

Service-Learning Course Criteria, Best Practices, and Designation Process¹

Service-Learning Definition

Service-Learning is a teaching strategy that integrates course content with relevant community service. Through assignments and class discussions, students critically reflect on the service in order to increase their understanding of course content, gain a broader appreciation of the discipline, and enhance their sense of civic responsibility.

-Adapted from the National and Community Service Trust Act

Service-Learning at EWU:

- Seeks to develop projects intentionally and in collaboration with community partners to meet a critical agency or community need.
- Provides students service-learning activities which are purposeful and support the academic outcomes of the course.
- Requires ongoing, structured reflection throughout the course to deepen the connections between classroom learning and the service performed.
- Fosters an environment in which students, faculty and community partners are “co-learners and co-teachers in creating better communities.”²

Course Criteria³:

1. Service or other community-based learning project is integrated with course content and supports its academic focus, with ideally a minimum of 15-20 hours of direct service or project-based community engagement by each student in the course.
2. Students are engaged in meaningful work that is of value to the community. Activities are designed in collaboration with the community itself. Evidence that the faculty member or Office of Community Engagement staff representative has consulted with the agency on the project is required in the course proposal (e.g, course placement list or project plan).
3. Structured opportunities for guided reflection such as writing assignments, discussions, presentations, or journals are required during the course. Guided reflection activities:
 - Examine critical issues related to their service-learning project
 - Connect the service experience to coursework
 - Enhance the development of civic and ethical skills and values
 - Assist students in finding personal relevance in their work

¹ Adapted from the Morgridge Center for Public Service's "Service Learning at University of Wisconsin-Madison Definition, Criteria and Recommended Practices"

² *Philosophical Roots of Experiential Learning and Service-Learning*, Starting Point
<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/service/experiential.html>

³ These criteria are supported by the AAC&U's High Impact Practices (*Kuh, G.D., 2008, High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities*)

4. Clear explanation of learning outcomes and their assessment are included in syllabus.
These must address both the academic and community engagement portions of the course.

Essential Learning Outcomes

Each service-learning course will have its own content-specific learning objectives that align with the *Overarching Goals for General Education at Eastern Washington University*, in particular the following goals:

1. **Critical thinking and analysis** - application of critical thinking in problem solving, application of academic concepts to new situation or setting (Goal 1).
2. **Appreciating diversity** – developed understanding of and mutual respect for diverse perspectives, beliefs, points of view and open exchange of ideas (Goal 3).
3. **Social responsibility and ethical reasoning** – developed sense of social, civic and environmental responsibility (Goal 5).
4. **Self-awareness and self-efficacy** – enhanced understanding of self, clarified values, personal development (Goal 6).

Recommended Best Practices for Service-Learning Courses

1. Meet with Office of Community Engagement staff to discuss proposed course and potential partnerships.
2. Include assessment criteria for student learning.
3. Provide a course syllabus to community partners in advance of the term, and invite partners to participate in class presentations when possible.
4. Require students to complete an *EWU Service-Learning Agreement Form* outlining course and agency goals and objectives.
5. At the beginning of the term, conduct a service-learning orientation or invite Office of Community Engagement staff to courses to provide a service-learning orientation.
6. Request that students complete the *EWU Service-Learning Student Evaluation* at the end of each term.
7. Review results of *EWU Service-Learning Student Evaluation* and *EWU Community Partner Project Evaluation* and make necessary adjustments to the project for future courses.

EWU Service-Learning Course Designation Process

In an effort to ensure consistency and quality in service-learning courses at Eastern Washington University, the Office of Community Engagement and Community Engagement Advisory Board has designed the following designation process. Designation as a service-learning course is strongly recommended to alert students of the out-of-class time commitment and to formally identify service-learning courses for risk management considerations.

The approval process is as follows:

1. Faculty or instructor proposes a service-learning designation to an existing course in their department and completes the Service-Learning Course Designation Form.
2. The Service-Learning Course Designation Form should be signed by the department chair and sent to the Office of Community Engagement (SHW 115).
3. The request will be reviewed by the Community Engagement Advisory Board using the service-learning course criteria specified above (see pages 1-2).
4. The Office of Community Engagement notifies the Registrar's Office and the faculty member regarding approval within the month. If approved, the searchable attribute will be added to the course display in EagleNET.
5. The course will be designated a portal in EagleSync and all required forms will be uploaded to the class's portal. All student hours and community partner correspondence will be tracked in EagleSync.
6. Formal designation does not require the approval of UAC or GAC as part of the course approval process. The proposed process retains the flexibility to not teach a course section using service-learning in the event that either the faculty member or community partner is unable to participate during a given term.
7. It will be assumed that once approved, no further approvals will be necessary unless the faculty member changes the course design with respect to the service-learning significantly. Faculty will ultimately decide when to request a new approval for their courses if courses are modified.

Professional training, internships, clinical, practica or mandated community learning experiences for degree programs are exempt – this process is meant strictly for standard service-learning courses. Please contact the **Office of Community Engagement (509-359-2036) for further information.*

Service-Learning Course Approval Form

**Send completed form to the Office of Community Engagement, Showalter 115.*

Name:

Email:

Phone :

College:

Department/Unit:

Proposed Course Title:

Proposed Community Partners:

Describe how the engagement piece will be of value to the community partner(s) and their stakeholders:

Give a brief description of how the service activity will be integrated with the course content and support the academic focus of the course:

Please indicate the number of hours of direct service, advocacy work or project-based service-learning that will be required of each student in the course (must be required of all students in the section):

List reflection strategies you will use throughout the course:

How do you propose to assess the service-learning component of the course?

Please check the following:

- My students will receive a service-learning orientation conducted either by Office of Community Engagement staff or myself.
- My students will be required to complete the EWU Service-Learning Agreement Form and Service Time Log in EagleSync (for direct service projects).
- My students will be asked to complete the EWU Service-Learning Student Evaluation.
- I will report end of term service data to the Office of Community Engagement.
- My course syllabus is attached.

Faculty Member Signature:

Date:

Department Chair Signature:

Date:

Office of Community Engagement Staff to Complete

- Course Approved
- Course Not Approved for following reasons: