

Guideline for Junior Research Project: Optional S-L in SSC3319

SSC3319 Junior Research Project provides a platform for senior BSS students to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to independently conduct a research project which incorporates the fundamental elements of a full-fledged research project in the Social Sciences. Along with providing individual supervision under a faculty member, the Junior Research project includes an **optional Service-Learning (S-L) option**. Students choosing the S-L option in SSC3319 Junior Research Project should carefully consider the following information:

1. Project-related responsibilities,
2. Expectations of support from the Office of Service-Learning (OSL),
3. Proposed project timelines, and
4. Other logistical matters.

This information is **essential for fulfilling the S-L Graduation Requirement** through SSC3319.

1. Responsibilities of Students in Completing Research and S-L

- 1.1 As principal investigators, students must be proactive about designing and approaching research topics that balance the needs of *both* the research project and the community partner for service. Students should communicate with supervisors and OSL staff to gather enough feedback to propose appropriate research topics.
- 1.2 For the best possible matches, it is highly recommended that students initiate general searches for partners they are interested in working with and are relevant to their topics, preferably in the pre-registration stage, or as soon as possible. It is recommended that students either propose community partners relevant to their topic after conducting a general search of available partners **and/or** communicate with OSL staff to assist with this search, **in the pre-registration stage, preferably during the break before the academic year begins, regardless of whether it is a Term 1 or Term 2 project;**
- 1.3 To best ensure that the service is relevant to the topic, students should **consult with all stakeholders** (supervisor, community partners, and S-L coordinator), starting from **early September** (for projects in both terms). Certain service projects may not seem immediately relevant to broad research topics – in these situations, students should actively discuss with stakeholders how to translate findings from the service into appropriate data for the research topic and how to set service goals and deliverables for research;
- 1.4 All researchers should schedule appointments with OSL in **early October** for initial discussions about the project, **and Term 2 projects** must schedule another appointment **at least 2 weeks before Term 2 starts**. All introductory meetings with community partners facilitated by OSL will take place **in the 2 weeks after** the initial meeting with OSL (Term 1 for Term 1 projects, Term 2 for Term 2

projects). For a general timeline for reference, please see item “**3. Timeline**” provided below;

- 1.5 Students **should take charge of planning and self-accountability measures** in independent service and research. In S-L tasks, students must engage with community partners responsibly and professionally, communicate with them and S-L Coordinators about research and/or service progress when necessary, clarify the nature of how, when, and why information is being collected, observe rules pertaining to working with the community partners, and complete tasks according to given deadlines. Students should also communicate with stakeholders continuously and proactively about any extenuating circumstances which may prevent them from completing tasks;
- 1.6 For research support, actively and consistently engage with the University’s and the relevant department’s research support services under your supervisor's guidance. All data should be collected based on the [University guideline on data privacy](#).
- 1.7 To fulfill the **Service-Learning Graduation Requirement (S-LGR)**, students must be mindful of the following while completing the service tasks in the research project:
 - Complete **30 hours** of Service-Learning tasks: All service-related work, preparation, consultations, and other relevant tasks must add up to a minimum of 30 hours by the end of the semester. All Service-Learning tasks should be implemented within the course period. These hours must be noted in the S-L hours record sheet which will be shared by the S-L coordinator. The S-L coordinator will inform students about the deadline for submitting the record sheet.
 - **Submit all documents** by their respective deadlines: To fulfill the graduation requirement, you must submit (a) a Pre-test questionnaire at the beginning of service tasks, (b) a Post-test questionnaire after service is completed, (c) S-L hours record sheet, and (d) any other documents requested by the S-L coordinator, faculty advisor or department. The S-L coordinator will specify the deadlines for these at the beginning of the semester. Please refer to the attachments for more information about these.
 - **Pass the course:** Students must meet all course requirements and pass the entire course itself in order to complete the S-LGR.

2. Expectations of support from the Office of Service-Learning

- 2.1 After student-initiated discussions with supervisors and general search of potential community partners, OSL will help students with **project matching**. OSL can assist students with searching for community partners and facilitating initial communications with potential partners.
- 2.2 OSL will provide **supervision and pertinent resources** for fieldwork. While the research design and methodologies are led by the student researchers, OSL can provide suggestions and guidance about service fieldwork options, along with

suggestions for community partners if the student requires support in their search. OSL can supervise the fieldwork component and assist in planning, provide a maximum of 500HKD as the budget for any service-related expenses and service events that the student may want to host with the partner, and a 100HKD travel subsidy. Students must communicate with OSL in advance to request additional resources for service;

2.3 OSL will facilitate **reflection activities**, which are an essential element of S-L projects. These include one mid-term consultation facilitated by the S-L coordinator. Additionally, the S-L coordinator will organize two reflection meetings or consultations with students to review their service progress, evaluate their project in terms of feasibility, goals, and resources needed, and provide feedback to address service concerns and improve project design;

2.4 **Conflicts and emergencies** arising in the progress of S-L projects must be reported to OSL immediately to further explore the best possible resolution methods. These include but are not limited to miscommunications with the community partner, challenges in completing tasks, and so on.

3. Timeline

3.1 Detailed Timeline description

3.1.1 Pre-registration stage

It is recommended that students begin to prepare in advance over the **Summer break preceding Project registration**. Students can brainstorm topics/areas of interest, do a general search for potential partners, contact faculty advisors and OSL for guidance, etc.

3.1.2 Project Registration

- (a) Complete the **SSC3319 Junior Research Project Topic Form** with the supervisor's signature and send it to the responsible OSL staff for endorsement **three days before** the application deadline.
- (b) Submit the endorsed Project Topic Form to your **department** for record. Registration results will be released by the department in early October.

3.1.3 Pre-Service Project Design

- (a) Connect with OSL staff actively to make an **appointment for an agency selection** meeting **within two weeks after the application deadline**. Please send a short introduction of your research and your proposed S-L project to the staff. This can include the rationale behind the research topic and a list of proposed agencies/types of proposed agencies. If the project is to be carried out in Term 2, please contact the staff again **two weeks before the Term 2 classes begin to schedule a second appointment**;

- (b) **Meet the agency partner** to discuss your S-L projects in detail. After the first agency selection meeting, OSL will contact the agency to invite them to join the project. For Term 2 projects, this invitation will be sent following the second appointment before Term 2 begins. The meeting is facilitated by OSL at least 2 weeks after the invitation is sent and accepted (Term 2 students meet with the agency around the time Term 2 begins). It is attended by the student and partner. Students must present their proposed S-L project to the agency. As mentioned before, students should take the initiative to propose a list of agencies beforehand who fit their research project's needs or propose the types of partners they might be interested in working with. The majority of the OSL's agency partners are NGOs and start-ups.

***Note:** If no agency supports your proposed research and S-L ideas, you may not be able to complete the required 30 Service-Learning hours to fulfill the S-L Graduation Requirement*

- (c) Complete the **Pre-test questionnaire** before the deadline.

3.1.4 Project Implementation and S-L Progress

- (a) Take an active role in organizing your proposed S-L project and **regularly report** the project progress to the agency partner and S-L coordinator. Students can decide a schedule for these updates along with the partners and S-L coordinator. To plan better and follow accountability measures, students are encouraged to complete the **Strategic Service-Learning and Research Plan** and return it to OSL **within two weeks after service begins**;
- (b) Complete **30 hours of service and service-related tasks** to meet the S-L graduation requirement. Typically, students are expected to **lead at least 2-3 S-L activities** with the agency partner. The nature of activities will depend on discussions with the partner, supervisor, and S-L Coordinators. You will receive feedback after the first activity for continuous improvement in the following activity/activities;
- (c) **Within 2 weeks after your service begins**, submit a strategic calendar plan of weekly S-L tasks to OSL, demonstrating your plan to complete S-L and research tasks in the term. See Appendix III for the template.
- (d) Submit your **mid-term progress report** to the agency partners for 10% of the partner rating. Also, submit this report to the faculty advisor/department and OSL.
- (e) Complete the **Post-test questionnaire and submit the S-L hour record sheet** to the staff before the deadline.

- (f) Submit your **final report** to the agency partners, faculty advisor/department, and OSL for the record. 20% of the ratings are incorporated into the final report for addressing the needs of agency partners.
- (g) Report the **social impacts** (e.g., service targets, no. of beneficiaries, and a brief description of your project) with photos to OSL before the end of Term.

3.2 General Timeline

This is a summarized general timeline for the Junior Research Project for reference only. For specific deadlines, please consult the concerned department, faculty advisor or S-L coordinator.

Reference Description	Item	General Deadline
3.1.1	Pre-registration Preparation (Brainstorm topics/areas of interest, general search for potential partners, contact instructors, and OSL for pre-registration advice, etc.)	During Summer break
3.1.2-a.b.	SSC3319 Junior Research Project Topic Form submission to department (with supervisor's signature), for ALL projects	<u>Mid-September</u> (for projects carried out in either term) * After supervisor's signature, send to OSL staff for endorsement 3 days before the application deadline.
3.1.2 b	Registration results from department	Early October
3.1.3 a	For ALL Projects: Appointment with OSL to discuss potential agencies, go over the proposed list of agencies, research introduction documents	An appointment should be within 2 weeks after the Topic Form submission deadline. * Before appointment: Send documents to OSL at least 3 days in advance.

3.1.3 a	For Projects in Term 2: Restart communication with OSL again - Appointment with OSL to discuss potential agencies, go over the proposed list of agencies, research introduction documents (see: Pre-Service project design p. 2)	An appointment should be at least 2 weeks before Term 2 starts. * Before appointment: Send updated documents to OSL at least 3 days in advance.
3.1.3 b	Projects in Term 1 & 2: Agency partner invitation to join the project (from OSL)	Immediately post-appointment with OSL. Minimum 1 week for agency's response
3.1.3 b	Meeting with agency partner for Term 1 projects (facilitated by OSL, attended by the student, and faculty advisor may join if needed. Student should present S-L project proposal for the agency to review)	Within 2 weeks after the initial meeting with OSL / depending on the agency's availability
3.1.3 b	Meeting with agency partner for Term 2 projects (facilitated by OSL, attended by student, and faculty advisor may join if needed. Student should present S-L project proposal for the agency to review)	Within 2 weeks after the first catch-up meeting with OSL in Term 2 / depending on the agency's availability
3.1.3 c	Submitting <i>Pre-test Questionnaire</i> to OSL	Pre-service deadline set for ALL S-L projects, TBD by OSL.
3.1.4 a	Strategic Service-Learning and Research Plan (See attachment II)	Within two weeks after service starts
3.1.4 d	Submitting <i>Mid-term Progress Report</i> to OSL, agency, and department/faculty advisor	Deadline set by department: Term 1 (Early November) / Term 2 (Late March or Early April)
3.1.4 f	Submitting <i>Final Report</i> to OSL, agency, and department/faculty advisor	Towards the end of term, TBD by department
3.1.4 g	Submitting <i>Social Impact Report</i> to OSL	Before the end of Term, TBD by OSL
3.1.4 e	Submitting <i>Post-test Questionnaire</i> and <i>S-L Hours Record Sheet</i> to OSL	Post-service deadline set for ALL S-L projects, TBD by OSL.

4. Other Logistical matters

4.1 Assessment for Junior Research Project with S-L

For students taking the Service-Learning option, their mid-term progress report and their final reports should take into account the research and service needs as agreed upon with the community partner in consultation with the supervisor. 10% of the mid-term progress report goes to community partner ratings, and another 20% incorporated into the final report. Please refer to the assessment rubrics for details.

4.2 Contact Persons from Office of Service-Learning (OSL)

Service-Learning Coordinator

Name: Mr. Chad Chan

Office No. / Email address: 26168074 / chadchan@ln.edu.hk

Website: <http://www.ln.edu.hk/osl/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LingnanOSL/?fref=ts>

Address: LBY101, B.Y. Lam Building, Lingnan University

APPENDIX I: Skills and Tips for Independent Research and S-L

- **Time Management:** To better manage your time, set feasible weekly tasks and ensure you have what you need to be able to complete these tasks and.

- **Process Management:**

To better monitor your progress, it is recommended that you maintain a log of research notes and observations as a record of daily work and questions to work through.

Find a healthy balance between research and service tasks, and your other schoolwork and personal needs.

- **Communication Management:**

Active communication is effective communication – respond to emails and text messages within at most 24 hours if you want to get tasks done in a timely manner. If you have any difficulties in meeting particular deadlines due to illness, personal matters, etc., communicate these to your supervisor, agency, and S-L coordinator as soon as possible.

You are the expert on the progress of your work, so only you will know what kind of resources you need to complete your work. Communicate with your department, supervisor, agency, and S-L coordinator to actively get access to these resources sooner rather than later.

Communicate any conflict arising in service work with your S-L Coordinators who can help you resolve them/explore alternatives.

- **Expectation Management:**

Do not expect service tasks to line up perfectly with your research goals/questions/topics – experiential learning such as Service-Learning is also an opportunity to understand the similarities and distances between theory and practice. You must think critically and lead your research in a way that identifies these. This will help refine your research targets and questions. If you are stuck and need support for this, reach out actively to your supervisors, agency, and S-L Coordinator.

APPENDIX II: Strategic Service-Learning and Research Plan

Please download the [Strategic Service-Learning and Research Plan](#) at the OSL's website

Suggested: complete and return to OSL within 2 weeks after service begins.