

### ***What is Service Learning?***

In the context of EDM8004 Teacher Identity, Service Learning (SL) refers to 50 hours of voluntary work undertaken by preservice teachers within an educational context. Unlike a standard professional experience placement, this voluntary role allows for the preservice teacher to undertake a range of duties and work across several year levels or various departments within the educational environment.

### ***Where can SL be done?***

SL can be undertaken in any number of educational settings. This includes, but is not limited to, schools (state, denominational or independent), environmental education centres, child care centres, tutoring firms, outdoor education camps, prison schools, hospital schools, special schools, flexible learning centres, schools of distance education and other such locations, in negotiation with the Course Examiner.

### ***What sorts of things can I be doing during my SL placement?***

Unlike typical professional experience placements where you are required to plan and implement lessons, SL allows you to experience other aspects of being part of an educational community. You may be asked by your site to work with specific groups of students with certain needs, or to work within a particular focus area that the site is currently working on (for example, improvement of reading skills or implementation of STEM etc.). With whom you work and what you do will be based on the needs of your setting and how best they can utilise your skillset as a preservice teacher. **Some examples of how service learning has been utilised include:**

- Undertaking teacher-librarian duties at a primary state school.
- Acting as an additional support person within the Industrial Technology and Design program at a Christian College for two weeks.
- Exploring and implementing the use of a new technology platform in the Music Department at a large inner-city high school over a two-week period.
- Assisting with the implementation of the reading improvement program across all year levels at a state primary school for one hour per day, 5 days per weeks across ten weeks.
- Supporting EALD students at a large urban high school develop their literacy skills within Mathematics classes for 5 hours per day, two days per week for 5 weeks.
- Splitting the 50 hours across two sites, undertaking 25 hours at each, one in a primary setting, the other secondary.
- Working as a volunteer on school/class camp in lead up activities and planning, attending the camp and then follow up activities.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Primary sector students should ensure their SL allows for at least 25 hours working in some form of English Literacy based duties.
- Secondary sector students should try to have at least 25 hours working within one of their identified teaching specialisation areas.

### ***What sort of evidence do I need to collect during my SL placement?***

You should also try to collect evidence and artefacts of how you are meeting aspects of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Graduate Career Stage) to use in your ePortfolio assignment for this course. These may include student work samples, communications between you and your supervisors, diarised reflections on incidents that take place during your placement etc. Keeping a blog or digital journal of your duties and experiences is highly recommended.

You will be required to keep a timesheet, signed by both you and a supervisor at your chosen educational setting. This must be submitted to the InPlace and the Service Learning assessment link on the StudyDesk.

There is no final report for Service Learning and no requirement for written feedback from a mentor or supervisor.

### ***When do I undertake SL and how should it be conducted?***

You can negotiate when you will do your 50 hours with your site. It should be a time during the semester of enrolment (Week 1 – 15) that is mutually agreeable to both you and your setting. SL can be done full or part-time, again, meeting the needs of both the school and you. It must be completed by the final workday of Week 15 of the semester of enrolment.

### ***How do I arrange my SL placement?***

You are asked to approach settings where you are interested in undertaking your SL placement. You are to discuss potential options for your role during your placement and, once an agreement is made, complete Form S and return it to the Placement team at [belaplacements@usq.edu.au](mailto:belaplacements@usq.edu.au). If you are having difficulty sourcing a site for your SL placement, please contact the Professional Experience team for assistance. You will need to provide the Placement team with a list of the locations you have already approached.

### ***I work at the setting or my children go there. Is this a conflict of interest?***

No, there is no conflict of interest for the Service Learning placement. As you are working at the school as a volunteer, conflict of interest does not come into play. If your child attends the school you would like to attend, you are encouraged to negotiate a classroom that your child is not in to ensure your role as learner and parent are not compromised.

### ***Can I complete SL while working under PTT?***

Yes, if you are successful in gaining a Permission to Teach (PTT) during the semester you are studying EDM8004, your PTT will be counted towards your SL hours. You will need to contact the Placement team at [belaplacements@usq.edu.au](mailto:belaplacements@usq.edu.au) and provide a copy of the QCT approval notice and contract of employment to have this recorded.

### ***Is my site paid for hosting me?***

As you will be working at the school as a volunteer, your site will not be paid to host you. There is no expectation of additional work for any member of your site.

### ***How do I make the most of my SL time?***

Develop a clear idea of how your time is to be utilised with your site contact. Where can your 50 hours be used for the most benefit to the students and staff of the location? Engage with the day-to-day operation of the setting and become involved in any activities that may be taking place during your time there. Consider continuing your relationship with the setting beyond your 50 hours. Demonstrate to them that you are committed to them and are in for the long haul. Is this a site where you would like to return for your GTPA? Is it a place where you would like to seek employment upon graduation? Find out how you can make yourself the 'perfect fit' for the location and continue to work on the skills, attitudes and dispositions that this setting values.

*Can I seek an exemption or credit if I have done voluntary work in previous semesters of my MoLT program?*

You may be able to seek recognition of other education-related voluntary work that you have undertaken during your time as a student in the Master of Learning and Teaching program. *For example*, if you have participated in the PLaN program, the time you have spent participating in this can be credited towards your 50 hours of SL. Other cases of voluntary work undertaken in an educational setting can also be put forward, in writing, to the Placement team [bela.placements@usq.edu.au](mailto:bela.placements@usq.edu.au) for consideration. Documented proof from the organisation supporting the role and indicative hours **must** accompany any such request. Any exemption requests must be submitted by Week 4 of semester.