Community Service Requirement FAQ Sheet

What are the ways in which I can complete the Community Service requirement?

Students can meet this requirement in one of two ways:

1. **Course**: Students can meet this requirement by completing a course in which "Community Service" is explicitly embedded. This option includes participating in 20 hours of volunteer service during the course of the semester or term. The course may be a stand-alone course (1-unit) or it may be embedded within another course that meets a GE, major, or minor requirement. Courses that meet this requirement are designated as UVCS in the course catalog.

2. **Alternative Assessment**: Students who have already completed 20 hours of *unpaid* community service in one community organization within the past two years from the date of application for alternative assessment may be able to meet the requirement for Community Service through an assessment of prior learning. Alternative Assessment assumes that you have already attained mastery of the learning outcomes. Instructions for the alternative assessment can be found online on the GE website.

*Exceptions to the unpaid requirement will be made for active duty military personnel who are not given release time but who participate in community service while on duty.*

What are the Community Service Learning Outcomes?

1. Reflect on service as a component of active citizenship, community engagement, and social responsibility.
2. Demonstrate reciprocity and responsiveness in volunteer service work with a community organization.
3. Describe and analyze the social issues relevant to the community organization.

Can this requirement be waived if I’ve done community service in the past?

No. However, you can complete the Alternative Assessment, which allows you to show what you have learned from prior experience. Instructions for the alternative assessment can be found online on the GE website.

Why do I have to take a class or do the alternative assessment if I’ve done community volunteer service in the past?

The faculty at the University of La Verne strongly believes that participating in service work alone is not enough. At the heart of the Community Service requirement is reflection on the experience of serving. The Community Service requirement at the University of La Verne seeks to foster the development of self-reflective, socially aware, and engaged citizens through the process of reciprocal service and learning. Students are given the opportunity for structured reflection (either in class or through the alternative assessment) in order to adequately meet the
learning outcomes required for the Community Service requirement. The experience of servicing a community and academically reflecting on that service go hand-in-hand.

What counts as “Community Service”

Community service is understood to be a minimum of 20 hours of unpaid, active participation assisting a community organization in the achievement of its goals, not simply observing the work of the organization. The community site must lend itself to reflection on the following three areas: 1) community engagement and social responsibility, 2) an experience of reciprocity and responsiveness to those served, and 3) engagement with the social issues relevant to the site being served.

The 20 hours of service must also be completed at one community organization within the past two years from the date of application for the alternative assessment. A good volunteer site is one in which you are building relationships with the agency and/or the clients being served. The point is to develop an engaged relationship so that you can reflect critically on community engagement, develop meaningful connections with those you are serving and begin to understand the relevant social issues faced by the community served.

How can students on active military duty complete this requirement?

Like other students, those in active military duty must complete the community service requirement either by taking a course that meets this requirement or by completing the alternative assessment. However, because of the unique situation of military students, the following exceptions are allowed: 1) The community service requirement stipulates that students are required to complete 20 hours of unpaid community service. However, students on active military duty work 24 hours a day, which makes the requirement of “unpaid” work untenable. Given this reality, exceptions will be made for active duty military personnel who are not given release time but who participate in community service while on duty. The 20 hours of community service cannot be fulfilled by doing military service; rather it can be fulfilled by doing service in the community while on active duty (see list of possibilities below). 2) The community service requirement stipulates that the 20 hours of community service must be completed at one site. While this is the expectation, exceptions may be made for active military students on a case-by-case basis. 3) The expectation that the community service be completed within the past two years from the date of application for alternative assessment remains in place. Exceptions to this may be made by active military students on a case-by-case basis.

What are examples of possible Community Service sites?

- Retirement communities and nursing homes
- Schools, after school programs – mentoring/tutoring
- Youth centers – YMCA, YWCA, etc.
- Juvenile centers
- Libraries
- Religious communities
- Community activities, i.e. sports, recreation, scouts, etc.
- Homeless shelters/food banks
- Animal shelters, rescues
- Conservation and environmental organizations
- Community development projects – i.e. Habitat for Humanity
- Hospitals, rehab centers, disability centers
- Charity project at one’s place of employment
- Any site that builds up a community and/or addresses community needs

**What types of “service” do not count?**

- Military service (however, active military students often participate in community service projects. This community service may be able to count toward the minimum requirement of 20 hours of service)
- Online volunteering
- Paid work
- Observations
- Any site that does not lend itself to fulfilling the learning outcomes

**What happens if I can’t complete the required hours during the term or semester that I am taking the course?**

A student must complete the required 20 hours of volunteer community service in order to receive credit for the course. If you are concerned that you cannot complete the hours before the semester or term concludes, you must discuss your situation with the instructor. It is up to the instructor’s discretion to allow a student to take an “incomplete.”

**How do I complete the Alternative Assessment process?**

If you have already completed 20 hours of unpaid community service in one community organization within the last two years from the date of application for alternative assessment, you may be able to meet the requirement for Community Service through an assessment of prior learning. To complete the alternative assessment, you must submit a Community Service Portfolio demonstrating achievement of the learning outcomes and satisfactory completion of at least 20 hours of unpaid community service. Instructions for the Portfolio can be found online on the GE website.

**Is there a deadline for submission of the Alternative Assessment Portfolio?**

Yes, the Alternative Assessment Portfolio must be submitted at least one semester prior to graduation. A student may not submit the Portfolio during the final semester or term of study. The reason for this deadline is to allow a student to register for CS 305, Learning Through Community Service, during the student’s last semester or term, should the student not pass the Alternative Assessment review.

Deadlines for submission of the Alternative Assessment Portfolio are July 1, November 15 and December 1.
What is the fee for the Alternative Assessment?

There is a $50 non-refundable fee for this assessment.

When will I know if my Alternative Assessment Portfolio has been successfully passed?

Decisions will be made approximately 45 days from the date of submission. You will be notified in writing whether or not you have successfully completed the assessment. If you receive a passing score, you will be certified as having met the Community Service requirement. No academic units are awarded for this certification.

Can I resubmit my Alternative Assessment Portfolio if I do not pass the review?

No. The decision of the Alternative Assessment review is final. No revision of the portfolio or appeal of the decision will be accepted.

What is included in the Alternative Assessment Portfolio?

The Portfolio consists of:
1) Receipt of the $50 assessment fee payment
2) A copy of the community organization’s mission or vision statement
3) Verification of 20 hours of unpaid community service completed within the last two years.
4) A reflection essay on Considering Community Service.

The Reflection Essay should draw upon your experiences during the volunteer service. It should be five pages long, double-spaced, and explain how and why service to the community should be an important aspect of our contemporary society.

This assignment combines several elements, and should include detailed examples of your experiences. This is not an essay that defines terms or proves that you have done your Community Service hours. The goal, rather, is to use your specific experiences for a deeply considered reflection on both the organization with which you worked and the population it serves. Then, consider even more broadly the general concept of service to the community and the reciprocal relationship that developed while serving the organization.

In approaching your essay, thoughtfully integrate the following:

• your understanding of how individuals might realistically connect to their communities;
• the limitations and benefits of limited (20 hour) community service engagement;
• how and why community service should or should not be a greater part of our societal values;
• the importance of fully understanding a Community Service organization’s role in the community (versus just showing up, helping, and leaving);
• the challenges faced by Community Service organizations;
• how the service experience has affected/changed you since you completed your service;
• the importance of fully understanding the needs of the population being served; and,
• the ways, beyond Community Service organizations, these needs might best be served.

NOTE: Correct application of grammar/Standard American English and spelling are required for a passing score.

Where do I submit my Alternative Assessment application and Portfolio?

Regional Campus students should mail their Portfolios to:

   University of La Verne – RCA
   CS Alternative Assessment
   1950 Third Street La Verne, CA 91750

Traditional-age undergraduate students and CAPA students should submit their Portfolios to:

   The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean’s Office