

HCCS

Service Learning Student Handbook

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About Service Learning/Civic Engagement

What is Service Learning?

According to the *National Service Learning Clearinghouse* website,

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. They become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

Benefits of Service Learning

The virtue of service learning lies in the benefits that all involved participants receive. Faculty, students, the College and the community profit by participating in service learning.

Benefits to Faculty

The most important professional responsibility faculty have, of course, is to teach. Service learning is an innovative teaching methodology that centers on course relevance based on student-directed learning. The faculty at Houston Community College benefits from strengthened community and volunteer efforts, especially from projects that link service and curriculum. Service learning enables faculty members to establish a concrete link between the classroom and their communities, and that enhances their own academic learning. In some cases, students who may not respond to traditional instruction techniques will respond to an applied learning approach that uses community and volunteer service.

1. Keeps courses fresh, new and exciting each semester
2. Creates deeper job satisfaction seeing growth in student awareness of the relationships between subject matter and their community
3. Strengthens community ties
4. Functions as a PEP goal

Benefits to Students

Benefits to the serving student range from an enhanced sense of efficacy and a heightened sense of civic values, to improved career opportunities. Some of the gains that have been attributed to participation in service learning programs include:

1. Greater likelihood of completing schooling goals
 - Sees the direct correlation between societal needs/careers and degree requirements
 - Finds faculty and community mentors to encourage them and provide support
 - Experiences greater enjoyment from deeper understanding and application of subject matter
2. Builds stronger social and community opportunities

- Provides opportunities to test out career options
 - Becomes more informed about societal needs/issues
 - Influences future decisions to continue volunteering
3. Designation for Service Learning on transcript
 - Enhances scholarship and transfer application
 - Shows societal concern/engagement on job applications
 - Potentially transitions to university internships
 4. Strengthens students' skill sets
 - Increased sense of self-efficacy as young people learn that they can impact real-world challenges
 - Enhanced problem-solving skills , ability to work in teams, and planning abilities

Many of these benefits relate directly to the stated goals and mission of Houston Community College. Students who enjoy strengthened intellectual development and college performance are better-educated students. Developing a sense of efficacy, staying in college and finding a career are precisely the outcomes HCC desires.

Benefits to the Community

A primary beneficiary of a Service Learning Program at Houston Community College should be the community. Critical challenges face the nation's communities today. Many of these issues are felt most strongly by people living in communities served by community colleges. It is not enough to educate students and then return them to their communities. Community colleges can help their students strengthen those communities. The impact of service learning is not limited to a student's time in school. After graduation, students will be more likely to volunteer and participate in community affairs for the rest of their adult lives. What lasts is not only the urge to serve, but also a broader perspective grounded in experience. That experience will enable our students to make more informed personal, social, and political choices as citizens in a democracy. Benefits for the community include the following:

1. Reinforces partnerships
2. Fosters an informed, civic minded student population regarding community needs
3. Furnishes a youthful perspective and innovative talent
4. Develops and trains potential employees
5. Supplies a diverse pool of volunteers
6. Provides college role models for client populations.

Steps for Starting Service Learning Program

If you are interested in participating in a Service Learning opportunity, follow these steps:

1. Contact the Service Learning Representative at your college.
2. Talk to your instructor to determine if Service Learning is a component of the class.
3. Complete the Student Service Learning Application in this handbook. Have parent complete the Parental Consent form if the student is under 18.
4. Choose a Service Learning placement from the list of approved service learning placement sites. A partnership site list is available on the HCC website.
5. Complete the Service Learning Placement Confirmation Agreement with the agency supervisor.
6. Report to the Service Learning partnership site at your scheduled time. Communicate regularly with your supervisor.
7. Use the Participant's Service Learning Hourly Report to record your hours of participation and have the supervisor initial your time each day you volunteer.
8. Turn in Service Learning Hourly Report form to your instructor.
9. Have supervisor complete the Agency Student Evaluation and turn it in to your instructor

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Is Service Learning applicable in all disciplines?

Answer: Yes. Service Learning can be used to address or enhance course objectives in any discipline.

Question: Does Service Learning require change or modification of course objectives?

Answer: No. Service Learning is a pedagogy used to achieve existing course objectives.

Question: May service be performed with an organization not HCC's Service Learning Agency list?

Answer: Yes, but this decision should be made in consultation with the student's instructor in advance of beginning service.

Question: May students do service at a faith-based organization?

Answer: Yes, under certain circumstances. HCC is a public institution. This means that service for a faith-based organization is acceptable as long as the service does not involve proselytizing or otherwise promulgating the views of the faith. For example, students may work in a thrift shop or soup kitchen run by a religious organization so long as their service does not involve trying to encourage those who are served to accept the views of, or join, the organization.

Question: Do the students have to meet certain requirements?

Answer: Some agencies/organizations do require that students are a certain age, that they possess needed skills, require fingerprinting and background checks, or ask students to sign confidentiality agreements. Do not let your students be intimidated by these as service at these can be rewarding. Discuss the reasons, i.e. a woman's shelter may require confidentiality and schools are legally bound to perform background checks for people who work with children.

Question: Do students have to complete all of their service hours for the semester at one organization?

Answer: No, they do not. If it is acceptable to the instructor and to the organizations, service hours may be performed at two or more organizations in a single semester.

Question: Is student reflection required?

Answer: Yes. Reflection allows students to integrate their service experiences with course content. It allows faculty to evaluate student learning and provide feedback to their students. Reflection can take many forms, i.e. journals, papers linking course content and service, oral presentations.

Question: How many hours of service must be performed to earn the Service Learning designation on a student's transcript?

Answer: The minimum number of hours required during the course of a semester is 15.

Question: How do students go about getting the Service Learning designation on their transcripts?

Answer: At the end of the semester, once the hours have been completed and the organization has certified them to the instructor, the instructor must email the student's name, student ID#, the course and course number, the name of the organization, and the number of hours completed, to the College Director of Service Learning.

HCC Instructor's Name: _____ Name of Course _____

Days/Times of Course: _____ Hours Required: _____

Student Service Learning Application
(To be completed by the student)

Date: _____ Student ID #: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Student's Name (please print) _____ Male / Female (circle one)

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____ Best times to reach you: _____

**Students under 18 must complete a "Parental Consent" form before beginning their placement.*

The Houston Community College Student Handbook governs the conduct of students participating in the Service Learning Program.

**HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SERVICE LEARNING
*PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

Your son/daughter _____ (name/student ID#) is currently

enrolled in _____ (course name & #). This course includes a service learning option which involves volunteering at a non-profit organization during the term. The purpose of the volunteer service experience is to enhance and enrich learning of course material while providing much needed support for our community's efforts to meet its needs.

Your son/daughter has committed to providing _____ hours of service to

Name of Agency	Address	Phone
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This placement is on the college's list of approved student volunteer placements. Yes / No

Scheduling of the service hours is done by the student and the agency volunteer supervisor who will be responsible for supervising all on-site activities. Transportation to and from the agency site is the responsibility of the student.

Since your son/daughter is not yet eighteen years of age, parental consent for your child's participation in this volunteer service is required. As the student's parent or legal guardian, please sign below indicating your consent, and return this form to the course professor before your child begins his/her volunteer placement.

If you have any questions about the volunteer service placement, please direct them to the student's professor.

Parent's Name (print)	Date
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Parent's Signature

Phone

**To be completed by all students under the age of eighteen who are enrolled in any course utilizing a service learning option. Signed forms must be returned to the professor before students begin volunteer service.*

A copy of this consent form will be provided to the volunteer placement supervisor.

Student's Name: _____

Instructor's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

SERVICE LEARNING PLACEMENT CONFIRMATION AGREEMENT

(To be completed jointly by student & agency supervisor)

Dear Agency Supervisor,

On behalf of the Houston Community College we would like to thank you for entering into an educational partnership with our students. By accepting and supervising service learners, you are helping these students join classroom theory with real-life experience. By encouraging and allowing these students to perform meaningful service, you are also contributing to education's mission of promoting civic responsibility. The critical role you play as a mentor and educator for our students cannot be underestimated. We appreciate your commitment to making our service learners feel welcome and ensuring that they have a productive and educational experience.

Name & Address of Agency: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Describe the service learning project, including expectations, requirements & responsibilities.

Days & Hours to work _____

Student will begin: _____

The student expects to gain the following kinds of learning from this experience:

The agency agrees to provide the student with an orientation and training: Yes / No (circle one)

The agency agrees to provide the student with the following resources: (check all applicable)

_____ On-site supervisor _____ Space to work _____ Critique of student's work

_____ Materials (please specify) _____

I agree to, and will uphold, the terms of this placement.

Student's Signature: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Agency Student Evaluation
(To be completed by supervisor)

Supervisor: Please complete this evaluation of the service learning student.

Service Learning Student: After your supervisor completes this form, please return it to your instructor.

Student's Name: _____ **Agency Name:** _____

On a scale of 1 to 4 (4 representing the highest), please rate the service learning student in the areas listed below by placing an "X" in the appropriate box.

	0	1	2	3	4
Attendance/Punctuality					
Attitude					
Quality of Work					
Initiative					
Overall Performance					

Comments:

Supervisor's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Title: _____ **Date:** _____

Phone: _____

