

PhD in Environmental Studies

The Service Project

In Antioch University New England's Doctoral Program in Environmental Studies, service means providing a gift of learning, compassion, and intention to a program, community, or institution that aspires to improve quality of life, promote justice, address inequity or intolerance, or enhance the environment. Through the service practicum, students at an advanced level of training reaffirm how their academic experience fits into the non-academic world and strengthens community, placing their scholarship in a renewed context.

Students engaged in service learning are giving their knowledge to the community they are working with. In many subsistence cultures, human/nature interactions are often conceptualized in terms of reciprocity, rather than management. Perhaps service learning is the foundation of restoration ecology in the broadest sense of the term, the level at which knowledge can cultivate life.

The service project must be completed by the end of the third year. Upon completion of the project, students are expected to submit an essay which assesses the experience. This includes a discussion of goals and objectives, the parameters of the project, the organizational, political, environmental, or educational ramifications of the project, and the questions that were raised by the project, including suggestions for future work, either in the form of institutional recommendations or as scholarly research.

It is expected that students will complete a minimum of three hundred hours of service. This may be structured as six hours a week over a year, a month-long intensive project, or another time table that accommodates the needs of all involved in the service setting. These scenarios depict a range of service projects, with different possible time commitments.

Examples of service projects might include:

- Assisting a grassroots advocacy organization in developing a public opinion poll to ascertain community values regarding a controversial project
- Designing an inclusive public participation process for a controversial local environmental issue
- Organizing local conservation biology research for a community that is concerned about habitat preservation and ecotourism
- Developing environmental education programs for the residents bordering an ecological reserve
- Writing a series of newspaper articles about an important public issue that has not been amply covered
- Planning a conference, designing a special issue of a journal, or developing a public service video on an issue of local and regional importance