

# Considerations for a Service-Learning Course Designation on Transcripts



Campus Compact

## *RATIONALE FOR A DESIGNATION*

What is the reason for having the designation? What is the institution hoping to accomplish with the designation on the transcript?

Is it for the student to be able to show employers? If this is the purpose, how are we (the institution, the student) informing the employer of the meaning? How is the institution preparing the student to talk about their experiences? Is there a plan in place (or support in place) to help the student incorporate the experience into their resume and then to “tell their story” in an interview?

## *PROCESS FOR CREATING A DESIGNATION*

- 1) How will the designation process be decided upon? Is it feasible and manageable to get a campus-wide agreement on definitions and criteria? Is there a mechanism or a committee in place (or does one need to be created) to determine the process of getting a course designation process designed and approved by the Academic Senate?
- 2) Are there other designations already used on transcripts? How have these worked?  
**What does the registrar’s office think about this?**
- 3) **What happens if the term “service learning” is evolving and is no longer the relevant term in a few years? What about community-based learning?**

## *ONCE A DESIGNATION IS ESTABLISHED*

- 1) How will the designation process be managed?
- 2) Once a course is designated (as service-learning, engaged learning, community based research, or other), how is the institution ensuring that the course is always taught in accordance with the best practices to ensure quality?
  - o What if a different professor teaches the course?
  - o **Will there be a “continuous improvement” process/evaluation for the course that is periodically required to maintain its’ designation?**

## *Tips:*

- Establish a working committee that includes Institutional Research and Data Collection colleagues;
- Bring in the Registrar staff early in planning and decision-making;
- Carefully evaluate the campus culture for accepting the concept of s/l designations on transcripts;
- Develop an approval process that ensures quality without creating too much bureaucracy;
- Develop a sufficient definition that is open to different types of community engagement;
- Manage how often approvals happen, whether there are regular reviews, and how to deal with different sections and changes in faculty; and
- Prevent designation from being a deterrent to some students.

## *Benefits*

It is very helpful for tracking data about SL hours, community-based learning objectives, community partners and scholarship of engagement. A very beneficial outcome is that over time we are now able to run stats on retention and graduation rates among students enrolled in SL courses. Just last week I worked with our data office on campus and found that retention and graduation were anywhere from 11% to 20% higher for students in SL courses than the general campus population. That is very powerful data! It is also great for the Carnegie Classification application. (University of Montana)

*Resource Links*

Elon University wrote an article on co-curricular transcripts: [https://aacrao-web.s3.amazonaws.com/files/IdVRIVL7QWqrJs4n0uy0\\_CUJ%209102-WEB.pdf#page=67](https://aacrao-web.s3.amazonaws.com/files/IdVRIVL7QWqrJs4n0uy0_CUJ%209102-WEB.pdf#page=67)

San Francisco State University

<https://icce.sfsu.edu/content/tracking-student-hours-official-transcripts>

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