

Frequently Asked Questions about Service Learning Electives

If you do not find the answer to your question about Service Learning Electives below, please contact Carla Lachecki (carla.lachecki@wright.edu).

1. What is a service learning (SL)?

“Service learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection.” In service learning, students, in partnership with the community, are “applying what they are learning to community problems and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves.”¹

SL is distinguished by three things:

1. SL is curricular-based so that students get **academic credit** for participating in community based experiences.
2. SL places equal value on the **service objectives** defined by the community as it does on the **learning objectives** defined by the academy.
3. The planning, preparation and implementation of the SL curriculum is done in a partnership that includes the **academic faculty**, the **site based community staff** and the **student**.

2. What am I required to do during B1 for service learning?

All B1 students are required to complete a service learning elective in addition to two regular (non-service learning) electives. To meet the service learning elective requirement, students must complete at least **sixty (60)** hours and no less than **sixteen (16)** hours in a single approved service learning unit.

3. How can I satisfy the B1 service learning elective requirement?

Students can enroll in **faculty directed electives** designated as service learning, and/or participate in service learning **student initiated electives (SL SIE)** that have been approved by the B1 Electives Subcommittee. See the **B1 Electives Catalog** for more information about faculty directed electives and SL SIEs.

4. What counts toward service learning hours? Do the hours I spend traveling to a service learning site count?

Time spent traveling to a service site does not count toward the requirement. Time spent in orientation, research, or other preparation needed to engage in the service, actual (direct) service hours, and time spent doing a reflection can be counted toward the B1 service learning elective requirement.

¹ Champagne, N. (2006). Increasing advocacy skills for entry-level health educators through service learning. *Journal for Civic Commitment*, 7, Spring, 2.

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5. Does service learning have to be clinical in nature?

No. Service learning, particularly in the first year of medical school, is not typically clinical in nature. However, if you plan to do SL at a BSOM clinical site, you must have approval from the student coordinator for the corresponding BSOM department before submitting the SL SIE proposal to the B1 Electives Subcommittee.

6. Does service learning have to be health-related?

No. Service learning can be any experience where service to the community is provided in conjunction with learning experiences for the student.

7. Can I do SL SIE focused on research?

Yes, however the SL SIE Proposal must clearly explain how the intended outcome of the research meets identified service objectives for the community site. Students must complete CITI training and submit proof of this prior to starting the research SL SIE project. In addition, students must apply for appropriate IRB approval for original research and provide documentation of that IRB application at the time of proposal submission to the B1 Elective Subcommittee. If students are participating in a research project initiated by the preceptor, the IRB approval certificate must be submitted with the SL SIE proposal.

8. I am already volunteering at a community site. Can I use this for service learning?

Yes and no. If you prepare a SL SIE proposal for the activity you are doing at the community site and have it approved by the B1 Electives Subcommittee, future hours of service at the site will count toward your SL elective requirement. However, **there is no retroactive credit** for service you have done prior to obtaining B1 Electives Subcommittee approval. Please see the B1 Electives Catalog for instructions on preparing a SL SIE proposal.

9. I have prepared a SL SIE proposal to submit to the B1 Electives Subcommittee. What other paperwork do I need to include with my submission?

If you are doing your service learning in the U.S., you must submit 1) your **SL SIE Proposal**, 2) a **SL SIE Proposal Cover Page** signed by the BSOM academic faculty and the community faculty of record for the experience (can be one or two separate cover pages), and 3) a signed **Service Learning Acknowledgment of Risk and Consent for Medical Treatment Form** by the appropriate deadline (see FAQ 11). If you are doing your service learning outside the U.S., the paperwork is different (see FAQ 16). See the B1 Electives Catalog for more information about submitting a SL SIE and related paperwork.

10. Where can I find the forms required for SL SIEs?

Forms for SL SIE proposals and service learning verification can be found on the BSOM MedU/Electives web site: <http://www.med.wright.edu/medu/electives>. This is also where you will find the B1 Electives Catalog.

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For a chart of required forms based on type of SIE, see page 5, FAQ 16.

11. When should I submit a SL SIE proposal for approval?

To ensure the B1 Electives Subcommittee can review and respond in a timely manner, students planning to do a *domestic* SL SIE must submit the SL SIE Proposal and required paperwork to the B1 Electives Subcommittee at least **sixty (60) days** prior to the starting day of the SL SIE.

If a student is doing an *international* SL SIE experience, there are different and more extensive paperwork requirements. Such proposals and required paperwork must be submitted to the B1 Electives Subcommittee at least **ninety (90) days** prior to the starting day of the SL SIE.

12. I plan to apply to a competitive national program and use this experience for service learning. Should I wait until I am accepted to submit a SL SIE proposal?

If a competitive national program meets the criteria, you can use this for service learning. You should prepare a SL SIE proposal for the experience and submit it for approval even if you do not know yet if you've been accepted. Since there is a 60-days-in-advance submission requirement, you may want to prepare a back-up project proposal and submit it at the same time in case you don't get accepted for the competitive national program.

13. Several medical students and I want to do a SL SIE project together. Can we prepare a group SL SIE proposal or do we have to submit individual proposals?

Students doing the same service project submit one SL SIE project proposal for approval. When doing a group SL SIE:

- List all identified students who plan to participate in this experience on the SL SIE proposal.
- Students listed on the proposal must individually submit a signed Service Learning Acknowledgement of Risk Form prior to starting the project.
- Students listed on the proposal must individually submit a Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance form and any required reflection assignment.

14. I heard about a SL experience that a group of other B1 students did/are doing that I would like to do for SL. Do I need to submit a new SL SIE proposal for committee approval?

It depends. You do not need to submit a new SL SIE proposal if the B1 Electives Subcommittee has approved the group SL activity for the current academic year. Contact Carla Lachecki (carla.lachecki@wright.edu) to find out if this is the case. If it has been a year or two since the SL SIE for this was approved, you must submit a new SL SIE proposal for approval. This is to ensure that community sites have been contacted and services provided by the students are updated.

If there is an approved proposal on file for the current academic year:

- a. Contact someone from the student group who did/is doing the experience and obtain a copy of the SL SIE Proposal. There may even be a student coordinator for the project.

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- b. Modify the approved SL SIE Proposal to include your name and dates you plan to do the service learning.

If the SL SIE proposal is not approved for the current academic year: submit the SL SIE Proposal to the B1 Electives Subcommittee going through the same steps as if it were a new SL SIE.

15. I am planning a SL SIE project that is four weeks long (160 hours at 40 hours/week)? Can I get credit for both a service learning elective and a regular elective?

To seek credit for one service learning and one regular elective for a four-week project, you must submit two different SIE proposals, one for a SL SIE and one for a regular SIE. The proposals must meet elective requirements for service learning (16-80 hours) and regular elective requirements (60-80 contact hours), and must clearly show what activities support service learning and what activities support a regular SIE. Approval is up to the B1 Electives Subcommittee.

16. What if I want to do a service learning international travel elective? What if I want this to count as participation in the International Health Program (IHP)? What do I need to do? What forms do I need to submit?

A number of questions come up around the intersections of: faculty-directed electives; Student Initiated Electives (SIE); Service Learning SIEs (SL SIE); SIEs with International Travel (Int'l SIE); SL SIEs with International Travel (Int'l SL SIE); the International Health Program (IHP) and Int'l SIEs or Int'l SL SIEs.

Service Learning or Regular Elective Credit:

Students who plan to do international travel between M1 and M2 (whether they are in the International Health Program or not) can usually do so for either regular elective credit or for service learning credit. There are faculty-directed international electives that have been designated service learning or students can prepare their own SL SIEs for international travel. In some situations, students can get both service learning and regular elective academic credit during B1 international travel (see FAQ 15 and Note 1, Table 1 below).

Forms:

Whether they are service or non-service learning, international SIEs and faculty-directed travel electives require specific sets of forms in addition to those required for domestic SIEs. **See Table 1 (below)** for these requirements.

International Health Program Requirements:

See Table 2 (below) for a comparison of requirements between IHP and non-IHP international student travel. IHP students must submit an International Health Program contract and travel to a developing country. For more information about IHP, visit the BSOM International Education web page, <http://www.med.wright.edu/curriculum/international-education>.

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TABLE 1. REQUIRED DOMESTIC SIE AND INTERNATIONAL SIE FORMS:

SIE (domestic)	SL SIE (domestic)	SIE (international)	SL SIE (international)	Faculty-Directed Travel Elective
SIE Proposal	SL SIE Proposal	SIE Proposal ¹	SL SIE Proposal ¹	Enroll in elective
Departmental Sponsor	SL SIE Proposal Cover Page	Departmental Sponsor	Departmental Sponsor	
Preceptor	SL SIE Proposal Cover Page	Preceptor ²	Preceptor ²	
		Int'l Elective Sponsor	Int'l Elective Sponsor	
		SL Acknowledgement of Risk and Consent to Medical Treatment	Agreement with WSU ³	Agreement with WSU ³
		IHP Contract (if IHP) ⁴	IHP Contract (if IHP) ⁴	IHP Contract (if IHP) ⁴
		Student Evaluation of Int'l Elective	Student Evaluation of Int'l Elective	Student Evaluation of Int'l Elective
Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance ⁵	Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance ⁵	Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance ⁵	Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance ⁵	

Table 1 Notes:

- (1) If you do an Int'l SL SIE for a total of four weeks or more, and **you submit a SL SIE proposal AND a SIE proposal for the experience**, you can count two of the four weeks toward your SL hours (up to 60 hours) AND two of the four weeks (at least 60 hours) as an Int'l SIE for one of your two required non-SL electives.
- (2) For International Travel Electives (SIE or SL SIE), the person identified on the Preceptor Form should be the person who supervises your work, or their designee, in the country to which you are traveling.
- (3) The (B1 International Elective) Agreement with WSU lists additional documents to submit prior to traveling: proof of required insurance, completion of required vaccinations, copy of passport and emergency contact information in the US.
- (4) Students participating in IHP must submit the IHP contract to Student Affairs by December of M1.
- (5) A Preceptor Evaluation Form is required whenever the preceptor is not BSOM faculty.

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TABLE 2. B1 International Travel Requirements

Requirements		Complete SMD 612 Course or Equivalent Experience	Travel to Developing Country (vs. a developed country)	Work/Service is Medically Related	Submit IHP Contract
Int'l Elective Type	Int'l SIE	Yes	No	No	No
	Int'l SIE - IHP	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Int'l SL SIE	Yes	No	No	No
	Int'l SL SIE - IHP	Yes	Yes	No	Yes