

**Western Michigan University
Faculty Senate
Memorandum of Action**

MOA – 26/09

**Revision of Service-Learning Course Approval Procedures
(supersedes MOA-18/09)**

RECOMMENDATION

The Undergraduate Studies Council recommends revision of the formal procedure for approving service learning courses, including revision of the Course Designation Request Form

RATIONALE:

This revision of MOA-18/09 is necessary to align with recent changes in the institutional structure at Western Michigan University. Specifically, Service Learning is now formally categorized within Experiential Learning, alongside Experience-Driven Learning and Study Abroad programs (see MOA-25/03). The purpose of this revision is to provide greater clarity regarding the role of the Office of Service Learning within the updated framework. Under the revised process, the Office of Service Learning will conduct an initial review of course approval requests to ensure alignment with established experiential learning criteria. Following this preliminary vetting, proposals will be forwarded to the Experiential Learning Committee of the Undergraduate Studies Council for final review and approval.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE(S) AND ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL(S):

WMU Registrar's office, Office of Service Learning, and the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council's Experiential Learning Committee.

STAKEHOLDERS

WMU faculty, staff, and students.

HISTORY:

- a) Effective date of current version: 2018
- b) Date first adopted: 2018
- c) Revision history: N/A
- d) Proposed date of next review: spring 2029

CURRENT POLICY MODIFICATION (additions in bold and deletions with strikethrough):

**Undergraduate Catalog
Academic Policies**

The procedures are as follows:

- A faculty member who is teaching a service learning course will complete a Course Designation Request Form (Appendix A) and forward the form along with the course syllabus to his/her department chair. The form was designed to ensure the course meets the Faculty Senate-approved criteria for service learning (MOA-14/05).
- The department chair will review and submit the designation request form and syllabus to the **Office of Service Learning**. ~~Undergraduate Studies Council's Service Learning Course Approval Subcommittee.~~
 - ~~The request form must be completed and submitted to the Service Learning Course Approval Subcommittee at least two months prior to curriculum submissions deadlines.~~
 - ~~The Service Learning Course Approval Subcommittee will meet monthly during fall and spring semesters, as needed, to review and approve courses.~~

- If the syllabus meets all service learning minimum criteria, the **Office of Service Learning** ~~Service Learning Course Approval Subcommittee~~ **will forward it to the Experiential Learning Committee for approval.** ~~approve the course for a service learning course designation and notify the Office of Service Learning.~~
- **If approved**, the Office of Service Learning will notify the Registrar's Office, department chair, and the faculty member who submitted the course approval request that the course was approved.
- The Registrar's Office will add a service learning attribute, designating the course in Banner and in the Undergraduate Catalog.
- For all subsequent semesters during which the course is taught with a service learning component, ~~the faculty member teaching the course~~ **the Office of Service Learning** will notify the Registrar's Office prior to curriculum submissions via email. **The department teaching the course will notify the Registrar's Office using the Section Change Form.**
 - The Registrar's Office will add the service learning attribute upon notification on a semester-by-semester basis.
 - Because the Registrar's Office will be notified each semester the course is taught, removal of the attribute is not a concern except in the case of a late faculty change.
- If the ~~Service Learning Course Approval Subcommittee~~ **Experiential Learning Committee** does not approve the course, the committee will provide recommendations and **the Office of Service Learning will** assist faculty to apply appropriate changes in order to meet minimum criteria.
 - The faculty member and chair may resubmit the request form an unlimited number of times to the **Office of Service Learning** ~~Service Learning Course Approval Subcommittee~~ for approval.
- All courses that receive the service learning designation must be resubmitted and reapproved every five years through the established procedures.

REFERENCES

- MOA-25/03: Revise the Undergraduate Catalog-Academic Policies-Glossary of Terms
Experiential Learning Definition
- MOA-18/09: Creation of Service Learning Courses Identification Procedures
- MOA-14/05: Experiential Learning, Service-Learning, Co-Curricular Learning and Volunteerism

KEY DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY

Experiential Learning is a broad educational approach that includes a variety of high-impact practices that may take place on campus, in our local community or in connection with a global learning experience. It is an important aspect of a student's academic progress because it inspires students to apply their learning and clarify their career goals through direct experience and reflection. A given experience might represent one or more of these opportunities:

- Experience-driven learning
- *Service Learning*
- Global Learning

Experience-Driven Learning (EDL) is Western's approach to education that integrates hands-on, practical experiences with traditional instructional methods. Students engaged in EDL apply classroom knowledge to career-relevant situations in ~~which course~~ real-world contexts through a range of different opportunities, including internships, simulations, problem and project-based learning global learning, service learning, and undergraduate research and creative scholarship. Experience-Driven involves all three of the following components:

- Enhancing Learning through problem-solving and creative thinking; team-oriented experiences; and application of learning to timelines, budgets and communication.
- Shaping Professional Purpose through work with industry and sector partners that enable students to build connections and references; engage in creative research; and develop a

compelling career narrative that evolves from course content, knowledge of the discipline, and employer expectations.

- Empowering Students by focusing on their perspectives and developing skills of inquiry, intentional reflection and assessment, and bridging the gap between theory and practice. This helps prepare students to transition into chosen careers.

Service Learning is a mutually beneficial application in which students apply course content to address community identified needs.

Global Learning provides opportunities for students to explore academics from a global perspective through focused study abroad programs and collaborative online international learning (COIL).

Appendix A

**Western Michigan University
Faculty Senate
Undergraduate Studies Council
Experiential Learning Committee
Service Learning Course Approval**

COURSE DESIGNATION REQUEST FORM

Instructor: _____ Department: _____

Course Name: _____ Course Number: _____

1. Is service learning required for all students enrolled in the course? Required Optional

NOTE: To receive course designation, all students must participate.

2. Course objectives: _____

3. Project vision: _____

4. How many hours will students be required to serve? _____

5. How many community partners do you envision working with each semester? _____

6. Do you have a community partner(s) in mind? _____

7. What reflection method do you envision utilizing? _____

8. Were you approached by the community to provide a service? Yes No

If not, how was the community need identified? _____

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Faculty, department _____ Date _____

Approve Disapprove Other Action
Comments:

Department chair _____ Date _____

Approve Disapprove Other Action
Comments:

Office of Service Learning Designee _____ Date _____