

Alternative Breaks

Alternative Breaks supports the Community Engagement Proficiency. Student participants are given the opportunity to learn “analytical and practical skills” [SLO 1] and, for those that satisfactorily demonstrate those skills, may petition to satisfy SLO 2 and the Community Engagement Proficiency as a whole.

SLO 1: In order to satisfy the Community Engagement Proficiency SLO 1, students must earn a Satisfactory rating on the **rubric** form (below) participating in the following activities. The faculty/staff trip advisor evaluates the student throughout his or her Alternative Break experience.

- a. **Pre-Trip Education and Training:** Participants engage in pre-trip education meetings and training sessions for each trip, where they begin to learn about the community agency, the community, and the social issue. These training sessions are an opportunity to learn before they embark on the trip and include activities such as watching and discussing educational videos, learning statistics and stories, discussing the needs and mission of the community agency, and setting goals and expectations [SLO 1].
- b. **On-Site Direct Service:** At the beginning of each trip, students participate in orientation to the community organization and receive any skill training relevant to the service work. Throughout their time in the community, participants have the opportunity to participate in direct experience-based learning activities [SLO 1].
- c. **On-Site Reflection:** Throughout the course of the trip, students participate in daily reflection activities led by trained student Site Leaders and faculty/staff advisors to further their personal understanding of the community, the social issue, and how they can make sustainable change [SLO 1]. Additionally, all participants are expected to submit at least two (2) written reflective journals.
- d. **Reorientation:** Upon return to campus, participants take part in group discussions, journals, blogs, and other reflective activities where they share their Alternative Break experiences and translate their experiences into a lifelong commitment to active citizenship [SLO 1].

SLO 2: In order to satisfy the Community Engagement Proficiency SLO 2, students must submit a formal petition, which can be found here: <http://smu.edu/gened/>. The petition should include their satisfactory rubric and an essay through which the student reflects on how he or she has applied academic learning during the Alternative Break experience.

Rubric of Understanding and Engagement

SMU Alternative Breaks – University Curriculum

Student Name: _____

Faculty/Staff Advisor: _____

Trip Issue: _____ Trip Location: _____ Trip Break: *Fall / Winter / Spring / Summer* Year: _____

Pre-Trip Education and Training	5 Participates fully in all pre-trip trainings. Student seeks to understand the social issue and community.	4 Participates moderately in at least one (1) pre-trip training.	3 Student attends one (1) pre-trip training, but does not engage or seem interested in the material/activities.	2 Student attends a portion of one (1) pre=trip training and is not engaged nor interested.	1 Failure to attend any pre-trip training.	Comments
On-Site Direct Service	5 Participates fully in all activities with positive attitude. Builds relationships with agency staff and clients. Seeks to understand community needs.	4 Participates in all activities with positive attitude.	3 Participates in all activities with a poor attitude or participates in most activities with positive attitude.	2 Engages in few service activities.	1 Engages in none of the service activities.	
On-Site Reflection (Discussion)	5 Participates fully in discussion, through active listening and/or contribution through comments/questions. Demonstrates ability to look critically at the root causes of social issue and challenges self and others to think about the role they can play in the community.	4 Participates fully in discussion through active listening and/or contribution through comments/questions.	3 Participates moderately in discussion.	2 Participates minimally in reflective discussion.	1 Engages none of the reflective discussions.	

On-Site Reflection (Journals)*	5 Completes two (2) or more journals that are at least one page in length.	4 Completes two (2) journals. Journals are not fully one page in length.	3 Completes one (1) journal, at least one page in length.	2 Completes one (1) journal. Journal is not fully one page in length.	1 Failure to write any reflection.	
Reorientation	5 Participates fully in all scheduled reorientation activities. Demonstrates commitment to continual learning and challenges self to make life changes based on trip experience.	4 Participates fully in most reorientation activities OR participates moderately in all reorientation activities.	3 Participates moderately in some reorientation activities.	2 Attends at least part of one reorientation activity, but is disengaged in participation and/or demonstrates a poor attitude.	1 Failure to attend any reorientation activities.	

Total Points** _____ / 25

Faculty/Staff Trip Advisor: X_____

Student: X_____

CEL Staff Member: X_____

* Faculty/staff advisor does not read journals, but rather glances at the work to determine completeness and length. Journals are intended to be an outlet for students to freely and privately express their emotions, realizations, observations, and applications from their service experience.

** A total of at least 20 points are needed for the student to satisfy SLO #1 for the Community Engagement Proficiency in the University Curriculum.