

Complementary Learning Handbook

Some kinds of learning are best accomplished outside the classroom, so an important part of the Honors Program is participation in activities that complement traditional academic work. The RIT Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) and the Honors Program provide many such opportunities, and many students find their own. This document explains the particulars of students' commitment, including definitions and examples, annual expectations, and ways to record your activity.

Table of Contents

<i>Expectations</i>	1
<i>Types of Complementary Learning</i>	3
Direct Service to a Non-Profit Organization	3
Citizenship	4
Indirect Service (CLCE calls this Advocacy)	4
Leadership Activities	4
<i>Designated Activities</i>	5
<i>If you know of an activity that we should consider, tell us!</i>	5
Designated Roles	5
<i>Broad Categories of Activity Outside of Complementary Learning</i>	6
Academic Pursuit is not Complementary Learning	6
Compensated Time is not Complementary Learning	6
Activism is not Complementary Learning	6
Direct Philanthropy is not Complementary Learning	6
Illegal and Rehabilitative Activity is not Complementary Learning	7
<i>Submitting Complementary Learning Hours</i>	8

Expectations

Students in the RIT Honors Program participate in at least **20 hours** of complementary learning activities per year (September 1 — August 31), until reaching a total of at least **70 hours**.

- No activity can earn more than 15 hours (neither a one-time nor a distributed effort such as CLCE alternative break, serving as an officer in a student organization, etc.)
- The threshold of 70 hours must be reached before the semester in which you graduate (e.g., if you graduate in May, you must be done in or before the previous December).

Types of Complementary Learning

Complementary learning activities often involve unpaid work with non-profit organizations for the benefit of others, and the Honors Program curates a list of activities that are cultural or academic in nature. In this section we describe different kinds of acceptable activities.

Direct Service to a Non-Profit Organization

The words *organization* and *volunteerism* are at the heart of direct service. The activity must be **sanctioned by a non-profit organization** (typically designated as a 501c3 organization for tax purposes), whether you do it with the organization or on its behalf.

- Cleaning kennels at an animal shelter is a good thing to do, and it is working with a non-profit organization, so it **is** recognized as complementary learning.
- Raking your elderly neighbor's leaves is a good thing to do, but if it's an individual act of kindness that's not with or on behalf of a non-profit organization, it is **not** recognized as complementary learning.
- Volunteering in a soup kitchen is a good thing to do, and it is working with a non-profit organization, so it **is** recognized as complementary learning.
- Walking door-to-door delivering flyers that announce the opening of a tutoring center may be a positive contribution to your community, but your time is **not** recognized as complementary learning *unless the tutoring center is a nonprofit organization*.

Some complementary learning activities require preparation. Although the activity itself is recognized as complementary learning, the preparation (training, rehearsal, creation of materials) is typically not recognized. In brief, *preparing to serve* is different than serving.

- Volunteering your time as a firefighter **is** recognized as complementary learning because you are donating your time and energy to a public institution (non-profit). However, the boot camp training that you must complete in preparation does **not** count.
- Volunteering your musical talent at an event that supports a non-profit organization **is** recognized as complementary learning, but the rehearsals leading up to that event are **not** (they are a kind of training).

Other examples of service include (but are not limited to):

- Any event organized by the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement
- Volunteering at a literacy program or at your local library
- Volunteering with Pick up the Parks or Habitat for Humanity
- Staffing a blood drive or a 5k-race to benefit a non-profit organization

Other non-examples of service include (but are not limited to):

- Giving blood (different than staffing!)
- Running in a 5k Race (different than staffing the race!)
- Tutoring

Citizenship

Citizenship activities are unpaid time in which you promote the goals of a non-profit grassroots civic or governmental organization with the overarching goal of promoting a cause or challenging a policy.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Attending a political rally or a social-change protest
- Attending RIT's Expressions of King's Legacy events
- Volunteering for a political campaign
- Volunteering as a door-to-door representative of the Environmental Defense Fund

Non-examples include (but are not limited to):

- Time spent making signs in preparation for a rally

Indirect Service (CLCE calls this Advocacy)

Whereas direct service is done **with** an organization, indirect service (which CLCE calls "advocacy") is done **for** a non-profit organization. This category includes *indirect philanthropy*, by which we mean unpaid time spent gathering on behalf of a non-profit organization — you are making other people's philanthropy possible.

Examples of advocacy include (but are not limited to):

- Organizing a food or toiletries drive and delivering the collected goods.
- Volunteering your time to generate funds for the Girl Scouts by selling cookies, provided that you are not given anything for your efforts (you cannot be paid in any way).
- Generating money by walking in Relay for Life, provided that you have pledges via which you are collecting money. (Walking on your own is good, but it's direct philanthropy.)
- Staffing a table with information packets promoting a non-profit organization

Leadership Activities

The Honors Program recognizes leadership activities as complementary learning (unless paid) including the leadership of student organizations registered with Campus Groups.

Examples of leadership include (but are not limited to):

- Successful completion of a *Momentum* program offered by the CLCE
- Time spent actively engaged in an executive board position for a student club (e.g., President, Vice President, Treasurer)
- Time engaged in the responsibilities of an officer or representative to the Honors Council or the RIT Student Government
- Time spent representing the student organization in an official/authorized capacity

Non-examples include (but are not limited to):

- Attending meetings (distinct from leading them)
- Attending events (distinct from organizing or staffing them)

Designated Activities

Participating in events designated by the Honors Program as complementary learning is, of course, complementary learning. You should look for these activities in weekly email from the Honors Program.

Examples of designated activities include (but are not limited to):

- Volunteering at the fall research symposium, spring gala, or open houses
- Participating in service events run by the Honors Council
- Alternative Break organized by the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement
- New Horizons events through the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement
- The annual Fram Critical Thinking lecture

If you know of an activity that we should consider, tell us!

Non-examples include (but are not limited to):

- Attending the spring gala or pop-up pizza events

Designated Roles

As you will see below, paid positions are almost never recognized as complementary learning. There are two exceptions:

- **RIT Orientation Leaders**, whether working for New Student Orientation or as Honors Mentors, are credited with **15 hours** per year for their contribution to building the community.
- **Members of Honors Council** who have remained active throughout the academic year are credited with 15 hours per year for their contribution to building the community.

- **RIT Resident Assistants** are credited **15 hours** of complementary learning in recognition of the unpaid time spent helping residents on behalf of RIT.

Broad Categories of Activity Outside of Complementary Learning

Having read the previous sections of this handbook, you understand that only specific types of activities are recognized as complementary learning. In addition to the non-examples listed previously, there are broad categories of activity that are almost always outside the scope of complementary learning. If you have any questions, please email honorscomplearning@rit.edu.

Academic Pursuit is **not** Complementary Learning

Time that you spend furthering your academic knowledge, including participation as an investigator in a research project, is not recognized as complementary learning. (However, participating in a research project often counts as honors points!)

Compensated Time is **not** Complementary Learning

Excepting the special roles described above, activity is not recognized as complementary learning if you are paid for your time, effort, or skill. This includes prizes, payment in kind, and monetary remuneration including stipends and scholarships. If you have questions, ask!

Activism is **not** Complementary Learning

The CLCE uses the word activism to mean activities that promote or educate about an organization that is not registered as a non-profit (i.e., not 501c3). *You should be paid if you are doing work for a company* — even if you think the company is great and that it contributes to the good of society.

Direct Philanthropy is **not** Complementary Learning

Direct philanthropy is the giving of gifts to a charitable or non-profit organization, often but not always monetary in nature. (This is something that you might do because you want to make the world a better place. That's good. Do that, even though it's not complementary learning.)

Examples of direct philanthropy include (but are not limited to):

- Donating money to a church, political or crowdfunding campaign
- Giving donations to Goodwill, or food or toiletry drives

Illegal and Rehabilitative Activity is not Complementary Learning

Activity is not recognized as complementary learning if it is illegal. Nor is it recognized if completed due to a mandate from the Center for Student Conduct, or a local, state, or federal court or agency.

Submitting Complementary Learning Hours

In all cases, your reporting should be contemporaneous with your activity. Rather than collecting a single long list of activities to report at the end of the year, report activities in the same week they are done (or as soon as possible).

The method of your reporting will depend on the activity:

- Activity characterized as **direct service, citizenship, or indirect service (advocacy)** should be submitted using the web form provided by the CLCE (link below)
 - <https://www.rit.edu/lead/report-service-and-philanthropy-hours>
 - When prompted with “Please select your organization” **you must choose Honors Program in order for us to be informed.** (The web form will collect more information later about when, where, with what group, etc.)
 - **Warning:** The CLCE web form is built to serve the whole RIT community, and so allows you to record activity that does not count toward complementary learning. See the previous discussion of categories that are not accepted and ask us if you have questions!
- **Leadership activities:** Activities that allow you to take a leadership role like serving as an officer of a student club or organization on campus or a varsity captain for a sports team. These activities should be reported using the Honors Program web form: [Submit Complementary Learning to Honors](#)
- For **service to or with the Honors Program**, including participation in activities organized by the Honors Council or the Honors Program Office, the event organizer will pass your name to the Honors Program office along with a description of the event and the number of hours that you contributed. The Honors Program office will record these hours for you.