Office of Service-Learning

Policies

Office of Service-Learning:

- The Office of Service-Learning will do due diligence to ensure the physical and emotional safety of community-engaged students. This includes working with partners whose policies reflect the values stated in WMU policies, http://wmich.edu/hr/policies/handbook.

- There is a dress code that should apply to EVERYONE: No shorts. No crop tops. No t-shirts or tank tops. No sweats. No low-cut or unbuttoned shirts. While working with different populations, and as in any job, adjust to fit into the culture and environment of the site. Err on the side of conservative dress at all times. This is both toward professionalism, and may in some cases be a matter of safety!


Students:

Client interactions:

- Observe strict confidentiality with regard to the community partner, community members, fellow employees and volunteers, classmates, etc. No sharing on social media, no references to names or other identifying characteristics.
- Don’t make assumptions about the people being served. Be aware of personal biases and stereotypes and assume that those being served have knowledge and experience to share.
- Follow all rules and regulations established by the community partner.
- No touching—includes sitting on laps, frontal or full contact hugging, grabbing a misbehaving child, braiding hair, etc. Be mindful and respectful of others’ personal space.
- No social media friending with those being served, e.g. K-12 students, agency clients, etc.
- No discussion of sex or sexuality.
- No discussion of religion.
- No playing of explicit or sexually explicit media, including videos, music, photos, books, etc.
- No sharing of personal email addresses or phone numbers.
• No closed doors one-on-one time with clients.
• No site visits outside of scheduled service hours.
• No photographs at placement sites or during service-learning hours without explicit permission from students’ site supervisor and a signed release form.
• If working with children or within the justice system, background checks and drug screens may be required prior to starting service.
• Do not provide rides to those being served.

If unclear about a policy or action, clarify with the site supervisor or faculty—err on the side of caution. Also refer to the Student Code of Conduct. Violation of the rules stated may result in a complaint to Student Conduct and dismissal from the community placement.

Community Partners:

Nondiscrimination policy: All community partners who wish to collaborate with the Office of Service-Learning are encouraged to contact the office; however, LGBT status must be included in the organization’s Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer statement, prohibiting discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, protected veteran status, height, weight, or marital status.

WMU Minors Policy:

It is the policy of Western Michigan University that all existing and future University programs and activities involving minors be developed and administered so as to:

• Provide safe and protective environments for participation of minors; and
• Mandate compliance with policies and requirements enacted by the Board, President, and the administration, including WMU’s Duty to Report Criminal Acts policy, the President’s Statement on Reporting Illegal and Unethical Activities, and EthicsPoints reporting procedures; and
• Require appropriate training for those WMU employees, students, and volunteers that come in direct contact with minors in these University programs and activities, which includes training on reporting of child abuse as mandated or allowed under state law.