelly S.; Pelco, Lynn E., Michigan Journal of Community*

How is Service Learning Different from Volunteering or an Internship?



Adapted from Furco, 1996

Source: Corporation for National Service. Furco, Andrew. "Service Learning: a Balanced Approach to Experiential Education." Expanding the Boundaries: Serving and Learning. Washington, DC: Corporation for National Service, 1996, 2-6.

As you can see from the above image, volunteerism primarily focuses on service while an internship primarily focuses on learning. Service Learning falls in between the two, with equal focus on service and learning and equal benefit to students and community partners. Both the community's needs and the student's learning needs will be met.

Earning Academic Credit for a Service Learning Course

Service Learning brings to life the subject matter of a course by involving students in "real world" experiences directly related to course learning objectives. Numerous courses at CSUSM include Service Learning as part of the learning process; in fact, this is becoming a popular way to learn at many colleges and universities.


Most Service Learning courses are visible in the [class schedule](#) under Enrollment Information.

Search for Classes

Class Detail

EDUC 364 - 01 The Role of Cultural Diversity in Schooling
Cal State San Marcos | Fall 2020 | Lecture

Class Details

Status	Open 	Course ID	100171
Class Number	40009	Offer Nbr	1
Session	Regular Academic Session	Career	Undergraduate
Units	3 units	Dates	8/31/2020 - 12/12/2020
Instruction Mode	On Line	Grading	Graded
Class Components	Lecture Required	Location	San Marcos Campus

Meeting Information

Days & Times	Room	Instructor	Meeting Dates
Mo 9:30AM - 12:20PM	Synchronous Virtual Instr	Sherry Freeborn	08/31/2020 - 12/12/2020

Enrollment Information

Requirement Designation	DD - UJGE Social Science
Class Attributes	Service Learning Course = Yes Upper Div GE requirement in Social Science



Class Availability

Class Capacity	40	Wait List Capacity	999
Enrollment Total	36	Wait List Total	0
Available Seats	4		

Notes

Class Notes SL - Class has a service-learning component.
Some seats in this class are reserved for students who need this course for major/minor requirements (see <https://bit.ly/3dz1EDU>).

For tips on how to enroll in a course please see the Office of the Registrars [class schedule](#) to help with enrollment.

How to find a Service Learning Placement Site

The process of making a placement is a little like applying for a new job. It may require persistence—start early and hang in there!

Follow these steps to find your Service Learning Placement

- 1) Log in to the Service Learning Database <https://app.calstates4.com/csusm>. You should see your course listed at the bottom of the welcome page. Click on **Browse**.

Course			
Fall 2020	AMD 495C (01): INTERNSHIP	Browse	Place
Fall 2020	EDUC 380 (05): APPL CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	Browse	Place
Fall 2020	HD 495 (04): FIELD EXP IN HUMAN DEVELOP	Browse	Place
Fall 2020	SOC 495 (03): CAPSTONE SEM IN COMM SERV	Browse	Place

- 2) Click **Search by Site** or **Search by Opportunity** (try searching in both lists). **Note:** you can still request to work with an organization even if they do not have an opportunity listed!

Search by site

If you know the name of the site (organization) where you are serving, find the site and continue your placement process.

Search by site

Search by opportunity

If you know the name of your opportunity (for example a specific project or internship), find the opportunity and continue your placement process.

Search by opportunities

- 3) You can narrow your search by typing a specific **City**, **Organization Type**, **Keyword**, etc.

The screenshot shows a search form with the following fields and options:

- Program:** A dropdown menu with "Service Learning" selected and a close button (x).
- Site name:** A text input field with a "Contains" dropdown menu.
- City:** A text input field with a blue arrow pointing to it.
- Organization Type:** A dropdown menu with "Choose some options" and a blue arrow pointing to it.
- Focus Population:** A dropdown menu with "Choose some options".
- Focus Area(s):** A dropdown menu with "Choose some options".
- Additional Focus Area(s):** A dropdown menu with "Choose some options".
- Keyword:** A text input field with a blue arrow pointing to it.
- Apply:** A blue button.

- 4) Click on the links for sites that match your course requirements to view the organization description. (**Note:** Ask your professor what type of organization you may choose.) Click on the organization's own **website** to get a better feel of what they do. **Do they have an online application for volunteers? If so, fill it out and skip to step 6.**

- 5) When you find a site that looks good, **call or email the contact person listed in our database.** (**Note:** you can send out several emails at once and see who gets back to you.)

You need to tell the organization

- who you are and what class you're in
- the type of work your professor requires (ask your professor if you're not sure)
- how many service hours you require

You need to ask the organization

- what type of work they need done
- what hours are available to volunteer

Here's a sample email (use it as a template by adding your course information):

Dear Ms. Andersen:

I am a student in Professor Karen Clark's Education class at California State University San Marcos. As part of the course, I am required to complete 30 hours of Service Learning this semester working with children.

If you have an opening, could you describe the type of work and the days/times you have available?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Sally Student

- 6) Once you get approval to work at a site from the site supervisor, log into the database again <https://app.calstates4.com/csusm>, click on the green button that says **Place** and complete the required forms.
- 7) Complete any onboarding requirements required by your site. This may include orientation, background check, TB test, Livescan, etc. Be sure to ask them for specifics.

Note: You must fill out the placement forms on the database by week 7 of the semester to avoid a hold being placed on your student account.

Onboarding Requirements for Service Learning

Be aware that most Community Partner sites have onboarding requirements, which may include orientation, training, a background check, TB test or LiveScan. Check with your site supervisor to find out these requirements. Our campus offers TB tests and LiveScan at low cost to our students. Check out the resources below to help get you started:

- [Student Health and Counseling Services](#) is located on our campus. Many Service Learning opportunities that involve working with youth/children will require students to obtain a tuberculosis test.
 - SHCS provides TB test for the cost of \$10; call 760-750-4915 to schedule an appointment.
 - Check with your Service Learning site to ensure this is an appropriate location to satisfy this pre-placement requirement.
- [The University Police Department](#) is located past parking lot O. Some Service Learning opportunities, particularly those with government agencies, will require students to obtain a LiveScan.

- The CSUSM Police Department provides a LiveScan service for the cost of \$20.
- Check with your Service Learning site to ensure this is an appropriate location to satisfy this pre-placement requirement.

Before You Start Your Service Learning Placement

Once you have confirmed your placement with the site supervisor, you will need to complete placement forms in the database at this link: <https://app.calstates4.com/csusm>

Once you have completed all placement forms in the S4 Service Learning database, check in with your course instructor to find out the dates when you may begin and end your service, how to keep track of your hours, and other important information.

Service Learning Student Responsibilities

- Be professional by dress appropriately for the site atmosphere, respond to emails in a timely manner and keep a notebook of all projects and meetings.
- Report to work when scheduled.
- Notify your site supervisor if you cannot come at your scheduled time.
- Keep you site supervisor informed about what you are working on and don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Take appropriate safety precautions as specified by your site.
- Inform your faculty supervisor immediately of any concerns you may have at your site.

Tips for a Successful Service Learning Experience

- Get to know your learning site supervisor at your community partner site.
- Every learning site has its own rules, policies, procedures, protocol and expectations for which you are responsible. Familiarize yourself with the workings of the learning site. This will contribute to both your success and your safety.
- Do not leave items visible in your car's interior. Place valuable articles in the trunk prior to arrival at the learning site.
- If you take the bus, be sure to know the route and cost of bus fare.
- In case of a breakdown or a mix up with transportation, carry enough money for an alternate ride home.
- Familiarize yourself with people, places and things in the area that can be of assistance in times of emergency (e.g. know the location of phones, 24-hour stores, police station, etc.).
- Give the phone number of the agency where you'll be serving to a roommate, friend, or relative before leaving for your learning site.

Frequently Asked Questions

- *How do I use the database?*
 - Please follow the following [Database Instructions](#) to show you simple step by step instructions on how to make a placement. You can also watch the [Student Introductory Video](#) for extra help as well.
- *How do I know if a site is appropriate for my course?*

- Review your course syllabus for details on which sites are appropriate and ask your professor if you are unsure. Most course instructors will review Service Learning requirements within the first few weeks of the semester.
- *What do I do if I have not heard back from my Service Learning site?*
 - If you have not heard back from the sites that you have reached out to please consult with your instructor for a list of additional recommended sites.
- *What if my organization is not on the database?*
 - Service Learning can only be performed at sites which have an active agreement and are listed in our [Service Learning Database](#). Therefore, students must select a Service Learning site from the database. **Only instructors are allowed to submit a Request for a New Community Partner.**
- *Is it okay to complete my Service Learning hours with a family member at their organization or at my family's own organization?*
 - To avoid a conflict of interest, students may not complete their Service Learning hours for academic credit at an organization where their family member is their supervisor.
- *Can I perform Service Learning hours at my place of employment?*
 - Generally, this is not allowed. Service Learning should address an important community need and contribute to achieving your course objectives. Job assignments may not be compatible with course learning needs.
 - Performing service at another agency offers the opportunity to expose you to new situations and experiences.
- *I have two (2) Service Learning courses this semester. Can my work at one site count for both classes?*
 - While you may not "double count" your service hours for more than one course, your instructors may allow you to complete additional hours at the same site. Check with your professors to see if they will allow this.
- *Can I begin my Service Learning project before the course begins or use past Service Learning experiences for my current course?*
 - Service Learning is a tool that will help you learn course material. You may **not** use previous community hours to fulfill your current semesters hours. It is typically required that the service occur during the duration of the semester while you are studying the course content.
 - If you would like to begin your service hours prior to the start of the course, please contact your course instructor.
- *How many hours are Service Learning students required to complete?*
 - Your instructor will specify the required hours for your course. For more information please review your course syllabus.
- *Do I need to keep a timesheet?*
 - Your instructor may require that you log your hours on a [timesheet](#). If you do keep a timesheet, you will submit it to your instructor upon completion of the course.
 - The Department of Service Learning **does not** collect completed timesheets.
- *I have a question about my course grade, assignments, or enrollment?*
 - Your course instructor is responsible for all course grades and assignments related to your Service Learning course. For questions related to your course grades and assignments please consult your course instructor.

- The Department of Service Learning **is not** responsible for course grades, adding or dropping a course, and/or course assignments.

COVID-19 Regulations for Service Learning Opportunities

- Due to current COVID-19 Federal, State and County restrictions, **we strongly recommend** that students search for and chose virtual service learning (remote) opportunities. If an in-person service learning opportunity is necessary to complete required hours, CSUSM students may participate in service learning activities in the State of California provided the student and the organization follow current Federal, State, and County public health guidelines effective May 19, 2020.
- Organizations will be required to submit evidence they are in compliance with public health guidelines.
- If you are interested in participating in an on-site service learning opportunity outside the State of California, contact the [Department of Service Learning](#).

Useful links

- [CSUSM Department of Service Learning](#)
- [Community Partner Database](#) to find your site and complete your placement forms.

**Updated Fall 2020 by Rochelle Smarr, Director of Service Learning, and Carol Cujec, Faculty Director of Service Learning*