

OSCI General Protocols for Area Engagements

I. Introduction

A. The Office for Social Concern and Involvement (OSCI)

The Office for Social Concern and Involvement is the unit of the Ateneo de Manila University's Loyola Schools which is principally responsible for the social formation of undergraduate students through area engagements that provide meaningful encounters between students and marginalized communities as well as those who work to address problems of marginalization.

The OSCI programs are part of the broader Integrated Ateneo Formation (InAF) Program which is coordinated by the Office of the Vice President for Mission Integration.

The Office is currently composed of forty-one personnel composed of a Director, three office staff, an Assistant Director for Programs, an Assistant to the Director for Operations, and thirty-two full-time Student Affairs Professionals who are assigned to one of three teams which are each led by a Program Assistant Director.

B. OSCI Programs

- Starting SY 2023-2024, **the primary mode of engagements** for OSCI's three programs, Binhi, NSTP11-Punla, and NSTP12-Bigkis **will be** onsite, which are both on-campus and off-campus.
- Off-campus engagements will be offered to all students. However, students who are not permitted to participate in the off-campus engagements may attend the on-campus engagements.

The Office for Social Concern and Involvement currently runs three programs:

1. **Binhi** is an integral part of the Understanding the Self (SoSc11) core course in first year and involves one eight-hour area engagement.
2. Punla is designed for sophomores taking Theology of the Catholic Social Vision (THEO 12) and enrolled in the National Service Training Program (NSTP 11). It aims to deepen students' social awareness through a two-and-a-half-day immersion in one of the vulnerable sectors of our society. The immersion experience provides opportunities for students to build relationships in their respective communities or institutions. It is hoped that the students gain a better understanding of the self, kapwa, and our society. Its design is based on the pastoral cycle framework which has immersion/area engagement in a particular marginalized sector of our society as its highlight. In this program, it is essential that a deepening of students' experiences is achieved through social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral action.
3. Bigkis is designed for juniors taking the Economy, Society, and Sustainable Development (SocSc13) course and the National Service Training Program (NSTP 12). It aims to provide students with opportunities to respond to the needs of marginalized communities or organizations through service-learning research or projects. It also aims to involve students in activities that would help them define themselves in the world and be more

discerning of their role in our society. Lastly, it hopes to weave together and synthesize students' learnings from the different formation programs.

C. Integration with Academic Training

Aside from the integration of various programs with core courses, the Ateneo promotes the integration of social formation with discipline-based training. OSCI coordinates with academic departments and programs to design service-learning and discipline-based area engagements.

- *Service-learning* area engagements involve the integration of the area engagement and outputs based on the area engagements as academic requirements for discipline-related courses.
- *Discipline-based* area engagements involve the integration of disciplinal-training through area engagements that are not tied up to the academic requirements of a discipline-related course.

Some OSCI area engagements remain neither service-learning nor discipline-based.

D. OSCI Partners

In order to do its work of facilitating area engagements for all Loyola Schools undergraduate students, OSCI partners with various institutions, communities, and Ateneo entities.

- *Academic Departments and Programs.* OSCI works with Loyola Schools academic departments and programs to design service-learning and discipline-based area engagements (as described in I.C above). OSCI also works with academic departments and programs that host Integrated Ateneo Formation Activities (Psychology and Sociology and Anthropology for Binhi, Theology for Punla, and Development Studies for Bigkis).
- *External and Internal Partners.* OSCI partners with various organizations including but not limited to the following: national government agencies, local government entities, public schools, non-government organizations (including Ateneo-based non-government organizations, student organizations, non-academic offices), formal and informal businesses, people's organizations.
- *Deputies.* OSCI works with deputies who are Ateneo employees who accompany students during area engagements.
- *Transportation Providers.* For some area engagements, OSCI contracts transportation providers who are LTFRB accredited.

E. OSCI Processes

In general, OSCI follows the following process for area engagements. The protocols for these will be explained in greater detail in Part III.

1. *Meeting with academic departments and programs.* OSCI meets with academic departments or programs that integrate area engagements as part of their course and those who want area engagements to follow service-learning/discipline-based models.
2. *Social Investigation.* OSCI conducts social investigation in select areas for the area engagement. Logistical preparations are also worked on at this stage. OSCI finalizes arrangements for area

- engagements in collaboration with academic departments and programs, as well as external and internal partner organizations.
- 3. *Student Preparation.* OSCI conducts preparatory activities for students including classroom orientations and integration workshops. Students are asked to pass various documents in preparation for the area engagement (parent's consent, medical clearance, etc.)
- 4. *Area Engagement.* Students go through the area engagements.
- 5. *Post-Engagement Activities.* OSCI conducts post-engagement activities including processing sessions, evaluation sessions, and in some cases, social analysis sessions.

II. Criteria for Selecting Areas of Engagement

The general criteria for selecting partner organizations and areas of engagement are as follows:

- A. Compatibility with the desired outcomes of the academic department/program and OSCI
 - o The partner shares common beliefs and values with the OSCI program
 - o Old areas have satisfactory ratings from previous evaluations
 - o The partner has programs and activities for the students which meet the desired outcome of the program/academic department and provide a rich learning experience for the students. For Punla, this also means that the partner organization has an advocacy related to a particular sector.
- B. Safety and security of the students and other stakeholders
 - o The area of engagement poses no threat to the security of students and other stakeholders. Threats that disqualify areas include but are not limited to ongoing armed conflict, prevalent drug use and presence of *tokhang* operations, prevalent criminality, and recent disease outbreaks. There must also be no extraordinary threat to the safety of the students and other stakeholders when travelling to and from the area of engagement. The Student Affairs Professional must also take note of the following: the potability of the water in the area and other health-related conditions and the vulnerability of the area to natural disasters which though may not immediately disqualify an area, may necessitate precautions.
 - o The partner must be recognized by reputable groups, has a good track record and has an active presence in the area of engagement.
 - o Willingness of the partner to sign a memorandum of agreement
 - o In general, the area of engagement must not be farther than 3 hours for same-day return trips and 6 hours for overnight engagements.
 - o Willingness and ability of the partner to safeguard the security of students and other stakeholders and follow agreed-upon contingency plans.
 - Should students be expected to disperse in a given area of engagement and the Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy cannot accompany all students throughout the area all at the same time, then the partner organization must identify area monitors, supervisors, or foster parents who are *willing and able to* oversee the safety and security of the students and provide the students assistance to accomplish the activities necessary for the program.

- For community-based area engagements or engagements that require students to go house-to-house in a community, the following additional criteria must be met:
 - The community has at least one people's organization OSCI can partner with that has a good track record.
 - The partner institution (if applicable) endorses the people's organization.
 - The people's organization has a good relationship with the partner institution (if applicable) and the local government and barangay officials.
- For community-based engagements which will involve students staying with foster parents at their foster homes or where students will be accompanied by foster parents around the community, the partner organization must ensure that there are enough foster parents who meet the following criteria:
 - o The foster parent is recommended by the people's organization.
 - o The foster parent is a member of the people's organization or is a beneficiary of the partner organization or people's organization or is highly endorsed by the organization.
 - o The barangay or people's organization attests that the foster parent has no existing criminal record.
 - o The foster parent attends an orientation to be given by the Student Affairs Professional. The orientation will be about the nature of the engagement of the students and will include but not be limited to the following points: roles and responsibilities, possible scenarios and responses, policies, protocols (including emergency, health and safety protocols on COVID-19), safe spaces act and proposed activities.
 - o The foster parent is willing and able to follow the prescribed safety protocols given by the Student Affairs Professional.
 - o The foster parent is present during the dates of the area engagement.
 - o It is preferred, particularly that the foster parent can articulate to students the community's/ sector's issues.

III. OSCI Processes and Protocols for Area Engagements

A. Meeting with Academic Departments and Programs

OSCI meets with the academic departments and programs which require the area engagements as part of their core courses. When the area engagement has service-learning or discipline-based components, OSCI also meets with other academic departments and programs within Ateneo. These meetings seek to accomplish the following:

1. Identify a coordinator for the academic department or program
2. Agree on expected outcomes for students and partner schools, institutions, and communities.
3. Agree on roles and responsibilities of the academic department or program

B. Social Investigation

1. Student Affairs Professionals identify possible partners and areas of engagement using criteria stated in Part II. Professionals may obtain recommendations from various stakeholders of the program (Fellow OSCI professionals, previous partners, faculty, etc.)
2. Student Affairs Professionals meet with authorized representatives of the partner organization. They are to brief new partners about the program and expected program outcomes (including student outputs, if any) and will ask to be briefed about the organization (and the community of the organization, if applicable). They will ask new partners for an initial assessment of the compatibility of the area of engagement with the program outcomes and ask for an initial assessment of the safety and security of the area of engagement. They will also ask the partner organization to designate a main coordinator for the program.

Materials for the briefing about the program must include a letter to the prospective partner and may also include the following:

- OSCI Primer/Program Primer,
- Area Information Report, or [Area Profile](#),
- Sample [Memorandum of Agreement](#)
- Proposed Calendar of Activities
- Emergency, safety and health protocols for community and students

3. Student Affairs Professionals are expected to visit the area of engagement at least twice for old areas and thrice for new areas to assess compatibility of the area of engagement with program outcomes as well as to assess the safety and security of the area of engagement. In the case of overnight immersions in new communities, student affairs professionals are required to stay overnight in one of the three visits. This will involve talking to as many key stakeholders as possible to check if the area of engagement meets the above-mentioned criteria. The Student Affairs Professional is also expected to get to know the area, the profile of the people in the area, and key stakeholders (e.g., institution/community leaders). For Punla, the Student Affairs Professional should assess the participation of the organization and its leaders with their stated sectoral advocacies. The Student Affairs Professional should also assess how many students the community can absorb without compromising program objectives as well as safety and security.
4. Should students be expected to disperse in a given area of engagement and the Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy cannot accompany all students throughout the area all at the same time, then the Student Affairs Professional and the partner organization must identify area monitors, supervisors, or foster parents who are *willing and able to* oversee the safety and security of the students and provide the students assistance to accomplish the activities necessary for the program. These area monitors, supervisors, or foster parents must be thoroughly briefed about the program and their roles. The Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy must be in strategic locations that will allow for quick response should their presence be requested by a student or monitor/supervisor/foster parent.

5. The following are special procedures for community-based area engagements.
 - 5.1 If the initial contact was a partner institution, the Student Affairs Professional is expected to repeat the briefing previously given to the partner institution this time with the partner people's organization. The Student Affairs Professional identifies and discusses the role of various individuals.
 - 5.2 The Student Affairs Professional must send letters to the barangay chairperson and the local police (and when applicable, the military) who must acknowledge that they were informed that students will be having trips in the area. Requests can be made to the barangay to provide additional security.
 - 5.3 For community-based engagements which will involve students staying with foster parents at their foster homes or where students will be accompanied by foster parents around the community, the following additional protocols and procedures must be followed:
 - 5.3.1 The foster parents must be given an orientation and some of the key messages at that orientation should include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Kayo ay katuwang ng OSCI sa paglalatatag ng karanasan ng sektor/komunidad upang maranasan ang pang-araw-araw na buhay at kabuhayan ng pamilya. Sikapin nating maging makabuluhan ang pakikipamuhay ng mga mag-aaral. Inaanyayahan kayong makipagkwentuhan sa mga mag-aaral tungkol sa pang-araw-araw ninyong pamumuhay.
 - b. Kayo ay nagsisilbing tagapagpadaloy o guro sa komunidad upang maintindihan ng estudyante ang kanyang karanasan habang nakikipamuhay sa komunidad.
 - c. Kayo ay katuwang sa buong proseso ng imersyon sa usapin ng seguridad. Sikapin natin mailayo ang lahat sa ano mang uri ng kapahamakan at iba't-ibang uri ng karahasan. Samahan ang mga estudyante kung kinakailangan nilang umalis ng bahay. Maaaring ipasama sa ibang nakatatanda subalit responsibilidad pa rin ito ng magulang.
 - d. Maging tapat/totoo sa kalagayang pangkalusugan ng inyong pamilya.
 - e. Kailangan niyong siguraduhing naaayon ang inyong bahay para sa pakikipamuhay ng estudyante. (Halimbawa, ang mga estudyante ay pinagbabawalang uminom ng alak o anumang nakalalasing na inumin sa mga araw ng pakikipamuhay. Sa ibayong pagpapatupad nito, ang pamilya at tahananang tutuluyan ng estudyante ay hinihiling na panatilihin walang gawain o pagtitipong isasagawa na magbibigay okasyon ng pag-inom ng nasabing bawal na inumin)

- f. Kailangan ipagbigay alam sa Student Affairs Professional ang anumang uri ng emergency at problema tungkol sa estudyante (hal. kalamidad, medical, inuman, gulo sa paligid)
- g. Note: The formators should explicitly state that drinking during the area engagements is not allowed. It should also be expressed that the foster parents should protect the students from harm. This includes gender-based violence.
- h. Siguruhing aktibong nakikilahok ang mag-aaral sa mga itinakdang gawain sa loob ng pakikipamuhay (hal. pakikihalubilo sa mga tao sa komunidad, gawaing-bahay, pag-iigib, atbp). Turuan sila ng mga gawaing bahay. Huwag silang ituring na bisita kaya't hindi kinakailangan ipaghanda ng kumportableng lugar o ipang-utang ng masarap na ulam.

Foster parents cannot be given orientations on the day of the area engagement. There should be stand-by foster parents who were oriented during the parent's orientations, in case the original foster parent cannot accept students on the day of the engagement. Another alternative is for students to be distributed to other foster parents who have previously been briefed as long as the foster parents can take on additional students without compromising safety and security.

- 5.3.2 The Student Affairs Professional should ask for the contact details of the foster family.
- 5.3.3 Should home visits to foster parents be required as part of the program design, the Student Affairs Professional is required to visit the homes of the foster parents and make a map of these homes. They are also required to note the sex and gender of the members of the household and assign students to foster parents in such a way that the risks to the students and other stakeholders are minimized.
- 5.3.4 For overnight stays, particularly for Punla and Bigkis, one student per house is allowed if the houses hosting students are near one another (compound type, houses are within or less than 1 kilometer radius, houses are almost beside each other). For houses that are farther apart from each other, pairing is required. If pairing is needed, only students of the same gender may be paired.
- 6. The Student Affairs Professional, in collaboration with the partner organization and the academic department (if applicable), designs activities for the students that are compatible with the expected outcomes of the program and which take into consideration the safety of all stakeholders. The

Student Affairs Professional discusses the possible student outputs, if any, with the partner organizations.

7. The Student Affairs Professional must brief the partner about emergency and health protocols and the partner must be willing to follow these emergency protocols. The partner must identify a female point person who will be present throughout the area engagement whom the students can also approach for instances of sexual violence. This point person must be briefed about possible scenarios and recommended responses.
8. The Student Affairs Professional presents the following during the program's area deliberations:
 - 8.1 Information about the Partner Organizations
 - 8.2 Area Information Report which includes a Risk Assessment. The report identifies emergency medical facilities nearby as well as emergency contact numbers of institutions in or near the area.
 - 8.3 Directions to and map of the area including transportation options and considerations. For areas where transportation will be provided by the program, computation of the distance that will be travelled.
 - 8.4 Proposed program design which includes planned activities, schedule, logistics, emergency plans.
 - 8.5 System for monitoring students should the students be dispersed within a particular area. This includes information on area monitors, supervisors, and/or foster parents.
 - 8.6 Assessment of feasibility of student outputs, if any.
 - 8.7 Number of students the community can absorb is compatible with program objectives and ensures the safety and security of all stakeholders.
 - 8.8 Documentation of meetings with partner institutions.

The program teams make an initial deliberation of proposed areas of engagement.

9. In terms of meeting safety criteria, the Assistant Director for each program is responsible for signing off on old areas without prior incidents or significantly new circumstances. The Assistant Director must inform the Director and the Assistant Director for Programs of such areas. The approval of the Assistant Director for Programs and the Director is required for old areas that had previous incidents, significantly new circumstances, and for new areas.

In terms of activity design relative to expected learning outcomes, the Assistant Director is responsible for signing off on standard designs as set in the operations manual. The Assistant Director must inform the Director and the Assistant Director for Programs of such areas. New designs require the approval of the Director.

10. A Memorandum of Agreement must be signed between the university and the partner organization.

Should there be a change of circumstances between the signing of the MOA and the actual area engagement that might compromise the objectives of the program or the safety of the stakeholders, the partner organization should immediately inform OSCI and they must deliberate on the appropriate course of action.

C. Preparation of Students

OSCI Programs have a set of preparatory activities to brief the students about the area engagements and inform them about safety protocols including emergency response. Various documents are also asked from the students as part of the requirements prior to the trip. Only students who have completed the following may join the area engagement:

1. The student must have attended the classroom orientation, the integration sessions and other sessions required by the program.
 - During the preparatory sessions, students must be informed about Safety and Emergency Response Procedures and situations that must be reported to the Student Affairs Professional for immediate action. Students should be given a list of emergency contact numbers (numbers of the Students Affairs Professional and the deputy, if applicable, partner organization contact, nearby health facilities, local government units, among others) and informed about evacuation points.
2. The student must have submitted the following: information sheet, parental consent form, medical clearance from the Office of Health Services, the Office of Guidance and Counselling, Declaration and Undertaking, and other documents that may be required by the program.

D. Area Engagement

1. *Logistical Preparations*
 - The Student Affairs Professional must ensure that all trips have first aid kits.
 - When applicable, the Student Affairs Professional must ensure that the transportation units have the necessary transportation permits.

2. *Student Companions / Deputy*

There must be at least one Ateneo employee accompanying every 21-24 students for community-based areas (as defined above) and one Ateneo employee for every 30 students for those that are inside institutions. For overnight immersions, a maximum of 36 students is allowed (assuming the presence of two Ateneo personnel).

If necessary, Student Affairs Professionals may assign deputies to accompany the students. Deputies are Ateneo employees who have been thoroughly briefed about the role of the deputy.

3. *Pre-departure protocols*

Students are not allowed to go directly to the area unless the student makes a request which is approved by the Director and which has the consent from the parent/guardian.

The Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy must check attendance prior to leaving for the area and ensure that only students who fulfilled all requirements stated above will participate in the engagement.

Students who are late for assembly will not be allowed to proceed to the area engagement.

Students riding in a jeepney or van are not allowed to sit in front.

4. *Area Orientation*

The Student Affairs Professional along with the partner organization must conduct an area orientation (on the first visit) to introduce the community leaders, provide a briefing about the area of engagement, run through the flow of activities, remind students of the emergency preparedness plan, buddy system, and communication system (including all emergency contact numbers), and endorse students to foster parents (if applicable).

5. *Monitoring Protocol*

Student Affairs Professionals and/or a deputy must be present in the area or zone during the area engagement of the students. They will be assisted by pre-identified area monitors, supervisors, or foster parents. If the students will disperse around the area, the professional and/or deputy must be in strategic locations that will allow for quick response should their presence be requested by a student or monitor/supervisor/foster parent.

For community-based area engagements, the Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy is required to visit and check on the students at least once a day and address the concerns of students and foster parents, if any. For community-based area engagements involving overnight stays at foster homes, the Student Affairs Professional and/or deputy is required to visit students at their foster home at least once a day and check on the students at their foster homes or community events at least twice a day. The Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy must also reside in a strategic area in the community that is close to the students' foster family, or at the community leader's residence to facilitate decision-making during emergency situations, or at locations where coordination of emergency response is facilitated (ex. house with a vehicle). The students must know where the community leader and the Student Affairs Professional and/or deputy are staying and how to get there and how to contact them.

6. *Protocols in the event of emergencies during the area engagement*

Student Affairs Professionals must do the following in case of emergencies:

1. Follow protocols for [medical and disaster related emergencies](#)
2. Follow protocols for emergencies related to [Critical Attention Required \(CARE\) students](#)
3. For community-based area engagements, any instance of drinking at or near the foster home or in the areas visited by students should be considered an emergency. The student should contact the Student Affairs Professional and/or deputy and they must determine an appropriate course of action.

4. The Student Affairs Professional and/or deputy reports any untoward incident to the Program Assistant Director (PAD) and/or OSCI Director
 - i. If the situation entails legal action, the Student Affairs Professional calls the OSCI director for coordination with the legal counsel of the university.
 - ii. Any form of harassment or any untoward incident reported by students should be promptly addressed by the Student Affairs Professional and/or deputy. The Student Affairs Professional and/or deputy must do the following:
 - a. Ensure the safety of the student/concerned parties
 - b. If necessary, ask assistance from area partners to secure the students
 - c. Immediately inform the Program Assistant Director and OSCI Director
 - d. Set a case conference between OSCI and the area.

7. *End-of-Engagement Protocols*

The Student Affairs Professional or the deputy checks attendance prior to departure from the area of engagement and conducts a quick feedback session to address any immediate concerns before the students leave the area.

Students, with their parents'/ guardian's written consent, may request the approval of the Director to be allowed to go home directly from the area after engagement. The request should be approved prior to the day of the area engagement.

For immersion trips that use a public utility bus going back to Manila, the Student Affairs Professional and/or the deputy must inform the Program Assistant Director of the plate number or bus number of the vehicle, the number of students, and expected time of arrival at the terminal point.

E. Post-Engagement Protocols

1. *Processing Session and Social Analysis*

The Student Affairs Professional conducts a processing session to help students reflect on their experiences and address emerging concerns of students. If applicable, the Student Affairs Professional also conducts a social analysis or synthesis session. The Student Affairs Professional uses the modules agreed upon by the program.

2. *Return to Communities*

If the students wish to go back to a community, the Student Affairs Professional informs the students that they have to inform or coordinate with the Student Affairs Professional and the Student Affairs Professional in turn informs the community partner/representative about the students visiting the area. Note: Students must submit a formal request to OSCI. If the return visit is to fulfill academic requirements, then parental consent is required.

3. *Evaluation*

The Student Affairs Professional must conduct an evaluation with area partners, students, and academic departments and programs. The Student Affairs Professional conducts feedback sessions with partners and accomplishes the Comprehensive Area Evaluation Report. A Committee of Student Affairs Professionals will be tasked to safe keep and analyze student evaluation data gathered for program evaluation purposes. The results of the evaluation are presented to partner departments, area partners, and students prior to the following semester.

IV. General Provisions

- A. Student Affairs Professionals are responsible for following the stipulations of the operations manual. If there are (possible or actual) circumstances which deviate from what is stated in the operations manual, they have to inform their respective Assistant Directors who will need to seek approval from the Assistant Director for Programs and the Director for actions to be taken.
- B. Assistant Directors are responsible for making sure formators-in-charge follow the stipulations of the operations manual. If formators-in-charge report (actual or possible) deviations from the manual or the Program Assistant Director notices deviations, these have to be reported to the Assistant Director for Programs and the Director for approval. Coordinators assist Program Assistant Directors in monitoring compliance with the operations manual.
- C. Any amendment to a program's operations manual requires approval of the Assistant Director for Programs and the Director.