



# Student Service-Learning Guidelines and Release

Service-learning is not a course requirement to volunteer. Service-learning is an academically rigorous, real-world learning experience in which students integrate classroom and experiential learning in mutually-beneficial exchanges of teaching, learning, and reflection.

In this service-learning course, students are expected to engage fully and participate enthusiastically in service work with a community partner organization. This service work is an opportunity to apply classroom learning, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate ongoing learning outside the classroom. Reflection on this service work and how it interacts with your classroom learning will be considered as a portion of your final grade.

## Guiding Principles

The opportunity to engage in service work is a privilege, not a right. Approach your time in the community with an open mind. Seek to build relationships rooted in trust and openness. Allow yourself to see community members as co-educators, and learn from them. Ask open-ended questions that lead to a deeper understanding of community dynamics, stakeholders, organization, challenges, assets, practices, and history. Work to gain an understanding of the mission, vision, and goals of the organization(s) where you complete your service work.

These principles from the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement provide additional guidance on how to approach service-learning partnerships:

- **Academic Excellence:** The McLean Institute believes that education should be a lifelong and empowering experience open to all.
- **Transformation:** The McLean Institute recognizes the potential of the University of Mississippi to transform the inequitable structures of Mississippi that contribute to generational poverty.
- **Respect:** The McLean Institute values the strengths and assets of all people and the organizations with whom we partner.
- **Integrity:** The McLean Institute believes in listening honestly, processing information accurately, and following through on its commitments.
- **Inclusion:** The McLean Institute fosters inclusivity and cultural competence in its work.

## Grading

This course assigns service hours as a teaching and learning tool. The service commitment is just as important as assigned readings and lectures. Final grades will be impacted by the number of service hours completed. Please note that completing a certain number of hours is not a guarantee of receiving the corresponding final grade, as the grading rubric will encompass the quality and quantity of service hours, as well as community partner feedback, student reflections, and a final paper. Students are encouraged to go beyond these minimum guidelines for their service hours:

C: 10 hours

B: 15 hours

A: 20 hours or more

## **Guidelines for Representing the University of Mississippi in the Community**

Remember that you are an ambassador for this service-learning course, your professor, and the University of Mississippi. Students are expected to conduct themselves as professionals and role models, and to uphold the spirit of the UM Creed. Adhere to the following guidelines as you engage in service work:

- Be punctual and aim to arrive ahead of the scheduled time;
- Dress in professional and appropriate attire;
- Be fully present during your service hours and do not bring your cell phone into the setting;
- Clarify expectations with the site supervisor;
- Notify site supervisor of any unforeseen circumstances that result in an absence, and make up those hours as soon as possible;
- Communicate any issues or concerns to the site supervisor and/or the professor;
- Follow through on your commitments.

## **University Guidelines for Contact with Minors**

The University of Mississippi has policies prohibiting one-on-one contact with a child, which is defined as *private, unsupervised, face-to-face interaction in a non-public area between a minor and any person 18 years of age or older who is not the minor's guardian*. A non-public area is a place that is not a common area, and cannot be observed from a common area. Transportation of a minor is not permitted under the auspices of the service-learning course, and contact with the minor outside of the service setting is only allowed with parental consent. Students should report any matters of concern to the site supervisor.

## **Emergencies, Absences, Concerns**

Should an emergency arise or if you are unable to attend your regularly scheduled service commitment, contact your site supervisor immediately. Students will be expected to reschedule any service hours that they miss due to unforeseen circumstances. If at any time you are asked to complete tasks that are outside the scope of your service commitment, or that make you uncomfortable, inform your site supervisor and your professor. Use your best judgment at all times.

## **University of Mississippi Creed**

The University of Mississippi is a community of learning dedicated to nurturing excellence in intellectual inquiry and personal character in an open and diverse environment. As a voluntary member of this community:

I believe in respect for the dignity of each person.

I believe in fairness and civility.

I believe in personal and professional integrity.

I believe in academic honesty.

I believe in academic freedom.

I believe in good stewardship of our resources.

I pledge to uphold these values and encourage others to follow my example.



# Service-Learning Activity Assumption of Risk and Liability Release

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant), am a student at the University of Mississippi and plan to participate in a Service-Learning Activity.

I acknowledge that as a part of this Service-Learning Activity, I may engage in activities that may expose me to risks, including but not limited to, personal injury, loss of property, illness and death. In full recognition of the dangers and hazards posed by participation in the Service-Learning Activity, I hereby assume all risks and responsibilities surrounding my participation in the Service-Learning Activity. I acknowledge that the University of Mississippi does not maintain nor is it obligated to provide me with any medical or liability insurance covering myself or my property while participating in the Service-Learning Activity. Should I decide during my participation in the Service-Learning Activity that the risks associated with participation are greater than I wish to assume, I may elect to immediately withdraw myself from participating in the Service-Learning Activity.

As consideration and in exchange for the University granting permission to participate in the Service-learning Activity, for myself and my heirs, beneficiaries, and personal representatives, **I release, absolve, hold harmless and agree not to sue** the University, its administrators, faculty, staff, employees and agents from any and all claims or actions I have or will have for any and all accidents, injuries, loss of property, or death that may occur while participating in the Service-Learning Activity.

I am of legal age and am freely signing the agreement. I understand that if I am under the age of 18, I **must** obtain a Parent-Guardian signature.

**By Signing this Document, I Acknowledge, Warrant and Represent That I Have Read the Foregoing Release, Understand its Contents, and Sign it Voluntarily.**

WITNESS my signature on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

Participant \_\_\_\_\_