

THE CHARTER OF THE CIVIC LEARNING PROGRAMME

1. GENERAL PRESENTATION

1.1 Overview

The Civic Learning Programme is a pillar of the academic mission of the Undergraduate College and a mandatory component of the Bachelor of Arts degree.

The Programme offers students an opportunity to learn about citizenship and social responsibility from both conceptual and empirical perspectives by connecting social sciences and humanities coursework with concrete civic actions on the ground.

Spanning all three undergraduate years, the Civic Learning Programme invites students to develop a personal project that pursues a theme involving community service that promotes equality and fairness:

- **Community service** can be broadly defined as activities that benefit the collectivity as a whole, including involving individuals or groups in the service of the common good (i.e., beyond individual self-interest). Serving the community demands an understanding of the founding principles of the common good, the conditions needed for peaceful coexistence, and the domains in which actions can bring about social cohesiveness (such as education, the environment, peace, health, etc.)
- **Equality and Solidarity** are the foundations of the fight against discrimination based on [25 criteria established under French law](#). Civic actions promoting them provide aid to groups likely to be victims of discrimination because of factors such as geographical location, age, physical appearance, sexuality, religion, or disability. These activities are specifically designed to assist those in difficulty such as financial hardship or social isolation.

The Civic Learning Programme promotes core principles of Sciences Po such as high ethical standards and an awareness of local, national, European, and international and international social realities while enacting a personal commitment to giving back to society.

Students are encouraged to develop an understanding of the issues that underlie citizenship by participating in a collective project and by thinking--and acting--independently and critically in accordance with Sciences Po's humanist principles.

1.2 Objectives

The Civic Learning Programme promotes:

- **An understanding of citizenship issues** through a multidisciplinary, comparative approach that includes real-life field experience (*Learning by doing*) with the objective to hone one's critical analysis while acting with a greater sense of responsibility.
- **Developing three domains of essential skills:**
 - **Multidisciplinary Knowledge:** Developing intellectual agility by engaging with diverse ways of thinking and acting, encountering different physical spaces, and evaluating and contextualizing information in both theory and practice
 - **Methodological Skills:** Designing and implementation of a project over an extended period of time, evaluating outcomes and engaging in critical analysis and self-assessment
 - **Personal and Civic Skills:** Sharpening one's sense of observation, learning to share ideas and listen to others, developing an ability to be tenacious in the search for solutions to complex situations. Strengthening an ability to adapt to different intellectual, professional, social, cultural and geographical contexts, thus learning to respond to the needs of a professional environment, as well as to engage in collective problem-solving solutions by drawing on each other's experience and analytical skills
- **Developing a career plan** by learning about a range of careers, organizations, and work environments.

1.3 Key References

The Civic Learning Programme is based on [Sciences Po's rules and regulations](#) and [Student Life regulations](#).

The principles of citizenship, responsibility, and solidarity that guide the Civic Learning Programme are fundamental to the laws of the French Republic.

In the Preamble and Article 1 of the 1958 Constitution:

- *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 organized on a decentralized basis.
Statutes shall promote equal access by women and men to elective offices and posts as well as to positions of professional and social responsibility.”

They are also enshrined more broadly in international texts providing for the protection of human rights, such as:

- The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) of 1948;
- The [European Convention on Human Rights](#) of 1950;
- The [Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees](#) of 1951;
- The [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) of 1966;
- The [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) of 1979;
- The [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) of 1989.

2. CALENDAR AND REQUIREMENTS

The Civic Learning Programme is a mandatory component of undergraduate study that contributes a minimum of 6 ECTS credits (up to a 9 ECTS credits) towards the three-year Bachelor's degree.

In accordance with the principles described in 1.1 and 1.2, the Programme requires the following:

2.1 Two Written Documents

- **The “Civic Engagement Letter” in Semester 2 of Year 1:**

In order to prepare the civic engagement letter, Students have access to a collection of texts in the humanities and social sciences on the theme of citizenship to support preparation of the civic engagement letter.

Two-three pages (maximum) in length, the letter introduces and describes the theme(s) that the student proposes to explore, the reasons for their interest, and the methods and actions proposed for the pursuit of his or her civic engagement activities, anticipated obstacles, and potentially positive outcomes of their project. The letter will draw on the humanities and social sciences texts in the collection, personal readings, and coursework, as well as news and current affairs. The letter serves as the basis for the Analytical Report in Year 3.

This mandatory, non-credit-bearing document will be evaluated according to the following criteria: Personal commitment, individual research on the proposed theme, relevance to one or more themes of the undergraduate curriculum, the clarity and precision of the presentation of the project, and the thoughtfulness and attentiveness of the letter in terms of both content and form.

- **The Analytical Report in Semester 2 of Year 3:**

This written analysis enables students to frame what they have learned during three years of study, by linking their coursework and academic major to their civic engagement field project and experiences (four-five pages maximum). Students whose themes and commitments are different from their original proposal as outlined in the civic engagement letter must justify all changes. The Analytical Report is one of the components of the mandatory [Capstone Project](#), the final task at the end of the Bachelor's, which counts for 6 ECTS credits.

In Years 2 and 3, students are assigned to a **Faculty Advisor** who provides methodological guidance for the two exercises that compose the Capstone Project --the Analytical Report and the Position Paper.

2.2 Two Field Experiences

To ensure fairness in evaluating the Undergraduate College Civic Learning Programme, no civic engagement activities undertaken prior to enrollment at Sciences Po may be counted.

Field experiences may include a concrete dimension and involve direct participation in providing assistance to beneficiaries, whether social, educational, preventive, or sensitization.

The **Civic Internship** can take a variety of forms and may be on either a volunteer or paid basis, but there must be clear evidence of students' involvement in actions towards the common good that promote equality and solidarity in an organization or department. Administrative and organizational tasks tied to the functioning of the host institution do not satisfy this requirement.

These field experiences are undertaken on-site in a non-partisan organization that is also non-profit, non-union, and non-proselytizing and may be either public or private:

- **The Civic Internship** takes place during the **Year 1**, off-campus, and consists of **4-6 consecutive weeks** embedded in an organization **on a full time basis** (for a total of 140 hours), after the examination period (in May, June, July or August):
 - a. With a view to promoting local civic engagement (i.e., close to where you live), priority should be given to carrying out the civic internship in your campus town or, for practical reasons (costs, etc.), elsewhere in France;
 - b. In order to promote the Undergraduate College's academic objectives and the notion of European civic engagement, civic internships may be carried out in a country on the European continent (including the European Union);
 - c. If, for practical reasons (visa, cost, etc.), options 1 and 2 are not possible, you may do your internship in your parents' country of tax residence.

Supervised and evaluated by the campus pedagogical team and Sciences Po Career Services, the project should serve the common good, promote equality and solidarity, and may take the form of an internship or volunteer service according to either a convention with the host organization or a fixed-term contract (CDD).

*Are also accepted the limited profit-oriented structures, of social utility and having a shared governance model (e.g. Structures of the Social and Solidarity Economy - SSE).

- The **Independent Project**: In **Year 2**, students participate in the design and implementation - or implementation alone - of a social and solidarity-based project, within a single off-campus organization. Sciences Po student associations that propose projects in accordance with the framework of the Civic Learning programme are eligible.
 - a. an **individual project** within an organization identified by the student (either an internship or volunteer service pursuant to a convention established with the host organization or a fixed-term employment contract)
 - b. Or a **group project** (based on an agreement between Sciences Po and a partner institution).

Supervised and evaluated by the campus pedagogical team, this project is a **part-time** commitment that spans **the entire year, outside of coursework** (for a total of **60** hours distributed over two semesters). A second, optional Independent Project may be conducted (3 ECTS Credits) in Year 3 in association with an international host university.

The mandatory **Civic Internship** in **Year 1** and the mandatory **Year 2 Independent Project** (and **optional in Year 3 Independent Project**) will be evaluated based on both a student report and an evaluation form completed by the internship supervisor in the host organization.

Students are strongly advised to maintain a **logbook** to record their thoughts and experiences as their projects unfold in order to build a project with a clear purpose and pursue the same theme in various contexts.

The **Civic Learning Programme Committee** within the Undergraduate College reserves the right to refuse internships and independent projects that do not comply with the principles described in points 1.1 and 1.3 of this charter.

The Civic Learning Programme requirements are summarized as follows:

The Civic Learning Programme in 3 stages	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>Mandatory, for the three years of studies (3 + 3 = 6 ECTS credits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A “Civic Engagement Letter” • A 4-6 consecutive week “Civic internship” in May, June, July, or August (3 ECTS credits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual “Independent Project” (3 ECTS credits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An “Analytical Report” that is a key part of the Capstone Project
<p>Optional, in Year 3 (3 ECTS credits)</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual “Independent Project” in association with an international host university (3 ECTS credits)