

What does Service-Learning at BCC involve?

A service-learner at BCC must complete a minimum of ten hours over the semester with a non-profit agency or organization doing unpaid service work that is related to the specific course material for which the student is doing the service-learning project. The agency or organization that the student serves and from which he or she learns will be determined by community need and, when options exist, the student's preference. The student must also complete a reflection activity you assign that help him or her connect the conceptual material covered in class with "hands on" learning gained from serving in the community.

What Is the Timetable for Service-Learning Placements?

Service-Learning placements must be for a minimum of 10 hours within the Spring (January to May), Summer (May to September), or Fall (September to December) semesters.

How Are Service-Learning Placements Arranged and Supervised?

Service-Learning can be offered as an option that an individual student can select or an assignment for all students in a course, if the instructor feels that this is appropriate. For example, students in English classes might act as tutors for middle school students or help them conduct library research using a computer. Students in reading classes might act as reading tutors for middle school students or for adults learning to read English. Students in a baking class might demonstrate their skill and teach children how to follow a recipe using basic math at a career day program.

For individual student placements, the student or professor selects a non-profit agency or organization that would be appropriate for the course. The individual student makes arrangements with the agency or organization for an interview at which the supervisor explains any prerequisite background checks or training as well as the work the student will be asked to perform. If the student and agency agree to make a commitment, they complete a BCC Pre-Service Learning Individual Placement Contract form. The student then asks the professor of the course to sign the contract to verify that the placement is course related and submits it to the Center for Civic Engagement prior to performing the service. The Center for Civic Engagement contacts the community partner to verify that the student has performed a minimum of 10 hours of the service. Faculty are asked to verify that the student has completed the reflection activity.

Group activities are arranged by the community partner, faculty member, or civic engagement coordinator. The faculty member or civic engagement coordinator selects the agency for student group placements, makes the necessary arrangements, has the students sign a [Pre-Service Learning Group Placement Contract](#) and submits it to the Civic Engagement Coordinator prior to the students' performing the service. The onsite supervisor, the student, and the BCC faculty member teaching the course in which Service-Learning is offered sign the completed form. The Center for Civic Engagement contacts the community partner to verify that the student has performed a minimum of 10 hours of service. Faculty are asked to verify that the student has completed the reflection activity.

How Can Students or Faculty Find an Appropriate Service-Learning Placement?

Many BCC students are already doing volunteer work at agencies or organizations that qualify as service-learning placements for specific courses, such as a Sociology student who is working at a homeless shelter for women and children. Some faculty members have already been offering service-learning options to their students and have their own community contacts. A list of BCC [Community Partner Placements](#) and links to other [non-profit agencies](#) or organizations that may give students placements are available from links on this website.

For example, several school systems are interested in hosting Service-Learning students. Middle schools in Fall River, New Bedford, and Somerset have expressed interest. The Kuss Middle School, for example, would like students to serve as tutors, mentors, library assistants, clerical workers, chefs, and more. Several schools are interested in having BCC teach their students about college and professional careers. The Civic Engagement Director can help you plan an appropriate course module. The Civic Engagement Coordinator and the Civic Engagement Center staff can easily refer you and or your students for placements.

How Does the Student Relate the “Real World” Experience With Course Work?

To develop the student’s academic understanding and personal growth that result from this service-learning experience, he or she must also complete a reflection activity (or activities), as determined by the instructor of the course, relating the service-learning experience to the course material. The purposes of the reflection activity are to encourage the student to document his or her service work experiences and lessons learned as well as to serve as a guide for helping the student to intellectually connect his or her “hands on” experiences to some aspect of the conceptual course material. For example, a student in a Child Development Psychology course who is serving as a tutor for an elementary school child could write a research report and give a class presentation showing how his or her work experiences are related to a psychological theory and scholarly literature about how children process and learn new information. The instructor of the course designs and supervises the student’s progress in this reflection activity and, before the end of the semester, signs a BCC Credit Verification form that confirms that the student has satisfactorily completed the required reflection activity.

Service-Learning enables a student to bring his or her classroom knowledge and skills to a non-profit community agency or organization. In turn, he or she takes back to the classroom the knowledge and skills he or she learns from this “real world” experience.

How Does Service-Learning Augment The Credentials Of The Student?

BCC is the first community college in Massachusetts to provide the notation “Service-Learning Component” on the student’s academic transcript beneath each course for which he or she successfully completes a service-learning project, and for which the student and faculty sponsor have submitted the required paperwork. This service work experience and notation enhance the student’s credibility as an actively engaged learner and marketability both to transfer institutions and employers. Service-Learning also encourages dedication and commitment of the student to his or her community. BCC recognizes the contributions of students who successfully complete service-learning projects with the award of a Service-Learning Certificate of Accomplishment.

How Can Students Who Perform Service in the Community Gain Recognition as Community Service Leaders?

Students who enroll in with the Seminar in Global Leadership (PSY 271) or the Honors Seminar in Community Leadership (PSY 295) who lead a minimum of five peers on a service project earn the designation Community Service Leader Graduating Community Service Leaders wear a red cord and are publicly recognized for their achievement at Commencement. The notation “Service-Learning Component” is also included on the student’s academic transcript beneath the course title.

A student who completes one of these two leadership courses and service-learning for at least one other course can earn a Global Leadership Certificate of Accomplishment if he or she completes the other required courses listed in the College Catalog.

Is Pre-Service Training Provided for Students?

Yes. Students must read the online [Pre-Service Training Guide](#) and take the online [Pre-Service-Self-Test](#) available from the Student page before performing community service for the first time at

Can the Civic Engagement Staff Visit Your Classes?

Yes. Please contact [Dr. Mary Zahm](#), Director of Civic Engagement, at if you would you like her to arrange for a Student Community Service-Learning Coordinator to attend one of your courses and talk to students about possible placements at which they could perform service related to your course.