

Guidelines for utilizing a Community-based Learning Intern

The Morgridge Center for Public Service's Community-based Learning (CBL) Interns can be invaluable assets for CBL courses. However, figuring out how to best employ your intern's time and capacity can be challenging, so we've prepared a short guide to help you utilize their skills, talents, and time. We feel that interns primarily support three main pieces of a course – **learning, relationships, and logistics** – so we've organized the guide accordingly.

Typically, an intern will devote 2-4 hours weekly to your course throughout the semester. Of course, this time commitment may fluctuate, but it's difficult for interns if they consistently cannot put in enough hours for your course – or if they have too much to do for your course. **It is no problem if your course does not need 2-4 hours per week throughout the semester – we just need to know this in advance so we can allocate the interns' time accordingly.** We expect you as instructors to make good use of the interns' time through different activities to support your course. Maintaining a consistent flow of communication with your intern throughout the semester is essential. This can help to ensure that your intern has the right amount of work with your course and is neither overburdened nor unable to put in the hours s/he would like.



If you have concerns about your intern or have any other questions, please feel free to contact Haley Madden, graduate assistant for community-based learning, at hmadden@wisc.edu or 608.770.1811. You may also contact Beth Tryon, Assistant Director for Community-based Learning, at etryon@wisc.edu or 608.890.3334.

Types of CBL Intern Activities

Learning

Preparing students to serve in the community

In CBL classes, students are often working with people who may be very different from themselves. We frequently hear from community members and organizations that serve them that they would like students to receive at least some social identity and cultural awareness training before working in the community. We have developed a basic curriculum for preparing students to serve in the community that interns can help implement in the classroom. These resources can also be shared with you directly. We have additional materials regarding student preparation as well.

Lead icebreaker sessions

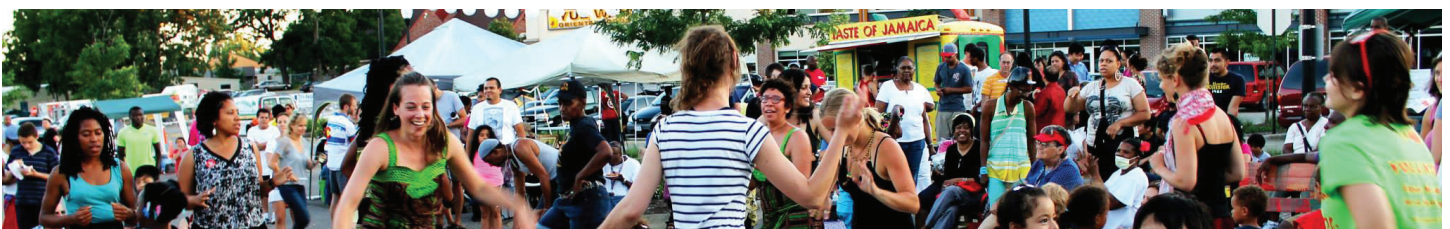
Students in all classes, but especially CBL classes, benefit a great deal when they feel comfortable with the instructors and other students. This promotes honest and authentic dialogue and engagement. One way to promote camaraderie is through icebreakers or other routines that encourage students to get to know each other. Interns can lead icebreaker sessions to support this.

Lead reflection sessions

Interns are trained to support the various reflection activities of CBL courses. They will be happy to lead discussion reflection sessions and may have some new ideas about how you can use reflection in your course.

Review written reflections

Interns can also provide feedback or annotations (NOT grades) on written reflections.



Relationships

Check-ins with community partners

Interns are happy to contact community partners via email, phone, or in person to discuss how the course is going and how students are doing at their placements. Interns can also go with students to observe them at their placements and provide feedback.

Check-ins with students

At one or two times during the semester, it can be very helpful for interns to conduct check-ins with students. This is a time for students to discuss their service placements one-on-one. These sessions are valuable in troubleshooting any problem areas before they become unmanageable. **It is extremely helpful if these check-ins are required by instructors as a graded part of the course;** otherwise, students may not make them a high priority and might not attend.

Contact new community partners

If you are looking to make connections with new community partners, interns can help with that!



Logistics

Orientations

Students new to the concept of CBL can often benefit from some introduction to the practice and pedagogy of CBL. Interns have specific training to introduce students to the unique world of CBL. This is often helpful during the first few weeks of class.

Transportation

Although the Morgridge Center for Public Service has a designated transportation intern, CBL interns can often answer questions about transportation and work with students to help them get to their placements in the best way possible.

Student placements

It can be a daunting task to organize students into their site placements or projects, and interns are happy to support this. They may also have ideas about how to do this more efficiently and effectively!

Technical support

Interns can keep track of student progress and the course on sites like Learn@UW and Moodle, or however else you keep in touch with students and student learning.

Keys to a successful relationship with your CBL Intern

Communication

Communication is key! **Let your intern know what the best way to get in touch with you is and follow through.** This could be email, phone, or coming to class or office hours. It is very frustrating for interns if they are unable to contact you with questions pertaining to the course logistics or other time-sensitive needs.

Clear expectations

It is very helpful if your intern knows what will be expected of her/him throughout the semester. If you have in mind and can communicate a clear idea of the tasks and activities you would like your intern to help with, s/he can do a better job of fulfilling her/his duties. Your intern also may have ideas about how s/he can support the class, and asking for that feedback from her/him can be very useful. This can also help your intern know how much time s/he will need to devote to your class.



Tips for online courses

When you are not directly interacting with your students for the majority of the course time, it may be more difficult initially to see how the skills of your intern will be utilized in your course. Here are some tips that may help! Tasks for your intern could include:

- Checking in one-on-one with your students
- Reviewing reflections and giving feedback
- Meeting with community partners
- Facilitating online reflection discussions