COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING (CSL) PROGRAM

STUDENT’S HANDBOOK
Table of Contents
I. What is Community Service Learning (CSL)? ................................................................. 3
   I.I. What impact should CSL have on students? ................................................................. 3
   I.II. Why participate in the CSL program and community engagement? .......................... 4
II. How is CSL integrated into my course? ............................................................................. 5
   II.I. Selecting a placement and meeting your supervisor ..................................................... 5
   II.II. Proposing your own placement .................................................................................. 5
   II.III. Understanding your Placement learning objectives .................................................. 6
   II.IV. Submitting your online timesheets on the Navigator ................................................ 6
   II.V. Reflective assignments ............................................................................................... 6
   II.VI. Community Partner evaluation ................................................................................ 6
III. CSL Student Survey ......................................................................................................... 6
IV. Request your Co-Curricular Record (CCR) ...................................................................... 7
V. Police Record Check (PRC) ............................................................................................... 7
VI. Scholarships ..................................................................................................................... 8
VII. Important information .................................................................................................... 8
   VII.I. Informed consent form .............................................................................................. 8
   VII.II. Behaviour — code of conduct .................................................................................. 8
   VII.III. Varied CSL experience .......................................................................................... 8
   VII.IV. Managing challenges during your placement ......................................................... 9
   VII.V. Managing stress ........................................................................................................ 9
   VII.VI. Harassment ............................................................................................................ 9
VIII. Questions or concerns? ................................................................................................. 9
Appendix A – CSL Program Responsibilities (Professors; Students; Community Partner; MJCGCE) ... 10
Appendix B - Accessing Placements through the Community Engagement Navigator ............ 13
Appendix C - Sample Placements ......................................................................................... 14
Appendix D – Guidelines for volunteer placements involving groups of students in the CSL program ..... 17
I. **What is Community Service Learning (CSL)?**

Community Service Learning (CSL) is a credited educational experience, that (1) is conducted as part of a course, during which (2) students participate in a structured volunteer service placement (volunteer activities) designed to meet a community need or priority and (3) critically reflect on their in-community placement learning to develop a better understanding of class materials and of their field of study. To be included in the centre’s CSL program, a course must have all three components, as shown below.

I.I. **What impact should CSL have on students?**

At the University of Ottawa, CSL courses must offer service placement options that are linked to the course’s objectives, and must require participating students to critically reflect on the connection between their placement experience and the course material. This in turn offers students the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of their field of study, and in some cases, enables them to understand the potential role they can play in effecting change in society (social impact).
I.II. Why participate in the CSL program and community engagement?

The Community Service Learning program benefits all stakeholders:

Table 1 – Benefits of CSL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Students</th>
<th>For Professors</th>
<th>For Community Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develops skills and broadens knowledge (critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, communication)</td>
<td>• Incorporates theory taught in class with practice available in the community</td>
<td>• Provides additional human resources, which in turn allows partners to increase services and accomplish goals that may otherwise not have been possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increases understanding of concepts learned in class</td>
<td>• Encourages students to be more engaged in class</td>
<td>• Provides organizations with knowledge and skills that students have gained through their university studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applies theory to real-life situations</td>
<td>• Enhances student experience and furthers learning through proven pedagogy</td>
<td>• Creates partnerships with community organizations that can potentially lead to collaborative initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhances social awareness and responsibility</td>
<td>• Creates partnerships with community organizations that can potentially lead to collaborative initiatives</td>
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</table>

Participation in community service has been shown to have significant benefits for a student’s academic and non-academic life, whether the service is part of a course or not. Researchers at the University of California in Los Angeles conducted a study titled “How Service Learning Affects Students,” which found eleven areas that were positively affected by service learning:²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Performance</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Post-Graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• GPA</td>
<td>• Commitment to activism</td>
<td>• Self-efficacy</td>
<td>• Leadership activities</td>
<td>• Choice of a service career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing skills</td>
<td>• Promoting racial understanding</td>
<td>• Self-rated leadership ability</td>
<td>• Self-rated leadership ability</td>
<td>• Plans to participate in service post-graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical thinking skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpersonal skills</td>
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Taking part in community service as part of a course allows students to apply theories learned in class. Through CSL, students develop their sense of self while significantly contributing to their communities. Participation in service learning also provides a valuable opportunity to meet interesting people and

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expand networks. This can prove to be a valuable tool when it comes time to search for a job after graduation.

II. How is CSL integrated into my course?

In order to ensure you have a successful CSL experience, it is important you understand what will be expected of you throughout the session. For an overview of student’s roles and responsibilities in the CSL program, please refer to Appendix I.

Our community partners depend on the commitment of volunteers. It is vitally important that before you apply for a placement, you are certain you can fulfill the commitment your placement involves (e.g., minimum time contribution, language requirements, Police Record Checks etc.).

II.I. Selecting a placement and meeting your supervisor

Your professor will tell you when placements for your course are available and how much time you have to apply. Placements are available on a first-come first-served basis. You must use our Community Engagement Navigator (online tool) to participate in CSL and select placements. You can activate your account by clicking on the link found in the “Applications” section of uoZone (see Appendix A for screen shot).

Upon selecting a placement, make sure you understand what will be expected of you, as well as any qualifications required. The placement will also indicate if you need to submit a Police Record Check. Learn more about the Police Record Check on page 7 of this document.

You are responsible for contacting your supervisor within 48 hours of applying for your placement to schedule a meeting. This initial meeting allows you to learn more about the organization and discuss a work plan and schedule for your placement, as well as any training or orientation required. It allows both parties to get a clear understanding of placement objectives and expectations; however, students should be prepared to offer a degree of flexibility and openness to respond to the changing demands of the organization. If any issues arise during this meeting, or at any other time during your placement, contact your placement officer immediately. If the issue affects your professor, the placement officer will advise him or her.

II.II. Proposing your own placement

If you would like to volunteer with an organization that we have not yet partnered with, or are already volunteering with one, you may propose your own placement. All placements proposed by students must be approved by the partner organization, the centre, and the professor. Students must also respect the same timelines as everyone else. The organization you are proposing to work with must meet our community partner criteria. To learn more about community partners, visit our centre website.

To propose your own placement, you must submit a Placement Proposed by Student (PPBS) form by the sessional deadline. You can download the PPBS form from our website or pick it up at our office, in Tabaret Hall, Room 304.
II.III  Understanding your Placement learning objectives
Clear, concise learning objectives are crucial to making your CSL placement a successful experience. Both professors and community partners must identify learning objectives related to their placements based on the following list of placement objectives:

- Apply learning from field of study
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills
- Identify different approaches to solving problems by using a variety of appropriate techniques
- Develop the ability to communicate orally and/or in writing to a variety of audiences
- Develop the ability to work in an interdisciplinary team
- Enhance initiative, accountability and decision-making skills
- Enhance social awareness and active citizenship
- Gain research experience

I.IV.  Submitting your online timesheets on the Navigator
Once you start your placement and complete hours, you will need to enter them on the Community Engagement Navigator throughout the session, meeting all centre CSL program deadlines. You will receive reminders from your professor, as well as from the centre via email communications.

Note: Time spent getting a Police Record Check or travelling to and from your placement does not count towards your 30 hours.

II.V.  Reflective assignments
CSL professors are responsible for assigning reflective assignments to help evaluate students’ volunteer experiences. These assignments allow you to connect your volunteer experience to the theories learned in the classroom.

The reflective process is what turns a volunteering position into a service learning experience tied to an academic education. It also allows you to analyze your experience, connect it to your life and apply what you have learned to your future.³

II.VI.  Community Partner evaluation
At the end of your placement, your supervisor will be asked to fill out an online feedback-evaluation form which your professor will review.

III.  CSL Student Survey
At the end of every session, we send out a short, autonomous online survey to gather feedback from students, community partners and professors on the CSL program, as well as the centre's general activities and programs. We encourage you to complete it, as your feedback will allow us to improve our programs and services.

We are also always happy to discuss your placement experience in person or by telephone. Contact your placement officer to book a meeting, or come by the office during our weekly drop in hours (Thursday afternoons) to talk to a centre staff about your placement experience. The centre may want to feature your CSL experience in its various online or print communications: contact us if you would be interested in sharing your impact story.

IV. Request your Co-Curricular Record (CCR)

Don’t forget to request your Co-Curricular Record (CCR) once your placement is complete! The CCR is an official university document that records approved and verified volunteer activities undertaken by students both on and off campus, whether or not they are part of a course. The CCR can prove valuable when it comes time to apply for scholarships, graduate studies or employment. At the end of your placement, you can easily request your CCR through your online Navigator account. The CCR is free of charge.

![Figure 1: Example of a Co-Curricular Record](image)

V. Police Record Check (PRC)

Certain community partners require you to have a valid Police Record Check. This is quite common with organizations who work with children, vulnerable populations or sensitive and confidential information. The level of verification required, if any, is specified for each placement on the Community Engagement Navigator.

If the placement you wish to select or have selected indicates that a Police Record Check is required, it is your responsibility to obtain one before starting the placement. While a Police Record Check is valid for one full year, some community partners may ask you for a proof completed within the last 3 to 6 months. To complete a Police Record Check, please follow the instructions provided by the specific police station where you will be submitting the request. Steps to complete the verification may vary from station to station and can change at any moment – it is your responsibility to consult the relevant website or to call and speak to a representative in order to obtain accurate and up-to-date information about the process.
For more information on Police Records check for uOttawa students residing in or outside of Ottawa-Gatineau, as well as international students, please consult our website to access a helpful document with key information.

VI. Scholarships
The Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement also offers several scholarships and awards linked to volunteering. These include scholarships for students who have been exceptional volunteers and who create innovative community-based (local or international) projects. There are also specific awards for the CSL program – including for outstanding CSL professors or community partners.

To learn more about these opportunities or to nominate a deserving candidate, consult our website for details and deadlines.

VII. Important information
VII.I. Informed consent form
Prior to starting your volunteer placement, you will need to carefully read and accept the terms of our online consent form. This consent form sets forth the responsibilities you have as a volunteer. By signing it, you assume responsibility for any risks you may encounter during your volunteer placement. It is important that you take the time to read and understand the form. Please also ensure that your emergency contact information is up to date in your uoZone student account.

VII.II. Behaviour — code of conduct
While volunteering, it is important that you conduct yourself professionally at all times. By applying for a CSL placement, you are not only committing to completing 30 hours of volunteering. You are also agreeing to:

- conduct yourself ethically
- respect the dignity and inherent values of each person you work with
- arrive at the designated time
- be proactive and speak to your supervisor if you anticipate changes to your work plan
- perform the work to the best of your ability
- comply with your community partner’s rules and procedures
- keep in confidence all confidential information you may have access to
- not accept any monetary compensation for your work
- not accept any position that is normally a paid position
- not make any false statements regarding the number of volunteer hours you complete
- inform the centre and the designated supervisor of any problems you encounter

VII.III. Varied CSL experience
In collaboration with your course’s professor, the centre works hard to identify quality placements for participating CSL students. However, CSL placement experiences cannot be the same from one student
to the next in any given course. The various organizations who participate in the program and who will welcome you do not have the same mission, capacity and resources. The centre believes that students who demonstrate flexibility, curiosity and openness while volunteering will maximize their chance of completing a very successful placement.

VII.IV. Managing challenges during your placement

If you feel like your placement is not going well or is not meeting the placement objectives that were agreed upon, we encourage you to discuss this with your community partner placement supervisor to find a suitable solution.

Please notify your professor as well as the centre placement officer as soon as possible if there is an issue you feel cannot be resolved at the community organization level, and you need assistance. You should also notify both the professor and the centre of any changes to the placement (ie. change in supervision or if you drop the course).

VII.V. Managing stress

If you find yourself overly stressed and are having difficulty balancing your volunteer and work responsibilities with your school responsibilities, the Student Academic Success Service (SASS) has services and resources that may be able to help you. The Counselling and Coaching Service (Counselling and Coaching Service home page,) and the Student Mentoring Program (Student Mentoring Program home page) can help you learn how to better manage your stress and ensure a more successful university experience.

VII.VI. Harassment

We hope you have a wonderful volunteer experience and encounter minimal problems. If problems occur, however, you should know how to face them and find a solution. If you believe you are experiencing harassment in your volunteer placement, please contact SASS’s Office for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment (Office for prevention of Discrimination home page.). Make sure that you understand what qualifies as harassment, and seek help. You should also contact your placement officer, so that the centre is aware of your concerns.

VIII. Questions or concerns?

If you have any additional questions, please contact the centre to speak to your placement officer.

Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement (MJCGCE)

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Telephone: (613) 562-5945
Email: servingothers@uottawa.ca
Appendix A – CSL Program Responsibilities (Professors; Students; Community Partner; MJCGCE)

For Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Service Placement</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Read the syllabus to understand the Community Service Learning program requirements and make a decision on whether or not to take on optional CSL.</td>
<td>• Log onto the Community Engagement Navigator to select and start their service placement on time, and then contact their placement supervisor to schedule a first meeting.</td>
<td>• Complete the in-class CSL reflection evaluated component and take the time to reflect on their learning as described in the syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In mandatory CSL, select or propose a placement before the centre-assigned deadline.</td>
<td>• Fulfill placement requirements (training, police record check, etc.) in a timely matter.</td>
<td>• Participate in class discussions or other activities to encourage further learning, as proposed in the course outline (optional and mandatory).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure they understand the learning objectives and how they relate to the available placements.</td>
<td>• Carry out the required hours and enter them on the Community Engagement Navigator throughout the session, meeting all deadlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask the centre or professor for clarification as necessary.</td>
<td>• Notify both their professor and the centre of any changes to the placement (i.e., cancelling or dropping the course).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure community partner supervisor approves their hours by the deadlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage community partner supervisor to provide feedback on their placement experience via the online evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review feedback from community partner supervisor.</td>
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For Professors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Service Placement</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Notify centre staff of their intent to participate in CSL by the sessional deadlines.</td>
<td>• Work in close collaboration with the centre to find volunteer placements that meet course objectives.</td>
<td>• Provide a structured reflection activity in the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include the definition of Community Service Learning program, its requirements and a short text on the centre itself (provided by the centre) in course syllabus. Share a copy of the course syllabus with centre staff.</td>
<td>• Approve placements in a timely manner, before the in-class presentation by the centre.</td>
<td>• Determine evaluated reflection format (essay, blog, etc.) and proportion of overall grade reflection represents before the start of the course and share them with centre’s staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In optional CSL, determine the CSL-evaluated component of the course grade (or what CSL will replace in the course), assign proportionate weight for</td>
<td>• Review students’ evaluation and timesheets on the Community Engagement Navigator.</td>
<td>• Encourage students to respond to at least two or three key reflection questions, as outlined in the CSL Professor’s Handbook.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review the completed reflection activity to assign a grade.</td>
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<td>• Where appropriate, encourage</td>
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</table>
**Academics**

- Placement and reflection within the overall grade and contextualize student learning objectives for all options offered in class, so that students can make an informed decision.
- In courses where CSL is mandatory, contextualize what the CSL placement represents to students’ learning and the program requirements, and establish plan B coursework for students whose chosen placements fall through for reasons out of their control.
- Arrange in-class CSL staff presentations with centre.
- Consider service hours carried out, evaluation from community partner, reflections and in-class CSL student discussion in grading student.
- Meet all CSL sessional deadlines and inform centre staff of any changes that affect participating CSL students.

**Service Placement**

- Reflection in the classroom (in both mandatory and optional CSL).

**Reflection**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Community partners (CP)</th>
<th>For Centre staff</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Service Placement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reflection</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure they understand the difference between CSL and extracurricular volunteering (EV) and confirm their interest in taking on CSL students, who volunteer as part of a course.</td>
<td>• Prepare placement description and requirements prior to the start of the session—as much as three months in advance.</td>
<td>• Ensure they are available to discuss questions pertaining to the student’s reflection, where relevant and as initiated by the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide ongoing feedback as well as ongoing and timely placement supervision.</td>
<td>• At the start of the student placement, provide orientation on the organization and the placement tasks as well as occupational health and safety requirements, as needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inform the centre as soon as possible if problems or concerns arise, or if there is a change in supervision of the student.</td>
<td>• Approve timesheets directly on the Community Engagement Navigator by the deadlines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Document students’ work and performance in the online evaluation form by the deadlines.</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Service Placement</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assist professors in integrating CSL into their class.</td>
<td>• Liaise with community partners to cultivate ideas for possible placements.</td>
<td>• Assist professors in adapting reflection questions as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Familiarize themselves with course syllabi to understand the learning objectives.</td>
<td>• Identify community-based placements that meet the course objectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work with professors to ensure staff understand the type of placements being sought.</td>
<td>• Organize CSL class presentations for students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Verify with the professor that any course with CSL includes all three program components. If it does not, bring, the matter up with manager or director to review how best to approach the situation.</td>
<td>• Answer questions from students, community partners and professors by email, telephone or in person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide professors with a definition of the Community Service Learning program and its requirements, as well as a short text on the centre itself and specific centre staff contact information to be added to the syllabus.</td>
<td>• Send reminders to students and community partners regarding the timely entry and approval of timesheets as well as the submission of the online evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assist professors in adapting reflection questions as required.</td>
<td>• Problem solve as needed with community partners, professors and students.</td>
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Appendix B - Accessing Placements through the Community Engagement Navigator

How to access your account:

1. Log in to uOZone.
2. Under Applications, select Community engagement Navigator.

*Note, by clicking this icon, you will have created your account!*

![Figure 1: Accessing the Community Engagement Navigator through uOzone](image)

How to view available placements:

1. Log in to your account and go to Placements in the navigation bar. Select CSL (specific courses).
2. Select your course code, the correct Semester and click Search. This will allow you to view placements available for your course.

![Figure 2: Finding placements through the Community Engagement Navigator](image)

How to select a placement:

1. Review placement descriptions and requirements by clicking on the titles of placements that interest you.
2. Once you decide on a placement, click Select in the Options menu, and then review the two consent forms.
3. Re-confirm your course and click Confirm in...
the Options menu. You will then receive an email confirming your placement selection.

*Figure 3: Selecting a placement through the Community Engagement Navigator*

**Appendix C - Sample Placements**

1. **Health Information Sheet Project Assistant**
   **Turner Syndrome of Canada — MED4101 (Portfolio on Core Competencies Part 1) Description:** The Turner Syndrome Society of Canada, a non-profit charitable organization, was founded in 1981 by an individual with TS who wanted to share experiences and information. It provides support services for individuals with TS and their families and disseminates up-to-date medical information to families, physicians and the general public. The Society is run by individuals with TS and their families, supported by professionals and governed by a Board of Directors.

   *Role:* The student volunteer will research and develop a set of health information sheets concerning common Turner Syndrome health issues (for example, blood pressure, hearing, etc.). The work will involve consulting with members and medical specialists to determine appropriate content, undertaking research, preparing a draft information sheet for each targeted issue and circulating these for feedback as well as preparing a final draft of each sheet. The student may also be involved in undertaking some information outreach on Turner Syndrome within the medical community.

2. **Early Learning Education and Family Learning Support**
   **Pinecrest Community Health Centre — FEM1100C (Women, Gender, Feminism: An Introduction), PSY3523A (Psychologie de la famille)**

   *Description:* Students will support the Early Childhood Educators, Social Workers and Health Nurses to plan, implement and deliver a variety of health promotion play based activities, such as art, music, circle time, sensory activities, for youth children (aged 2 months to 5 years). Opportunities to support families and caregivers with resources and referral information about health promotion (healthy eating and nutrition, physical activities, appropriate behaviours, teething etc.) may be available. If you have the ability to speak French, Somali or Arabic this would be considered an asset. Variety of daytime, weekend and some evening opportunities to fit your needs.

3. **Research Assistant — Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women**
   **FEM 1100C (Women, Gender, Feminism: An Introduction)**

   *Description:* A student on a research assistant placement with CRIA will gain valuable experience understanding the functioning of a non-profit, bilingual research institute for women in Canada today.

   *Role:* The research assistant will conduct research to assist with the updating of CRIA fact sheets, prepare texts based on the research that are accessible to the non-university community, and/or gain experience and knowledge in how to write grant applications for feminist research projects. Research topics on which the student might focus presently include women’s experiences of racism, immigrant
and refugee women, violence against women, the impact on women of economic restructuring and of the reduction of public services. A feminist intersectional approach is central to all analyses.

4. Customer Service Survey (Team of 5)
Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation – CMN3102B (Quantitative Methods)

Description: CCOC is a private non-profit landlord and property developer in downtown Ottawa with over 1600 units of housing. Our maintenance department responds to roughly 7,000 service requests from tenants per year.

Role: Working under the supervision of the Manager of the Communications Department, the team of 5 volunteers will be responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating a pilot follow-up survey tool to gauge satisfaction with our service. For this pilot phase, the survey tool implementation will target a minimum of 100 stakeholders. Once the tool is developed, tested and refined by the pilot team, CCOC will be able to use it to monitor tenant satisfaction and tweak our services to address any issues uncovered through the survey and analysis report.

5. Drop-in Center Worker – A Post Psychiatric Leisure Experience (APPLE)
MED4101 (Portfolio on Core Competencies Part 1)

Description: APPLE is a non-profit organization run by and for people who have experienced mental health challenges. APPLE operates a drop-in centre and a thrift shop.

Role: Services also include peer support group, free light lunches, employment opportunities and referrals to employment programs that offer support to persons with disabilities and free Internet access.

6. General Volunteer – Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
EAS1501A (Introduction aux sociétés et cultures autochtones)

Description: General volunteers will assist in setting up and organizing special events, food and beverage preparation, clean-up and other minor tasks as needed. The volunteer will also participate at these events and help out in areas that will interest them based on their first meeting with the supervisor.

8. Developing a Global Perspective for Educators
UNICEF-Rights Respecting Schools – uOttawa Faculty of Education – PED2143GJ (Professional Inquiry - Global Cohort)

Description: This initiative partners a team of 4-5 teacher candidates and staff from three receiving schools to develop and implement a “UNICEF Rights Respecting School” initiative. Training and guidance are provided by the Educational Manager from UNICEF Canada and Tracy Crowe from the Faculty of Education. Working as a member of the school’s team, this is a full year project (September to March) requiring volunteering at least ½ day every two weeks in partner schools and a number of full day events. There is a possibility that at least one practicum placement will be within the school.
Each team will be required to report on the project through a variety of formats.

Total number of participants for fall and winter session: 15 teacher candidates

The events planned by DGPE would not occur without the support of the students involved. This community involvement mirrors the type of professional learning, program planning and implementation, and extra-curricular expectations expected of teachers in their schools.

9. Research Assistant – uOttawa Office of Campus Sustainability
   HIS4365 (Selected Topics in History: Global History of Environmentalism)

   **Description:** The history of the people of Canada is a story intertwined with nature. Even today, Canada’s greatest icons are related to nature. Our money is adorned with animals, our flag supports a maple leaf, and advertising is awash in images of the forest.

   It is thought that people tend to connect with concepts and ideas that they can relate to. The goal of this project is to use iconic symbols of Canada’s nature to encourage more sustainable practices on campus. Students in this course will create small briefing documents related to iconic Canadian environmental symbols to be eventually used for promotional materials for the Office of Campus Sustainability. Students will be asked to gather information about the icons in the national and local context and write a report summarizing key points.

   **Role:** The students will work with the Office of Campus Sustainability to create their final report. The report must include a detailed explanation of how the Canadian icons are linked to specific sustainability practices on campus, as well as a list of recommendations about how to promote these links on campus.

10. Correspondence and Data Management Assistant (Constituency Concerns)
    Parliamentary Office Matthew Kellway (NDP) – POL2101C (Introduction to Canadian Politics)

   **Description:** The volunteer will assist with:

   - Letter writing and correspondence with constituents;
   - Constituency data management;
   - Research pertaining to incoming correspondence.
Appendix D – Guidelines for volunteer placements involving groups of students in the CSL program

Typically, volunteer opportunities identified through the Community Service Learning (CSL) program are for individual positions. However, they can also entail a project or community service activity involving a group of students. The Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement defines a group placement as being a placement for a group consisting of a team leader and team members working together to produce a deliverable. The team leader takes responsibility for preparing, in collaboration with the community partner (CP) and team members, a project plan that includes a timeline for the project. The team leader becomes accountable for monitoring this timeline and ensuring that the final product is of the anticipated quality and delivered on time and in consultation with the CP and professor. The sections below provide tips and information to guide professors, students and community partners. Paying attention to these tips is important in order to ensure a positive experience for all involved. If at any point you have questions, email us at servingothers@uOttawa.ca or contact your placement officer.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Community partner (CP)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ If you offer a CSL option in your course that requires students to work in a group, define placement parameters and expectations very precisely (e.g. no. of students per group, type of CPs, timelines, deliverables, evaluation and grading criteria). Include as much detail as you can about the community service activity or project to be carried out.</td>
<td>➢ Carefully review and understand group placement expectations to ensure you can fully commit to all requirements.</td>
<td>➢ Create your group volunteer placement in Community Engagement Navigator. Describe your placement thoroughly so the group understands the overall objectives. Include start and end dates, no. of students needed, key deliverables and dates along with any essential qualifications.</td>
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<td>➢ Clarify when you plan to provide input to or consult with each group. Note: It’s important for you to clarify the extent of your involvement before the CP posts a group placement to help avoid any misunderstandings and ensure CP is willing and able to handle all necessary tasks.</td>
<td>➢ Before CSL group placements become active in Community Engagement Navigator, identify placements of interest and begin forming groups.</td>
<td>➢ Ensure the person responsible for supervising the group has the necessary time to provide feedback and monitor student progress and that the group is following project plan. Note: Be sure to clarify the extent of the professor’s involvement with the students throughout placement.</td>
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<td>➢ Determine and communicate grading process. Please keep in mind that a CSL placement typically represents a 30-hour commitment per student and includes reflection activities. Note: Once your group placement is well defined, your placement officer will begin identifying possible placement options. Due to the complexity of group placements, the Centre will not accept placements proposed by students (PPBS) for group placements.</td>
<td>➢ Assign a team leader to serve as the primary contact between the professor, CP and the Centre. The team leader registers for the placement in Community Engagement Navigator, follows up with team members to ensure they activate their Community Engagement Navigator accounts and gathers and communicate team member information (i.e. names and email addresses) to placement officer by the deadline. Note: The placement officer will manually match each team member to the placement.</td>
<td>Once a group has selected your placement, you will receive a confirmation email. The team leader will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss mutual expectations and develop a project plan. Note: If you haven’t heard from anyone within 48 hours of receiving the confirmation email, please contact your placement officer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Ask students to form groups and identify a team leader to serve as the primary contact between you, their group, the Centre and the CP (this will be in addition to their other duties). You may want to consider assigning bonus marks to the team leader for this added responsibility.</td>
<td>➢ Team leader contacts the CP to arrange a meeting to discuss project requirements, timelines for all deliverables and overall expectations. At this meeting, establish a project plan and guidelines for regular communications and check-ins. All students should be at this first meeting (check availability of all team members before arranging the meeting).</td>
<td>➢ After initial meeting, contact your placement officer if you believe there is a conflict between your expectations and those of the group (we may then contact the professor to review the learning objectives).</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Ask each team leader to register for a group placement in Community Engagement Navigator and email a list of</td>
<td>➢ Draft a schedule for key</td>
<td>➢ Within a few days of this first meeting, your team leader should</td>
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</table>

MJC GCE - Community Service Learning Program - Student Handbook – July 2017
### Professor

- All members of their group to their placement officer (including each member’s email address).

- After each team has had its first meeting with the community partner, discuss with the team leader any potential issues (e.g. discrepancy in professor’s and CP’s expectations, participation of a particular team member).

- Throughout the session, emphasize the importance of fulfilling the required volunteer hours and meeting deliverables and communicate any penalties you’ve established if requirements aren’t met.

- Throughout the session, consult with each group to ensure they’re on the right track (i.e. will be able to provide quality and timely deliverables).

- Send reminders of project deadlines and for entering hours in Community Engagement Navigator.

- At the end of the session, log into Community Engagement Navigator to review the CP evaluation and timesheet entries for each group.

  **Note:** If you need assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact your placement officer.

**Note:** If any students don’t complete the required number of hours for the placement, consider lowering their CSL grade. However, we suggest you discuss your decision first with the team leader and take into account the evaluation submitted by the CP (we will try our best to ensure these evaluations get completed).

### Student

- Deliverables, keeping in mind schedules of the students, professor the CP. Send the final plan to the CP.

- Throughout the placement, the team leader communicates regularly with CP to ensure CP’s feedback is effectively integrated (keep other team members up to date—in person, by phone or email as needed).

  The team leader also facilitates discussions between the team and professor to gather input. If the team leader feels there is a discrepancy between what the professor and the CP are requesting, the leader is to notify the placement officer immediately.

  **Note:** All students should be involved in these exchanges in order to maximize learning.

- Throughout the placement, each team member logs their completed hours in Community Engagement Navigator (timesheets module). **Students enter their individual hours completed, not the group hours.**

  **Note:** Timesheets are approved by the CP supervisor.

- The CP supervisor contacts the team leader with any questions about timesheet entries.

- **Team leader sends reminders to approve pending hours to CP supervisor, if necessary.**

**Note:** Final group evaluation is completed by CP supervisor (all students will see a copy in their Navigator account).

- Advise team leader if you have any questions or concerns throughout the process on any aspect of the group placement.

- **Team leader follows up with placement officer.**

### Community Partner (CP)

- Send you the final project plan clearly outlining expectations, including frequency of check-ins and communications as well as final project deliverables. **Review the final project plan.** It is critical for you and the students to respect this timeline.

  **If a problem arises that you’re not able to resolve, please contact your placement officer to discuss possible solutions.** The team leader is your primary contact person throughout the placement and should be part of this conversation. Be sure to copy the team leader on all communications.

  **Note:** If for some reason you don’t hear from the team leader within a reasonable time or you have any concerns, please contact your placement officer, who will bring the issue to the attention of the professor or team leader.

- Throughout the placement, be sure to approve student timesheets entries in Community Engagement Navigator. Please contact the team leader if you have any questions about individual timesheet entries.

  **If you think the hours entered by a student don’t reflect the level of effort, please discuss this with your placement officer.**

- Once the placement is complete, please complete the online evaluation. Usually an evaluation is submitted for each student. However, you can evaluate the group as a whole and simply copy your group evaluation into each student’s profile.

  **Your evaluation is very important and helps professors assign a final grade to each student. An additional comment on the team leader’s overall performance is also very helpful and would be very much appreciated.**