

Service-Learning Experience Information Guide

What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning is the process of involving students in community activities and providing them an academic facilitated environment in which to reflect upon the experience and grow as a person and as a professional. It has been said that learning and practicing citizenship are life long activities that extend far beyond the conclusion of formal education. The objective of this experience is to provide the student with the means to enhance awareness of themselves and the social, civic and ethical issues that surrounds their everyday lives. This experience also ties into the “statement of goals” that Mercer University strives to achieve. Some of these are:

- To foster intellectual and spiritual freedom in an environment that encourages tolerance, compassion, understanding and responsibility.
- To offer a variety of intellectual, cultural, recreational, and spiritual activities designed to enlarge capacity for improved judgment and moral, ethical and spiritual growth.
- To contribute campus resources in partnership with other institutions and agencies to improve the educational, social and economic development of the community.

How do I benefit from Service-Learning?

- Hands on use of skills and knowledge that have been obtained through school.
- Opportunities to interact with people of diverse cultures and lifestyles.
- Increase awareness of larger social issues.
- Enhanced sense of analytical, communication and civic skills.
- Meaningful involvement in the community.
- Self-satisfaction.

What are the requirements?

1. During each of your professional years (1st, 2nd and 3rd) you will be required to complete 32 hours of service-learning. Sixteen hours should be completed fall semester and sixteen hours spring semester. A list of approved organizations and agencies are provided for you to choose from. If you are already involved or know of an organization that you would like to use that is not currently on the list then you will need to complete a service-learning opportunity form and return it to the coordinator of service learning for approval.
2. Once you have selected a site then you will need to make contact with the organization/agency coordinator with in the first 3 weeks of each semester and

schedule a time to complete your hours. You should discuss what the service site needs are and your responsibilities while you are there.

3. The Student-Learner Time Log and Evaluation should be completed by you and the organization/agency coordinator at the end of each activity. These forms are to be placed in the student portfolio and turned into the course coordinator the last Wednesday of fall semester and the last Wednesday of spring semester.
4. A journal should be kept for this experience. The journal is to be typed, placed in the student portfolio and turned into the course coordinator on the last Wednesday of fall semester and the last Wednesday of spring semester. The journal should have 2 key sections; experience, and reflection (after your experience). Below is a list of some questions to help guide you in creating the journal and help you increase your understanding of the experience.

Experience:

- Where was your experience?
- What did you do, observe, read and hear?
- Who were you serving?
- Why is your service work needed?
- What was your surrounding like?
- How do you feel about the experience?

Reflection:

- What were your expectations?
- How do you feel after completing the experience?
- Did you feel successful, effective, and/or knowledgeable?
- Did this experience change your thinking about people/issues? How?
- What did you learn?
- How do you feel this experience could enhance your skills as a pharmacist? A citizen?
- What will you do differently next time?
- What do you feel could be done to help the people that you served?

What is expected of me while I am there?

- Be prompt, courteous, enthusiastic and positive at the service site.
- Fulfill all agreed upon responsibilities at the service site.
- Be open to learning about different lifestyles and cultures.
- Speak with the organization/agency coordinator if you are uncomfortable or unsure of what you are to do.
- Respect the confidentiality of the people that you serve.
- Provide feedback and participate in the evaluation process.

What should I expect from the Service site?

- Orient the student to the mission and goals of the organization/agency.
- Provide a service-learning opportunity that is significant and challenging.
- Provide support and guidance so that the student will succeed in the service
- Ensure a safe work environment for the student to perform their service.

What if I have some concerns/questions?

If you have any concerns or questions either before, during or after the experience you should call Dr. Coffey at 678-547-6308.