

California State University, Stanislaus  
**Policy for Service Learning Student Placements**

**A. Purpose**

The California State University recognizes the beneficial educational purpose of service learning, as well as the need to maximize the educational experience while minimizing the risks to participants and the University's liability exposure.

**B. Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all enrolled students at CSU Stanislaus.

**C. Definitions**

*Academic Department:* Personnel to include CSU Stanislaus faculty, staff, and students.

*Agency:* Business, company, organization, or bureau that provides a particular service or is authorized to act for others.

*Community Service:* Any work provided by individuals that contributes to the quality of life in the community. When the community service is part of the academic course work, and when the community service relates directly to the course content, it is considered service learning.

*Faculty Member:* A full- or part-time academic professional or closely-related employee (librarians, counselors, and employees with academic rank) whose duties pertain to instruction, instructional support, and/or student counseling.

*Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):* The written agreement between CSU Stanislaus and the Agency Site (off-campus location), that includes (but is not limited to) the University and Agency contact information, the statement of purpose, the priorities and program activities, the structure and support of students, the length of the agreement term, general provisions (including insurance and liability requirements), and any other considerations specific to the student placements.

*Office of Service Learning:* The designated campus office (provost's designee) responsible for campus compliance with this policy.

*Service Learning:* An innovative pedagogy (educational approach) that empowers students to learn through active participation in meaningful and planned community service or community-based research experiences that are directly related to course content. Through reflective activities, students enhance their understanding of course content, sense of social responsibility, general knowledge, self-awareness, and commitment to the community.

*Service Learning Student Agreement:* The written agreement between the enrolled student, the Agency site, and the CSU Stanislaus faculty member, that includes student and organization contact information, student learning outcomes, academic credit unit value, placement logistics, insurance requirements, risk awareness, informed consent, release of liability, and other special considerations specific to the service learning placement.

*Service Learning Course:* An academic course (in any discipline) that provides students opportunities to participate in organized community service or community-based research experiences that meet community needs while linking the community service or community-based research experiences to the course content.

*Service Learning Site:* The Agency site where the Service Learning experience occurs.

*Service Learning Site Supervisor:* The Agency individual who supervises the student at the Service Learning Site.

*Student:* A person enrolled at CSU Stanislaus in credit-bearing courses.

#### **D. Responsibilities**

The CSU Stanislaus President delegates authority for the implementation of this policy to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The CSU Stanislaus Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may delegate the a) authority for the implementation of this policy, and b) the responsibility for the development, annual review, and maintenance of the MOUs for the Student Placements to the Office of Service Learning.

All CSU Stanislaus Academic Departments shall comply with the procedures set forth below regarding the placement of Service Learning students. (Note: For interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary Service Learning courses, a designated Academic Department affiliation is necessary for enrolled students to participate in a Service Learning experience.)

The CSU Stanislaus Risk Manager shall provide risk management and liability requirements consultation and training to faculty and staff concerning MOUs, Service Learning Student Agreements, and procedures.

#### **E. Procedures**

##### **1. Placement Assessment.**

Prior to placing students at off-campus locations, the Faculty Member or the Office of Service Learning shall conduct an assessment of the appropriateness of the Service Learning Site for CSU Stanislaus students. A written assessment summary of the Service Learning Site shall be completed by the Faculty Member or the Office of Service Learning, and retained by the Office of Service Learning and be available for review. That summary shall address, at minimum, the following considerations:

- a. the potential for the Service Learning Site to provide an educationally appropriate experience;
- b. identification of the potential risks of the Service Learning Site;
- c. identification of a Service Learning Site Supervisor to supervise the student at the Service Learning Site;
- d. evaluation of the educational environment at the Service Learning Site;
- e. evaluation of the potential for student academic experience at the Service Learning Site and its relationship to the student's academic study;
- f. selection criteria and basic skills required of the student; and
- g. confirmation that the Agency has executed a MOU with CSU Stanislaus.

##### **2. Service Learning Site Visits.**

The criteria for conducting a site visit and evaluating the Service Learning Site shall be developed by the appropriate Academic Department. At a minimum, the site visit shall include a) an assessment of whether the placement will lead to meaningful academic Service Learning, b) an evaluation of the facility to identify potential risks, and c) communication with the Service Learning Site Supervisor who will supervise the student at the Service Learning Site. The site visit may be bypassed if the Academic Department or the Office of Service Learning has documented sufficient knowledge of the Service Learning Site. This could be accomplished through online review, published materials, direct contact with the site, or a history of approved site visits.

3. Placement and Orientation.

Before the student begins the Service Learning experience, the following steps shall be completed:

- a. CSU Stanislaus Office of Service Learning reviews and retains an electronic copy of the signed and approved MOU;
- b. CSU Stanislaus Office of Service Learning reviews and retains the signed and approved Service Learning Student Agreement;
- c. student is required to read orientation information (includes student conduct expectations, health and safety instructions, and a list of emergency contacts) as part of the Service Learning Student Agreement; and
- d. completion of a student emergency contact form.

4. Annual Review.

Before the start of any Service Learning Site placement, the Office of Service Learning shall ensure that an appropriate MOU has been approved by the campus Contracts office and executed by the University and the Agency.

The Office of Service Learning shall also perform an annual review of all Service Learning Sites, both for educational purposes and student safety. This review shall take into account information gathered from on-site supervisors, faculty members, university staff, and students.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall meet annually with the Office of Service Learning to review the policy and procedures, to determine if updates are needed, and to communicate those updates to faculty members and staff.

5. Document Retention.

Consistent with system-wide and campus document retention guidelines, the Office of Service Learning shall retain all documents pertaining to student Service Learning placements. See Executive Order 1031.

In addition, the instructional agenda, name and contact information for the Service Learning Site, student information, and executed release of liability be retained together for a period of two years after the conclusion of the semester during which the Service Learning placement occurred. Electronic copies of the documents are permissible.

**F. Laws, State Codes, Regulations and Guidelines**

California State University – Use of Approved Waiver of Liability Executive Order No. 1051

<http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1051.pdf>

CSU's Resource Guide for Managing Risk in Service Learning (2011)

[http://www.calstate.edu/cce/resource\\_center/documents/CCE\\_ResGuide\\_2011\\_webvs\\_Final.pdf](http://www.calstate.edu/cce/resource_center/documents/CCE_ResGuide_2011_webvs_Final.pdf)

Student Academic Field Experience for Credit Liability Insurance Fee - Executive Order No. 1012

<http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-1012.pdf>

Student Professional Liability Insurance Fee - Executive Order Number 986

<http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-986.pdf>