



**Service Learning
Tool kit**

PROVOST LETTER

Dear Faculty,

To support the vision and mission of the University, UHD will begin the process of designating service learning course sections in Fall 2015. Identifying course sections as service learning will inform students of their enrollment in a service learning course section during the registration process, in turn educating them to the concept before they have the service learning experience. I urge faculty to participate in formally designating their course section as service learning. Process to apply for service learning designation:

1. Please complete the [Service Learning Community Engagement Application](#).
2. Review of application and course syllabus by the Service Learning Committee.
3. If approved, course section will be granted designation in banner.

By working with faculty, in Spring 2015 we will be piloting the process of assigning service learning designation. Faculty will be receiving RFPs for two grants from the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning. One is for the Representative Sylvester Turner Service Learning Community grant and the other one is for a service learning mini-grant. Faculty who apply and are awarded these grants will have their course designated as service learning and will be part of the beta-test group. Starting Fall 2015, any of the course sections (regardless of funding) that faculty would like to designate as service learning course sections, can apply. The same process will be followed for both grant funding and voluntary designations of classes.

For more information, please see the service learning and community engagement committee approved service learning tool kit: <http://goo.gl/elk9x3>

Service-Learning

UHD's Mission

The University of Houston-Downtown is a comprehensive four-year university offering bachelor's and selected master's degree programs and providing strong academic and career preparation as well as life-long learning opportunities. Located in the heart of the city, the University reflects the diversity of the Greater Houston Area, and through its academic programs, engages with the community to address the needs and advance the development of the region. UHD is an inclusive community dedicated to integrating teaching, service and scholarly research to develop students' talents and prepare them for success in a dynamic global society.

UHD's Vision

The University of Houston-Downtown will be a premier city university engaging every student in high-impact educational experiences and ensuring that students graduate with 21st century skills.

Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Mission

The mission of CCESL is to support and promote the mission and vision of the university, by building external relationships with local and regional communities, philanthropic organizations, foundations, faith-based organizations, education and civic institutions, governmental agencies, and individuals, in order to enhance student learning, responsible citizenship, and services to the community.

DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE LEARNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Definition
- Criteria
- Service Learning Committee Responsibilities

DEFINITION AND CRITERIA FOR SERVICE LEARNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As approved by the Service Learning and Community Engagement Committee

Definition:

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities (Learn and Serve America National Service Learning Clearinghouse). Service-learning aims to connect the personal and intellectual to help students acquire knowledge and a useful understanding of the world, build critical thinking capacities, and perhaps lead to fundamental questions about learning and about society and to a commitment to improve both.

Criteria:

Curricular Service Learning and Community Engagement:

- A minimum of 10 hours in an academic semester—either in or outside of class involving a service oriented or community oriented curricular activity or any activity related to the service project. For example, searching for sites for service, reports on projects with community partners, etc.
- Service learning/community outreach is embedded in the syllabus of all Service Learning (S-L) designated courses.
- An assessment component for each project is required to assess learning outcomes. This could be in the form of a critique or reflection assignment for the class.
- Outreach/service partnership hosts or collaborators need to partner with the Center to ensure the organization or site is recognized as an official community partner/collaborator.
- A process for how service learning/community outreach hours are logged or credited toward service will be established by the sitting Service Learning Committee and the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning.
- Faculty teaching courses designated as Service Learning Courses will adhere to the criteria and requirements for designation as established by the sitting Service Learning Committee and through the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning
- Faculty will receive service credit for teaching credit courses with Service Learning designation. Forms will be filled out each academic semester and a continuance can be requested if there are no changes in the service/community outreach project. The purpose of filling out forms is to ensure proper credit is attributed to the faculty member and ensures the course(s) are listed in the*** Service Learning Catalog for student, faculty and advisor reference and properly coded by the registrar.
- Students taking a Service Learning Designated course will receive Service Learning course credit on their transcript.
- Students who participate in 100 hours or more of curricular/co-curricular service/community outreach credit will receive **President's Community Engagement Recognition** at graduation.

Co-Curricular Service Learning and Community Engagement:

- A minimum of 10 hours -either in or outside of class involving a service oriented or community oriented project/**co-curricular activity or any activity related to the service project. For example, a student participating in a planning session for a community-wide clean up, developing collaborations with non-profits, etc.
- Co-curricular service projects are overseen by student services, faculty, and/or club advisors and activities reported to the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning.
- A process for how service learning/community outreach hours are logged or credited toward service will be established by the sitting Service Learning Committee and the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning.
- Faculty who organize or assist in student participation of service projects/community outreach will receive service credit for evaluations.
- Staff who organize or assist in student participation of service projects/ community outreach will receive service credit for evaluations.
- Students who participate in 100 hours or more of curricular/co-curricular service/community outreach credit will receive **President's Community Engagement Recognition** at graduation.

Footnotes:

***This does not require a tie to learning outcomes for an academic course.*

****The Service Learning Catalog will be available through the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning's website and will change each academic semester based on faculty submissions.*

Service Learning Committee Responsibilities Include:

- Develop and approve criteria for service learning course designation.
- Review applications for mini-grant and Turner funds and determine awards.
- Act as a liaison between the Service Learning Committee and departmental colleagues, chairs and Deans.
- Establish criteria for the President's Community Engagement Award for staff and faculty.
- Determine Annual President's Community Engagement Award Winner for staff and faculty.

Curricular Service Learning is NOT:

- 1) Internship-although some internships may satisfy the service learning criteria
- 2) Volunteering-as this is co-curricular service and community engagement

NOTE: Both internships and volunteerism may count for civic and/or community engagement but may/may not meet specific criteria for S-L course on transcripts.

RECOMMENDED FORMS AND AGREEMENTS FOR APPROVED S-L COURSES

- **SAMPLE: Student Responsibility Contract:**
Application and Agreement – Community Service Learning
- **SAMPLE: Reflection Exercise**

These forms are not required but recommended resources.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY: APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

Student ID:	Student name:
Address:	City, ST ZIP:
Semester:	Year:
Course Title:	Instructor
	PHONE #1: PHONE #2:
Email address:	
Major:	Goals
Agency Selected? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Name of Agency:
Agency Contact:	Phone #:
Address	City, ST ZIP:
Service Details:	

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

ALL STUDENTS MUST:

1. Be respectful of the agency being served
2. Be professional at all times
3. Be punctual and dependable
4. Be appropriately dressed
5. Seek help if in doubt
6. Be respectful of the client's privacy

STUDENTS MUST NEVER:

1. Report for service under the influence of drugs or alcohol
2. Loan or give money or personal belongings to a client
3. Give personal information (Phone, address, email) to a client
4. Offer commitments to clients or agency that you cannot keep
5. Engage in sexual exchanges with client or representative
6. Engage in discriminatory behavior against an individual on the basis of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or ethnicity.
7. Engage in any behavior that could put agency staff or participants in danger or violate ethical, legal or moral standards or university policy.

Upon review of the guidelines for Student Responsibilities, I agree to adhere to them during my community service learning experience.

Student Signature _____
Date

Faculty Signature _____
Date

Reflection Exercise (Sample)

Reflection is one of the important elements of service-learning. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their activities in order to promote critical thinking about the work they are doing and to increase their understanding of key concepts.

Answer the following questions, and keep this form so that you may refer to it at the end of your service-learning experience.

1. What are your initial observations about your service-learning placement site?

2. What are your expectations for this service-learning assignment? What will you gain?
What service will you provide?

3. What are your feelings about your service-learning assignment?

PROCEDURES

- **Procedure for Service Learning Course Approval**
- **Syllabus Evaluation Checklist**

University of Houston-Downtown

UHD SERVICE-LEARNING, Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning

One Main Street C345 (713-226-5570 Bezetten@uhd.edu)

Procedure for Service-Learning Course Approval

PROCEDURE

For designation as a service-learning course, the following procedure must be followed.

Please go to: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=c03cbb78ef7642d49547d33f87f43940>

1. Course syllabus or course materials
 - a. Explanation of the types of S-L experiences that will be used to meet course objectives
 - b. Request for Alternative Assignment, e.g., If any student has a valid objection to a proposed service-learning project or placement, he or she must let the faculty member know during the first week of class or before the drop/add deadline so the faculty member can discuss options.
 - c. Inclusion of service-learning definition. Inserting this statement into the syllabus does not automatically create an approved service-learning course; supporting material should appear in the syllabus.
 - d. Description of the process students will use to make contact with the community agencies
 - e. A description of the reflection component of the experience
 - f. Statement indicating that the grade will be given for achievement of course objectives through the S-L activity, not solely for completing a set number of hours work with the community partner.
 - g. Refer to insert 1 (pg. 12) Syllabus Checklist.
 - h. Follow the course designation link:
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=c03cbb78ef7642d49547d33f87f43940>
and submit your syllabus online.
2. Review by Service Learning and Community Engagement Committee.

After certification is approved by the Service Learning and Community Engagement Committee appointed by the Provost, the course/course section will be eligible to have an S-L designation on the schedule of classes and on student transcripts.

University of Houston-Downtown
UHD Service-Learning
Syllabus Evaluation Checklist– S-L Course Approval
Faculty

Please use this checklist to be sure that your application is complete.

Criteria	Yes	No	Comment
UHD Criteria for S-L: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses a need in the community (campus, local, regional, global) • meets one or more course objectives • demonstrates a clear connection between the service activity and the course content • involves reciprocity between course and community that results in students' increased civic awareness and engagement • involves structured student reflection • involves collaboration with an appropriate agency representative • involves at least 10 hours of student service to the community agency 			
Work is with one or more non-profit organizations, governmental agencies including public schools, philanthropic arms of for-profit organizations, or other initiatives approved by the S-L Course Evaluation Committee on a case by case basis.			
Request for Alternative Assignment			
If service-learning template statement is used, it is revised appropriately for the discipline. Supporting material appears in syllabus.			
All students in the course are required to engage in S-L experiences.			
Grade will be given for achievement of course objectives through the S-L activity; not just for completing a set number of hours work with the community partner.			

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- **Sample Syllabus-PSY 3322, CRN 12607, Fall 2014**
- **Sample Syllabus-PSY 2302, CRN 10178, Fall 2014**
- **Discussion of Reflection Options as an Integral Part of Service Learning**

Reflection as an Integral Part of Service-Learning

Reflecting on Your Service-Learning

During the semester, your professor will ask you to reflect on the experiences you've had and how the course material relates to what you have experienced through service-learning. This will serve as an opportunity for you to share the knowledge and expertise that you've gained with your class. Reflection can be in a variety of forms:

- * On-going process throughout the semester
- * A group decision and sharing process
- * A paper at the end of the semester
- * A journal of experiences

Your professor will decide which type of reflection activity you will use. But students may be more comfortable with using other formats. Reflection, for many faculty, is the key to successful learning. NOTE: The more you are able to integrate your experience with classroom theory the more you will contribute to your reflection activities.

Reflection in Service-Learning Activities

Journals give students time to reflect on and articulate their experiences in the field. When directed, this activity can serve as a way to challenge students to integrate experience and course content. It is important that students are aware of what is expected for journal entries and how they will be used. If the instructor intends on grading journals or sharing them with classmates or agency personnel, criteria and intentions should be clearly communicated at the start of the semester. Often, journals end up being mere lists of activities if a framework is not provided.

Below is a list of structured journals to direct reflection and promote connection to course material.

Critical incident journal

Students can consider their reactions to a particular incident and contemplate the actions they wish to make in the future, given they face the incident again. Prompts can be provided to encourage the joining of relevant course information with the incident. Advisable interventions can also be added to either curb or encourage the reoccurrence of the analyzed incident.

Three-part journal

Weekly journal entries are divided into categories: description, analysis, and application. Students respectively chart their experience, how it relates to course content, and how it will personally affect them.

Highlighted journal

To ease the grading process and reveal the extent to which students are linking course content with their experience, students review journal entries before submitting and highlight key terms and concepts.

Key-phrase journal

To provide structure and a means for evaluation, the instructor provides a list of terms or key

phrases to be used in journal entries. Students are asked to demonstrate their understanding of the term in relation to their experience. The degree to which the terms are applicable, executed, and articulated determines the quality of the work.

Double-entry journal

Students divide their journal entries into two sections. On the left pages of their journal, the student records reflections on experiences; on pages to the right, students review class or text content. Students then draw lines linking the two areas of learning.

Dialogue journal

Students either submit entries to the instructor for feedback or have a peer provide comments to review. This dialoguing can offer students direction and different perspectives to consider throughout the course.

Artistic journal

Students can choose an artistic medium to articulate their thoughts and feelings. Creative entries can be composed of drawings, poetry or music.

Other Ways to Incorporate Reflection into the Course

Personal Narratives as a final assignment provide students an opportunity to assess their growth at the conclusion of the semester. By reviewing reflective journals maintained throughout the semester, students focus their creative energies on a narrative about themselves as learners.

Weekly Logs are a great way for students to monitor their service throughout the course. As an encouragement, logs can be brief listings of the activities accomplished each week.

Oral Histories can be another keepsake of reflection. Students choose a community member to interview in order to gain insight into their background, organization, or lifestyle. Questions are composed according to class content and students intentionally target information with historical value.

Community Murals can be made by a team of students reflecting on their experience or one student could visually represent a discussion occurring during a class session. Murals can be collages, paintings, or drawings and can be periodically modified in order to trace a service experience chronologically.

Service-learning Theater offers variety to reflection exercises. Students can be organized into groups around common topics in their Critical Incident Journals. Students can then create brief skits or role plays about their common areas of concern.

Song Lyrics can reflect experience and emotion in a powerful way. Students can work in teams to create a verse of a song about their service experience while the class as a whole composes a refrain.

Poetry Round-Robin is another fun way to encourage reflection and share diversity of

experience in the classroom. One student starts the game by writing one or two lines of poetry reflecting on a recent experience. The paper is then passed to the next student who does the same. Before passing it to the next person though, they fold the paper (accordion style) so that only their entry is showing. After the poem has been circulated around the entire classroom with only the previous entry visible to the composer, it is read aloud.

Giant Likert Scales can serve as a means to generate important discussion. Signs reading “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree” can be placed around the classroom. After statements are posed by the instructor, students group under the sign indicating their choice position. After the exercise; students dialogue about the issues raised.

Exit Cards are an in-class activity that helps students to stay on task, applying coursework to their service-learning experience. Before students leave the classroom they are asked to write on an index card the way in which the day’s material applies to their field experience.

String/Yarn Webs are formed when students sit in a circle and toss a ball of string around as they reflect on their service-learning experience. Students hold the end of the string as they toss it to the next person and the action continues until a web is formed.

Electronic Reflections can occur through a variety of mediums. Video logs, twitter feeds, online discussion boards, on-line surveys, emails, listservs, and class homepages can utilize the convenience of technology during the reflection process.

Class Presentations allow students to communicate their accomplishments, organize their experiences, and develop creative displays.

Ethical Case Studies enable students to exercise ethical decision-making skills as they confront a dilemma they have witnessed at the service site.

Experiential Research Papers can identify and evaluate underlying social issues encountered during service-learning experiences. The investigation of recent professional literature can provide a framework for exploration.

Ideal Letters of Recommendation help students to envision the way in which they would like to work and what they wish to accomplish via the service-learning experience.

Letter to Self: Students write letters to themselves about their service-learning experience. Students should include the most important thing that they learned; why it was important to them, and how it will affect their personal, professional or educational goals.

Agency Analyses are comprehensive papers outlining the organizational frameworks of agencies.

Service-Learning Portfolios deliver proof of experiences in a complete and comprehensive fashion. Students organize their work in accordance with previously established learning objectives.