

## SERVICE LEARNING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is Service Learning?

Service Learning allows you to blend your educational goals with your passions through serving the community. It gives you the opportunity to respond to real needs, mutually defined in partnership with representatives from community/non-profit agencies while earning college credit! The community can be as close as a neighborhood just beyond the school campus or one located in other parts of the world.

### What is the difference between volunteerism, Service Learning and an internship?

At Valencia we make the following distinction among the three experiences: (1) **Volunteering** is normally a project-oriented activity that occurs over a brief period of time (one afternoon, one day, one week, etc.). (2) **Service Learning** is an opportunity to serve the community over a longer period of time. Site selection is based on your passion, not your career/program area. (3) **Internships** are career specific and normally last over a longer period of time. They are designed to provide you with an opportunity to either explore your career field or fine-tune specific skills in preparation for a transition to employment.

### Why do students enroll in Service Learning?

Students may register for Service Learning if they:

- ❖ Want to receive academic credit for volunteering with an agency that blends their passions and learning goals.
- ❖ Want the opportunity to focus on social awareness and strengthening of specific skills that will cultivate a sense of ownership for your academic, personal and career goals.
- ❖ Desire to complete community service hours beyond the amount required for a course with a volunteer/community service component (i.e. education, psychology, etc.).
- ❖ Want to receive college credit for community service hours completed beyond those required as a scholarship recipient (e.g. Bridges).

### Who is eligible?

To be eligible, students must meet the following requirements:

- ❖ 2.0 GPA or better
- ❖ Completion of college prep courses in English, reading, or math (if you were required to take them)
- ❖ 12 credits
- ❖ Internship and Placement Office approval

### How does it work?

You will...

- ❖ Register for the course (SLS 2940) to receive credit for the experience.
- ❖ Receive supervision by a Service Learning Faculty Supervisor.
- ❖ Each experience/credit is equivalent to 50 total hours of service.
- ❖ You may complete a maximum of four service-learning experiences (**equivalent to four credits**) while attending Valencia.

**Steps to take to participate in Service Learning:**

1. Complete a Service Learning Application/Letter of Agreement (attach an unofficial transcript) on which you will list the name of the agency with which you would like to complete your experience. If you do not have a site selected, you may look at our list of community partners or develop one that best matches your interests. They will verify completion of requirements.

**Application Deadlines**

Current application deadlines are posted on our website at:

<http://valenciacc.edu/ipo/ServiceLearning.cfm>

2. Contact the community partner(s) to arrange for an interview.
3. Select a site and return the Service Learning Application/Letter of Agreement signed by the community partner to the Internship and Placement Office.
4. Complete and submit the Application to the Internship and Placement Office staff on your campus.
5. Meet with the Internship and Placement Office staff to receive registration information and the Service Learning Orientation packet.
6. Meet with your faculty supervisor to develop a Service Learning Plan and receive orientation.
7. Show up at your site as planned, keep track of your hours, complete your activity logs, and communicate regularly with your faculty supervisor.
8. Enjoy the rewards of selfless giving and making a real difference in the lives of others.

**Will I receive an S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) or a letter grade when I complete this course and how will my grade be determined?**

You will receive a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F. Your grade will be determined in accordance with Valencia's policies as outlined in the current catalog, per completion of the following activities:

- 24 points – Bi-monthly contact with your Service Learning Faculty Supervisor
- 36 points – Completion of weekly Service Learning Reflection Journals
- 30 points – Service Learning Plan/Agency Evaluation of Service Learning Student
- 10 points – Completion of other activities as assigned by your Faculty Supervisor (class presentations)
- 100 points

**Will the credit I receive from completing this course satisfy an elective or general education requirement?**

The Service Learning course satisfies elective credit requirements.

**Will the credit I receive when I complete this course count towards my GPA?**

Service Learning, SLS 2940, is an approved Valencia college-level class and will be calculated in determination of your grade point average (GPA).

**What is the cost to register for this course?**

You will pay the regular cost per credit hour to register for this course. You may register for up to four credits.

**I'd like to complete my Service Learning at more than one site this term. Is this possible?**

It is preferable to complete your Service Learning with one agency/non-profit organization in order to contribute the greatest benefit to the selected agency and to realize the highest gain through the reflection journal exercises; nonetheless, you may complete your hours at a maximum of two agencies. In this case, you may need to complete a set of reflection exercises for each agency. For more information, contact your Service Learning Faculty Supervisor.

**I started my Service Learning two weeks into the term. When should I complete my first reflection journal?**

You should complete a reflection journal on a weekly basis starting the first week you begin your Service Learning. Turn in your reflection journals to your Service Learning Faculty Supervisor by the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month after you begin your Service Learning.