

Transcript Notation for Service-Learning: Instructor Guide

What is the Transcript Notation for Service-Learning (TNSL)?

Through the creation of this notation, Bellevue College has acknowledged the utility of service-learning (S-L) as a teaching methodology, particularly in helping students better understand and/or apply course content, build transferrable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, and bolster their résumés and transfer applications. When students do list their service-learning experiences in their résumés and transfer applications, as they should be encouraged to do, the TNSL provides official support that they did actually have these experiences. Additionally, it may help some students transfer service hours from Bellevue College to other academic institutions.

Qualifying students will receive an additional course in their transcript for that quarter. The course will come with zero credits and no grade, and will read: SRVLN 001-SERVICE-LEARN: [COURSE WITH S-L].

Does a service-learning course *need* to qualify for or offer the TNSL?

No, it does not. Instructors are strongly encouraged to offer courses with service-learning or community engagement components, even if they do not meet the rigorous criteria (explained below) to qualify for the transcript notation. Almost any form of community engagement will benefit students, and research has shown that robust service-learning offers a variety of benefits that go beyond many other forms of community engagement.

Instructors should talk with the RISE office if they would like support in converting a community engaged or service-learning course into one that may qualify for the transcript notation.

How does a student qualify for the Transcript Notation for Service-Learning?

There are three steps involved in students earning the TNSL:

- 1) A committee consisting of one administrator, one instructor, and one student will review materials from the course to gauge whether it meets criteria to qualify for the TNSL. ***Just because a course uses service-learning does not mean it automatically qualifies for the transcript notation; it must be approved by the committee.*** Interested instructors will need to submit their syllabi and supporting documents to the committee for review, preferably by the end of the previous quarter. These materials need to show the following:
 - a. Service-learning is built into the course, either as direct service (individual volunteering with an external agency for a certain number of hours) or as a project (team of students working on a project for an external agency). Community education (students work to educate members of the community about an important issue) might also qualify; the instructor should talk with RISE prior to implementation.
 - b. Partner agencies ***must be*** 501(c)3 non-profits or government offices to qualify as service-learning (Bellevue College offices work, as well). The service-learning needs to focus on a ***mutually-beneficial partnership*** (not just volunteering to help the agency, and not just mentoring to help the student).

- RISE has a list of approved, vetted agencies that can be utilized for service-learning. Talk with RISE for suggestions on how to make the partnership more mutually-beneficial.
- c. Students must complete a **minimum** of 16 hours of direct service, or must give a project deliverable to the agency. Students should be encouraged to spread the 16 hours evenly throughout the quarter.
 - d. The **syllabus must talk about service-learning** and explain why it's an integral part of the course. Service-learning should also be seen as contributing to the overall course grade.
 - e. The course must have **at least three dedicated reflection assignments** (graded or not graded). Each assignment must exist for the purpose of reflection, and not simply be integrated into others, such as final papers. The reflections should encourage students to critically examine their service-learning experiences and connect them to the coursework. Details of these reflection assignments must be provided to the committee.
- 2) Additionally, instructors will need to meet with RISE to discuss policies and procedures. Doing so will minimize risk to the college and ensure standardization of processes.
 - 3) Once the committee has approved a course and the instructor has met with RISE, the students are then eligible for the TNSL. At the end of the quarter, RISE will send out a reminder to send the SIDs of qualifying students. For students to qualify, they will have:
 - a. Completed their hours or given the project deliverable to the agency
 - b. Submitted and given meaningful effort to at least three reflection assignments
 - c. Done nothing to disqualify them
- A few other points:
- d. Instructors are encouraged to reach out to the partner agencies throughout the quarter as check-ins. However, the any results of final evaluations (as organized by RISE) will not be counted towards TNSL eligibility.
 - e. If a student completes the hours/deliverable and submits the reflections, but the instructor feels that the student did not give significant or meaningful effort to either/both, the instructor is encouraged to talk with RISE before deciding whether that student earns the TNSL.

What is the timeline for all this?

- 1) **Middle of previous quarter** – Meet with RISE to discuss options and ensure an understanding of policies and procedures
 - a. Does not need to be repeated if done before
- 2) **End of previous quarter or first week of new quarter** – Submit syllabus and supporting documents (e.g. reflective assignments) to RISE for review by committee
 - a. A previously-approved course may need to be resubmitted (see below)
 - b. RISE encourages instructors to submit before the previous quarter ends in order to utilize the TNSL the next quarter to get student buy-in for service-learning
- 3) **Last week of class or finals week** – Submit to RISE a list of the SIDs for students who meet the requirements and qualify for the TNSL

Do I really need to resubmit my course every time I offer it?

The short answer is – it depends on the feedback. RISE has **new** rules regarding submission designed to make things easier for instructors:

- 1) **Approval** – The feedback is good and the committee feels that the course provides meaningful service-learning opportunities with mutually beneficial partnerships and critical reflection. The committee might provide suggestions for strengthening the course more, but feels confident that the course is already strong. **Courses with Unequivocal Approval are approved for three quarters of offerings**, including the quarter seeking approval, with the assumption that the course will not change much over that time. Instructors are encouraged to submit the latest versions of altered courses as an update.
 - a. Example: if the course is offered three quarters per year, resubmission will occur yearly.
 - b. Example: if the course is offered once per year, resubmission will occur after the third year.
 - c. Example: multiple sections offered in the same quarter will not be considered separate, and will be seen as one quarter.
- 2) **Conditional Approval** – The committee has approved the course, but has some reservations about the strength of the service-learning components (or simply do not understand it). The committee will suggest improvements, and expects them to be incorporated for future consideration. **Courses with Conditional Approval are approved for one quarter and require resubmission before the TNSL is given again.**
 - a. Example: A course has clearly addressed the committee’s concerns when resubmitted the next time it is offered – the course is given Unequivocal Approval and does not need resubmission for three additional quarters.
 - b. Example: A course has clearly not addressed the committee’s concerns when resubmitted the next time it is offered – the course is rejected unless changes are immediately made (see below).
- 3) **Request for Resubmission** – The committee felt, based on the material given, that either it did not have enough information to make a decision or it believed the course to fall short of the criteria set in this Guide. Depending on when the instructor initially submits the material, the committee may be able to approve a resubmission for that quarter. **Courses in this category will be considered rejected until a resubmission is approved.**
 - a. Example: A course is initially submitted before the end of the previous quarter, and resubmits with meaningful alterations before the second week of the new quarter – it is approved with Unequivocally or Conditionally for that quarter.
 - b. Example: A course is initially submitted in the quarter the class is offered – there is no time for a resubmission to be considered this quarter, and any approval will be applied for the next offering.

Anything else to know?

All submitted materials for qualifying courses will be uploaded to the Service-Learning SharePoint as support for other BC faculty **unless** otherwise requested by the instructor.

What are some tips for making more meaningful or critical reflections?

- 1) The assignment should be focused on or dedicated to reflection.
- 2) There must be at least three, one before service, during service, and after service. However, RISE recommends five for best effect.
- 3) In order to provide the greatest accessibility to reflections, a variety of methods is best. These include written and spoken, in-class and online/Canvas, individual and group-based.
- 4) Reflections should help students build connections to different things:
 - a. Coursework and learning materials
 - b. Social/Environmental issue
 - c. Community and agencies
 - d. Personal behavior and actions
 - e. Future plans and/or careers
 - f. Personal feelings
 - g. Personal and professional skills, such as professionalism, teamwork, conflict management, etc.
- 5) Some possible reflection topics are:
 - a. Beginning Reflection
 - i. Why are they being asked to do Service-Learning?
 - ii. Take a *temperature check* (e.g. What are they excited about? Nervous about?)
 - iii. How do they plan to manage their time/project over the course of the quarter?
 - b. Mid-term Reflection
 - i. How can the material being learned in class benefit the world around them, and in particular, the issue being addressed through their service-learning partnership?
 - ii. How does the coursework relate to what they're doing for S-L?
 - iii. What is something they've observed or experienced as part of S-L, what was their reaction to it, and how does it relate to their coursework?
 - iv. What are some challenges and/or discomfort they've been feeling as part of S-L, and how have they been dealing with them?
 - c. End Reflection
 - i. How was the S-L useful in helping them better understand or make sense of the course material?
 - ii. What impact did the course material make on communities, agencies, or local issues?
 - iii. How have they personally changed because of the S-L?
 - iv. What will they do in the future? What changes will they make in how they do or see things? How can they use their own knowledge or skills to become more civically-engaged or help address the issues they experienced?

Send all materials to, arrange meetings with, and ask questions to:

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