

**Bluefield State University
(BSU)**

SERVICE-LEARNING

**Handbook for Bluefield State University's
Service-Learning Placements
(Undergraduate)**

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Service-Learning is embedded within courses in various degree programs at Bluefield State University.

Service-Learning will occur during the fall, winter, spring, and summer sessions.

Courses that embed service learning engage students in directed projects, internships, and externships, preparing undergraduates to cultivate competence for employment in worldwide contexts.

Service-Learning provides an opportunity for students to integrate classroom learning and theory with practical experiences in a professional setting and to make contacts in various sectors. Many students may obtain employment owing to their Service-Learning expertise and contacts.

Service-Learning will be from two weeks to a month, generally during the second half of the semester.

Participating Public/Private/Nonprofit partners will provide BSU faculty and the **Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning** an outline of responsibilities, along with workplace protocols that must be adhered to by BSU students.

Purpose and Structure of Service-Learning

In courses incorporating Service-Learning, students will work with their Service-Learning Workplace Mentors in the public/private/nonprofit sectors and Faculty to strengthen competence in appropriate workplaces. After the Service-Learning activity, Service-Learning Workplace Mentors will submit a written assessment of the student's performance.

Although the structure of the Service-Learning activity will vary depending on the nature and needs of the organization and BSU students' skills, a Service-Learning experience will include observation and participation. Comments may include activities such as attending various meetings, interviewing or shadowing key personnel, and watching interactions between the Service-Learning Workplace Mentor and other staff members. Participation involves a project being assigned to the Service-Learning student.

The Service-Learning experience has an academic component as well. The primary requirement Service-Learning is that the student prepares a **Service-Learning Portfolio**.

The **Portfolio** serves as a compendium of documents demonstrating accomplishments during Service-Learning. Key elements include:

- Weekly Report
- Organizational Assessment
- Self-Assessment
- Project Summaries

Workplace Mentor Responsibilities

- While each Service-Learning activity will be a uniquely defined experience for the student and the Workplace Mentor, the following list summarizes Bluefield State University's philosophy regarding "ideal" Service-Learning experiences:
- Specifically, the Workplace Mentor will allow the student to observe decision-making at many levels, including, when appropriate, attending departmental meetings, board meetings, and relevant community meetings and watching and discussing the day-to-day activities of the Workplace Mentor and his assigned staff.
- The Workplace Mentor will help the Service-Learning student become actively involved in a project that will add value to the organization when appropriate.
- The Workplace Mentor will meet regularly with the Service-Learning student to discuss progress and provide feedback and guidance.
- The Workplace Mentor will provide the Service-Learning student with meaningful tasks and ensure exposure to as many operational aspects as possible. **The Service-Learning student should not serve as a secretary or clerk.**
- The Workplace Mentor assigns a supervisor to direct and coordinate the Service-Learning experience and prepare a written evaluation of the Service-Learning student's performance, which should reach the Faculty at least a week before the last day of the semester (see Form 4).
- The Workplace Mentor offers constructive criticism when needed.
- The Workplace Mentor provide facilities, supplies, space, etc., which are necessary for the Service-Learning student to perform his or her assigned duties adequately.
- The Workplace Mentor alert the Faculty about any problems relating to the Service-Learning student's job performance.
- The Workplace Mentor should request the Faculty to withdraw the Service-Learning student when personal conduct or educational progress is such that additional time and effort on the part of the agency would not be worthwhile.
- The Workplace Mentor should terminate a Service-Learning student only with cause and prior notice to the Faculty.
- The Workplace Mentor should make suggestions to the Faculty Record how the Service-Learning program might be improved.

Student's Responsibilities

The student is responsible for identifying Service-Learning opportunities of interest. Once the placement for Service Learning has been made by the Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning in collaboration with the Faculty, the student is expected to:

- Comply with the participating Public/Private/Nonprofit partners' requirements (e.g., criminal background checks, drug screening, and any other health documentation of immunizations, physicals, etc., or other information requirements).
- At all times, be professional in appearance, dress and conduct.
- Follow the schedule predetermined with the Workplace Mentor.
- Notify the Workplace Mentor and Faculty if there is a possibility of being late or absent (this should not happen unless an emergency situation arises).
- Practice professional courtesy when communicating with clients and other agency professionals.
- Report directly to the Workplace Mentor: The relationship between the student and the Workplace Mentor should be one of student-teacher rather than employer-employee or coworkers. The student-teacher relationship should be built on mutual respect, trust, communication, and understanding.
- Complete an evaluation of the experience at the end of the Service-Learning activity.
- Communicate concerns and problems to the Workplace Mentor and Faculty.
- Fulfill the learning goals, course objectives, and assignments.
- Follow organization policies and procedures (including policies on confidentiality, documentation, dress code, etc.).

Program and Faculty/Instructor Responsibilities

- Assist the student in clarifying the educational goals to be achieved by the placement.
- Assist the student in identifying potential sites for the Service-Learning experience.
- In collaboration with the Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning, arrange affiliation agreements.
- Supervise completion of documentation requirements, i.e., drug screenings, background checks, and health checks.
- Facilitate insurance coverage by the university for students.
- Contact the Workplace Mentor during the Service-Learning experience to discuss the student's progress.
- Respond to the needs of the student and Workplace Mentor during the placement and provide consultation upon request.
- Clearly state the course's Service-Learning requirements/opportunities and assist students in successfully completing the course.
- Weekly contact with students by faculty.
- Grading: Grades are assigned by the Faculty in consultation with the Workplace Mentor based on student performance during Service-Learning and on the Service-Learning Portfolio, as described in the Service-Learning component of practical courses.

Service-Learning (embedded within BSU Courses)

Description

Supervised full-time Service-Learning in BSU courses.

Learning Objectives

At the end of Service-Learning, the student should be able to:

- Assess the operational and managerial aspects of the Service-Learning organization.
- List and explain the task assigned and projects accomplished during the Service-Learning and how they contribute to the student's career goals.
- Identify and effectively use appropriate communication goals.
- Describe how the Service-Learning experience has strengthened problem-solving, communication, and presenting skills.
- Identify critical regulations affecting the Service-Learning partner organization.
- Understand and assess the source of power and authority and how they are distributed within the Service-Learning partner organization.
- Explain how the Service-Learning activity contributed to establishing a network of professional relationships.
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner that cultivates confidence and trust.

Service-Learning Requirements

The **grade** for Service-Learning will be based on the requirements listed below. Students must submit to the Faculty a **Service-Learning Portfolio** that consists of the following components:

- Weekly Report
- Organizational Assessment
- Self-Assessment
- Project Summaries

Weekly Report: description of appointments, activities, and projects

The journal's objective is to provide a "running record" of Service-Learning activities. The journal is quite helpful, and it is recommended that the student take a few minutes to do this each day. The weekly summary should consist of one to three typed pages and must be submitted electronically to the Faculty by midnight each Sunday.

Organizational Assessment: structured description of the organization

The format for this component is up to the Service-Learning student, but the assessment must include the following information: organization name and location; ownership; services and/or

goods offered; licensing & accreditation; size: governance; organization structure (including an organizational chart); mission, vision, values, etc.; external environment (market, key, competitors, etc.).

Personal Leadership Self-Assessment

For this component, the Service-Learning student must describe with personal examples how he/she *used his/her/their strengths* and *experienced challenges* in the Service-Learning activity. *Service-Learning students* must explain how they moved beyond their comfort zone and grew. These self-assessments may include coaching and mentoring feedback from the Workplace Mentor.

Project Summaries: a brief description of each project

The length of the written summary will depend on the amount of time and effort Service-Learning students devote to the project. A separate page must be used for each project. At a minimum, the summary should be 2-3 paragraphs long. Service-Learning students may also include other materials related to the project as relevant (i.e., spreadsheets, slides for presentations, etc.).

Form I

Service-Learning Information (to be shared with Public/Private/Nonprofit Partner)
Must be completed prior to the beginning of each semester/session to the
Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning
BS 308

Name _____ Student ID No. _____ Date _____

Sex _____ Age _____ Semester Applying For _____

Local Address _____

Permanent Address _____

Local Telephone _____ Permanent Telephone _____

Semester of Expected Graduation _____

List Courses Completed/Currently Enrolled In:

Course Grade Course Grade

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.

Cumulative GPA at BSU _____

Placement Organization/Agency _____

Approved: _____

Faculty

Date

Service-Learning Agreement

I understand I am participating in Service Learning administered by **BSU's Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning** and an off-campus organization or agency. I recognize that during Service-Learning, I am subject to the rules, regulations, and policies of Bluefield State University and those that the course instructor deems appropriate for the organization or agency.

I will not hold the Service-Learning partner agency or organization, Bluefield State University, nor any of the personnel employed by these organizations liable for injury or death due to this Service-Learning experience. I understand that in the Service-Learning experience, I will represent Bluefield State University's Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning. I will do nothing that would adversely affect the image of any of these units. I agree that if my behavior is deemed improper (detrimental to the Service-Learning partner organization or Bluefield State University), I will be withdrawn from the Service-Learning experience and accept a grade of F. I understand that my failure to abide by the policies and procedures of the Service-Learning program indicated in this document will result in the termination of the Service-Learning experience with a grade of F.

I further agree that I will:

- a. Always dress appropriately for the Service-Learning experience.
- b. Notify my Workplace Mentor and Faculty as soon as possible should I be unable to report to work.
- c. Conduct myself in a professional manner at all times.
- d. Maintain the confidentiality of records and internal matters of the preceptor organization at all times.
- e. Obtain prior approval from my Faculty/Instructor of Record and preceptor/supervisors before circulating any written work outside of the Service-Learning partner organization or Bluefield State University's Office of International Initiatives, Honors College, and Service-Learning.

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT. THE NATURE, SCOPE, AND POLICIES OF THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, AND I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM.

Service-Learning Student

Date

Form 4

WORKPLACE MENTOR EVALUATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING STUDENT

1. What were the specific responsibilities that he/she was asked to perform?
2. What were the Service-Learning student's most helpful skills?
3. How would you evaluate your Service-Learning student in the following areas of performance, using a scale of 1 to 5, 1 indicating poor performance and 5 indicating excellent performance?

Attitude:

Judgment:

Initiative:

Writing Skills:

Interpersonal Relations:

Availability/Dependability:

4. What areas should the intern should try to build or improve?
5. Would you care to comment on the Service-Learning Program in any general way? We would be grateful for any constructive criticism that you may wish to offer.
6. Were you satisfied with the procedure used to select and assign the Service-Learning student, or are there ways to improve this process?

Workplace Mentor's Name-Signature

Received at BSU by: Name (Please Print) Service-Learning Faculty

Date _____

Form 5

Student's Evaluation of Service-Learning

Name: _____

ASSIGNMENT:

Place: _____

Address: _____

Dates: _____

Tasks/Projects:

Hours Worked (Average/wk):

Preceptor: _____

GENERAL EVALUATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

How did it meet your expectations?

What were the most positive aspects?

What were the most negative aspects (if any)?

Suggestions for improvement