

FAQ Sheet – Students

Question: Why does this class have a community placement component?

The intent of the community placement component is to expose students to learning opportunities outside of the traditional lecture hall format, enriching their learning experiences. This course is centered on critically engaging and reflecting upon the various differences, the result of our distinctive identities, that inform education and schooling experiences. Therefore, community placements were viewed as an opportunity to unite classroom knowledge and real-world experiences, the latter taking place with diverse populations in our local communities. **This does not mean that all students will be placed in a local school setting for their community placement. Students will engage with community members (varying in age) in diverse local venues.**

Question: Where are the community placements located?

Community placements will take place both on- and off-campus. Off-campus placements will be with community organizations in either Urbana or Champaign. Sites can be accessed either by personal or public transportation. Students can access all of the community placements, specifically the off- campus placements, on a [MTD](#) bus. Students can also use the [MTD](#) website’s “Trip Planner” feature to plan your trips to and from your community placement.

Question: What types of community placements will be available to students?

A list of our community partners can be viewed on the Placement Site Guide. When students complete the placement application they will select placement sites from those listed on the site guide. Students will rank their preferred placement sites (from 1-4) in their application.

Question: What does the application process entail to select a community site?

Students will be introduced to the course’s community placement component during the first week of classes, in both the lecture and the discussion sections. At that time, students will receive the Placement Site Guide and the placement application via email from SCE. The specific time frame to complete the placement application will be explained in the email. Once all of the applications have been submitted, SCE will determine community placements from the ranked preferences each student provided in their application. All efforts will be made to place students with one of their preferred placements. **However, it is not guaranteed that a student will be assigned to one of their 4 preferred placements.**

Question: What is a “community experience”?

Each community organization will offer unique experiences tailored to their organization’s mission and goals. The course’s community partners have spent considerable time designing personalized experiences for EDUC 201 students. The “community experiences” for each community organization are listed in their site guide description.

Question: Are students able to choose their community placement site?

Students will play a major role in selecting their community placement. Students will have the option of ranking their top 4 preferred community organizations. **Every effort will be made to place a student with one of their preferred sites.** The placement process is predicated upon the overall preferences noted by all of the students, the number of projected volunteers each site can take, and student/community organizations’ schedules.

When completing the application, students want to make sure they have thoroughly reviewed the descriptions in the Placement Site Guide so they can make the most informed decision possible.

Question: When will EDUC 201 students begin their placement experiences?

EDUC 201 students should receive their placement letters from School and Community Experiences by mid-September for fall and mid-February for spring. At that time, students should reach out to their site supervisors (they are listed in each community organization’s profile in the Community Placement Guidebook) to introduce themselves and determine if there is an orientation session they need to attend or other requirements to complete.

Question: Does transportation time to and from my community site count towards my required hours?

No, transportation time does not count towards your required hours. When you complete your weekly timesheet, you are only recording contact hours at your actual site. It should not take more than 30 minutes, each way, to get to any community placement. You can import a community organization's address into the MTD "Trip Planner" feature, along with your "starting location", to obtain accurate travel information. Therefore, before selecting a given placement site you can determine the transportation time to get to and from any community organization. Though a placement site may require you to take a city bus, it should not detract from the worthwhile experience you will have there. Off-campus sites (and taking public transportation) allow you to become better acquainted with the larger cities you now live in.

Question: How do I access my timesheets?

Students can access their weekly timesheet through the EDUC 201 Portal. The portal is an electronic platform that you will use to complete your timesheet as well as provide feedback on your experiences with the course's community placement component (you will do the later through a mid-semester survey and an end of the semester evaluation). In your timesheet you will report your hours and the activities you completed each time you volunteered. Your completed timesheet will be submitted to your site supervisor for approval. The finalized timesheet (with your site supervisor's signature) will be sent to your Teaching Assistant so they can monitor your progress at your placement site, and tailor aspects of the class discussions around students' experiences in the community.

Question: How many hours are students expected to volunteer over the fall semester?

Students are expected to volunteer for a minimum of 20 hours over the course of the semester. Our community partners are depending on your continued participation until the end of the semester.

Question: Do I have to attend my community placement site weekly?

Yes, you will attend your placement site weekly. Ultimately, you will determine your weekly schedule with your site supervisor. Some placement sites and site supervisors allow for more flexibility in determining a student's weekly volunteer schedule, and other sites require a more specific weekly schedule. Each community organization's guide description will indicate the type of weekly arrangement they would like their volunteers to maintain. If a site requires specific weekly hours, this is most likely because EDUC 201 students will participate in programming already established at their site.

Question: Are students given any training prior to beginning their placement experiences?

It is at the discretion of each site supervisor to determine if they would like to hold an orientation or training session for their volunteers. Most site supervisors have indicated that they will hold an orientation session. The session will allow volunteers to learn more about the organization, its mission, and the specific experience they will complete.

Question: Who should I contact if I have questions about my placement experience?

You can reach out to a few different people if you have questions. You can always contact your site supervisor if you have specific questions pertaining to your community experience. You will discuss with your site supervisor the best way to contact them. You can reach out to your TA or the course instructor, if you have any questions about the course or course requirements. If you have questions about the overall community placement component of the course, you can contact SCE at sce@education.illinois.edu

Question: Do I get to provide feedback regarding my placement experience?

Yes, your feedback is very important. Along with any feedback you provide to your TAs, site supervisors, course professor, or SCE throughout the semester, you will also complete a mid-semester survey and an evaluation at the end of the semester. In both the survey and the evaluation you will reflect upon the community placement component of the course. It is very important that personnel in the College learn all that they can about the community placement component. As students going through the course, experiencing the community placements first-hand, your feedback is vital.

Question: Are there any resources I can access now to learn more about volunteering in Champaign-Urbana as a university student?

Yes, a website was made, in part, for you as a student enrolled in EDUC 201. Some of the students enrolled in EDUC 201: Identity & Difference in Education during the fall 2015 semester selected to participate in a course entitled EPS 199: Community Engagement during the following spring 2016 semester. EPS 199 allowed students to remain connected to an EDUC 201 community organization. The students in EPS 199 created a course website where they reflected upon their experiences volunteering in Champaign-Urbana communities. They intended for the website to also be a resource for future students enrolled in EDUC 201 to help them learn more about local organizations and to support their efforts to successfully transition into their placement sites. The link to the website is below:

<http://engagededucatorsuiuc.weebly.com/>