

Chapter Thirteen

Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Service-Learning

13.1 Service-Learning at Lingnan University

Service-Learning (S-L) is a pedagogy that combines rigorous academic study with meaningful service in the community. It is an effective teaching and learning strategy that aims to facilitate student learning in terms of academic knowledge and personal development.

At Lingnan University, S-L practices of students and faculties embody the University's long-standing motto, "Education for Service".

For all undergraduate students, S-L is a graduation requirement. To fulfill it, each student must pass at least one course with an S-L element (see [Appendix A](#) for course criteria) before graduating. The types of courses with an S-L element are:

- Departmental S-L course which is offered by Departments
- Departmental OSL co-taught S-L course which is jointly taught by faculty members from Departments(s) and OSL staff
- OSL S-L course which is initiated and taught by OSL staff
- Overseas S-L course which is offered by overseas institutions recognised by the University¹

Details of each type of course with an S-L component are listed in Section 4 of [Appendix A](#) and the procedures for approval of S-L courses offered by overseas institutions are listed in [Appendix B](#).

13.2 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Structure

The Office of Service-Learning (OSL) reports directly to the Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost². In order to assure the quality of the S-L programmes at Lingnan University, two committees have been established.

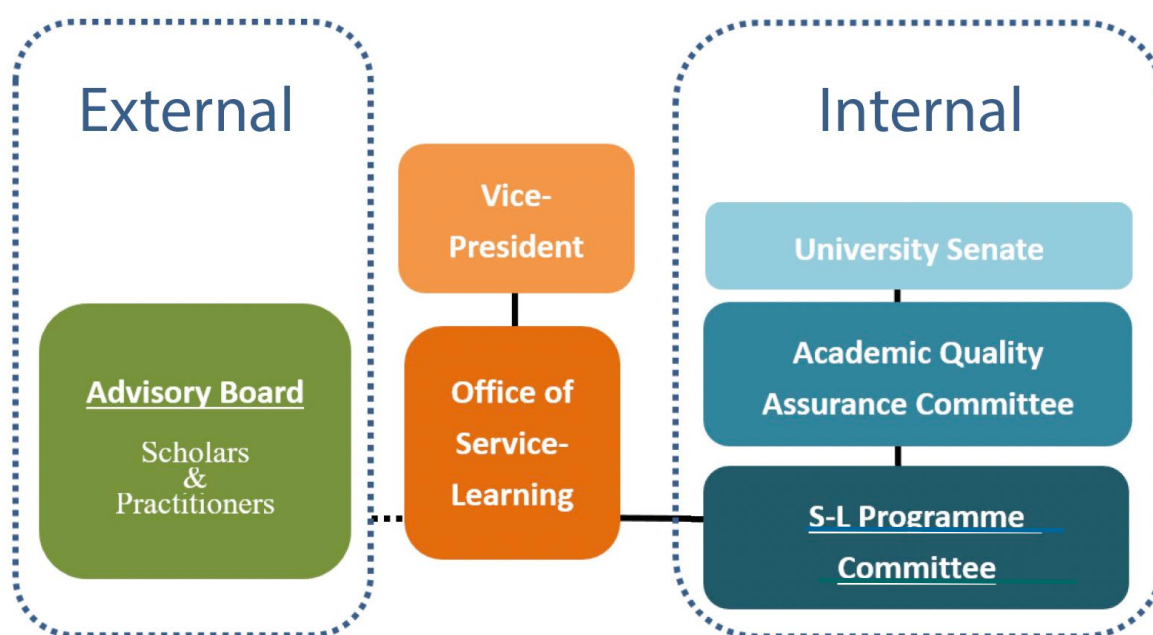
- The S-L Programme Committee comprises the Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost and representatives of relevant academic and academic (support) units. Its major roles are to approve new S-L courses, review existing programmes, and monitor the development of S-L at Lingnan as a whole.
- The Advisory Board, including external scholars and practitioners, mainly provides advice and guidance for the development of S-L at Lingnan based on their expertise.

The details of the structure can be referred to Figure 1. All terms of reference and membership are listed in [Appendix C](#).

¹ This types of course should be approved by either the Director of OSL (for SLP Courses) or by the respective Head of Department/Programme Director.

² This is based on the updated Organisational Chart of Lingnan University.

Figure 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Structure



#Vice-President refers to Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost in Figure 1 above

13.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Procedures

13.3.1 Course/Programme Development and Approval

As one of the most important quality assurance mechanisms, courses with S-L as a newly-added element must go through approval procedures with the below steps:

1. Courses with an S-L element^{Note} shall be endorsed by (a) the Programme Curriculum Committee/Department Board*, and (b) the Service-Learning Programme Committee to review the effectiveness, feasibility, and sustainability of each course with an S-L element. To speed up the review and endorsement process, the proposed courses with an S-L element shall be submitted to the above parties at the same time.

Note The Department Head or faculty members can refer to the S-L best practices of other Universities in [Appendix D](#); the criteria for a course with an S-L element and suggested course design guidelines for course instructors can be found in [Appendix E](#).

2. The finalised and endorsed proposal about courses with an S-L element will then be submitted by the responsible department to the:
 - (a) Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) and then Academic Quality Assurance Committee for Undergraduate Programmes (AQAC) if the course is to be offered as a course in the Core Curriculum; or
 - (b) AQAC, directly.
3. The AQAC approved courses will be submitted to the Senate for noting.

**For more details of the endorsement authorities for major changes which include adding S-L element to a course, please refer to Section 5.2.4 of Chapter 5.*

13.3.2 Course/Programme Planning Implementation

In order to ensure a high-quality S-L programme, OSL facilitates and monitors the operations and outcomes of programmes, closely working with different stakeholders, namely faculty, agency partners, and students. Relevant activities in this regard include:

- assisting the course/programme planning in terms of faculty-agency matching and overall procedure briefing;
- facilitating the course/programme delivery through conducting in-progress evaluation, arranging consultation, reflection, and report-back sessions, and providing necessary skill training; and
- leading the service practicum by monitoring the fieldwork, settling all logistic matters, and handling any emergencies.

OSL coordinators who are in charge of the above task items are all at the grade of Senior Project Officer, with at least four years' experience working at alike positions and settings.

13.3.3 Programme Evaluation and Improvement

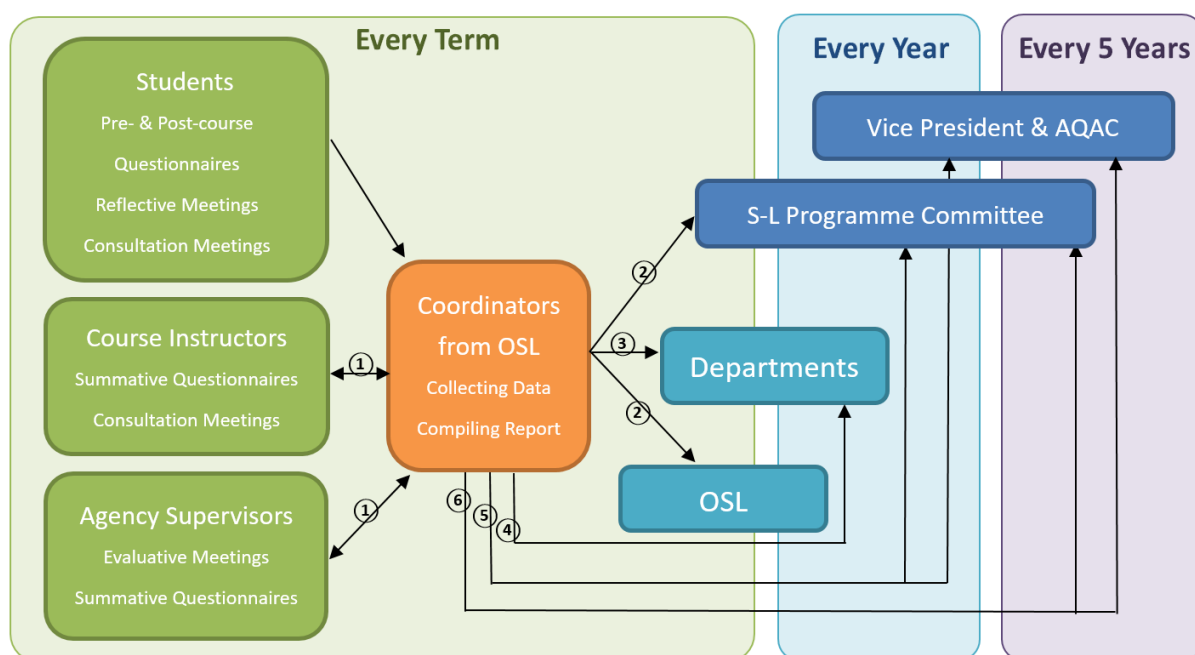
At the end of each term, the coordinators from OSL collect feedback on the programme implementation from different stakeholders - students, course instructors and agency partners. Their perceptions and interpretations of the learning outcomes and programme effectiveness are obtained through questionnaires and/or focus groups. Based on collected data, three review reports (shown as ①, ②, and ③ in Figure 2) with different foci and coverage will be compiled and shared to the course instructors, agency partners, Departments, OSL as the course providers, and the S-L Programme Committee, respectively, for identifying best practices and future improvement.

Every academic year, as with other units that are similar in nature (e.g. Office of Core Curriculum), the departmental annual programme review (shown as ④ in Figure 2) will be submitted to the Departments. An overall annual programme review report (shown as ⑤ in Figure 2) will be submitted to the S-L Programme Committee, the Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost, and AQAC in order to ensure the quality of the programmes.

Every five years, a five-year programme review document (shown as ⑥ in Figure 2) on the S-L practices at Lingnan University as a whole will be submitted to the S-L Programme Committee, the Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost, and AQAC for overall monitoring and planning.

For relevant practice, please refer to Figure 2 for details.

Figure 2: Evaluation Process Chart



#Vice-President refers to Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost in Figure 2 above

13.3.4 Student Learning and Development Measurement

To review student learning outcomes across different courses and departments, the OSL uses a fifteen domain framework to assess students' performance grouped under the following four conceptual categories:

- Knowledge Application
- Personal and Professional Skills
- Civic Orientation and Engagement
- Self-Awareness

A set of rubrics has been developed for effectively assessing students' performance.

Several pre- and post-test questionnaires have been designed to evaluate students' learning and development. Focus groups interviews are conducted by OSL at the end of each term to gather more in-depth data related to students' learning experience and outcomes. Additionally, students' reflective essays and reports are collected to triangulate the data from questionnaires and interviews for internal and future enhancement.

The Business Intelligence (BI) keeps track of student performance records, and provides relevant information for the programme effectiveness review and quality enhancement suggestions.

13.3.5 Community Partnership Maintenance and Strengthening

A sustainable community partnership among the OSL, academic departments, and

community partners is essential for a high-quality S-L course/programme. Criteria for selecting an appropriate agency partner include the following aspects:

- 1) Being able to provide sufficient manpower to monitor the S-L experience with the students and course instructors;
- 2) Being able to provide 30 training/service hours for students to serve the community based on the proposed service experience;
- 3) Being able to jointly identify the community needs and understand the learning objectives of the course(s);
- 4) Being willing to serve as a co-educator contributing to student learning and providing guidance to students; and
- 5) Being able to take responsibility to maintain students' health and safety during the S-L experience.

In order to maintain a reciprocal community partnership and facilitate the quality enhancement of S-L practice, the collaboration with agency partners will be regularly reviewed by the S-L Programme Committee and Advisory Board.

13.3.6 Result and Appeal System

In order to fulfill the S-L graduation requirement, students have to:

- 1) satisfactorily complete the required S-L experience(s) as confirmed by the course instructor;
- 2) submit all relevant S-L documents; and
- 3) pass the course.

The Registry will check the progress of each student's S-L graduation requirement by combining the completion record of S-L project (from OSL) and academic results (from Departments). At the end of each term, students can check the updated record in Degree Works to ensure the fulfilment of the S-L graduation requirement.

Students can appeal against the result by following the University policy and timeframe.

13.3.7 Examination and grading of courses offered by OSL

The Director of OSL is the approval authority for matters related to examination and grading of courses offered by OSL (such as the issuing of Grade I) in those cases where this role would otherwise be fulfilled by the Head of Department/Faculty Dean/Board of Examiners for courses offered by academic Departments.

Appendix A: Service-Learning Graduation Requirement (SLR) Guidelines

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

Office of Service-Learning

1. Service-Learning at Lingnan University

Service-Learning (S-L) is an effective teaching and learning strategy, which combines formal academic study with meaningful community service and reflection. The pedagogy promotes student academic, professional and personal development along with embodying Lingnan University's long-standing motto of "Education for Service".

Participating in voluntary service activities alone without academic elements does not qualify as S-L, nor conducting an academic study without serving the true needs of the community. Service-Learning serves as a real-life experiential classroom for students.

In this real-life experiential classroom, students are given the opportunity to integrate academic theories and real-world circumstances, while community agencies benefit from students' support in developing innovative and impactful projects. Experiences in the community become a basis for both course instructors and students to conduct research. Through the process of S-L, new knowledge is produced and transferred between the community and higher education institutions.

2. Overall Aims of Service-Learning

S-L guides students to understand the importance of personal and social responsibility through meaningful community-based experience and reflection. Experience is broadened as students are equipped with the tools necessary to cope with any environment, thus granting them a competitive edge in further self- and career development.

3. Arrangements for Service-Learning Graduation Requirement

All undergraduate students are required to fulfill the S-L graduation requirement.

4. Service-Learning Courses Offered

4.1 Departmental S-L course

- Provided by Departments; and
- Aims to apply academic knowledge and professional skills to serve in a community-based experience.

4.2 Department-OSL co-taught course

- Jointly delivered by faculty members from Department(s) and staff members from OSL; and
- Aims to enhance the collaboration between the OSL staff members, who have rich experience in service to the community, and faculty members, who possess a rich fund of academic knowledge in their field, so as to strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of S-L courses.

4.3 OSL S-L course

- Provided by OSL;
- Aims to enhance the academic rigor of service practicum; and
- Aims to seek collaborative opportunities with a variety of overseas community partners.

4.4 Overseas S-L courses

- Offered by overseas institutions and approved by the OSL or Department/Programme;
- Aims to allow credit transfer for S-L courses taken overseas, including internships, placements or projects containing service components, which meet a public good; and
- Students are required to attend credit bearing course/seminar sessions and submit written assignment(s) with a significant component of reflection or reflective learning based on the related service experience. The topic of the written assignment(s) must be closely related to the topic of community-based S-L experience/research.
- The application for credit transfer should be approved prior by the Director of OSL in the study plan before the overseas S-L courses. After completion of the overseas S-L courses the application of credit transfer should be approved by either the Director of OSL (for SLP Courses) or the Department Head/Programme Director concerned. The Director of OSL (for SLP Courses) or the Department Head/Programme Director concerned reserves the right to allow the students' fulfilment of the S-L graduation requirement.

5. Criteria for Service-Learning Courses

Course instructors are responsible for the course design of courses with an S-L component. An S-L course must meet the following criteria for University approval.

5.1 Course structure

- At least 3 credits; and
- At least 30 training/service hours.
 - Training could be in the forms of pre-training, on-site training, skills workshops, orientation, student forum or reflective meeting, etc.
 - The S-L experience must demonstrate students' empathy for people in need and a strong sense of civic responsibility; applies their academic knowledge and professional skills to deal with complex issues in a community setting

- Structured opportunities are provided for reflection to connect students' learning with the service experience, and to reflect on their role and social responsibilities both as a professional and a responsible citizen.
- At least 30% of the continuous assessment of a course should be assessed through students' performance in S-L.

5.2 *Service-Learning Experience*

The service nature and arrangement should create the following experiences for students:

- To address social needs through community engagement and meaningful service;
- To engage with the community in several different forms, including direct services, indirect services, advocacy services and/or research-based services (see 5.3 below);
- To serve the community as a professional and contribute to the common good as a responsible citizen;
- To attend all the required preparatory lectures, tutorials, workshops, briefings, meetings, visits and training, etc.; and
- To facilitate students' learning and whole person development through the use of structured reflection, which analyses students' service experience in relation to their roles and responsibilities as professionals and responsible citizens reflection on both academic and civic aspects of their S-L experience.

5.3 *Measurement of Learning Outcomes*

Learning outcomes will be assessed by students' performance on and commitment to S-L experience. Possible assessment instruments can be project proposal and report, reflective journals/essay, and report-back presentations. The components of the S-L assessments and respective weight are subject to the course instructors' decision. Course instructors can decide whether to adopt peer evaluation and agency supervisor(s) evaluation. It is strongly advised to include students' ability to connect S-L to their academic outcomes as a part of the assessment rubrics.

5.4 *Teaching and Learning Method*

Teaching and learning methods include onsite supervision, lectures and discussions, consultations, presentations, and reflective writings and activities. All of these activities help students establish a connection between service experience and academic knowledge. In each project, students work individually or as a team under the general guidance of an agency supervisor and course instructor(s). The team must keep in contact with the course instructors and report their progress through regular meetings and/or consultations.

6. Openness and Entry-requirements

The S-L component in a course could be either open to all enrolled students or only to certain types of students. The form of course organisation is subject to the course instructors' decision, informed by suggestions from agency partners and OSL coordinator.

If the S-L option requires a particular broad discipline/department/programme as the condition for participation, relevant criteria should be transparent and clarified to students at the very beginning of a course. When screening is necessary, the course instructor can work with the OSL coordinator/agency supervisor to set up the entry requirements and selection criteria which must fit the nature and feature of the service practicum.

7. Accreditation and Credit Transfer

For fulfilling the S-L graduation requirement, students are required to complete the required documents in the Moodle system, namely, a set of pre- and post-course questionnaires³. Those who fail to submit the required documents after the official deadline will be disqualified from the S-L graduation requirement. The course instructor reserves the right to decide if a student fulfills the S-L graduation requirement based on the agency supervisor's observation and feedback and/or the peer review among students.

Students who have taken S-L courses at an overseas institution during their exchange study or overseas internship can apply to transfer the credits obtained to Lingnan University to fulfill their S-L graduation requirement. Whether the credits can be successfully transferred is subject to the prior application in the study plan and decision of either the Director of OSL (for SLP Courses), or the Department Head /Programme Director concerned.

8. Advice and Support

As a support unit, OSL is always ready to assist the curriculum development, project design, practicum implementation, and outcomes evaluation related to S-L. Student programme assistants who are well trained through the "Student Service-Learning Programme Assistants Scheme" will also stand by to facilitate the course delivery and the project implementations. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact OSL:

Title	Name	Tel	Email
Director	Prof. Albert KO	2616 8059	albertko@ln.edu.hk
Faculty Coordinator	Mr. Chad CHAN	2616 8074	chadchan@ln.edu.hk

³ To better track students' learning progress and outcomes, the University keeps a record of all students who have taken S-L through a set of pre-test and post-test questionnaires which will be found in the Moodle before and after the S-L practicum. Focus group interviews will also be conducted to collect students' feedback.

Appendix B: Procedure of Credit Transfer for Overseas S-L Courses

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

Office of Service-Learning

For Students:

Credits achieved from S-L courses which are offered by overseas institutions with university recognition and taken during students' exchange study/internship can be transferred to fulfill the S-L graduation requirement. For students who are planning to take an overseas S-L course and conduct credit transfer later, an approval from the Director of OSL in the study plan concerned prior to the commencement of the course is mandatory. The procedure for granting approval is as follows:

1. Register for the overseas S-L course (equivalent to at least 3 Lingnan credits) with the host institution and get the approval from the department advisor of Lingnan University. To understand the S-L opportunities at different Institutions, students may refer to "*Table of Academic and Language Requirement of Host Institutions*" or visit the host institution's website or contact the Office of Global Education (OGE) directly.
2. Submit the endorsed study plan to OGE and complete the online pre-test questionnaire in the Moodle.
3. Attend the course, receive at least a passing grade, and fulfill the host university's S-L course requirements (if any).
4. Complete Activity & Attendance Record Sheet with the endorsement from the course instructor from the host university and/or overseas agency supervisor.
5. If there are any changes to the overseas S-L experience, students must report to OGE and OSL immediately via email. Any changes without pre-approval will NOT be counted for the fulfillment of the S-L graduation requirement.
6. Submit the completed Activity & Attendance Record Sheet (with the transcript issued by host institution) and complete the online post-test questionnaire in the Moodle within one month after course completion.
7. Submit the completed credit transfer form to OGE with the endorsement of either Director of OSL (for SLP Courses) or the Department Head/ Programme Director.
8. Check the updated record in Degree Works at the end of each term to ensure the fulfillment of the S-L graduation requirement. Students can appeal their result by following the University policy and timeframe stated in section 9 of *Regulations Governing University Examinations and Course Work*.

For OSL:

1. At the beginning and the end of each term, OSL collects the pre- and post-course questionnaires respectively and conducts focus group interviews to assess student learning and programme effectiveness.
2. A copy of the memo of credit transfer will be sent from OGE to both OSL and Registry upon the completion of the exchange.
3. The summary report of the programme evaluation and review are then sent to the S-L Programme Committee for review and endorsement.

**Appendix C: Terms of reference and membership of
Programme Committee / Advisory Board**

**LINGNAN UNIVERSITY
Office of Service-Learning**

Service-Learning Programme Committee

Terms of reference:

- To give advice and review the policies, standards and procedures of academic affairs as they pertain to the S-L programme;
- To support and facilitate the other academic departments/units for the implementation of the S-L programme;
- To endorse courses with an S-L element from different academic departments/units;
- To evaluate the quality of the S-L programme and provide feedback from multi-disciplinary for the purposes of future programme enhancement.
- To monitor the progress of the S-L Graduation Requirement.

Membership:

Chairman:	Director, Office of Service-Learning
Members:	Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost
	Director of Core Curriculum
	Director of the Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning
	Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies) from three faculties
	One representative from the Faculty of Arts
	One representative from the Faculty of Business
	One representative from the Faculty of Social Sciences
	One representative from the School of Data Science
	One representative from the Wu Jieh Yee School of Interdisciplinary Studies
	One student representative
Member and Secretary:	A staff member from OSL

Advisory Board

Terms of reference:

1. To meet once or twice a year to assist in the planning and development of the S-L programme, with particular reference to the following:
 - The level and length of course/programme concerned in relation to local/ regional/ international needs;
 - The development of teaching and other activities carried out jointly by the academic units and the appropriate sector of the community;

- Offering advice on the development of the OSL at Lingnan University, in the context of Hong Kong.
- 2. To support and facilitate the other community partners (including both local and international community partners) with an eye to implementing the S-L programme.
- 3. To evaluate the quality of the S-L programme and provide feedback for the purposes of future programme enhancement.

Membership:

Chairperson:	To be nominated by the Convener and appointed by the Senate
Convener:	Director, Office of Service-Learning
Members:	To be nominated by the Convener and appointed by the Senate
Secretary:	To be appointed by the Convener
Observers and Advisers:	The Committee may invite persons to attend meeting as observers or advisers, as needed

Appendix D: Examples of Service-Learning Principles and Best Practices

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

Office of Service-Learning

International Christian University (ICU), Japan

Strong Internationalization in Service-Learning

A year-long curriculum on Service-Learning for international students

<https://www.icu.ac.jp/en/academics/sl/>

NUS College (formerly known as Yale-NUS College), Singapore

NUS Leadership Excellence And Development (LEAD) programme

<https://osa.nus.edu.sg/experience-communities/leadership/nus-leadership-excellence-and-development-lead-programme/>

Oberlin College and Conservatory, USA

Strong Leadership and Innovation Development Programmes

The Faculty Fellow Programme helps to expand and deepen understanding about best practices and models of Community-based Learning/Research

<https://www.oberlin.edu/bcsl/programs/community-learning>

Babson University, USA

No.1 Top Entrepreneurial Programmes for its undergraduate school, strong focus on inclusive entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability

<https://www.babson.edu/undergraduate/academics/why-babson/>

Beijing Normal University, China

Strong international partnerships in multi-disciplinary undergraduate research programmes

<https://english.bnu.edu.cn/research/researchcollaborations/index.htm>

Appendix E: Criteria for a Course with S-L element and Suggested Course Design Guideline for Course Instructor

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY Office of Service-Learning

Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS)

1. Course Structure

- At least 3 credits;
- At least 30 training/service hours.
 - Training could be in the forms of pre-service training, on-site training, skills workshops, orientations, student forum, or reflective meetings, etc.
 - The S-L experience must demonstrate empathy for people in need and a strong sense of civic responsibility; applies their academic knowledge and professional skills to deal with complex issues in a community setting.
- Structured opportunities are provided for reflection to connect students' learning with service experience, and to reflect on their role and social responsibilities both as a professional and a responsible citizen.
- At least 30% of the continuous assessment of a course should be assessed through students' performance in S-L.

2. Service-Learning Experience

The service nature and arrangement should create the following experiences for students:

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- To engage with the community in several different forms, including direct services, indirect services, advocacy services and/or research-based services;
- To serve the community as a professional and contribute to the common good as a responsible citizen;
- To integrate all the required preparatory lectures, tutorials, workshops, briefings, meetings, visits, and training, etc.; and
- To facilitate students' learning and whole person development through the use of structured reflection on both academic and civic aspects of their S-L experience.

3. Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes will be assessed by students' performance on and commitment to S-L experience. Possible assessment instruments can be project proposal and report, reflective journal/essay, and report-back presentations. The components of the S-L assessments and respective weight are subject to course instructors' decision. Course instructors can decide whether to adopt peer evaluation and agency supervisor(s) evaluation. It's strongly advised including students' ability to connect S-L to their academic learning as a part of assessment rubrics.

4. Suggested Assessment Plan

I. Definition of Service-Learning Goals

By completing the **S-L graduation requirement**, Lingnan students will:

1. discover how to apply and extend what is learned in the classroom while addressing the needs and issues of the community agency that hosts the service-learning experience;
2. analyse their own beliefs, values, assumptions and identities while learning about the beliefs, voices and values of others;
3. demonstrate an understanding of the extent to which all individuals share the need to be ethically engaged in furthering the welfare of their communities;
4. demonstrate the ability to properly identify the demographic characteristics, socio-cultural dynamics, needs and strengths of a group or community;
5. reflect on the personal and academic impact of their experiences with a community or agency;
6. demonstrate learning from multiple sources of knowledge and an appreciation for the reciprocity between scholarly knowledge and community action; and
7. think critically and act compassionately as they promote social justice.

II. Course Assessment Matrix

The matrix below is an effort to summarise the relationship between programme components (curriculum, courses) and curriculum goals.

(1) Service-Learning Curriculum Goals	(2) Measurement of Evidence	(3) Summary Results	(4) Assessment Informed Improvements
1. Discover how to apply and extend what is learned in the classroom while addressing the needs and issues of the community agency that hosts the service-learning experience.			

2. Analyse their own beliefs, values, assumptions and identities while learning about the beliefs, voices and values of others.			
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the extent to which all individuals share the need to be ethically engaged in furthering the welfare of their communities.			
4. Demonstrate the ability to properly identify the demographic characteristics, socio-cultural dynamics, needs and strengths of a group or community.			
5. Reflect on the personal and academic impact of their experiences with a community or agency.			
6. Demonstrate learning from multiple sources of knowledge and an appreciation for the reciprocity between scholarly knowledge and community action.			
7. Think critically and act compassionately as they promote social justice.			