

The purpose of this section is to explain the Senior Service Requirement of 40 total hours and the May Senior Project Program which is an additional 60 hours (last two academic weeks in May).

First, the Senior Graduation Requirement. Every graduating Senior must complete at least 40 hours of service before March 1st of Senior Year.

The time frame to begin these 40 hours begins June 1st after the completion of sophomore year. This gives every cadet two full summers to complete the requirement, although some seniors do not begin their service work until the fall of senior year. *It is highly recommended that service work be completed during the summer months!* Students that wait until the fall or winter of senior year usually struggle to get them done.

One last detail about the 40-hour total. Because we know that many requests come in for our cadets to help and volunteer on much smaller projects, we allow up to 10 of these 40 hours to be what are called “miscellaneous volunteering hours”. Most juniors and seniors use the following experiences to accumulate these 10 hours. Some of them include working at STA summer sports camps, assembling meals at Feed My Starving Children, helping with the STA Auction, working with Junior Achievement, coaching community sports teams, helping an elderly neighbor with chores, working at the J-Rob Wrestling Camp, selling Christmas trees at church, working with animals at an area Humane Society, cutting down buckthorn with a community group, etc. *Repeat; None of these examples work for the CORE 30 hours but ARE accepted as miscellaneous.*

When completing hours like these, the student is asked to email a brief description to Mr. Seidel at jseidel@cadets.com. These 10 hours do NOT have to be verified by any third party. The clock for completing these hours also begins June 1st AFTER sophomore year.

This leaves 30 hours. These thirty hours must be completed between June 1st after sophomore year and March 1st of Senior Year. All remaining 30 hours must be done at one church, program or agency. How do you find an agency or program? Each fall, Visitation hosts a Fall Service Fair and each spring, STA hosts a Spring Service Fair. Dozens of agencies attend the fairs at the respective schools in hopes of recruiting school year or summer volunteers.

All 30 hours must be completed with the same church, agency or program. Orientation and training count as hours too. All of these sites have someone that is in charge of orientation, training, scheduling and keeping track of hours. Once the student has completed at least 30 hours, the student is asked to have the agency representative or supervisor email Mr. Seidel at jseidel@cadets.com.

Answers to frequently asked questions:

1. *"Yes, after completing the 10 miscellaneous hours, the remaining 30 hours must be done at the same agency, church or program"*
2. *"Yes, If you do not want to do any miscellaneous volunteer hours, you can do all 40 hours at one church, agency or program".*
3. *"No, any volunteer work done with a relative or at home does NOT count ever".*
4. *"Yes, you must be done with all 40 hours by March 1st of Senior Year or you may not be eligible to participate in the May Senior Projects".*
5. *"Yes, if the agency or program you choose was NOT represented at one of the service fairs, you must email Mr. Seidel at jseidel@cadets.com for approval. Do NOT begin the work and expect credit until you know the program or agency is approved".*
6. *"Yes, almost all nursing home elderly visits, work with poor or at-risk youth, work with persons with intellectual disabilities, weeklong or weekend camps for children with disabilities, church or parish activities will be approved".*
7. *"No, Boy Scout Camps and activities are not approved service options for either category".*
8. *"Yes, failure to complete the required number of hours for the Service Requirement and May Senior Project can effect your graduation status in early June. You will not receive a STA Diploma until both requirements are satisfactorily met".*
9. *"Yes, it is perfectly OK to find a church, agency or program on your own to do your Core 30 hours after June 1st of Sophomore year, but you need to have it approved by Mr. Seidel to be sure it fulfills the graduation requirement guidelines".*
10. *"No, volunteer service done BEFORE June 1st after sophomore year is awesome but cannot be counted in either graduation requirement category (Miscellaneous 10 or the Core 30)".*

List of agencies that are common summer service experiences: (Many are closed temporarily this summer due to COVID-19).

Delivering furniture at Bridging
Visiting residents at a local nursing home.
Working with people who have intellectual disabilities at Living Well Homes
Working with kids at District 197 Summer School Age Programs
Working at local Catholic church Summer Stretch Program, Vacation Bible School.
Working at Camp Hand-in-Hand summer camp
Working at True Friends Summer Camp
Serving lunches at local Loaves and Fishes Location.
Helping seniors with yard work through the DARTS program.
Serving as an acolyte, usher, children's mass help at local church.

May Senior Projects: General Description

Each year, after the Change of Command Ceremony, the seniors embark on a wonderful class experience called May Senior Projects.

The projects usually begin the third Monday in May and run the next nine academic days. It last two weeks minus a day off to celebrate Memorial Day. Every senior that has completed their Senior Requirement is eligible to participate. There is a meeting that takes place one week before when administration goes through the senior roster to see if everyone is actually ready to go. Students that are pulled after this meeting are usually students that:

- Are failing a required course and putting their graduation in jeopardy.
- Students that are experiencing emotional turmoil such as a community program will not be able to meet their emotional needs for support.
- Students that are in behavioral trouble to a degree that we decide a community program does not have the capacity to supervise them safely.
- Students that have not completed their Senior Requirement and cannot be trusted off campus out of the supervisory watch of STA.

These are rare occasions, yet every year, one or two seniors makes themselves ineligible to participate in the May Senior Projects. Here is the timeline.

9/15: Every senior that has completed their Service Requirement work has their name placed in a hat. Usually, this is half of the senior class. Names are picked and each senior is given a number that is his place in the Site Selection Lottery on March 1st later in the year. **IMPORTANT!** The lottery for site selection is NOT first done, first on the list!

12/15: The next group of seniors that completed their service requirement is chosen from a hat. They are then added to the site lottery selection list.

2/15: The final group is chosen out of a hat. These are students that complete their service sometime after 12/15. Hopefully, every senior now has a number .

2/20: Every senior receives a packet that provides the critical information for all 35 agencies that are hosting the seniors in May.

3/1: The seniors meet in Wright Lecture Hall and one by one they choose their May service site.

3/15: Captains are chosen by Mr. Seidel for each site.

4/1: Captains contact their site "crew" members to let them know what is expected of them at the site on May 15 when they start. Many of the sites require Mantoux tests, application forms and training before May 15th. Some do not.

5/15: All the seniors are prepped, trained, and ready to begin their service at their chosen site.

It is important to note that unlike daily attendance during the academic year, ANY TIME MISSED FROM SENIOR PROJECTS MUST BE MADE UP BEFORE GRADUATION. Each senior must log around 60 hours. The site supervisor from the agency will take attendance each day and log hours.

There are usually 5 days between the last day of project and Graduation so there is ample time for students to make up sick time. The only valid excused absences (hours that do NOT have to be made up) are family weddings, family graduations, mandatory college registration days and medical emergencies. Parents should NOT schedule elective surgeries or casual college visits or anything else during these two weeks.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please contact Joe Seidel at your convenience at jseidel@cadets.com