

OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING



A GUIDE FOR AGENCIES



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY
NEW ORLEANS

OUR STAFF



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The Office of Service Learning (OSL) supports the development and implementation of service learning and community-based learning experiences in academic courses and programs of study at Loyola University New Orleans. Our goal is to bring education to life by connecting the classroom to community needs. We support Loyola’s Jesuit mission of fostering students toward social responsibility, solidarity, and a concern for justice and the common good.

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WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

Service learning is the integration of service experiences into academic courses. The goal of service learning is twofold: to enliven students' educational experiences and to strengthen communities.

EXAMPLE: Students in a biology class plant trees and grasses in wetland areas with a conservation group.

Learning topics: ecosystems, biodiversity, coastal erosion, plant life cycles, environmental degradation

EXAMPLE: Students in an introductory sociology class tutor children and adolescents in local schools.

Learning topics: race and class in public schools, child and adolescent development, socialization, social institutions, inequality

EXAMPLE: Students in a writing class serve food and socialize with guests at a local shelter. They use their experience in a final essay on homelessness.

Relevant skills: participant observation, effective communication, listening, analysis, critical inquiry

What are the benefits of service learning?

The benefits of service learning are mutual.

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How agencies benefit:

More volunteers

Capacity building

New energy and creativity

More personal attention for clients

Ability to strengthen existing services or develop new services

Connect to university resources

How Loyola students and faculty benefit:

Apply and understand concepts from class

Develop a sense of social responsibility

Self-discovery

Learn about social justice and injustice

Learn about agencies and their clients

Learn how nonprofits work

WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

How are service learning students different from ordinary volunteers?

Loyola students do a lot of wonderful volunteer work in the community. **Service learning students do so in conjunction with an academic course they're taking.** Usually, their service work is part of their grade. Therefore, service learning students may need things ordinary volunteers don't: a steady schedule, ongoing supervision, signed timesheets, and performance evaluations. In return, however, service learning students are more accountable for the quality and consistency of their work.

How are service learning students different from interns?

Internships help students get work experience and acquire useful skills. Internships are often stand-alone learning experiences without a substantial class component. Interns usually spend most of their time working at their field site and less of their time on class activities. Many internships require 70 – 120 hours of work per semester. Sometimes interns are paid.

Service learning enhances the academic content of a regular class. Time spent on service learning is part of a student's overall out-of-class work for a course, like studying, reading books, doing homework, and writing papers. Service learning usually requires 10 – 30 hours of work per semester. Service learning activities are always unpaid.

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Does the Office of Service Learning provide interns?

No, but we can give you contact information for individuals at Loyola who arrange and supervise internships in a variety of departments. Call (504) 865-2283 or e-mail sl@loyno.edu for more information.

How can we work with Loyola service learning students?

There are two ways you can work with Loyola service learning students. When students in a class volunteer regularly at various agencies throughout the semester, this is called a service learning **PLACEMENT**. When students in a single class work together on a project for a single agency, this is called a service learning **PROJECT**.

PROJECTS and PLACEMENTS

What's the difference between a service learning project and a placement?

In service learning **placements**, each student in a class volunteers regularly throughout the semester at a partner agency. The Office of Service Learning (OSL) facilitates a mutual selection process at the beginning of every semester. Agencies must invest energy and time in recruiting and selecting interested students. Generally, placement work takes place off campus and involves hands-on work with agency clients. Professors determine the total number of hours students must commit to service learning placements. Typically, this is 15 – 25 hours per semester. At the end of the semester, agency supervisors must submit an online performance evaluation for each student, which professors incorporate into class grades.

EXAMPLE: Students in a religion class on social justice served 20 hours in tutoring programs and criminal justice agencies.

In service learning **projects**, students in a single class work together to complete a specific task for a single agency. While OSL can help match classes with projects, professors ultimately choose which project is most suitable for the class. Project work may take place off campus or on campus. Projects are guided by a signed agreement, which outlines expectations, deadlines, and evaluation procedures. Project agreements are drafted collaboratively by professors, agencies, and OSL staff. Visit www.loyno.edu/servicelearning for some examples.

EXAMPLE: Students in a visual arts freshman seminar revitalized a community center in Gert Town.

EXAMPLE: Students in a freshman English course teamed up with NolaCycle to map bike routes throughout the Uptown area.

My agency would like to host Loyola service learning students for PLACEMENTS. What do we need to do?

1. APPLY

Fill out our Interested Placement Agency Form, found at www.loyno.edu/servicelearning/forms, or contact OSL directly: (504) 865-2283 or sl@loyno.edu

2. BE SELECTED AS A PARTNER AGENCY

OSL will contact your agency to schedule at least one site visit. We will want to talk with key staff members at your agency and observe your programs in operation. We'll discuss whether there is a good match between your agency's needs and our service learning needs. OSL will evaluate potential partnerships using the following criteria:

- 1) number of students with interests and skills which match your needs;
- 2) topics of upcoming service learning courses;
- 3) appropriateness of proposed tasks to course learning goals;
- 4) whether your agency's schedule is a good match for Loyola students; and
- 5) the availability of adequate transportation options.

3. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

We'll ask your agency to read and agree to all provisions in Loyola's memorandum of understanding. This document outlines mutual expectations and clarifies liability matters.

Once you've been through these steps, your agency can become an active service learning placement. This process usually takes at least a few weeks, but it can be accelerated or slowed down by a variety of factors. See the list of important deadlines on page 8.

PROJECTS

My agency would like to host a Loyola service learning PROJECT. What do we need to do?

1. PROPOSE A PROJECT

Fill out our Project Proposal Form, found at www.loyno.edu/servicelearning/forms, or contact OSL directly: (504) 865-2283 or sl@loyno.edu

2. CONSULT ABOUT MATCHING COURSES

OSL will contact Loyola professors who are seeking project partners for upcoming courses. If your proposed project is a possible fit, we'll schedule at least one informational meeting to determine whether the project should be adopted in the course. The following criteria may be applied:

- 1) whether the project schedule fits within an academic semester;
- 2) time required to complete the project;
- 3) costs associated with the project, including supplies and transportation;
- 4) specialized skills needed to successfully complete the project;
- 5) availability of adequate supervision from agency staff; and
- 6) course learning goals.

3. PROJECT AGREEMENT

If your project is adopted by a Loyola professor, your agency will participate in drafting a project agreement, which will detail all aspects of the project (expectations, roles and responsibilities, important deadlines, scheduling details, and so on). This agreement will be signed by everyone participating in the project: agency staff, the professor, students, and OSL staff.

4. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

We'll ask your agency to read and agree to all provisions in Loyola's memorandum of understanding. This document outlines mutual expectations and clarifies liability matters.

Once these steps have been completed, your agency can host a service learning project. This process usually takes at least a few weeks, and can be accelerated or slowed down by a variety of factors. See the list of important deadlines on page 8.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Most service learning partnerships come together the semester **before** the partnership begins. In other words, agencies should think about service learning activities which could take place in an **upcoming** semester, not the **current** semester. Loyola does not currently offer service learning courses during the summer session.

To host a project in	Make contact by
Fall semester (Sept. – Dec.)	May 30
Spring semester (Jan. – Apr.)	October 1

To host placement students in	Make contact by
Fall semester (Sept. – Dec.)	July 31
Spring semester (Jan. – Apr.)	November 1



AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES: PLACEMENT

AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SEMESTER:

1. Designate a primary liaison between your agency and Loyola service learning staff and students.
2. Attend the SERVE fair on Loyola's campus. The SERVE fair is usually held during the second week of classes each semester (late September or late January). Agencies that do not attend the SERVE fair rarely get student volunteers.
3. Select service learning students. Placements at Loyola operate on a system of mutual choice. Agencies and students choose one another in an active recruitment process. If you do not feel an interested student is a good fit for your agency, do not offer him/her a placement at your agency. Timely responses to student inquiries are crucial to getting the number of volunteers you desire.
4. Sign placement confirmation forms for selected students.
5. Train and orient students as necessary. Explain all pre-service requirements (health clearance, criminal background check, etc.) and complete them in a timely fashion.
6. Schedule service hours by mutual agreement with students.
7. Explain your policies on cancellation, rescheduling, and make-up work to all students.

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DURING THE SEMESTER:

1. Sign Loyola students' timesheets to verify hours, or provide verified time records of your own. OSL will collect timesheets from students twice per semester. Placement hours should be completed by the last day of classes.

AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER:

1. Submit an online performance evaluation for each student placed at your agency. Evaluations should be submitted by someone who has directly observed or supervised the student. These evaluations will be incorporated into course grades.
2. Respond to a short survey from OSL.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES: PROJECTS

If our agency hosts a Loyola service learning PROJECT, what do we have to do?

Depending on the project, you will have a variety of responsibilities throughout the semester. These may include: arranging meetings with clients, scheduling community events, facilitating site visits, providing needed information to students and professors, visiting classes, and evaluating the quality of students' work. Your responsibilities will be fully outlined in the project agreement.

WHAT DO LOYOLA STUDENTS SAY ABOUT SERVICE LEARNING?*

I enjoyed my service learning experience.

91% agree

My service learning experience gave me a better understanding of social problems.

83% agree

I have a better idea about how to work for social justice because of my service learning experience.

74% agree

Service learning made me feel more connected to the greater New Orleans community.

91% agree

*80 students completed this survey

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are appropriate tasks for service learning placements?

Tasks should always be relevant to course learning goals. For example, if a student is serving at your agency for a Spanish class, he or she should perform tasks that will allow him or her to speak Spanish, or learn about your agency's role within the Latino community. In all cases, we prefer that students have at least some degree of contact with the people your agency serves. Clerical tasks such as filing papers, bookkeeping, and answering phones are acceptable, but only if the student spends an equal or greater amount of time in more interactive settings.

What are appropriate tasks for service learning projects?

Many projects involve indirect or capacity-building work such as publicity, research, technical assistance, or support for special events. Other projects involve direct, hands-on work with your agency's staff and/or clients. Students may work on projects on campus, at home, or at your agency's sites. The best results are achieved when project tasks are carefully planned in advance.

My agency is hosting Loyola service learning students and I have some concerns. What should I do?

First, talk to the student about your expectations. Be clear and direct. Second, contact OSL to discuss your concerns. We can work with service learning professors, students, and agencies to resolve problems and make the service learning experience better for everyone.

"It completely changed my outlook on mentally handicapped people. I have never spent this much time with them, and my outlook is now to advocate for their civil rights and their equality. It's a goal of mine now to change the attitude of others."

— *Loyola service learning student at ARC of Greater New Orleans*

"I listened to eye-opening stories about rehabilitation, picked up things about the culture of New Orleans, learned what particular terms commonly used in the city mean, and a whole lot more. Because of receiving so much insight, I actually feel like I've lived in the city for a much longer time."

— *Loyola service learning student at Bridge House*

"Louisiana Green Corps and the people who associate with them have changed my life for the better. I cry every time I leave the facility because I feel as if I have taken the first 19 years of my life for granted and I promise myself that I will try to change the way I live from here on out."

— *Loyola service learning student at Louisiana Green Corps*



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