SERVICE

LEARNING

PARTNER GUIDE

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Versioning

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Introduction

Service Learning is structured experiential learning that integrates active, meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to promote a sense of civic responsibility and strengthen communities. Service Learning promotes a sense of community and civic engagement that enriches the learning process and enhances personal and professional growth. In addition to providing a meaningful portfolio learning experience for learners, Service Learning increases the capacity of our communities to maintain programs and services that are vital to Social and economic development in Nova Scotia.

Through service learning, learners will strengthen their attachment to their communities and see themselves as integral to the continued growth of the province.

Quality service learning experiences are built on a foundation of community relationships. Working together, our community partners can serve as co-educators helping NSCC to prepare learners for work in various sectors or industries. Beyond this, our graduate profile identifies additional values such as civic responsibility, citizenship, social consciousness and leadership. We believe service learning helps us to shape graduates who are both skilled in their professions and who see themselves as an integral part of the sustainability and progress of their campus, college, community and province.

Our vision is to provide every learner with an opportunity to experience community engagement that will enhance her/his critical thinking, leadership development, ethical decision-making, social consciousness and civic responsibility. To that end, Service Learning is a program-level outcome in all of NSCC's core programs.

Preparing for Service Learning

It is important that Community Partners understand the difference between Service Learning and volunteering and other forms of applied learning. Providing an orientation for Community Partners is an important step in developing and designing successful Service Learning projects. One valuable way to do this is to provide opportunities for Faculty and learners to learn more about your community organization. Also, you may be invited to come to the campus to talk about your organization's needs. Service Learning always strives to create a balance between benefits to learners and benefits to the community organization

Checklists

The following checklist outlines the required procedures to be completed by community partners prior to, during and following the completion of a service learning project.

Designing Successful Service Learning Projects

☐ Consider the following questions:

    ☐ Does the Service Learning project meet program or course-level outcomes?

    ☐ Is the Community Partner a not-for-profit organization with at least $2 million in General Liability Insurance Coverage?

    ☐ Are the benefits shared equally between learning and service?

    ☐ Does the Community Partner understand and share the NSCC definition of Service Learning?

    ☐ Are we confident that the service being provided by learners does not take away employment from local contractors or compete with local businesses or organizations?

    ☐ Is the project location suitable?

    ☐ Are funds available for costs such as materials, tools etc.?

Pre-Project Checklist

☐ Participate in the completion of the following forms:

    ☐ Service Learning Plan

    ☐ Risk Management Plan

    ☐ Service Learning Partnership Agreement

Post Project Checklist

☐ Celebrate the results of the project

Responsibilities

Partners

- Provide relevant information on the service needs of the organization
- Collaboratively design service learning projects that both address real community need and meet stated learning goals and objectives for the learners
- Assist with orientation and/or training to prepare learners for active involvement, and to supervise and support learners during their projects
- Provide learner(s) with feedback and assessment throughout their projects
- Collaborate as a co-educator; for example, Community Partners may be invited by the Faculty member to present in the classroom on relevant subject matter

Students

- Student responsibilities are outlined in the Service Learning Student Guide. See http://www.nscc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/ for more information.

Faculty

- Faculty responsibilities are outlined in the Service Learning Faculty Guide. See http://www.nscc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/ for more information.

Health & Safety

Student health and safety is a priority. Safety is a shared responsibility amongst NSCC, the community partner and the student. A consideration in planning a service learning activity, project, course or placement is risk management. Most risks associated with applied learning activities can be managed collaboratively amongst Learners, Community Partners and Faculty effectively with good communication, planning and documentation.

Students have insurance coverage through the Student Insurance Program (SIP) while they are participating in College learning activities, but learning how to identify, manage and avoid risk helps learners develop safe employment practices. NSCC requires learning partners (employers, community organizations etc.) to carry general liability insurance of at least $2 million. We will ask our partners to sign an agreement with us indicating they have met this requirement. Some exceptions apply.

A risk assessment should be done to identify risks associated with each Service Learning project. This may include: a tour of the facility or a site assessment; a discussion with the agency supervisor; a review of the organization's policies, procedures and OH&S manual; and an orientation to the project.

Minimizing risk is in the best interest of learners, learning partners and NSCC. A Partner Agreement has been developed to record any potential risks and plans for minimizing or eliminating the risks. The Partner Agreement will be prepared and signed by: (1) partner organization, (2) learner, (3) Faculty, and (4) Academic Chair before the learner begins his/her placement. The final decision about whether or not risk has been adequately managed will be determined by the Faculty and the Academic Chair.

In case of accident, a NSCC Accident/Incident Report must be completed. Community partners and/or students are to inform faculty. Accident reports must be completed by Faculty or Academic Chair and be submitted online through "OurNSCC" https://ournscc.nscc.ca/Departments/OHSE/Pages/AccidentIncidentReporting.aspx

Please note: In case of a serious accident or incident requiring ambulance transport, hospitalization, or emergency care, contact the office of NSCC Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services IMMEDIATELY at 902-491-7233.   Please ensure that each student knows what to do and who to contact (i.e. faculty and/or academic chair) if they find themselves in an unsafe or disrespectful working environment.

Safe & Respectful Environment

NSCC is committed to ensuring that all students and community partners learn and work in a safe environment, free from discrimination and harassment, and conducive to learning and teaching.

NSCC is committed to ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all members of its community, while maintaining the academic integrity of programs and curriculum, and an academic climate conducive to learning, free from disruptive or inappropriate behaviour.

To learn more about NSCC's commitment to providing safe and respectful work environments, visit Student Code of Conduct at http://www.nscc.ca/about_nscc/policies_procedures/index.asp.

Resources

Guides

Guides have been developed for Faculty, Students and Partners to ensure there is a clear expectation of roles.

Documents & Forms

Forms for service learning projects can be found in the Service Learning Forms Guide. Some forms are mandatory which need to be completed by all stakeholders (Students, Partners and NSCC). Stakeholders and timing for each form is indicated in the table at the front of the Service Learning Forms Guide.

Policies and Procedures

Relevant NSCC policies and procedures apply to students during the duration of a service learning project. For an overview of NSCC's policies, please visit:
http://www.nscc.ca/about_nscc/policies_procedures/index.asp