

# Service-Learning Guidebook

## Introduction

All candidates for the baccalaureate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire must satisfactorily complete 30 or more hours of accepted service-learning activity. This requirement is intended to provide students with an opportunity to serve their community, apply knowledge gained in the classroom, enhance their critical thinking skills and become informed, active, and responsible citizens.

This guidebook outlines the UW-Eau Claire service-learning graduation requirement and describes the procedures for its completion. This information is provided to assist students, faculty/staff members and community project supervisors in designing and undertaking projects that provide both rich experiences for UW-Eau Claire students and substantial benefits for the community.

At UW-Eau Claire, Service-Learning includes both service and learning to promote the common good. Service-Learning is **service** because it must benefit others. Service-Learning can make education a collaborative effort where students benefit society by exercising both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Service-Learning is **learning** because it must educate students. It challenges them to apply concepts and principles they have learned in their college coursework to their other experiences—and to apply experiential insights critically and creatively to their college learning. Service-Learning also fosters academic and personal growth.

## The Service-Learning Requirement

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire established the service-learning graduation requirement in 1995. Changes were made to the service-learning mission statement and outcome statement in May 2016 and are listed below:

### Mission Statement

Service-learning integrates meaningful community service with reflection by enriching learning experiences and by teaching responsibility to community.

### Outcome Statement

Students will serve their community by applying skills and knowledge gained through university coursework and/or experiences.

## Guidelines for Service-Learning Projects

The following policy statements provide general guidance to all parties as they plan together for a service-learning project:

**STUDENT CHOICE** Students' sincerely held beliefs, preferences and values will be reasonably accommodated in accepting service-learning proposals.

**NONDISCRIMINATION** Consistent with accepted interpretation of affirmative action policies of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, service-learning proposals will not be accepted that exclude students, mentors and/or recipients from the service-learning activity based on race, religion, creed, color, sex, gender identity or expression, ancestry, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, veteran's status, pregnancy, marital or parental status, military service, arrest and conviction record or political affiliation or any other category protected by law, including physical condition or developmental

disability as defined in Wisconsin Statutes §51.01(5). Other sources include Wisconsin Statutes §36-12(1) and UW Regents Policy 14-6.

**WILLING RECIPIENTS** To be accepted, service-learning proposals must focus on willing recipients.

**FOR-PROFIT ACTIVITY** Service-learning proposals involving for-profit agencies may be accepted if they are part of an agency's charitable activities. Service-learning proposals that focus on seeking private monetary profit will not be accepted.

**NONENDORSEMENT** Acceptance of a service-learning proposal indicates that the proposal is acceptable for meeting the service-learning requirement; it does not imply endorsement either of the proposed activities or of the recipient by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

**PRE-ENROLLMENT EXPERIENCES** Service-learning activities may be completed at any time between admission and graduation from UW-Eau Claire, although students with the support of the academic advisor may petition the Dean's Office of the School/College in which they are enrolled to use pre-enrollment experiences in partial fulfillment of the requirement.

**SECOND BACCALAUREATE DEGREE STUDENTS** University policy presumes that candidates for the second baccalaureate degree have met the service-learning graduation requirement.

**TRANSFER STUDENTS** may petition the Dean's Office of the UW-Eau Claire School/College in which they are enrolled to accept service-learning experiences from another postsecondary institution as either partially or completely fulfilling the UW-Eau Claire graduation requirement.

**MILITARY SERVICE** Students in active military service or with an honorable or general discharge from military service are presumed to have met the service-learning graduation requirement. Evidence of military service is provided to the Registrar's Office through a copy of a D.D. 214.

## Fulfilling the Service-Learning Requirement

Students can meet the service-learning requirement in two ways: (1) through academic courses with service-learning project components or (2) through non-course activities conducted through the Center for Service-Learning. Students may pursue both options in combination to fulfill the graduation requirement if permitted by requirements set for individual academic majors.

### The Credit Option

UW-Eau Claire offers over 120 courses with service-learning components accepted by college curriculum committees as fulfilling either one-half (15 hours) or the full (30 hours) graduation requirement. Some courses are required for particular academic majors, whereas, others may be taken as electives.

### SERVICE-LEARNING REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC MAJORS

The following academic majors require specific course work, internships, practice or other activities (credit or non-credit) that fulfill the service-learning requirement:

- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Elementary Education
- Environmental Public Health
- Health Care Administration
- Kinesiology (except Movement Science)

- Nursing
- Secondary Education
- Social Work
- Special Education

Upon the student's successful completion of the course or activity, the course instructor or activity administrator will certify to the Registrar that the student has fulfilled the service-learning requirement. Students should consult with their advisor for more information.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING AS AN ELECTIVE COURSE ACTIVITY**

A student whose academic major does not require completion of a specific service-learning course or activity may choose an elective course with a service-learning component. In some courses the service-learning component is a required activity; in others it is optional. Further, in some courses the activity meets the full requirement (30 hours); in others, it meets half the requirement (15 hours). The instructor of the course administers the service-learning requirement for students enrolled in the course. Upon the student's successful completion of the course and the associated service-learning activity, the course instructor will certify to the Registrar that the student has fulfilled either half or the full service-learning requirement.

## **ACADEMIC COURSES WITH SERVICE-LEARNING COMPONENTS**

Several courses contain activity components accepted by college curriculum committees that can apply toward the service-learning requirement. Some courses are required for the majors listed above, whereas, others are for elective credit. The list of courses indicates whether the component satisfies one-half (15 hours) or the full (30 hours) service-learning requirement. The listing can be found in the latest catalog at this link: <http://www.uwec.edu/Registrar/catalogs/Catalogs.htm>. Search for **SERVICE-LEARNING REQUIREMENT**.

## **Non-Credit Options**

The non-credit option affords the student an opportunity to fulfill the service-learning requirement outside of an academic course setting. Students do not receive academic credit for the experience, although a non-credit activity could be conducted in association with a course with the approval of the course instructor. To fulfill the requirement under this option, students are to work with the Center for Service-Learning. Upon the student's successful completion of the service-learning activity, the Center shall certify to the Registrar that the student has fulfilled either half (15 hours) or the full (30 hours) service-learning requirement.

Students are to take the following steps to successfully pursue the service-learning requirement through the non-credit option:

### **1. CHOOSE A SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT**

Students can create their own projects or respond to project proposals submitted by a community partner to the Center for Service-Learning. They may complete projects individually or with others, with an on-campus group or off-campus community organization, in the Eau Claire area or elsewhere, and during the academic year or over break periods. Whether devised by students or a community partner, projects must comply with the provisions of the Service-Learning requirement mission and outcome statements and project guidelines.

### **PROJECTS INITIATED BY COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

A number of community agencies and organizations (including non-profit organizations, elementary and secondary schools, governmental entities, and faith-based communities) in the Chippewa Valley and

elsewhere have worked with the Center for Service-Learning to establish student projects that meet the service-learning requirement. A community partner submits a project proposal to the Center for Service-Learning describing the requested student activity. Upon receiving the project proposal, the Center notifies students of project availability by e-mail and project announcements on the Center's website and social media. Students wishing to respond to a service-learning project offered by a community partner should contact the partner to find out more information about the project and/or to make project arrangements. If the student wishes to pursue the project, the student is to prepare and submit a service-learning online application (described below), available on the Center's website.

### **STUDENT-INITIATED PROJECTS**

Students wishing to develop a service-learning project on their own are to contact a potential community partner willing to work with them. In this instance, the community partner need not submit a project proposal. If the partner agrees to work with the student, the student is to develop and submit an online service-learning application. The application will be reviewed by the Service-Learning Coordinator to be sure Service-Learning policy is being adhered to.

For either type of project, the student works with a project supervisor from the community partner organization and a faculty/academic staff mentor to organize, conduct and complete a service-learning project. The project supervisor conducts the necessary training activities for the student, regularly oversees the student's service activity, and evaluates the student's involvement upon the conclusion of the project. The primary roles of the faculty/academic staff mentor are to help the student establish learning objectives, monitor the student's service activities, facilitate the student's reflection upon completion of the project, and certify whether the student has successfully completed the project. The choice of the faculty/academic staff mentor rests with the student. Students are discouraged from selecting a family member or close friend to serve as the project supervisor or faculty mentor. A student is not to serve as a project supervisor for a fellow student.

### **PROJECT LENGTH**

Students fulfill the service-learning requirement by completing either one, 30-hour project, or two, 15-hour projects. In some circumstances, the community partner may determine that a student commitment of more than 30 hours is necessary to fulfill project needs. If the partner requests a longer commitment from the student, the partner and the student should agree to the time requirement before the student begins the project.

### **INDIVIDUAL/GROUP PROJECT**

A student may conduct a project individually or with other students. Community partners requesting a group project are asked to estimate the number of persons needed. Each student—whether conducting an individual project or participating in a group activity—must complete and submit a service-learning online application.

### **ONE-TIME/ONGOING PROJECT**

Projects may meet a one-time need (such as developing a website for a community organization) or be part of an organization's continuing activity (such as ongoing recreational services for senior citizens).

### **VOLUNTEER/COMPENSATED PROJECT**

Service-Learning projects are typically unpaid. Students should contact the Service-Learning Coordinator to discuss options.

### **NON-PROFIT/FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**

Service-learning projects are typically conducted with non-profit or governmental organizations. Projects may be conducted with for-profit organizations, as long as the project is not directly related to the profit-making activities of the firm. Examples of acceptable projects with a for-profit organization are fundraisers for community needs sponsored by that organization (such as a golf tournament for a charitable cause) or the firm's pro bono services (such as an accounting firm that offers free income tax assistance to low-income persons).

## **2. PREPARE FOR THE PROJECT**

The student is to plan and make arrangements for project activities in consultation with the faculty/academic staff mentor and the community partner project supervisor. Each student—whether participating alone or with others— must complete the online service-learning application with online approval from the Community Partner Project Supervisor, the Faculty/Academic Staff Mentor and the Service-Learning Coordinator. The student is to submit the fully completed online application to the Center before beginning the project at [www.uwec.edu/SL](http://www.uwec.edu/SL). Upon receiving and reviewing the student's online Service-Learning application, the Center for Service-Learning will send an e-mail to the student indicating project acceptance.

The project description contained within the online application is to contain the following information:

### **A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

- Community needs to be addressed through the proposed project and what the student will do to meet the needs
- What the student expects to learn through established learning outcomes
- Time frame in which the service hours will be accomplished
- Orientation, training and supervision the student will receive for this project
- A description of the method that the student will use to reflect upon the service activity— examples include maintaining a journal, writing a reaction paper, creating a power point presentation, participating in a group discussion and giving an oral presentation.

The faculty/academic staff mentor and/or community partner may wish the student to engage in specific preparation before beginning the project through training, readings, research or other activities beneficial to the project (such as Red Cross Certification in water safety or cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Preparation and training activities may account for part of the project hours, although a substantive part of the 15 or 30 hours must be devoted to the project itself.

Depending on the nature of the project and/or the persons to be served, the community partner may request a background check of the student. Costs for this and certifications described above are borne either by the student or the community partner.

## **3. CONDUCT THE PROJECT**

Working with the project supervisor, the student conducts the project. The student is encouraged to meet with the faculty/academic staff mentor periodically to discuss and assess project activities and gauge progress.

## **4. REFLECTION**

Upon completing the project, the student arranges to meet with the faculty/academic staff mentor to conduct the reflection activities. A common method of reflection is the student's preparation of a journal and reflection paper, followed by a discussion with the mentor. If accepted by the mentor, other means of reflection are acceptable. The most significant learning often occurs during this reflection phase. Students are encouraged to think about the following questions (among others):

- What was the significance of your service at the agency/organization?
- What did you learn about the agency/organization staff, those served by the agency/organization and their similarities or differences to you?
- What did you learn during your project that enhanced your learning gained in the classroom?
- What impact might your project have on your life-long learning process?

- What impact did your project have on your everyday life?
- What insights did you gain through your project that might assist you in your career or in selecting a career?
- What did your project teach you about community involvement, citizenship and civic responsibility?
- What is the relationship of your service-learning project to the “real world”?
- How were you able to contribute to the agency/organization goals?
- What do you feel was your main contribution to the agency/organization?
- What did you do on this project that made you feel proud?
- What was the most difficult part of your work?
- If you were to start at the beginning of this project again, what would you do differently the second time around?

## **5. EVALUATION AND COMPLETION**

Shortly before the student ends his/her service-learning project, the Center will request the project supervisor to evaluate the student's service activity. Upon receiving the completed online evaluation, students and faculty/academic staff mentors can review the evaluations as well by logging in to the Center's online system.

The Center will also send an e-mail reminder to faculty/academic staff to log into the Center's system to certify whether the student successfully completed the project. A project is not considered complete until the student has fulfilled the reflection activity with the mentor. Upon receiving online confirmation from the mentor of a student's success in completing his/her service-learning project, the Center will contact the Registrar to certify the student's completion of either one-half or the full service-learning requirement. This certification will be entered on the student's University record. The Center will also send an e-mail to the student indicating project completion. If the faculty/staff mentor determines that the student did not satisfactorily complete the service-learning project, the project will be regarded as “unsuccessful” and will not apply toward the student's service-learning requirement.

## **Service-Learning Resources**

### **SERVICE-LEARNING WEB SITE**

The Center maintains a web page—[www.uwec.edu/SL](http://www.uwec.edu/SL)—that contains information about the service-learning requirement, service opportunities, and allows for students, community partners and mentors to access student online applications. Community partners can also submit project proposals for student service-learning opportunities via the website.

### **ADVISING**

Center staff members are pleased to visit with students, community partners, and faculty/staff members to discuss service-learning concepts, the service-learning requirement and necessary steps to fulfill the degree requirement. “Walk-in” visitors are welcome.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Center staff members are available to make presentations to classes, student organizations, faculty/staff and civic groups about the service-learning graduation requirement, establishing a service-learning project, service-learning opportunities and community development. Please contact the Center to make arrangements.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING AND CAREER CHOICE**

Some students may find their service-learning experience to have an impact on their major or career direction. Students are encouraged to visit with the Service-Learning Coordinator about service-learning opportunities they may be interested in to help choose a major/minor or work toward a career path. Students are also encouraged to visit with their academic advisor and Career Services counselors to explore career options. Career Services offers individual career counseling/advising, tests and inventories related to the career development process, career workshops and programs and career guidance. Service-Learning, Academic Advising and Career Services are all located in the Advising, Retention & Career Center on the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire campus.

## **LIABILITY PROTECTION**

Students performing service-learning activities as a graduation requirement will be covered by the State of Wisconsin's liability protection [Wisconsin Statutes 895.46(1) and 893.82]. The students will be covered while acting within the scope of their responsibilities while doing service-learning activities.

## **Service-Learning and the Volunteer Network**

Service-learning and volunteering are similar in their scope to assist organizations in the community. However, service-learning is a graduation requirement, and the specifics are listed within this guidebook. Volunteering can be done with limited hours or more than required service-learning hours. For opportunities within the Volunteer Network, contact Katy Rand, Coordinator of Student Leadership, Davies Center 222C at [randka@uwec.edu](mailto:randka@uwec.edu), (715) 836-4803, or by checking out this website: <http://www.uwec.edu/Activities/volunteer/index.htm>.