
Procedure **Service Learning Course Designation**

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Approved by: ASCRC, Faculty Senate

Service Learning Definition:

Service Learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students, faculty and community partners work together to enhance student learning by applying academic knowledge in a community-based setting. Student work addresses the needs of the community, as identified through collaboration with community or tribal partners, while meeting instructional objectives through faculty-structured service work and critical reflection meant to prepare students to be civically responsible members of the community. At its best, service learning enhances and deepens students' understanding of an academic discipline by facilitating the integration of theory and practice, while providing them with experience that develops life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.

Courses based upon the service learning instructional method are designated as Service Learning courses in each semester's Schedule of Classes.

Service Learning Course Criteria

The University of Montana-Missoula has established the following criteria for Service Learning courses. In order to receive the Service Learning course designation, a course must clearly exemplify all of the following criteria:

- Students in the course will provide a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other not-for-profit or tax-exempt entities in the community.
- The service experience is directly related to the subject matter of the course.
- Knowledge from the discipline informs the service experiences with which the students are to be involved.
- Activities in the classroom will provide opportunities for students to actively reflect upon what they have learned through the service experience and how these experiences relate to the subject matter of the course. Reflection should be imbedded as course assignments and in-class time should be scheduled to do reflection – both should be clear on the syllabus. Reflection should incorporate discussion/assignments that help students understand the importance of meeting community needs through service and civic engagement in a democratic society.
- The course offers a method to assess the learning derived from the service. Credit will be given for the learning and its relation to the course, not for the service alone.

- Service interactions in the community will recognize the needs of service recipients and represent reciprocal partnerships between the campus (class) and community partner organization(s). Community partner(s) should have the opportunity to provide advice and feedback in class on the nature and value of the service performed by the students.
- Training (by the service agency) and preparation (by the course instructor) ensure that students perform service activities in a professional manner and that vulnerable populations are not harmed.
- Service options ensure that no student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religious, political, or moral conflict for the student.

In a 3-credit service learning course, students should be required to perform a minimum of 15 hours of community service per semester (i.e. 5 hours of service per academic credit.) Service hours may include hours spent in training, preparation, and direct contact with clients. **The service requirement should be clearly stated in the course description.**

Application for Service Learning Designation

Faculty wishing a course to be designated as service learning must complete the service learning course form by the curriculum deadline (typically the 3rd or 4th week in September). The form is reviewed by the Service Learning Subcommittee of ASCRC. The subcommittee chair will create a summary list of points for discussion or approval at ASCRC. The subcommittee chair will follow-up with requestors as necessary.

Review of existing courses

All Service Learning courses are reviewed every four years to determine whether the courses still conform to the criteria.