STARTING YOUR COMMUNITY PLACEMENT

Congratulations, you’ve been accepted into CTLB03 with a community outreach placement! This guide provides you with some information to help you make the most of the course and your placement experience.

In both the class and the placement you will be asked to work on assignments and tasks that are likely new to you, which can be both exciting and challenging. So in CTLB03 class-time, we’ll address some of those key issues, so you can feel more prepared to deal with common issues in placements. Here are some key topics:

- Professionalism
- Facilitation vs Teaching
- Working in groups/teams
- Communication/presentation skills
- Learning to think and write reflectively
- Learning styles and setting learning goals

THINGS TO DO AS YOUR PLACEMENT AND CTLB03 START:

1. Prepare a list of questions to ask the placement supervisor
2. Set up a meeting with the placement supervisor to discuss and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (the agreement document was sent to you with your acceptance email)
3. Think about what background information/resources you could read/review to prepare for the placement, e.g. brochures, textbook, articles, websites, workshops, etc.
4. Start thinking of your learning goals for the course and placement, that is, what do you want to gain from it, e.g. I want to improve my presentation skills; I want to make new professional/academic connections; I want to give back to the community; I want to connect my academic learning to a real-life situation.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR MEETING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR TO DISCUSS AND SIGN THE PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

1. What my specific duties/tasks to be completed?
2. What specific days/times am I needed each week?
3. Are there any Do's and Don'ts I should know about, e.g. expectations for behavior, attire, and professionalism?
4. Will I be working only with you, or someone else? What supervisory formats will be used? feedback sessions, regular meetings, etc. How often will we meet?
5. If I have problems, should I talk with you? If you’re not available, who else can I go to?
6. Will I be working with anyone else?
7. Where specifically will I be working?
8. Are there possible conflicts between my service responsibilities and my learning objectives?
9. What self-learning and helping skills do I need to be successful?
10. Any specific training I’ll need/receive?
11. What am I bringing to this experience that you need? (e.g. skills, knowledge, values)
12. What background information/resources can I read/review to get the most from my experience (brochures, guides, textbook, articles, faculty member, reading materials, workshops, etc.)?

UNDERSTAND ‘REFLECTION’ AS A KEY ACADEMIC SKILL IN CTLB03

Learning Objectives for CTLB03 (found in the syllabus) include concepts like ‘meaningful context’, ‘grounding academic knowledge’ and ‘connecting perspectives and ideas’. In the course, these objectives are addressed as students learn how to write reflective statements that increase their understanding of their academic discipline in those ways. Reflection is an academic skill that can be used in other courses and situations. When writing a reflection, students are typically asked to do three things:

1. Describe briefly an event or situation (“What”)
2. Tell the meaning or significance of that event or situation (“So What”)
3. Develop and explain a plan to integrate that new meaning or significance into your learning and actions going forward (“Now What”)

TIPS TO HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR PLACEMENT:

1. Arrive on time, be appropriately dressed and behave professionally.
2. If possible, meet regularly with your supervisor; be prepared to ask for more information or clarification.
3. Maintain and respect confidentiality.
4. Where possible, be flexible in terms of meeting times, projects, etc.
5. Be respectful, positive, responsible, honest and cooperative. (Remember you’re representing the University of Toronto!)
6. Be engaged in the work, and think about what you are ‘giving’ to the community, in addition to ‘getting’ from the community.
7. Communicate with the SLO course assistant and course instructor regarding problems, questions or concerns you may have.
8. Be aware of your own safety, avoid unsafe situations and refuse activity when feeling unsafe. (Report any such issues to the SLO course assistant and course instructor.)
9. Participate in any additional training and/or orientation required for your placement project.
10. Contact the placement supervisor in advance if unable to make a scheduled appointment
11. Honour your commitment to your placement partnership and the Service Learning program.

Most of all – enjoy the placement!!!!!