

CIVIC LEARNING PROGRAMME CHARTER

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1 GOALS OF THE CIVIC LEARNING PROGRAMME

The Civic Learning Programme is a pillar of the Undergraduate College curriculum and a compulsory module of the Bachelor of Arts degree.

The programme gives students an opportunity to engage with issues of citizenship and social responsibility from both a conceptual and a practical perspective by connecting academic coursework and experience in the field. Students are invited to develop a personal project on a topic of their choice involving community service or the promotion of equality and inclusion:

- **Community service** can be defined as any activity that benefits the community as a whole, or any individual or group initiative advancing the public interest (i.e. surpassing individual interests). Community service also involves reflecting on what constitutes the public interest and what it means to live in community, in a cohesive society (examples include initiatives within education, the environment, peace-building, health, etc.).
- **Promotion of equality and inclusion** refers to efforts to combat discrimination, as per the 25 criteria set out in French law. Examples include initiatives aimed at groups likely to experience discrimination (due to location, age, physical appearance, sexuality, religion, disability, etc.) or disadvantaged groups (social precarity, financial hardship, isolation, etc.).

The Civic Learning Programme fulfils Sciences Po's goal of training ethically minded and socially conscious individuals, aware of social conditions at levels (local, international and global) and capable of working with and for others. Its aim is to encourage students to identify the specificities of fieldwork in a given context or territory, to consider the challenges of group project work, and to develop an analytical and practical approach aligned with humanist values.

1.2 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The Civic Learning Programme offers students an opportunity to:

- Consider different citizenship issues through a multidisciplinary and comparative lens informed by in the realities of the field (i.e. Learning by Doing), with the overarching aim of developing critical thinking and responsible action.

- Build skills and competencies in three crucial areas, specifically:
 1. Multidisciplinary knowledge: develop intellectual agility by engaging with different experiences, spaces and ways of thinking; analyse and contextualise information from a theoretical and practical perspective.
 2. Methodological skills: design and implement a project over an extended period and evaluate its outcomes; practise self-reflection and self-assessment in the projects completed.
 3. Personal and citizenship skills: sharpen sensitivity and observation; learn how to share ideas and listen to others; show tenacity in determining the right responses to often complex situations; hone ability to adapt to a wide variety of contexts (e.g. intellectual, professional, social, multicultural, geographic, etc.) and learn to position oneself in a given organisation; contribute to collective problem-solving by drawing on the ideas and experience of each team member.

- Develop a career plan taking inspiration from the different professional roles, assignments and organisations encountered.

1.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Civic Learning Programme is informed by Sciences Po's Academic Rules and Regulations and its Regulations on Student Life.

The principles of citizenship and social responsibility which guide the programme also form the foundations of the French Constitution and French law.

In the Preamble and Article 1 of the Constitution of 1958:

- *Preamble*: "The French people solemnly proclaim their attachment to the Rights of Man and the principles of national sovereignty as defined by the Declaration of 1789, confirmed and complemented by the Preamble to the Constitution of 1946, and to the rights and duties as defined in the Charter for the Environment of 2004."
- *Article 1*: "France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organised on a decentralised basis. Statutes shall promote equal access by women and men to elective offices and posts as well as to professional and social positions."

Finally, these guiding principles are enshrined more widely in international documents providing for the protection of human rights, specifically:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
2. The European Convention on Human Rights of 1950;
3. Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951;
4. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966;
5. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979
6. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

2. PROGRAMME COMPONENTS AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Civic Learning Programme is a compulsory module of the Bachelor of Arts degree, worth a minimum of six ECTS credits (nine ECTS credits maximum), together with the six ECTS credits of the Capstone Project. The requirements and components of the programme are set out below.

2.1 Completion of two field experiences

In the interest of ensuring a level playing field for undergraduates, no community service or citizenship activities undertaken by students prior to their enrolment at Science Po are eligible for credit within the Civic Learning Programme. Academic staff reserve the right to review and refuse civic internship and independent project proposals that do not meet the programme specifications.

All field experiences must involve direct and demonstrable participation in initiatives to assist or advise target beneficiaries (types of initiatives include social action, education, awareness-raising, prevention etc.). These field experiences are then evaluated on the basis of a written report by students and a form completed by their supervisors at the host organisation where they completed their placement.

Civic internships and independent projects may take a variety of different forms and may be either voluntary or paid, so long as students can demonstrate genuine involvement in community service and/or actions to promote equality and inclusion within the host organisation or department. Administrative or logistical tasks associated with the running of the host structure do not fall within this category.

Field placements must be undertaken onsite, in a non-partisan, non-union, non-proselytising, and non- or low-profit organisation with a social or charitable purpose. The organisation may be either public or private.

- The **civic internship** is completed off-campus in students' first year of the Undergraduate College, after the examination period (in either May, June, July or August). It requires students to spend four to six consecutive weeks working or volunteering full-time within a single organisation (for a total of 140 hours). Additional provisions are as follows:

1. In the interest of promoting local civic engagement (i.e. initiatives near where you live), students should give priority to civic internship opportunities in their campus city or, for practical reasons (i.e. cost etc.), elsewhere in France.
2. In the interest of promoting the educational mission of the Undergraduate College and its commitment to European civic engagement, civic internships may also be undertaken in Europe (here encompassing the European Union and the European continent).
3. If, for practical reasons (i.e. visa, cost etc.), options 1 and 2 are not feasible, students may complete their civic internship in the country of their parents' tax residence.

The civic internship may take the form of a paid internship, volunteering placement (formally contracted with the host organisation), or fixed-term contract (CDD). In all cases, the internship will be supervised and approved by campus academic staff and the Sciences Po Careers Service.

- The **civic engagement project** is completed off-campus in students' second year of the Undergraduate College, on a part-time basis (for a total of 50 hours, distributed across the two semesters). Students work to design and implement – or implement alone – a project with a social and community mission, in their free time outside of classes. Any student associations at Sciences Po proposing projects that meet the Civic Learning Programme specifications are also eligible. Students are free to determine the parameters of their project, choosing one of the following options:
 1. An **independent civic engagement project** undertaken within an organisation of the student's choice, in the form of a paid internship, a volunteering placement (formally contracted with the host organisation) or a fixed-term contract (CDD).
 2. A **group civic engagement project** chosen from a list published by Sciences Po and formally contracted with the host organisation.

Students may also choose to undertake a second and optional civic engagement project during their third year abroad. This is completed in association with their host university abroad and is worth an additional three ECTS credits.

2.2 SUBMISSION OF THREE PIECES OF WRITTEN WORK

An internship report on students' first-year field experience, submitted at the start of Semester 3.

A project review (in written report or creative format) of the second-year civic engagement project, submitted at the end of Semester 4.

A Capstone Project: as the final assessment of the Sciences Po's Bachelor of Arts degree, the Capstone Project is a chance for students to synthesise the multidisciplinary knowledge and training they have gained at the Sciences Po Undergraduate College. It is worth six ECTS credits.

The Capstone Project requires strong academic writing skills. Within a methodology workshop running throughout the second year, students receive 18 hours of supervision from an academic mentor, who also evaluates the project upon its completion. The project constitutes an extended piece of independent written work responding to a research question based on a situation or context encountered during students' field experiences for the Civic Learning Programme.

Students set out their research question and formulate an analytical response proposing some form of solution or action. The paper may take one of two forms:

- A policy-oriented position paper, written as though addressed to a policy-maker.
- An academic-oriented position paper, comprising a literature review on the chosen research topic and working hypotheses.

3. DIAGRAM OF PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

Programme components	First year	Second year	
	Summer civic internship (3 ECTS)	Civic engagement project (3 ECTS)	Capstone Project (6 ECTS)