

### SAMPLE MOU

Developed by Carol L. Glasser, PHD

This is a sample memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a community engaged research project involving a college class. It is an actual MOU for a project completed in Spring 2019. Annotations provide guidance as to components of the MOU as well as considerations to discuss with a community partner when developing an MOU.

#### Research and Learning Agreement

Between

[ANIMAL SHELTER]

AND

Carol L. Glasser, PhD  
Instructor, Sociology in Action  
Minnesota State University Mankato

Contact:  
XXXXXXXXXX

Contact:  
Carol L. Glasser  
XXXXXXXXXX

This is an agreement to work together on a study assessing volunteerism at [ANIMAL SHELTER]. The study will involve a survey of volunteers, interviews with key staff and volunteers, a literature review addressing volunteerism, and a final report of the findings.

**Commented [Dr. G1]:** Provide a brief introduction to the project and outline the main project goals

The goals of this project are to provide:

1. Useful research for [ANIMAL SHELTER] to better understand their volunteer base in order to promote retention and satisfaction among volunteers.
2. An applied learning and research experience for students studying applied and public sociology.

This research will be a collaboration between Carol Glasser, [ANIMAL SHELTER], and students enrolled in Sociology in Action at MSU Mankato in the Spring 2019 semester. Glasser and [ANIMAL SHELTER] will begin the collaboration in December 2018 and incorporate students in January 2019. The final product will include a report, available in both print and electronic form, and a presentation by the students in May 2019. The project will be completed in May 2019, though [ANIMAL SHELTER] and Glasser may choose to extend this research further if they both agree.

**Commented [Dr. G2]:** Clearly identify all the participants in the project and when they will be expected to work on the project

**Commented [Dr. G3]:** The instructor should determine prior to beginning the project if they will need to continue the research publish something academically from the research to meet their own professional expectations. If so, this should be clearly discussed and outlined prior to the start of the project.

Glasser will serve as the instructor for Sociology in Action and will be responsible for primary study design, completing all required paperwork for Minnesota State Mankato regarding the project, and working directly with students to provide them adequate training for the project. Glasser will also be primarily in charge of the study design, but will rely on [ANIMAL SHELTER] for direction in the process of survey design and sampling and receive their consent before beginning the study.

**Commented [Dr. G4]:** Clearly define what each participant/ group working on the project is responsible for managing/ completing. It is essential this is clearly and openly discussed with the instructor and community partner before involving students so that the community partner can feel more open to express the limitations on their resources and the degree to which they personally want to engage with students.

Students, with guidance from both Glasser and [ANIMAL SHELTER], will be responsible for completing a literature review, conducting the study, analyzing the data, completing a report, and preparing a presentation for [ANIMAL SHELTER] stakeholders. All students will complete service learning at [ANIMAL SHELTER] in the area of animal sheltering during [ANIMAL SHELTER'S] regularly scheduled volunteer dog-walking opportunities, except in the case of allergies or other extenuating circumstances. In such cases other arrangements for an adequate service learning opportunity will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Students will sign up for pre-determined days in January-March 2019 in order to ensure that [ANIMAL SHELTER] is not overwhelmed with too many students on a given day.

**Commented [Dr. G5]:** The instructor should be in the role of lead researcher/PI for the project. Students should not be left alone to design and develop projects on their own. This can lead to incomplete projects at the end of the semester and an inefficient use of the community partner's time.

**Commented [Dr. G6]:** Set up student guidelines based around planned assessments. Assessments should have the dual purpose of evaluating learning and completing the project. Instructors should always provide a way on their syllabus to remove students from the project and give them an alternate project if they are hindering progress. This should be included in the syllabus but not on the MOU, as the MOU is typically signed before the involvement of students between the instructor and organization.

[ANIMAL SHELTER] will provide consultation and service-learning opportunities. [ANIMAL SHELTER] will work with Glasser in December 2018 to develop the project parameters and will work with Glasser and Students from January 2019-May 2019 to consult on the project. [ANIMAL SHELTER] will identify no more than three key personnel to meet with Students for up to 10 class periods in the spring semester. Days and times will be determined based on the individuals' availability and project needs. Classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursday, 3:30-4:45 pm, which is when most of these meetings will take place. However, other times for meeting can be arranged, depending on everyone's schedules and project needs.

**Commented [Dr. G7]:** It is important to have clear conversations before the start of the project and before involving students when deciding what the community partner will contribute. They should only come into the classroom on a regular basis if working with students fits their organizational or project mission and they have the resources to send someone there. If they do not have these resources invite them to come as a guest speaker at the start of the class and make clear agreements about how they will communicate with the students after that point (directly, though an appointed student? Through the instructor? Via email or phone?) You want to ensure the project adds value to the community partner and does not misuse their resources.

Though Glasser will provide guidance, much of this project will be conducted and carried out by students. While the highest quality of work is the goal, it cannot be guaranteed. In the case that both Glasser and [ANIMAL SHELTER] agree that the work provided by the students is inadequate, Glasser will provide a revised project by July 2019.

**Commented [Dr. G8]:** Set up expectations about the final project. Expectations include quality, type of final product, and time frames. If the community partner is relying on the project outcomes, the instructor should determine if it is appropriate to offer to redo the project for the community partner if the final product is not useful. This should be clearly discussed prior to beginning the partnership and included in the MOU.

Signatures verify an agreement by all signing parties.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol L. Glasser, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME/ OF SIGNEE FOR [ANIMAL SHELTER]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date