

Department of Teacher Education Service Learning



What is Service Learning?

Generally speaking, Service Learning is engagement with the community in personally relevant, meaningful volunteer activity. For purposes of the Department of Teacher Education, Service Learning is **engagement with school-aged children in a teaching / learning setting.**

Why does TEP require Service Learning?

- Meaningful involvement with school-aged children often provides a potential teacher with relevant, practical opportunities to reflect on whether or not s/he is suited to the profession.
- Service Learning with one level of students may encourage a potential teacher to pursue that level or to investigate a different age group of students in his / her career.
- Public Engagement is one of the four themes of the Conceptual Framework¹ that drive the development of all certification programs in the College of Education and Human Services.

What will fulfill the Service Learning requirement for the Department of Teacher Education at UIS?

- Engagement in a minimum of 30 hours of organized activity with school-aged children in a teaching / learning setting
- Documentation of those 30 hours from a supervisor* on letterhead from the organization with whom the Service Learning was performed

*The supervisor from whom the documentation is received must not be a spouse, parent, or other immediate relative.

When must Service Learning be completed?

- Service Learning must be completed and documentation submitted before a candidate will be considered **fully admitted**. (Candidates who are not fully admitted will not be able to participate as Candidate Representative to the Department, receive Professional Development stipends, or receive Special Approvals to take methods courses.)

What kinds of activities are acceptable?

- Working as an aide in a classroom (paid or unpaid position)
- Substitute teaching
- Volunteering with student organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club or Scouts Working / volunteering as a camp counselor
- Tutoring (where appropriate documentation will be available – see below)
- Teaching for a religious organization
- Coaching / sponsoring school student groups

What kinds of activities are not acceptable?

- Babysitting
- Tutoring one's own children or other relatives
- Homeschooling
- Volunteering or working in any of the previously identified capacities for a relative or spouse, unless there is another supervisor who can provide documentation

Department personnel can answer questions about other possible appropriate Service Learning activities.

What kind of documentation is acceptable?

- A letter written and signed by a supervisor (not a relative or spouse) on letterhead of the organization for which Service Learning was completed. The letter must indicate that at least 30 hours were completed. The letter must be original with ink signature (fax, copy, scan, etc. not accepted)
- A signed certificate of completion of at least 30 clock hours of Service Learning from an institution of higher learning (i.e. Lincoln Land Community College) where service learning hours were completed as part of course requirements.
- A copy of a substitute teaching certificate, accompanied by a photocopy of a pay stub indicating at least 30 hours.
- A signed letter from an administrator on school letterhead indicating completion of at least 30 hours of work as a classroom aide or substitute teacher.

Note: Candidates need not complete Service Learning at the same level as the certification of his/ her TEP program (elementary / secondary).

¹*Conceptual Framework Themes: Quality Teaching and Professional Practice, Public Engagement, Technology, and Diversity*