

## What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning links classroom learning with service to communities. Service opportunities are developed through collaboration among faculty, students, and individuals and organizations in the community. Service placements are designed to meet two criteria: to enhance the educational goals of a course and to serve the public good by providing a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community. Students involved in service-learning make a commitment to engage in a service project or to complete a specified number of hours of service work. Through structured activities of reflection and analysis, they are asked to integrate their service experience with the other materials of the course.

Service-learning goes beyond extracurricular community service because it involves participants in reading, reflection and analysis. Credit is awarded not for service alone, but for academic work integrating the service experience. At its best, service-learning enhances and deepens students' understanding of an academic discipline or subject, while providing them with experience that develops leadership and life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.

Service-learning supports Duke University's mission, outlined in the university's 1994 mission statement *Shaping Our Future*, of providing "a superior liberal education to undergraduate students, attending not only to their intellectual growth but also to their development as adults committed to high ethical standards and full participation as leaders in their communities."

**Summary of Criteria** for designation as a service-learning class:

1. The service experience is integrally related to the subject matter of the course. Credit is given for learning that derives from the service and its relationships to the course, not for the service alone.
2. Students in the class provide a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community in ways that serve the public good. All parties to the arrangement are seen as learners and teachers, servers and served. Community partners are involved in the design and evaluation of service opportunities.
3. Through the course, students learn to reflect critically in a structured manner on the ethical and cultural dimensions of their service experience as well as the relationship between their service experience and the course content.

Dean's Advisory Committee for Service-Learning  
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<http://www.duke.edu/web/sl/WhatIs.htm>