COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING (CSL) PROGRAM

STUDENT’S HANDBOOK

Centre for Global and Community Engagement

Visit our website at www.servingothers.uOttawa.ca

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I. What is Community Service Learning (CSL)?

CSL is an academic program that requires students to complete 30 hours of “service learning” as part of a course. Placements with local community partners are carefully selected, based on course learning objectives, and require students to complete a reflection piece when they complete the program. Placements are typically individual placements, but can also take place in groups (see Appendix D for Guidelines on volunteer placements involving groups of students in the Community Service Learning (CSL) program).

Professors integrate CSL into their class syllabi and set assignments which require students to relate their experiences in the community to the course content using various reflective methods. Students complete 30 hours of volunteer work over the course of a session. Community partners must officially confirm student volunteer hours, as well as complete a short one-page online evaluation form.

Table 1 – Benefits of CSL

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

II. Why participate in the CSL program and community engagement?

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

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

III. Evaluating CSL through reflective assignments
CSL professors are responsible for assigning reflective assignments to help evaluate students’ volunteer experience. 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

IV. Community partners
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.).

Note that time spent getting a police record check or travelling to and from your placement does not count towards your 30 hours.

IV.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).

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. 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.

**IV.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, CGCE 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 website.

To propose your own placement, you must submit a Placement Proposed by Student (PPBS) form. You can download the PPBS form from our website or pick it up at our office, in Tabaret Hall, Room 304.

**V. 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 CGCE 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

**VI. Scholarships**

CGCE 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. To learn more about these opportunities, visit our website.

**VII. Co-Curricular Record (CCR)**

The Co-Curricular Record (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 request your CCR through your online account. You can get one free CCR per academic year.

![Image of Co-Curricular Record]

Figure 1: Example of a Co-Curricular Record

**VIII. 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.

**IX. 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 CGCE and the designated supervisor of any problems you encounter
X. Police Record Check (PRC)
Certain community partners require you to have a valid Police Record Check (PRC). This is quite common with organizations who work with children, vulnerable populations or sensitive and confidential information. If you select a placement which requires a PRC, you must begin the application process for it as soon as you register for your placement, so that you can begin volunteering as soon as possible. Getting a PRC can take between two and six weeks. While some community partners will allow you to begin working while your PRC is being processed, others will not. There are fees for obtaining a PRC. Some partners will provide you with a letter in order to reduce the fees. This will be indicated in the placement description.

XI. CSL student feedback
We send out an online survey to gather feedback from students, community partners and professors on the CSL program and 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.

XII. 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.

XIII. 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 CGCE is aware of your concerns.
Appendix A - Accessing the Community Engagement Navigator through uoZone

Appendix B - Accessing Placements 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 CRIAW 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 CRIAW 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.

7. Student Refugee Program and Local Committee member –
uOttawa World University Service of Canada – MED4101 (Portfolio on Core Competencies Part 1)

**Description:** World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a leading Canadian non-profit organization in international development, committed to build a more equitable and sustainable world. The University of Ottawa’s WUSC committee is one of over 70 WUSC Local Committees active on university and college campuses across Canada.

For most refugees, there are few or no opportunities to continue post-secondary education. Since 1978, WUSC’s Student Refugee Program has helped address this shortage by enabling student refugees aged 18-25 to pursue their studies at Canadian universities and colleges (see http://wusc.ca/en/srp). The students have strong academic credentials and strong extra-curricular activities but are new to Canada.
Role: In this placement volunteers will help resettle incoming sponsored students in Ottawa by providing everything from academic support (navigate through campus, switch courses/programs) to practical support (shop for winter clothes, talk about healthy eating and exercise, how to draft a CV or apply for a job, etc.). The volunteers' participation will optimize the sponsored students' integration into the Ottawa community.

Volunteers will also help organize outreach activities in support of the Student Refugee Program, complete HARP (Health Advocacy for Refugees Project) training, participate in local committee activities and provide suggestions on how to improve the program.

Students will be required to work mainly on campus, and the volunteer schedule is flexible.

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. CGCE 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.

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<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Community partner (CP)</th>
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<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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<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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<td>➤ Ask each team leader to register for a group placement in Community Engagement Navigator and email a list of all members of their group to their placement officer (including each member’s email address).</td>
<td>➤ Draft a schedule for key deliverables, keeping in mind schedules of the students, professor the CP. Send the final</td>
<td>➤ Within a few days of this first meeting, your team leader should send you the final project plan clearly outlining expectations, including frequency of check-ins and</td>
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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.

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).

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.

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.