

Volunteering with Diverse Communities

Program Partner Info Sheet

About Volunteering with Diverse Communities

The **Volunteering with Diverse Communities** Program (VDC) is an optional offering within the *EDUC 450: Diversity in Learning* course in the winter semester of our BEd program. Tied in with the regular course work, students undertake a weekly service-learning community placement at an agency partner. Led and collaboratively designed by our community partners, this program offers Education students the chance to gain first-hand experience working with children and youth from a variety of diverse backgrounds.

Program Timelines

July – August

- Confirm your program’s participation for the coming year, and provide any new details and updates
- September – October
- Students will apply for the program
- The Experiential Learning Facilitator will match and place students to your program

November – December

- Attend the Program Partner orientation and access the orientation package online (November) to learn more about the *Volunteering with Diverse Communities* (VDC) Program
- Share information about the program with colleagues to build a welcoming environment for Werklund students
- Identify a secondary contact within your organization who can provide leadership to the program
- The Experiential Learning Team will introduce your volunteers to you
- Connect with your volunteers and provide any trainings ahead of time before they begin in January

January – March

- Organize and prepare materials needed to support volunteers
- Meet with students for an initial (January), intermediate (February), and final meeting (March). These discussions should include goal setting, progress, areas of strength, challenges, and areas of growth. Werklund students and program mentors are expected to collaboratively establish goals for the community placement. See next page for recommendations.
- During reading week, students are not required to attend their community placements; however, if the Program Mentor and the Werklund student agree, students are welcome to participate in their community placement on their personal time.
- Organize and facilitate opportunities that allow Werklund students to gradually assume leadership roles at the community placements:
 - Learning & Engaging stages (January)
 - Planning stage (January - February)
 - Implementing stage (February - March)
- Complete a program survey at the end of the program to strengthen the partnership with Werklund and to enhance the services to all students.

Learning Stages	Details
Learning (January)	Prepare materials and facilitate opportunities for students to learn about the organization and to observe programs.
Engaging (January)	Prepare materials and facilitate opportunities for students to engage in one-on-one and group activities with children and youth.
Planning (January-February)	Prepare materials and facilitate opportunities for students to plan two activities that contribute to the positive development of diverse children and youth. Additionally, collect final draft of activity plans and provide feedback and suggested revisions.
Implementing (February-March)	Organize and facilitate opportunities for students to implement two activities that contribute to the positive development of diverse children and youth. Support Werklund student in implementing and facilitating activities.

Contact Information

Experiential Learning Facilitator

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<https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate-programs/student-opportunities/service-learning/volunteering-diverse-communities-program>



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Recommended Questions for Meetings

Initial Meeting (January)

Purpose: Provide an overview of the *community organization* (i.e., program partner) and community program, including an overview of the program curriculum, and ask the following guiding questions:

- What do you hope to achieve from being placed at this organization?
- This organization is offering community placements because we hope to ...
- How can the program mentor support you in achieving your goals?
- Do you need additional support in understanding the goals of the organization and about the program?
- Can we do a run-down of the activities that we are expected to complete by the end of this program?

Intermediate Meeting (February)

Purpose: Discuss progress of activity plans with students and their reflection on the community placement goals, make revisions where necessary, and ask the following guiding questions:

- How do you feel the community placement is going?
- Do you feel that you have had meaningful opportunities to engage in one-on-one and group activities with children/youth in our program?
- In relation to the goals that we established at the initial meeting; can you share a few things that you have learned from being at the community placement?
- In relation to the goals that we established at the initial meeting, is there anything that you are struggling to understand? e.g., behaviours of children/youth in our programs, activity plans, dynamics between children, and dynamics between staff and children.
- Do you feel we need to make changes to the placement to ensure accomplishing our respective goals?
- Overall, I feel your participation / engagement at the community placement has been ...(strengths and suggested changes).

Final Meeting (March)

Purpose: Discuss the students' final reflection on the community placement goals and ask the following guiding questions:

- Program mentors were expected to gradually increase the Werklund students' leadership role in the program (i.e., observation, to participation, to planning, to implementing and facilitating). Do you feel this was achieved?
- In relation to the goals that we established at the initial meeting and our review of those goals at the intermediate meeting, can you share a few things that you have learned from being at the community placement?
- Do you feel you achieved your goals? If yes, what contributed to the achievements? If not, how could the placement experience have been different?
- Overall, I feel your participation / engagement at the community placement has been ...(strengths and final comments).

Additional Recommendations & Examples

- **Be receptive and responsive** to comments from the other partners regarding ways in which we might better accomplish our respective tasks.
- **Work with all partners** to clarify roles, timelines, expectations, and responsibilities throughout the course of the program.

Examples of activities:

- Creating and implementing lesson plans
- Planning and leading group activities, such as sports and other forms of recreation
- Researching, planning, and facilitating group discussions on a topic relevant to children and youth from diverse backgrounds