

Reflection Paper

Independent project participants are required to complete a capstone activity upon concluding their projects. The **Reflection Paper** capstone option allows students to use reflection to incorporate their service work into their academic education and personal growth, to improve the way in which they serve, to bring meaning to their service, and to contemplate next steps.

The structured reflection questions outlined in this capstone activity are designed to link your service experiences to personal and professional development. Reflecting on how your DukeEngage project has influenced your own life and learning can impact your growth and understanding in areas such as:

- academic and career exploration
- civic responsibility and political consciousness
- intellectual pursuit
- social justice
- leadership development
- cross-cultural understanding
- professional development
- regional knowledge
- spiritual fulfillment

If you choose to complete a reflective paper to fulfill your DukeEngage independent project capstone requirement, aim to write 5-10 pages (double-spaced). Within your essay, include responses to each question in Category A. Select at least two or three of the prompts from Category B to include in your writing. Feel free to include photos as well.

Please submit your paper via email to DukeEngage (thomas.n.phillips@duke.edu) and to your project mentor prior to the deadline.

Category A

What did you do on a typical day at your placement?

How did that change throughout your time spent with the community partner? (Consider your expectations on arrival, activities you were involved with, level of responsibility, whom you worked with, etc.)

What do you feel was your main contribution?

What did you learn from your community partner and the community you lived in (personally, intellectually, and/or professionally)?

How did this project connect to your academic learning and what might it lead to next?

Category B

What is one thing you learned as a result of a disappointment or a failure during your project?

What was the most difficult part of your work?

If a time warp placed you back at the first day of your project, what would you do differently the second time around?

How did people see you there? As a staff member; a friend; a student; or something else? What did you feel like when you were there?

What insights did you gain into people? What cultural factors may be at work?

How similar is your impression of yourself to the impression others seem to have of you?

Share the connections you have found between your service work and your classes or life at Duke.

Reflect on a critical incident at your service placement where you learned something significant about yourself, community partner, project, or all three.

Think back on a moment when you felt especially happy or satisfied. What does that tell you about yourself?

What kind of person does it take to be successful (as a volunteer or as a professional employee) at the kind of work you did?