The URV Service Learning Programme
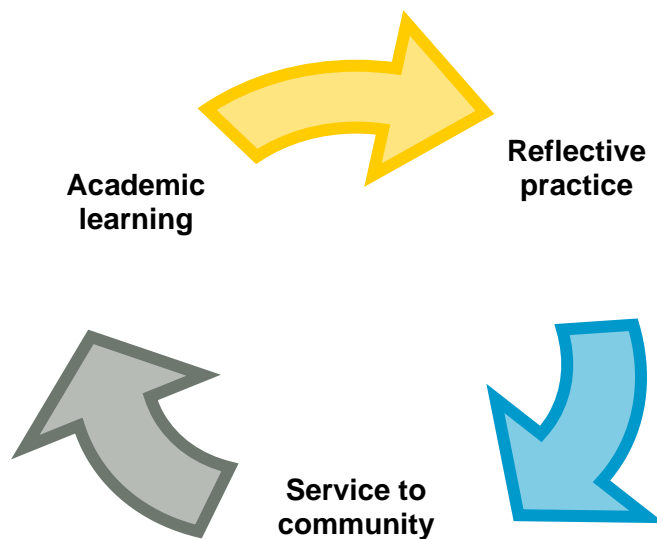
Student Guide

INDEX

1. WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

Service Learning (hereafter SL) is an educational proposal that combines the processes of learning and service to the community in one project, thus creating a tool for the comprehensive training of the student.

Its primary object is to train socially responsible professionals, given that, together with the learning of the content, competencies and skills associated with each qualification, it develops civic and social engagement through reflective practice.

In particular, SL provides a link between the URV's first mission (teaching), second mission (research) and third mission (ethics) insofar as its focus on curriculum-based service coincides with the internationally understood concept of community-based research.

SL must:

- Combine academic learning and community service.
- Be connected to the curriculum (see *point 3* of this guide).
- Must include reflective practice (see **point 6** of this guide).
- Foster the student's acquisition of transversal competency CT7, which is to learn how to: *Apply the principles of ethics and social responsibility as a citizen and professional.*

What Service Learning is not

SL is **not volunteer work.** In volunteer work, the only aim is to provide a service to the community. In contrast, SL projects have two simultaneous aims: service to the community and student learning as a result of this service. Reflective practice is also an important and necessary component.

SL does not always take the format of **external curricular internships**. The external internships subject is one of the ways SL is incorporated into the curriculum, but it is not the only one.

SL is not always associated with **community-based research**, but it may be depending on the nature of the service provided.

SL is not generally associated with **international cooperation in development**, but it may be depending on the nature of the beneficiary and/or the service provided.

2. BENEFITS OF SL

As stated in the Framework Document of the URV's Service Learning Programme, approved by the Governing Council on 23 February 2012, the benefits of SL extend to the teaching staff, the students, the beneficiaries and the University.

As a student on the SLP, you will:

PERSONAL AMBIT

- Become more actively engaged with your social surroundings.
- Increase your motivation for learning.
- Increase your awareness of diversity and multiculturalism.
- Acquire new perspectives that will influence your professional career processes.

CURRICULAR AMBIT

- Develop in a manner that is effective and which can be evaluated your commitment to ethics and social responsibility as a citizen and professional.
- Develop the transversal and degree-specific competencies in a manner that is effective and which can be evaluated.
- Participate in socially innovative processes.

UNIVERSITY AMBIT

- Strengthen your connections with the University (sense of belonging).
- Strengthen your relationship with the teaching and research staff, thus favouring effective learning processes.

3. WHERE CAN I FIND SL?

In accordance with the definition and elements of SL, at all times the student's learning must be academic, which necessarily means that it is linked to and dictated by the student's course of study in terms of planning, supervision and evaluation.

The following options all provide an opportunity to participate in SL:
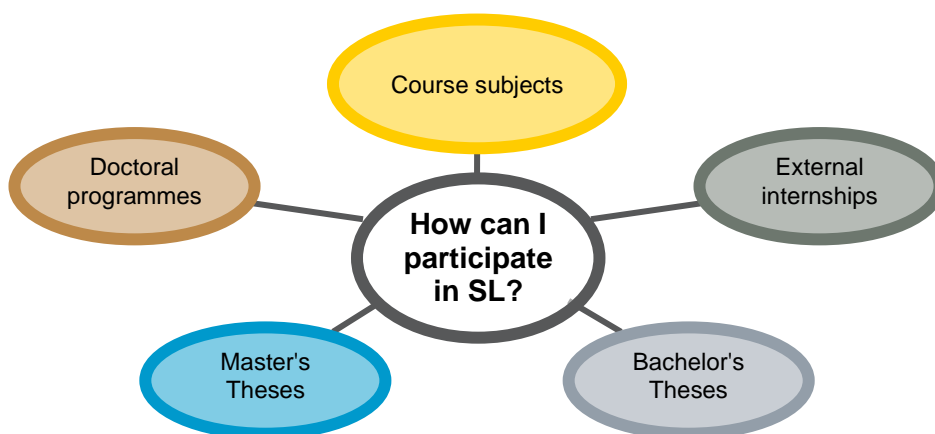
- SL can be incorporated into any subject on a bachelor's or master's programme, including External Internships, the Bachelor's Thesis and the Master's Thesis.

- In the case of External Internships, Bachelor's Theses and Master's Theses, you can propose a place to carry out the internship or a subject for your thesis. Consult the **Online Catalogue of SL Projects** to find projects that you can choose from. Contact the course coordinator for details regarding the procedure established by your faculty/school or contact aps@urv.cat for assistance.

- In the case of other subjects from the curriculum, the website of the programme will be updated as these experiences become validated. You can also ask the teaching staff of a subject if it is intended to be added to the SLP.

- Remember that in the context of a subject and depending on how it has been planned by the teaching staff, for each student the SLP may be:
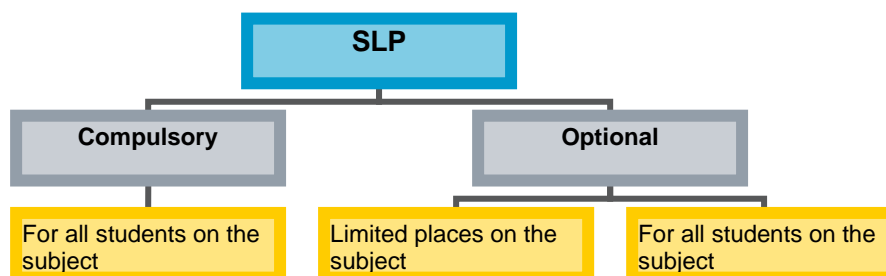
4. POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START

How I find out if the subjects that I have registered for allow SL?

When classes start, the professor will describe the subject and, if it forms part, the SL experience. If the subject already has a validated SLP, you can find out more about it in *annex 8.4* of the present guide.

Is it compulsory to do SL?

It is compulsory to obtain transversal competence CT7, namely, to *apply the principles of ethics and social responsibility as a citizen and professional*. One way of acquiring this competence is through SL. Within a specific subject, SL is just one of the educational methodologies available to the teacher, and each teacher will decide if participating in a SL experience is compulsory or optional.

**If SL forms an optional part of a subject,
what must I do to participate?**

The teaching staff will inform students if participation is available to the whole class or only a limited number of students. Students will also be informed about the process they must follow and the selection criteria and requirements. **Annex 8.1** of the present guide contains an application form that you can present to the teaching staff.

Can I propose to do SL in a specific subject?

Yes, in the External Internships, Bachelor's Thesis, Master's Thesis subjects and Doctoral Programmes. Annex 8.2 of the present guide contains an application form that you can present to the coordinator of the External Internships or the Bachelor's/Master's Thesis. There is also the Online Catalogue of SL Projects with SL options for you to choose from. Always pay attention to the procedure and deadlines established by your faculty/school.

How many hours must I spend on SL?

The amount of time you spend on SL will depend on how the activity is planned by the teaching staff and on the nature of the SL experience in question. You should consult the subject teachers. In the case of External Internships and the Bachelor's/Master's Theses, the amount of time you spend will depend on the credits assigned to the subject.

What do I have to commit to?

By participating in the SLP, you agree to the statements and ethical principles in **point 5** of the present guide.

Do I need additional insurance?

SL takes place in the frame of a specific subject; therefore, the student's service is covered by academic insurance that the student automatically acquired when registering at the University, or by private insurance, which is also automatically acquired in cases where academic insurance does not provide cover (for students over the age of 28). Therefore, in order to carry out SL whilst being covered, the student must complete the registration process for the corresponding subject.

What will be assessed and what is the evaluation procedure?

The teaching staff will provide information on what will be assessed and the nature of the evaluation procedure, taking into account competency CT7, which is to *apply the principles of ethics and social responsibility as a citizen and professional*.

5. WHAT MUST I DO DURING THE SL?

The following are the statements and ethical principles that you agree to as a student on the SLP:

WHAT MUST I DO?

- I must: Undertake the SL experience in accordance with the indications of the teaching staff and the entity and follow the indications of those in charge.
- Learn about the beneficiary of the service and the individuals with whom I am to collaborate.
- Learn who is my contact or tutor at the entity where I will provide service.
- Ask for help if in doubt.
- Be punctual and responsible when meeting my commitments.
- Call the beneficiary of the service if I think I am going to be arrive late or not be able to attend.
- Report immediately to my teacher any incident that may affect the SL experience (my withdrawal, unsuitability for the tasks, etc.).
- Be respectful towards the place, the staff and the beneficiaries of the SLP.
- Be friendly, polite and flexible.
- Respect the internal rules and regulations of the beneficiary and in particular maintain professional secrecy and under no circumstances use or disclose to third parties any information relating to the beneficiary or its activities to which the student has had access during the SL, without authorization from the beneficiary.
- Present any reports required regarding the experience and complete any satisfaction questionnaires that may be required of me.
- Remember that I am representing my University.

WHAT MUSTN'T I DO?

- I must not: Promise or commit to something that I cannot do.
- Tolerate any verbal exchange or conduct that may be perceived as discriminating against a person on the basis of their age, origin, gender, sexual orientation or capacities.
- Make swift judgements.

We also provide you with some general keys to success in service learning which we have adapted for the URV from the *Professor Handbook* (2011) of the Centre for Global and Community Engagement of the University of Ottawa:

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Reflect on how the SLP related to the content of the subject.
- Ask yourself to what extent the theories that you are learning in the classroom can be applied to the setting in which you are doing your SL. If the theories cannot be applied, ask yourself why?
- Update your tasks in relation to the experience.
- If you have any problem during the experience, remember that your university teacher and your contact/tutor at the entity can help you.

6. REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is a technique aimed at the self-observation and critical self-evaluation of an action or set of actions with the aim of establishing connections between personal experience of the individual who carried out the actions and the theories and values that these actions bring into play. Critical reflection on one's own actions is regarded as a professional skill that is inseparable from the concept of lifelong learning.

According to the international quality standards governing Service Learning, reflective practice is one of the essential elements. Reflection makes it possible to integrate service to the community and academic learning. In particular, it works on the ethical dimension of learning because it gives meaning to that which has been directly experienced. This is why one cannot talk about SL without talking about reflective practice.

What will my teacher ask for in terms of reflective practice?

There are various ways of incorporating reflective practice into academic activity. They involve tools that enable students to provide evidence of their reflections and for these reflections to be evaluated. Reflective practice may take the form of a journal, a classroom debate, a case study, among other options. The tools used for reflective practice in SL experiences that form part of a subject are established by the teachers of that subject, whereas in SL experiences that form part of BTs, MTs and External Internships, they are chosen by the student with the approval of the teaching staff.

What constitutes good reflective practice?

In addition to the help with your reflective practice that you can expect from your teachers, we provide the following list of tools for reflective practice and two examples to give you an idea of what it consists of. The questions are intended to guide you and can be included among the tools for reflective practice that you ultimately decide to use.

TOOLS FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Adapted from: Centre for Global and Community Engagement (2011). *Professor Handbook*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa.

Domingo Roget, A.; Gómez Serés, M.V. (2014): *La práctica reflexiva. Bases, modelos e instrumentos*. Madrid: Narcea, S.A. de Ediciones.

Project proposal	- The project proposal can be used to reflect on the SL experience before it starts. - The student has to present their project and explain their expectations, how they will carry it out and the challenges they will face. - Allows the student to think about the experience that they are about to embark on and how they can take advantage of the opportunity. - Can be used with other tools. For example, after completing the experience, the student may have to go back and re-evaluate their project proposal. Did everything go as they expected? If not, what differences did they encounter?
Predict-observe-explain technique	- Facilitates reflection throughout the SL experience. - Stimulates the student's initial ideas and interpretations in relation to experimental observation. - As part of the technique, before the SL experience, the student writes down and submits their predictions and hypotheses and a brief summary of the reasoning behind them. The teaching staff must make clear the relationship between these initial ideas of the student and the related theories. - The student contrasts their initial ideas with their subsequent interpretation of the facts, relating these to theoretical knowledge. - Used to help the student understand the role of prior knowledge in the interpretation of phenomena. - This tool can be combined with the professional profile building and reflective learning tools.
Professional profile building	- Facilitates reflection throughout the SL experience. - Before the SL experience, the student notes down how they would like or how they imagine their professional profile to be. The student should include the professional ethical principles that they wish to appear in their profile, their priority competencies, any aspects that they reject, their values, the methodologies that they will adopt and those that they will reject, and their competencies regarding coexistence, discipline, conflict management and online working. They will then describe which aspects they wish to incorporate into their SL experience and how they will do this. - During the experience, the degree of development, the difficulties and opportunities and any proposals for future professional improvement will

12

Reflective Evaluation Stage (RAS)

- This stage occurs before and after the SL experience and consists of reflecting on and answering specific questions.
- Before the experience, the student should identify their training and personal objectives for the SL experience, state when and how they will achieve them and provide evidence of this.
- After the experience, the student must share their evidence and what they have learnt, ask for feedback from their peers and individually put forward proposals for improvement.
- The tool can be combined with the field journal. At the end of this document are some examples of this kind of reflection.

Concept maps

- Facilitates reflection throughout the SL experience.
- Concept maps are a technique that uses a network of concepts to graphically represent knowledge.
- Good for allowing the student to organise and represent abstract ideas and thus make an in-depth analysis of the questions dealt with during the SL experience.
- Allows teachers to analyse the student's representations of concepts and to evaluate the student's ability to integrate them into a comprehensive mental diagram.
- To exploit further these types of representation, they may be complemented with V diagrams, a heuristic technique that illustrates the conceptual and methodological elements that interact in the knowledge construction process.

Reflective Learning Record (RLR)

- Personal notebook used for focusing the process of reflection whilst promoting the transfer of knowledge into practice.
- The left hand page of the notebook includes a description of the SL experience, a record of the facts and the informative data provided. The right hand page is reserved for the student's reflections: comments, personal reflections, learning that can be taken from the experience.
- Initially, more attention is given to the descriptive part, but the volume of notes should be greater on the right hand page in the reflective learning process.
- This tool can be used as a methodology for writing the field journal.

Journal	- Facilitates reflection throughout the SL experience. - Consists of writing entries in a field journal. The frequency of the entries is specified by the teaching staff, although they should not be sporadic and should be written shortly after the activity. - Offers the student different levels of reflection, from the most descriptive to the most analytical. - The contents of the journal can be used for more focused reflections on different aspects of the experience (personal and professional development, relations with the people served and with the institutions, analysis of macro problems). - The tool can be combined with the Reflective Evaluation Stage (RAS) and with the Reflective Learning Record (RLR)
Midterm reflection paper	- Facilitates reflection throughout the SL experience. - The student produces a reflection on everything they have experienced up to this moment, their expectations for the rest of the experience and how they will resolve any problems that emerge. If a project proposal was put forward at the start, this may be revisited and reformulated. - Helps the teachers to see in which areas the student needs guidance in dealing with the challenges that they encountered during the experience. - The tool can be combined with the project proposal and with problem
Problem solving	- Helps during and after the SL experience. - Involves a series of skills that enable the development of strategies for managing and resolving conflicts, both when identifying the problem and finding possible alternatives. - Enables the student to develop various competencies such as identifying problems, defining them, representing them and exploring possible strategies. - This tool can be combined with ethical dilemmas and discussion and debate.

Portfolio

- Facilitates reflection throughout the SL experience.
- Is a summary of other reflective activities: journals, proposals, writings, presentation notes. It is potentially more creative that the other reflective activities (it can include photographs and videos).
- Lets the student compiles everything that they have worked on during the academic year or semester in a single document. If appropriate, it can include the project completed during the SL experience.
- In courses with portfolios of qualification-related competencies, it may include the SL experiences as a means of accrediting transversal competence CT7.

Ethical dilemmas

- Facilitates reflection during and after the SL experience.
- In general, this reflective activity requires the student to carry out a case study of an ethical dilemma that they have encountered during their SL experience and to describe the skills that they have developed to deal with it.
- Ethical problems can be worked on with the whole class or in smaller groups, with the aim of proposing alternatives. They can also be used to involve any students who have not participated in the SL experience.
- This tool can be combined with problem solving, discussion and debate and with the final presentation of the experience.

Discussion and debate

- Facilitates reflection during and after the SL experience.
- The participating student presents their SL experience to the class: the challenge that they have faced, how to resolve conflicts, the ethical dilemmas that have arisen, the learning achieved. The rest of the group gives their feedback.
- It enables students who have not participated in the SL experience to form part of the learning process based on the experience.
- This tool can be combined with problem solving, discussion and debate and with the final presentation of the experience.

Final presentation of the experience	- Facilitates reflection after the SL experience. - The participating student gives a final presentation of their SL experience to different audiences: to the rest of their class, to the examination panel (in the case of BTs/MTs) and in a final visit to the entity. - It enables students who have not participated in the SL experience and/or the collaborating entity to form part of the learning process based on the experience. - It helps the student to appreciate the impact of their SL experience on the learning and the involvement of the university with the territory that it serves. - This tool can be combined with the project proposal and the final

Final analysis paper	- Facilitates reflection after the SL experience. - Written assignment that must include the relationship between the experience and the academic content of the subject, all connected with reflections on the experience. - Allows the student to analyse their experience retrospectively and understand the impact that SL has on learning and the University is involved in its territory. - This tool can be combined with the project proposal and the final presentation of the experience.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO HELP FOCUS YOUR REFLECTIVE PROCESS

The following are two examples of reflective questions taken from the *Professor Handbook* (2011) of the Centre for Global and Community Engagement of the University of Ottawa:

- The first example structures the reflection in terms of the time when it is carried out, including academic and personal aspects.
- The second example shows questions that can be answered after the SL has been completed. This example includes various ambits (personal, professional and academic).

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE. EXAMPLE 1

BEFORE THE SL EXPERIENCE. PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What are your expectations regarding SL? What impact will SL have on your learning?
- How do you think that SL will influence you as a person?
- How do you think that SL will change your studies?
- How do you think SL will change the way you see your surroundings and your ability yo help improve them?

AFTER THE SL EXPERIENCE. PERSONAL REFLECTION

- How has SL changed your approach to learning?
- Has SL influenced you on a personal level? How?
- Has SL had an impact on the way you view your studies? How?
- Has SL made you more aware of your surroundings and enabled you to help improve them? How?
- Evaluate the impact on your SL experience in the following areas:
  - Working with uncertainty or difficulties.
  - Building self-esteem.
  - Improving time management skills.

AFTER THE SL EXPERIENCE. ACADEMIC REFLECTION

- Do you think SL is important in relation to knowledge previously acquired in the classroom?

- Give two examples of concepts (theories, rules, methods) that you have acquired during your studies and for which you have found a practical application or have seen exemplified during the SL experience:

    1. a) Give an example of the first concept.

       b) Explain the application or experience during the SL.

    2. a) Give an example of the second concept.

       b) Explain the application or experience during the SL.

- Analyse a situation or problem that you have encountered during the SL experience that you were able to resolve using the knowledge that you had previously acquired during your studies.

- Choose a situation from your SL experience and contrast it with what you have learnt in the classroom.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE. EXAMPLE 2

INTRODUCTION

Describe the beneficiary of the service for whom you have worked:

1. What were your responsibilities?
2. What did the beneficiary need from the service and from the project in particular? What are the causes of this need?
3. What does the beneficiary for whom you have worked do for the community?
4. What changes do you recommend for the organisation or entity?

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. What have you learnt about yourself as a result of the SL experience?
2. What have you learnt about others as a result of the SL experience?
3. Has the way you think about the community changed as a result of the SL experience?
4. Can any prejudice be changed through the SL experience?
5. Have your values been challenged by the SL experience?
6. Has the SL experience had an impact on your long-term personal development objectives?
7. Do you feel more connected to the community or do you have stronger civic and social sentiments as a result of the SL experience?
8. Do you think the actions that you have been engaged will have an impact? Do you think you will make a difference?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. How has the SL experience changed your professional abilities?
2. What frustrations and difficulties have you encountered? How have you resolved them?
3. What have you learnt about your strengths and weaknesses?
4. Has SL had an impact on your professional aspirations?

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. What have you learnt from the community?
2. Has the SL helped you to better understand the concepts that underpin the subject or studies?
3. How does the SLP reflect or contrast with what you have learnt in class?
4. What have you learnt about your academic discipline and its capacity to influence society?
5. Has your understanding of the concept of education changed as a result of your SL experience?

7. ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION OF SL

TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT

The nature of the teachers' evaluation will depend on each experience and on the subject of which it forms part. They will evaluate the specific and transversal competencies indicated in the course guide. The teaching staff may also permit self-evaluation.

PARTICIPATION CERTIFICATE

Once the student has completed and passed the subject, the university will issue a certificate accrediting their participation in the URV's SLP. In order to receive this certificate, you must answer the online satisfaction questionnaire. The SLP participation certificate will only be issued once the satisfaction questionnaire has been submitted. Once completed, you will receive an email with your participation certificate.

This certificate will be signed by the Office of the Vice-Rector for Institutional Relations, Culture and Social Engagement and will state your full name, the name of the subject, the SL credits carried out, the beneficiary of the SL service and the non-numerical grade obtained for the subject.

QUALITY MONITORING

With the aim of improving the results of the Service Learning Programme and evaluating its quality and impact, students who have completed an SL experience as part of an External Internship, a Bachelor's Thesis, a Master's Thesis or a Doctoral Programme must complete *annex 8.3* and send it to aps@urv.cat within one month of the end of the experience.

8. ANNEXES

8.1 Student application form for (Service Learning if SL is optional for the subject).

Available in PDF format on the service learning URV website (Spanish version).

8.2 Student application for Service Learning as part of an External Internship/Bachelor's Degree/Master's Degree.

Available in PDF format on the service learning URV website (Spanish version).

8.3 Quality monitoring of students who have completed Service Learning as part of an External Internship/Bachelor's Degree/Master's Degree.

Available in PDF format on the service learning URV website (Spanish version).

8.4 Examples of Service Learning validated at the URV.

You can consult the full list of Service Learning projects at the different centres of the URV (English version).

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