Frequently Asked Questions

Community Partner Relations

What types of organizations are partners with Office of Civic Engagement & Service Learning (CESL)?
Please see our list of current community partners. The list may be found on our website at www.uncfsu.edu/civic-engagement/Community_Organizations.htm.

I have not chosen a community partner for my course. May I still integrate service learning into my course?
Yes. The Office of Civic Engagement & Service Learning will assist you with the process of establishing a community partner for your course. If your course does not involve working with a single community partner, we can help your students choose a service project that fits their interests and meets the service requirements you have established for your course.

What if I want my students to conduct service learning at an organization that does not have a partnership with the CESL?
Please provide the organization information so that the Service Learning Program Manager, Melissa Lyon, will contact the agency to establish a partnership. Then, the faculty member, the community partner, and Ms. Lyon will meet to sign a Memorandum of Agreement.

Am I allowed to coordinate and work directly with the Community Partner?
Yes, you may work directly with the community partner as the course and project develop. Please remember that the CESL should be informed of any special arrangements or events occurring with the students and the community partner. For example, if a field trip is planned to visit the agency for an orientation, please inform CESL staff. In some situations, it would be a good idea for one of our Service-Learning Coordinators to be present. Also, please notify us of any changes in the agreed upon service-learning project.

I want to continue to offer my course as a service-learning course but circumstances will not allow my class to complete the service project as agreed upon. What do I do now?
If you still plan to do service, contact the CESL so that alternate arrangements may be made with the agency. CESL staff will also help you decide on an alternate project.

If you don’t plan to do service, notify the CESL as soon as possible and complete a Service-Learning Course Discontinuation Form. This will allow CESL staff to perform the important task of making sure that our relationship with the community partner remains positive despite the need to end the project and help facilitate removal of the SL designation.
Student Issues

I have students who registered for the class late and did not complete the service-learning orientation. Can they still perform the service learning?
Before students can start their service learning, they need to register with the CESL and complete the required paperwork. If a student is not present on the day of the orientation, please instruct them to visit the Center in order to complete the orientation.

What if a student does not want to sign the FSU Waiver of Liability?
The student has the right to refuse to sign the FSU Waiver of Liability. However, please be advised that the student will not be able to perform service learning off campus without signing the waiver. If a student does not sign the waiver, the student may do an alternate service-learning project that does not require him/her to go off campus or complete an alternate assignment in place of service learning. Students should be informed in the course syllabus and on the first day of class that they will need to sign the FSU Waiver of Liability in order to participate in service learning. Students who do not wish to sign the waiver should be advised against enrolling in a service-learning course.

What if a student cannot be photographed or recorded?
The student may request that they not be photographed. The CESL will respect their request for not being photographed. If it comes to our attention that the student is inadvertently pictured in a group photograph, this photograph will not be used in our promotional materials. Students need to be proactive in avoiding pictures during service.

How do students get to the service-learning placement site?
There are a few ways that the students can get to their service sites. The students can get to sites by providing their own transportation. You may request that CESL staff arrange group transportation if appropriate and if funds are available. Please note: In order for CESL staff to arrange group transportation, the faculty member must submit all necessary paperwork no less than 15 business days in advance of the planned trip.

What is the proper procedure for completing the timesheets?
Timesheets must contain the name of the agency, the time in, time out, the number of hours, the student’s initials, and site supervisor’s initials for each day. Before the time sheet is submitted to the Office of Civic Engagement & Service Learning, it must be signed by the site supervisor. Again, the signature of the site supervisor is important for accountability. Please note that students will only receive credit in the CESL database for properly completed timesheets.
**What counts as service?**
The time spent performing the actual service can be documented on the timesheets as well as time spent reflecting or preparing for the service such as orientations. However, there must be a differentiation between the hours actually spent performing the service and the hours spent preparing for the service or reflecting on the service. It is important to distinguish between actual service hours and preparation/reflection. The description field on the student timesheets allow for the students to write an accurate description of the service events.

**May I sign or initial the students’ timesheets?**
Classroom preparation and reflection time may be considered part of service learning. During classroom preparation and/or reflection, the faculty member is considered the site supervisor for those activities. As a result, the faculty member may initial and sign the students’ timesheets on those preparation/reflection dates.

If you are the site supervisor for a particular project (in class research papers, etc.), you may initial the timesheets. Otherwise, we ask that you do not initial or sign the student’s timesheets and that you instruct students to obtain initials and signatures from the site supervisors only. We request that only site supervisors initial and sign timesheets for accountability purposes.

**A student submitted their timesheet to me, what do I do with it?**
Unless otherwise arranged, please encourage students to turn in their timesheets directly to the CESL. Our records are not only required for grading purposes, but are very important for reporting information to our funders. Without timesheets, there is no record of the service hours each student has performed.

**How will I know how many hours my students have completed?**
The records are updated in our database as timesheets are submitted. You may request a report of your class and the hours performed at anytime via telephone or e-mail. A report is also generated and sent to faculty during mid-terms and at the end of the semester to aid in the grading process.

**A student says that he/she performed service hours, but it is not reflected on the service-learning hour report.**
If a student’s service hours do not appear on the report, it is likely that the student has not submitted a timesheet to the CESL. Please instruct the student to turn in all timesheets to the CESL in order for their time to be recorded. If there is a situation where the student insists all timesheets have been submitted, have the student contact the CESL. A CESL staff member will review the student’s records to ensure that all hours have been recorded accurately.
What if I believe the timesheet is forged, inaccurate, or tampered with?
Please bring timesheet accuracy and validity issues to the attention of the CESL staff. It may be necessary for us to schedule a meeting involving the Service-Learning Program Manager, the faculty member, and the community partner to determine the accuracy or validity of the timesheet. If it is determined that the student has acted in an unethical manner, the faculty member will determine the appropriate course of action in accordance with University policies.

If a student has a conflict (verbal/physical) with a staff member at the partnering agency what steps must be taken?
All involved parties must complete an Incident Report describing the incident. If necessary, the student will be removed from that project. If appropriate, the student may be given an alternate service assignment.

What if a student wants to bring his/her child to the service site?
Decisions to allow children at service sites should take the age of the child and the nature of the service into consideration. Please keep in mind that each agency will have its own rules and regulations, and in some situations, it may not be appropriate for children to be present. Of course, the community partner makes the final decision regarding this issue.