

Risk Management Guidelines for Service Learning: LECTURERS

1. Preamble

Since the adoption of its first Community Service Policy in 2002 the University of the Free State (UFS) had recommitted itself to the integration of its core functions of teaching, learning, research and community service (CS). The revised Community Service Policy (2006) reaffirms and extends this commitment and also recognises the importance of open systems of knowledge-generation in close and cooperative interaction with, and in the interest of, the broader society, thus answering to the challenges of the current South African development context through the production of socially relevant forms of knowledge.

One of the key implementation strategies towards achieving these goals is the priority given in the Policy to the inclusion of compulsory service learning (SL) modules in all academic programmes (at least one per programme). This prioritisation is informed by the proven record of service learning as a credit-bearing educational approach that leads to a deeper understanding of the linkage between curriculum content and community dynamics, as well as the achievement of personal growth and a sense of social responsibility in students and staff involved.

The CS Policy specifically states that the UFS will initiate and implement steps aimed at addressing the potential risks and liabilities associated with community service activities, and in this instance specifically regarding SL activities that UFS staff, students and external participants engage in while upholding a spirit of mutuality and reciprocity.

It should be noted from the outset that this document is not intended to cover the intricacies that exist in each and every field of community-based learning, associated placements, and specific academic requirements prescribed. It is a broad guideline to make SL staff members, students, and external partners aware of preventative (and, where necessary, liability) risk management practices. This guideline, therefore, is not intended to prohibit SL, but rather, to create a safe and positive service - learning environment where risks have been minimised. Prevention is always better than cure.

These guidelines are intended to further every SL role player's best interest and to encourage quality risk management practices.

2. Points of Departure

The following constitute the points of departure for service learning risk management at the UFS:

- 2.1 The University places a high priority on the safety, health and fulfilment of its staff and students – on campus as well as away, such as when engaged in SL activities.
- 2.2 Through its designated staff members, the University will take steps to identify potential dangers that are reasonably foreseeable, and will take precautionary steps to reduce possible risks involved in SL activities; and will further ensure that liability exposure (for staff, students and external partners) is kept to a minimum.
- 2.3 Risk management forms part of good practice in SL as it creates an awareness of and commitment to providing quality service among staff and students alike.
- 2.4 Risk management strategies and procedures should be adequately clarified during the orientation of the SL students and ought to be formalised in written form, either as a contract or information pamphlet. Precautionary measures should be part and parcel of the designing, planning, development, write-up and implementation of the SL module.
- 2.5 The UFS undertakes to make available training/orientation pertaining to emergency situations, risk management strategies and insurance policies to members of staff who are engaged in SL.
- 2.6 It is a responsibility of the individual faculty, through its CS Portfolio Committee, to appoint a panel of knowledgeable persons (e.g. experienced SL staff and SL site supervisors) to advise staff members who wish to implement SL modules. This panel should provide assistance with the evaluation of SL placements, and consider adequacy of the precautionary measures on a regular basis.
- 2.7 It is assumed that UFS faculties/schools will develop, or already have developed, safety guidelines specific to the placement and training of their students in addition to these SL guidelines, if required (e.g. guidelines regarding needle stick and sharp injuries in the Faculty of Health Sciences).
- 2.8 Each and every SL student has co-responsibility to ensure his/her own safety by keeping to safety measures and procedures throughout his/her participation in SL; this constitutes an essential element of his/her development as a responsible citizen and future professional serviceprovider.
- 2.9 Agreements should be entered into with the provincial/local authority and/or community service organisations in terms of which the authority/organisation undertake to collaborate with UFS staff and co-supervise the work of the “placed” SL students in return for the service being rendered to the community.
- 2.10 A student’s participation in SL should be considered against the backdrop of the declaration signed by all students as part of the UFS Application Form, in which the student acknowledges, inter alia, that participation in the degree/diploma is voluntary and that there may be “known and unknown risks and dangers” inherent in his/her participation in the degree/diploma and the “related activities”.

2.11 In essence, risk management should be the responsibility of all partners; and while there are indeed risks, the University is sufficiently convinced that these are outweighed by the advantages of engaging in SL.

3. Definition of Terms

The UFS defines service learning (SL) or “community service learning” as “*an educational approach involving curriculum-based, credit-bearing learning experiences in which students (a) participate in contextualised, well-structured and organised service activities aimed at addressing identified service needs in a community, and (b) reflect on the service experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between curriculum content and community dynamics, as well as achieve personal growth and a sense of social responsibility. It requires a collaborative partnership context that enhances mutual, reciprocal teaching and learning among all members of the partnership (lecturers and students, members of the communities and representatives of the service sector)*”.

The above definition serves as the basis for discussions regarding risk management matters in this document.

In order to further refine the SL risk management focus, the following basic terms need to be defined (cf. *Service Learning in the Curriculum*, pp. 112-113):

Risk management is formally defined as the process whereby an organisation (higher education institution – HEI) establishes its risk management goals and objectives, identifies and analyses its risks, and selects and implements measures to address its risks in an organised fashion. The goal of risk management is to improve performance by acknowledging and controlling risk, which improves the HEI’s ability to avoid unpleasant surprises that can occur during the implementation of a service learning module or project. This helps the organisation (HEI) to take control of the risks that cannot be avoided.

Risks can be categorised into different types and levels (people, property, income and goodwill). The simplest definition, however, is “*the possibility of loss, injury, disadvantage or destruction*”.

Liability in general includes almost every type of duty, obligation, debt, responsibility or hazard. More specifically, legal liability indicates under which circumstances a person is obliged to bear the damage he/she has caused another. To found liability as a matter of course, certain requirements must be met, namely the act of a person, wrongfulness, fault, harm and causation.

Liability prevention involves the systematic identification, analysis, measurement and reduction of risks. It encompasses both service learning products (e.g. poster, pamphlet, diet plan) and experiences, and also includes the service or community agency. Liability could pertain, for example, to incidents such as slipping on a wet stairway or being involved in a motor vehicle accident, and in worker’s compensation cases, among others.

Agreement and contracting refer to an arrangement made between two or more parties whereby they signify their assent, whether in writing or otherwise, to a course of action, or to a distinct intention, that affect the parties.

Insurance involves a contractual agreement that calls for one party, in exchange for a consideration, to reimburse another party for certain specified losses.

4. Guidelines for UFS Staff Involved in Service Learning

It is important that UFS staff members should be aware of the potential risks of implementing a SL module and disclose this in the module study guide. Students need to be prepared to perform their SL tasks in a professional, responsible and safe manner – both for their own sakes and those of their clients.

The idea with the following guiding principles and lists of guidelines is not to discourage prospective staff and students to engage in SL, but to make the SL environment safer and more conducive of positive outcomes for the University, staff members, students, service sector partners and community members alike.

4.1 General guidelines for UFS staff members

A UFS staff member who is responsible for a SL module should take the following guidelines into account:

- 4.1.1 Assume primary responsibility for, and take reasonable steps towards ensuring the safety of SL students and community members, in close collaboration with other staff involved and external partners.
- 4.1.2 Contemplate and be sensitive to reasonable foreseeable risks.
- 4.1.3 Understand that staff members who are involved in SL should play an active role in ensuring safe and healthy SL conditions for the students.
- 4.1.4 Take responsibility for the orientation of students regarding safety, liability and ethical matters before the SL commences.
- 4.1.5 Take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the SL students are not exposed to foreseeable danger in the course of their involvement in SL activities.
- 4.1.6 Adhere to relevant UFS policies and procedures, and, in addition develop procedures to deal with emergency situations that are specific to the placement of your SL students and review them periodically.
- 4.1.7 Keep emergency contact information (faculty contact person/student/SAPS/ hospital/ placement centre/ ambulance/ emergency service) readily available and keep (make available) copies of emergency procedures at the University and placement site at hand for the duration of the SL course.

- 4.1.8 Ensure that students have at least one cell phone that is available for use (with emergency numbers entered into the cell phone). Students should receive orientation regarding the use of the relevant contact numbers in an emergency situation.
- 4.1.9 Build a good relationship with the SAPS and other emergency personnel and make arrangements ahead of time for the speedy rendering of assistance in the event of an incident or the provision of information about local unrest/dangerous areas/obstructed routes.
- 4.1.10 Investigate placement centres and do site reviews before, during and after the SL module is offered, if at all possible. This might not be required in the case of post-graduate students who will choose/find their own SL sites.
- 4.1.11 Provide campus and SL site orientations to familiarise students with policies, procedures and risks involved in the specific service activities they will engage in and the populations they will serve. This should be undertaken in conjunction with external partners at the community sites or centres.
- 4.1.12 Ensure that all students sign the attendance register on the day when the risk management guidelines are discussed in class. For quality and risk management purposes UFS staffmembers are required to keep this register on file.
- 4.1.13 Know that staff members will be indemnified and protected by the University (insurance coverage, i.e. professional indemnity and liability coverage), provided that the staff member was acting within the scope of his/her employment.
- 4.1.14 Remember that reporting of incidents should ideally take place within 24 hours, or as soon as possible.
- 4.1.15 Staff members who transport more than 12 persons at a time are required to have a professional (endorsed) public driver's licence.

4.2 Guidelines for placement site visits

When visiting a potential SL placement site, staff members are advised to follow the guidelines provided below:

- 4.2.1 Investigate placement centres thoroughly beforehand and identify any potential dangers (preferably in consultation with the service provider).
- 4.2.2 Provide alternative placements and/or opportunities for students in SL courses to avoid potential risks and considering the safety needs of any student.
- 4.2.3 Be aware of special rules and regulations regarding placement centres that work with children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- 4.2.4 Keep proper records of the individual SL student's schedule of service and whether the service was indeed rendered.

- 4.2.5 Enter into agreements with the placement site authorities, local authority and/or provincial departments or community-based organisations to outline what their roles and responsibilities will be regarding supervision and assessment of SL students. Capture all decisions in writing.
- 4.2.6 Divulge contact information of the site supervisor to the students.
- 4.2.7 Provide the location of the site and directions via personal or public transportation, preferably in the form of a map with clear indications.

4.3 Guidelines for Service Learning student orientation

UFS staff members need to consider the following when planning orientation sessions for students:

- 4.3.1 Remember that campus and/or site orientations should be adapted to accommodate variations among SL modules, academic departments and placement centres.
- 4.3.2 Compel students to attend SL orientation and training sessions to enable them to make an informed decision relating to risks involved.
- 4.3.3 The first session should take place on campus informing students about the service provider and the nature of their service placements.
- 4.3.4 The second session ought to be presented by a senior service sector or community representative and should take place at the site where students are going to serve, informing them about emergency policies, work procedures, and other rules and regulations of the site.
- 4.3.5 Discuss the SL module with students so that they fully understand their responsibilities, the outcomes, goals and objectives of the module.
- 4.3.6 Don't assume that students are aware of such issues as liability or sexual harassment issues. Let them ask questions to adequately address uncertainty.
- 4.3.7 Let students give informed consent indicating their awareness of security matters by signing the attendance register on the day when safety matters are discussed in class. Keep this register on file.
- 4.3.8 Discuss safety measures and security issues in the course of the orientation of SL students. Make essential information regarding reasonably foreseeable risks available in pamphlet form/writing. Do not give a false or misleading impression of security or protection.
- 4.3.9 Don't assume that student fees will automatically absorb incidental SL costs or that the placement centre will pay such expenses. They can be an additional financial burden for SL students. Discuss this with the SL students in advance.
- 4.3.10 Be aware that special insurance policies for professional coverage (and others) are available for specific students and programmes (i.e. nursing).

4.4 Guidelines for the safety component of the Service Learning study guide

The safety guidelines included in the SL study guide should comprise the components listed below, as well as additional guidelines required by any specific field of training (e.g. medical, nursing or allied health profession).

- 4.4.1 Include a description of the nature of the SL experience and placement.
- 4.4.2 Specify the rights/duties and responsibilities of the students in SL experience and placement.
- 4.4.3 Stress that the SL experience is compulsory. Offer an alternative for students who, for an acceptable reason, cannot follow the specified SL. Allow students to select their placement sites randomly (as far as possible).
- 4.4.4 Stress the mandatory attendance of campus and on-site orientation in connection with the SL course.
- 4.4.5 Stipulate the duration, total number of hours per week/quarter/semester of the SL module. Distribute the SL over a consistent period of time. Make the process clear by means of a calendar of events and guidelines of control and grading.
- 4.4.6 Include important (and emergency) contact information, as well as that of the agent/service provider/supervisor. This may even be distributed by means of a separate handout or sticker/disk.
- 4.4.7 Indicate the location and route to the placement site and divulge information about transportation, safety and emergency procedures.
- 4.4.8 Identify the collaboratively identified service needs of the community that will be met through the SL placement.

5. Guidelines for Service Learning Students

The point of departure that guides this section of the risk management document is that each and every SL student has a co-responsibility to ensure his/her own safety by keeping to safety measures and procedures throughout his/her participation in SL. Through this aspect of the SL experience students are afforded an opportunity to better prepare themselves for the world of work where they might be required to venture into new territories. The following sets of guidelines should be included in the SL study guides of students.

5.1 General guidelines for students

All SL students are required to adhere to the following:

- 5.1.1 Participate in orientation, training and ongoing supervision for the SL experience.
- 5.1.2 Be sure to sign the attendance register for the day on which the risk management guidelines are discussed in class.

- 5.1.3 Be punctual and responsible in completing your commitment regarding time and task to the service provider/community.
- 5.1.4 Follow the appropriate dress code.
- 5.1.5 Always identify yourself when engaging with community members in order to ensure that they know that you represent the UFS as a service learning student, and that they understand what the purpose of your involvement is.
- 5.1.6 Inform a staff member or the service provider if you know you will be late or not able to make it at all – this is not only professional courtesy, but indicates your whereabouts.
- 5.1.7 Keep all information about clients you work with confidential.
- 5.1.8 Show respect for the supervisor, staff and clients at the placement site.
- 5.1.9 Be aware that you serve as ambassador of goodwill and are representing your University.
- 5.1.10 Talk to your lecturer or another appropriate staff member if you experience any problem or may become aware of safety risks at the placement site.
- 5.1.11 Sign in at the placement site every time you are there (if required), and record your service hours on your time record form. This will not only ensure that you receive credit for the hours you have served, but will help to allocate responsibility.
- 5.1.12 If you are uncomfortable with the placement site, you may request an alternative one. Do not just change by yourself.
- 5.1.13 Refrain from smoking when engaged in SL activities, especially where children are around.
- 5.1.14 DO NOT engage in any type of business with clients for the duration of your SL.
- 5.1.15 DO NOT give advice to clients that could have financial implications for them; always consult with your lecturer if such a temptation arises!
- 5.1.16 Ensure that you act within the scope of the set outcomes of your SL assignment and remain within your current level of competency. If in doubt, consult your lecturer or site supervisor.
- 5.1.17 Know that the University has limited insurance coverage (i.e. professional indemnity and liability coverage), which may make provision for your actions, depending on the specific circumstances, and provided that you act within the scope of your SL duties as outlined in your study guide.
- 5.1.18 It should, however, be kept in mind that the UFS is not liable for any injuries and/or damages a student may suffer through his/her own doing. It is recommended that students discuss this matter with their own insurers.

5.2 Guidelines for students entering an unfamiliar community

When you embark on your service learning activities in an unfamiliar community, you should adhere to the following guidelines, which will enhance your learning experience:

- 5.2.1 Make an effort to know your site supervisor. Ask him/her questions about the area. Solicit his/her advice on what precautions you need to take to avoid hazardous situations.
- 5.2.2 Familiarise yourself with the area. Get to know the location of phones, 24-hour stores, police stations, agency staff, other service agencies in the area and local businesses.
- 5.2.3 Be familiar with the rules of the site. These rules are in place to ensure the most efficient functioning of the operation. Rules about training requirements such as background checks, confidentiality pledges or immunisations are intended to protect both you and the people with whom you are working.
- 5.2.4 Be accessible. Provide the phone number of your service site and a schedule of your hours to a relative or friend before leaving to do service learning.
- 5.2.5 Work in pairs. Try not to be alone with clients without adequate supervision within close proximity.
- 5.2.6 Stay informed. Stay in touch with your fellow community and/or service agency workers and keep up with incidents and issues affecting the area in which you serve.
- 5.2.7 Trust your instincts. Sometimes the only indication you will have about impending problems is your “gut feeling”. These feelings are enough of a signal to take precautions or simply suspend your activity, but be sure to explain them to your supervisor.
- 5.2.8 Do what feels right. If you do not feel comfortable or safe when participating in a certain activity, do not hesitate to share your feelings with your site supervisor or another appropriate person. You are not required to participate in any activity that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

5.3 Safety guidelines for students

In addition to the above guidelines, also take note of the following:

- 5.3.1 Make sure that you know who to ask for help at the University and the placement site in encountering any kind of SL problems, or when in doubt, and in case of emergency.
- 5.3.2 Make sure that you know how to handle emergencies or where to get help on your way to or exiting from the placement site.
- 5.3.3 Again: Visit the placement site in pairs and trios – never alone.
- 5.3.4 When you embark on SL excursions, ensure that the lecturers always know exactly where you are. Deviations from the programme should be communicated to the staff member.
- 5.3.5 DO NOT report to your placement site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- 5.3.6 DO NOT give or loan your client money or other personal belongings.
- 5.3.7 DO NOT make promises or commitments to a client that you cannot keep.

- 5.3.8 DO NOT tolerate or engage in a verbal exchange of a sexual or discriminatory nature or engage in behaviour that might be perceived as sexual or discriminating with a client or serviceprovider.
- 5.3.9 DO NOT enter into a personal relationship with a client or service provider during the SL placement.
- 5.3.10 DO NOT wear or carry conspicuous jewellery and other expensive items. Conceal cell phones.
- 5.3.11 Act promptly if subjected to severe medical risks or infectious diseases at the placement site.
- 5.3.12 Should any problem arise while you are working in the community, you should immediately contact the nearest police station and enquire about the safest/recommended route to leave the area.
- 5.3.13 Report any incidents with your lecturer and/or site supervisor as soon as possible.

5.4 Arrangements for travelling and transport

Since SL students almost always engage in off-campus activities, the following arrangements for travelling and transport should be followed:

- 5.4.1 The driver of a vehicle transporting SL students should have a valid driver's licence older than two years and should be over the age of 20.
- 5.4.2 Students who transport more than 12 persons at a time are required to have a professional (endorsed) public driver's licence.
- 5.4.3 The driver of the vehicle should check it thoroughly (fuel/brakes/tyres/spare tyre) before departing on a SL trip.
- 5.4.4 Always maintain a positive attitude towards other road users, especially pedestrians.
- 5.4.5 Know the route and prescribed time schedules to the placement site. Be familiar with alternative escape routes.
- 5.4.6 Avoid high-risk crime and trouble areas *en route*.
- 5.4.7 Always go to the placement site during the day.
- 5.4.8 DO NOT travel alone in a car to the placement site.
- 5.4.9 Keep the vehicle's doors locked whilst travelling and windows preferably closed (or slightly open). Lock and immobilise (activate the alarm system/gear lock) when the vehicle is parked.
- 5.4.10 Park in well-illuminated parking areas if parking indoors.
- 5.4.11 Make sure of approved parking on the premises of the placement site.
- 5.4.12 DO NOT leave valuables/equipment in the parked vehicle.
- 5.4.13 Obey traffic rules at all times (don't speed or overload).

- 5.4.14 DO NOT give a client, service provider or stranger a ride in your own or a rented vehicle.
- 5.4.15 DO NOT drive under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- 5.4.16 Go directly to the placement site without unnecessary stops (e.g. to buy refreshments at a shop). If absolutely necessary, stop only at safe and well-frequented parking areas.
- 5.4.17 Take refreshments along to the placement site to inhibit unscheduled travelling in the vicinity of the placement site.
- 5.4.18 Be very cautious at unusual roadblocks and accident scenes, and if flagged down by police or traffic officers, request identification without opening doors and windows.
- 5.4.19 Be aware of risks (like hijacking) involved in travelling by road. Be as calm as possible under stressful circumstances. Try to remember particulars of the hijackers and their escape vehicle and convey these particulars to the police and contact person as soon as it is possible.
- 5.4.20 The University has limited insurance coverage against claims that may arise from accidents and/or injuries during **scheduled and officially approved trips** to and from SL centres at community sites when a lecturer or student has been the driver of a vehicle (either your own **authorised** or a rented vehicle). This means that you will be insured whether you are the passenger or the driver of such a vehicle.
- 5.4.21 Remember that a trip in your own vehicle will only be regarded as formally approved if you have written permission to claim for such a trip and have kept record of the kilometrestravelled. Take note: If you make use of your own vehicle without such permission, please ensure that your vehicle will be covered by your own insurance.
- 5.4.22 Please note that the University's insurance coverage does not include transport in a taxi.
- 5.4.23 If you have a breakdown or your vehicle is involved in an accident, gather all information and call in for help (if necessary). Inform your lecturer immediately and report the accident at the nearest police station.

5.5 Communication and contact information

Each group of students must be in possession of a cell phone. Where applicable, the following telephone numbers must be available to the students and must be stored in the cell phone:

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|---|------------------------------|
| The relevant UFS lecturer, supervisor or facilitator: _____ | |
| Flying Squad (SAPS): | 051 10111 |
| Report incidents at the nearest police station: _____ | |
| Ambulance service: | 051 10177 |
| Emergency services: Discovery | 086 0999 911 |
| ER 24 | 082 951 3009 |
| Medi-Clinic Emergency Unit (Contracted by UFS): | 0800 051 051 |
| Emergency services by air: AeroCare: | 082 555 8222 |
| Community contract person(s): _____ | |
| Service sector contact person(s): _____ | |
| Fellow students: _____ | |
| Reporting an incident for insurance purposes (via your lecturer): Chief Officer: Finance (UFS) – Mr Hentie Cilliers (Timeframe: Within 2 hours for accidents and within 24 hours in cases of theft) | 051 401 3131 083 644 9405 |
| Trauma Counselling (Up to three consultations) is covered by UFS insurance (accessed via Mr Hentie Cilliers) – provided by Europ Assistance: | 083 1999 |
| The following on-campus emergency services are available to students: | |
| Protection Services (Make a statement ASAP and provide Mr Cilliers with a copy) | 051 401 2911 |
| Medical Emergency Services (Kovsie Health) | 051 401 2603 |
| “If things are getting too much for me” – Contact a Counsellor at Kovsie Counselling (Social worker) | 073 182 3048 |
| Source: <i>UFS Student Portal HYSteria General – Where can I get help?</i> http://studentportal.ufs.ac.za/content.php?DCcode=0&DivCode=0&rid=36 | |

6. The Role of External Service Learning Partners

The following guidelines are offered as a broad outline of matters that should be negotiated with external partners in an open, collaborative manner. Partners are requested to consider the following actions for risk management purposes:

- 6.1 Thoroughly review the SL agreement to understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties.
- 6.2 Assign a supervisor for SL students at your placement site.
- 6.3 Orientate all SL students to your organisation/agency/government institution and its policies, procedures, clientele profile and emergency procedures. This will help to ensure that SL students act in safe and productive ways during their placement.
- 6.4 Require SL students to sign in/out each time they serve, so that you are aware of who is at your placement centre at all times.
- 6.5 Communicate problems with SL students to the designated UFS staff members.
- 6.6 Ensure that you have the contact number of the responsible faculty member/SL student in case problems or emergencies arise, or accidents happen.
- 6.7 Ask for the SL study guide distributed to the SL students.
- 6.8 Review each student's instruction and ensure that you can help the student to meet their SL objectives.
- 6.9 DO NOT expect SL students to perform tasks beyond their capabilities as volunteers, or beyond their scope of work, as outlined in the SL study guide.

7. Procedure to Implement Risk Management

The implementation of the risk management code in SL placements (whether preventative or remedial) goes hand in hand with the University's approach to risk management, namely:

- 7.1 To place a high priority on the safety, health and fulfilment of its members of staff and students (on campus as well as away doing SL).
- 7.2 To take steps to identify potential dangers that are foreseeable by the reasonable person and in a fair way to reduce such risks and, whenever unavoidable, liability exposure by taking precautionary steps not to inhibit SL, but to sensitise those involved to tread lightly and contemplate foreseeable risks to minimise the risks in SL.
- 7.3 To provide tools (e.g. SL agreements) developed to formalise the relationships amongst the different role players.

7.1 Proposed risk management process

The ideal would be to integrate the above strategies and tools in one continuing process to complete the SL placement. The implementation of the risk management process would then be developed along the following lines:

- 7.1.1 Familiarise yourself with the guiding principles enumerated above, subscribing to the underlying philosophies of SL and securing the best interests of the staff member, student, community partner, and the UFS and thereby reducing risk in SL.
- 7.1.2 Design the SL module and study guide, including the comprehensive student orientation guidelines (compiled in consultation with the external partners) and inform students accordingly.
- 7.1.3 As a risk management tool, the SL study guide ensures that the student has been made aware of the guidelines for and limitations of SL, and that the risks associated with SL placement have been read, discussed and understood.
- 7.1.4 Create a new partnership with a suitable community-based partner or proceed with the specifics of an existing SL placement. Review the guidelines for SL site visits. Meet with the supervisor of the community-based site.
- 7.1.5 Draft the agreement between the external partner(s) and the University (or authorised signatory). The contents of the agreement should be negotiated with as few as possible changes to the constant and unchangeable segments thereof (for legal and practical risk management reasons), but nevertheless in a way promoting open and reciprocal community partnerships. After having had enough time to look the agreement over, recommend amendments (if necessary, acceptable and manageable), and having reached consensus, the agreement can be signed by the parties.
- 7.1.6 After the partnership agreement between the University and community partner has been agreed on and signed, the SL placement specifics are sorted out between the faculty member and the community partner. This is done along with logistical information and orientation requirements in accordance with the orientation guidelines (above). All these items are incorporated in the SL study guide, which has been developed in congruence with the community partnership agreement and meetings.
- 7.1.7 Develop risk management procedures for the SL module and include it in the study guide.
- 7.1.8 Discuss risks and preventative conduct/emergency policies/accident procedures/liability issues with students during orientation.
- 7.1.9 Facilitate the signing by all students of the relevant attendance register on the day when the risks management guidelines are discussed in class.
- 7.1.10 Facilitate orientation of students by staff at placement centres.

7.1.11 Keep a register listing incidents related to your SL module.

| Date | Place | Nature of incident | Persons involved | Remedial action taken | Financial implications |
|------|-------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
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7.2 Codifying the service learning relationship

Codifying a relationship in writing can serve many useful purposes, for instance, ensuring that the parties have a shared understanding of the nature and extent of their work together, holding all parties accountable for the roles and responsibilities they have agreed to, clarifying legal obligations (*inter alia* evaluation, assessment, and supervision), and the management of risks.

At a minimum, the written partnership agreement (as far as risk management is concerned) should include the following, as delineated in the UFS Guidelines for Service Learning Collaboration (Annexure A):

- 7.2.1 Each partner’s expectations and anticipated benefits of the partnership.
- 7.2.2 The roles, responsibilities and key tasks for each partner, along with a corresponding timeline.
- 7.2.3 The partnership’s intended outcomes.
- 7.2.4 The partnership’s risk management plan and what each partner’s role will be in risk management.
- 7.2.5 The partnership’s anticipated products and any copyright or ownership issues.
- 7.2.6 Renewal process (if there is a desire to continue for the foreseeable future).
- 7.2.7 Incorporation of general provisions pertaining to indemnification (i.e. allocation of responsibility for negligent conduct occurring in the performance of the agreement, and holding harmless provisions based on the need of the contracting parties); minimum general liability insurance and vehicle and property coverage – the University may absorb this coverage if the community partner is not able to do it and if the SL experiences are valuable enough to warrant it; status of students as volunteers (not employees) of the community partner or University; governing laws (such as The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act; the Workman’s Compensation Act and privacy of clients); limitation on the assignment of the agreement; alteration or variation of the agreement; endorsement policy as to products and services; survival of agreement, warranties or clauses after termination thereof; severability of valid and unenforceable provisions; and encompassing nature of agreement.
- 7.2.8 Proper designated signing (by competent parties to) and dating of the legally binding agreement.

The following form is appended to indicate what such documents should include: *Guidelines for Service Learning Collaboration* (Guidelines for negotiating the rules of engagement for service learning among the following parties: representatives of the relevant University departments, community representatives and a service sector partners). Be sure to check with the University's risk management consultants or attorneys before using a form based on these samples.

References and Resources

This document should be read in conjunction with Chapter 6, "Risk Management and Agreements for Service-Learning", of the publication *Service-Learning in the Curriculum. A Resource for Higher Education Institutions* (June 2006, HEQC/CHE and JET Education Services).

Available at: www.ufs.ac.za/servicelearning

Other references:

Best Practices for Managing Risk in Service Learning. Community Service Learning in The California State University.

Available at: www.CalState.edu

Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). 2006. *Service Learning in the Curriculum: A resource for Higher Education Institutions.*

Relevant sections of the safety policies of the Universities of Pretoria, the Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch.

The transport and safety policy of the UFS School of Nursing.

Other information, adapted to the UFS's special needs in service learning, with inputs from various staff members.

Annexures

Annexure A: *UFS Guidelines for Service Learning Collaboration.*

Available at: www.ufs.ac.za/servicelearning