

# Service Immersion Trip Program Policies and Guidelines

Office of Campus Ministry & Service Learning



## OVERVIEW

Service Immersion Trips are one of the ways Mercy College of Ohio “educates and inspires students to lead and to serve in the global community.” They provide students an experience of service and social justice education that is rooted in relationship with the wider community. Students are given the opportunity to engage with the world around them, encounter new realities, and reflect on their experiences in the context of a diverse community and through the lens of our Mission and Values.

## PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

- Abide by all Mercy College of Ohio Service Immersion Trip guidelines and expectations; College policies and procedures; policies of organizations where you serve or interact with; and federal, state, and local laws.
- Exhibit flexibility, open-mindedness, and positivity throughout the entire Service Immersion experience.
- Attend and participate in all pre-trip meetings.
- Attend and participate in post-trip commitments, including completing the Service Immersion Trip evaluation and attending any post-trip debriefings/reflections.
- Gain an awareness of your trip’s social issue focus and trip location.
- Maintain communication with the Trip Coordinator prior to departure and throughout the Service Immersion Trip. Respond promptly to all email and phone communication regarding the program.
- Meet all financial commitments in full and on time.
- Complete and submit all required paperwork on time.
- Serve as a respectable representative of the Service Immersion Trip Program and Mercy College of Ohio.
- Remain substance free (refrain from alcohol/drug consumption regardless of legality) during the trip, including pre and post trip events/meetings.

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Participants in the Service Immersion Trip Program should subscribe to certain ideals and strive for the level of achievement and virtue as defined by the following:

- **Practice personal and academic integrity.**  
Examples of integrity include honesty, truthfulness and preparing one's own work.
- **Respect the rights and property of others.**  
Examples include respect of other's property, a person's right to move about freely, express one's self appropriately, and enjoy privacy.
- **Respect the dignity of all people and learn from the differences in people, ideas, and opinions.**  
Examples of respect are those behaviors that do not demean the dignity of individuals or groups, such as hazing, harassment, and discrimination. Learning from differences is demonstrated by affirmative support for equal rights and opportunities for all students, faculty and staff.
- **Demonstrate concern for others and their feelings, for conditions which support their work and development, and discouragement of behaviors which threaten the freedom and respect of Mercy College of Ohio community members.**  
This concern is demonstrated by avoiding behaviors which unjustly inhibit another's ability to feel safe or welcome in their pursuit of appropriate academic goals.

*Violation of expectations, community guidelines, the Student Code of Conduct, college policies, or federal, state, or local laws may result in separation from the trip at the participant's cost, and/or review by the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA)/Dean of Students.*

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## ALCOHOL & DRUG POLICY

Consuming alcohol or recreational drugs during service immersion trips is **NOT PERMITTED**. Regardless of the age of the participant or the law in the location you are visiting, no consumption of alcohol or recreational drug use is permitted. Any participant who violates this policy will be sent home at his/her own expense. Additionally, any violations will be reviewed by the VPSA/Dean of Students per the Student Code of Conduct.

## SERVICE IMMERSION TRIP MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

Students **MUST** be present for the pre-trip orientation meeting. Youngstown and online students may attend via Skype. The orientation is an opportunity to begin building community among the participants as well as learning about the area we will be visiting and preparing for the experience overall. Important details and information are communicated at this time and additional paperwork and forms are completed – attendance is required.

Post-trip debriefing meetings and reflections are important because they allow us to deepen and share the impact of the experience. These are also a required part of the Service Immersion Trip Program.

## FORMS

In addition to the APPLICATION FORM, each participant must review the STUDENT TRAVEL POLICY, and complete an EMERGENCY CONTACT & MEDICAL FORM, as well as a LIABILITY WAIVER before the service immersion trip begins. This paperwork will be completed at the pre-trip orientation meeting. Additional paperwork may be required for students who will be driving vehicles.

## PAYMENT INFORMATION

- A deposit must be submitted for your application to be considered complete.
- All payments for the trip must be completed one week prior to departure, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Students with financial hardship can meet with Annie Devine, Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning to discuss alternative payment options, additional fundraising assistance, or to discuss a deadline extension. Please communicate this need in advance of the trip.
- Payments can be made in cash or check or major credit card to the Business Office. All checks can be made out to Mercy College of Ohio.

## REFUNDS

Typically, there are no refunds for Service Immersion Trips. Exceptions to this policy include withdrawal from the institution or documented illness or injury that prevents a participant from traveling or documented family emergency. All exceptions must be requested in writing to the Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning prior to the scheduled time of departure. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Campus Ministry & Service Learning and the Assistant Dean of Student Life. Depending on the circumstances; participants may receive a refund, the amount of which will be determined by the Director of Campus Ministry & Service Learning and the Assistant Dean of Student Life. Final decisions in matters of refund may be appealed to the Dean of Students within 5 business days of the decision being communicated to the participant.

## CANCELLATIONS

The Office of Campus Ministry and Service Learning reserves the right to cancel a trip due to travel advisories, the closing of a host agency, low enrollment, or other situations that would create an unsafe Service Immersion Trip experience. Should this happen, participants will be given the opportunity to attend a future service immersion trip or receive a refund.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AGREEMENT

By signing below, I am certifying that I have read the Service Immersion Trip Policies & Guidelines and understand that I am responsible for meeting these standards. I understand that should I fail to fulfill my obligation as represented by the standards above, my participation in the Service Immersion Trip may be evaluated and/or withdrawn and I will be financially responsible for any remaining costs associated with my place on the trip.

**Participant Name (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are accepted into the Service Immersion Trip Program, please submit a signed version of this document to:**

Annie Devine  
Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning  
Madison 5706

2221 Madison Ave. Toledo, OH 43604  
phone: 419-251-1866 | fax: 419-251-1746  
[annie.devine@mercycollege.edu](mailto:annie.devine@mercycollege.edu)

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