COMMUNITY PARTNER GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING
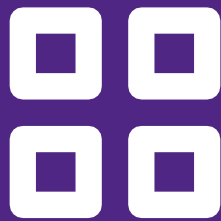
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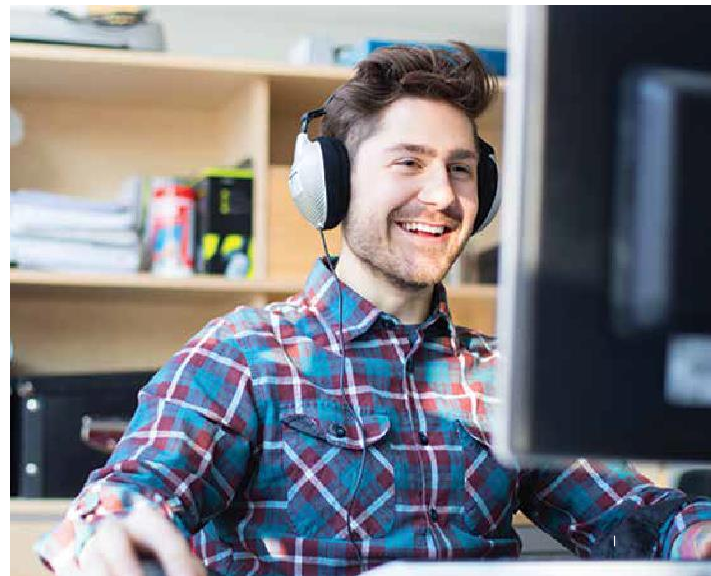
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WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING?

Western defines Community Engaged Learning as students engage in a project, developed collaboratively with a community partner, that has mutually beneficial outcomes. For other forms of Experiential Learning refer to our website.

The purpose of community engagement is to build partnerships wherein college and university knowledge and resources can be shared with those in the public and private sectors. These partnerships can contribute to (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching):

- enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity;
- enhance curriculum, teaching and academic learning;
- prepare students to serve as educated and engaged citizens;
- strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility;
- address critical societal issues; and,
- contribute to the public good.

HOW DOES CEL DIFFER FROM OTHER FORMS OF LEARNING?

Community Engaged Learning differs from traditional forms of learning because it brings course content to life by providing students opportunities to apply their course-based knowledge within real-world settings. CEL also endeavors to instill a sense of civic engagement and social responsibility in students. Through their CEL experience and reflection students learn "socially responsive knowledge" affording them the skills necessary to identify and provide solutions for social problems.

Community Engaged Learning is not about the addition of engagement to learning, but rather the integration of engagement with learning. In these settings, the students' observations and experiences in the community are as integral to the students' academic learning as class lectures and library research (Howard, 1998, p. 21). Through their engagement experiences and reflection, academic learning is informed and transformed, and the academic learning informs and transforms the engagement experience, creating a reciprocal relationship between service and learning (Howard, 1998, p. 21).

To be clear, community engaged learning is not an internship or a volunteer role. CEL students differ from both volunteer roles and internships in that their learning engagement is completed in conjunction with their academic course as part of their grade, whereas volunteer work is not associated with academic work and internships are typically stand-alone learning experiences without a substantial class component.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS ENGAGING IN THE COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING PROGRAM?

Benefits of CEL for community partners:

- Student commitment to the organization and quality of work is increased due to the evaluative component of their service.
- Students can bring fresh perspectives, new insight and enthusiasm, and creativity to the agency/organization.
- Increased capacity through additional human resources.
- Students can work on long-term projects that meet defined needs within the organization.
- Increased awareness of your organization as students become familiar with your mission and share the work they are doing with peers and professors in the Western community.
- Increase public awareness of key issues and potentially correct misconceptions.
- Recruitment of volunteers and employees.
- Network with colleagues in other organizations and agencies.
- Identify and access other university resources; build relationships with faculty and staff.
- Knowledge exchange through active participation in the learning process.

WHAT FORMS CAN COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING TAKE?

PLACEMENT-BASED CEL	PROJECT-BASED CEL
Students spend between 2-6 hours a week over a course term working on site at the organization fulfilling a specified need(s) determined by community partner	Students work in groups (approx. 3-10 students) to complete a project and deliver a specific outcome as determined by the community partner .

PLACEMENT-BASED CEL

PROJECT-BASED CEL

This type of CEL involves the student going to work within the agency/organization for a set amount of hours, and on a set weekly schedule. The intention of a placement is to have the student fully immersed in the day to day functions of an industry/community partner agency. Students can be involved in any kind of work deemed suitable by the agency, with intention that students' involvement directly connect to the course content and learning objectives.

It is also possible for students to take on special, independent projects that meet an agency/organization need during their placement hours. It is our hope that students will become fully oriented within the organization such that they become familiar with the site location and all projects and endeavors undertaken by the organization.

This type of CEL usually involves students working in groups of approximately 3-10 students to complete a project that fulfills a need for the partnering community organization. This format differs from a placement, as most of the work is completed independently and off-site from the organization. With these partnerships, community supervisors act as a resource to the student(s) and set the scope of the project being undertaken.

Projects should have tangible outcomes for both the student and the organization. It is our hope that students will become acquainted with the organization through a volunteer orientation and site tour, and understand and participate in some of the ongoing projects and endeavors undertaken by the organization.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN STUDENTS DO AT/FOR MY ORGANIZATION?

PROJECT DELIVERABLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Content creation
- Program plans/outlines
- Strategic planning

CREATING POLICY MATERIALS

- Policy briefs
- Letters to MPs

RESEARCH, ASSESSMENT, AND/OR EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM

- Focus groups
- Interviews

DATA ANALYSIS

- Analyzing donor behaviours
- Tracking communication strategy metrics
- Assessing volunteer engagement

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- Webinars
- Infographics
- Presentation Development
- Performance Production

RESEARCH PAPERS

- Literature reviews
- Executive summaries
- Position/response papers
- Annotated bibliographies
- Case studies

INFORMATION SHARING PRODUCTS

- Digital media
- Communication plans
- Social media content

MARKETING RESOURCES

- Website content
- Videos
- Social media campaigns
- Mobile content

OFFERING SERVICES VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORMS:

- Community member interviews
- Fundraising
- Mentorship
- Tutoring

EVENT COORDINATION

- Evaluating event cost strategies
- Creating and executing events
- Creating an accessibility plan for an annual event
- Developing post-event surveys

COVID RECOVERY PROJECTS

- Assisting with your organization's shift online
- Researching and providing a list of online tools
  - Films
  - Vodcasts and Podcasts
  - Awareness campaign
  - How-to videos

FUNDRAISING

- Identification of sponsors
- Grant writing
- Campaign outreach materials
- Marketing materials
- Fundraising events

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HOW MUCH TIME CAN THE STUDENT DEDICATE TO MY ORGANIZATION?

Placement-based CEL students are typically required to devote a minimum of 2 hours per week for 8-10 weeks during an academic term; however, the number of hours and duration of time spent in the placement varies from course to course. For project-based CEL, each student is expected to dedicate a minimum of 2 hours per week for approximately 8-10 weeks toward their work on the designated project. Students are not generally expected to be engaged in CEL service hours in the months of December and April, as they are in exams at this time.

WHAT EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED ON THE STUDENT BY WESTERN?

Experiential Learning at Western is committed to sending high-quality students to community partner organizations. As such, the following expectations are placed on students:

- Be punctual and reliable (e.g., be on time and meet scheduled deadlines).
- Dress appropriately. Consult community partner supervisor regarding acceptable attire within the organization.
- Participate in all activities that prepare you for your CEL role (e.g., understanding theory, site visits, risk management, planning, meeting with supervisors and groupmates, developing goals, etc.)
- Behave and communicate in a professional manner.
- Appoint a liaison between student group and community partner (for project-based CEL).
- Employ effective teamwork and problem-solving skills.
- Embody the dual role of learner and service provider.
- Be prepared for phone, videocall, or face to face meetings and service hours.
- Respect diversity.
- Graciously accepting supervision and feedback.
- Respect rules of confidentiality when dealing with sensitive or private information.
- Actively engage in your service experience.
- Be proactive and flexible with your service and educational expectations.
- Engage in regular and efficient communication with your community partner.
- Produce high-quality work.
- Accept the responsibility inherent in community engagement and respectful relationship building.

HOW ARE STUDENTS EVALUATED FOR THEIR WORK WITHIN MY ORGANIZATION?

The CEL team and course instructor are committed to ensuring that the CEL experience aligns with course learning outcomes. As such, assessment and evaluation measures are specifically designed to integrate course content with students work and involvement with their industry or community organization. Methods for evaluating students include, but are not limited to:

• Reflective essays or papers • Reflective journals • In-class discussion • Executive summaries or reports	• Individual or group presentations • e-Portfolio presentations • Quizzes • Online discussions • Response papers	• Debriefing meetings • Project notebooks • Final synthesis of learning • Research proposal • Newspaper article • Posters

These assessment and evaluation methods can be tailored to provide an accurate reflection of student's engagement within the community organization and understanding of course concepts.

As a partner, it is a good idea to be aware of and understand the overarching learning outcomes for the course, in addition to the CEL objectives and outcomes.

HOW ARE STUDENT(S) MATCHED WITH PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS?

Typically, the CEL coordinator will share information with each class about engaged community partners, and then subsequent matches will be determined based on students' expressions of interest and learning motivations.

Other methods for matching students with partners include student applications to opportunities or professional "speed dating". It is important to note that the process for matching students (or groups) with community partners is at the discretion of the instructor and/or CEL coordinator and varies depending on the course.

WILL THE STUDENT HAVE A POLICE CHECK?

Police checks are at the discretion of the community partner. When community partners are discussing partnership with Careers & Experience, they will be asked to identify the type of Police Records Check required by their organization for the work that students will be engaged in. Since students are receiving credit for their engagement with your organization, London Police Services has requested that students seek Police Records Checks for Employment Purposes, and thus, students will pay the full fee of $45.

It is not recommended that organizations put students through their regular volunteer program; however, we ask that organizations provide students with any supporting documentation they would require to get the appropriate record check. Since there is a cost incurred to the students, we would ask you to carefully consider the work of the students and the necessity for a Police Records Check.

IS COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING THE RIGHT FIT FOR MY ORGANIZATION?

There are many factors that a community partner should consider when deciding whether or not to take on CEL students. Although each organization will have a unique interest and goal for engaging service-learners, the following are factors that all organizations should consider before determining if CEL is right for the organization:

TIME, ENERGY AND RESOURCES

- Does the organization have a staff member that can commit to serve as the students' supervisor and mentor? Does that staff member have the time, energy, and enthusiasm to serve such a role, to provide consistent feedback, and to commit to evaluating student's involvement and project/deliverable?
- Does the organization have the resources necessary for the successful completion of the desired project/deliverable?
- If the project or placement involves students working on-site, is their space to accommodate them?

PREPARATION FOR STUDENTS

- Pre-planning is necessary for successful CEL involvement.
    - Meetings with CEL coordinators and faculty members are needed to flesh out the details of the scope of student's involvement and potential projects.
- Preparation of "welcome package" that can orient students to your organization and its missions and values.
- Tasks and activities, and policies and procedures should be clearly-described and outlined before service-learners begin their involvement.
- Staff at the organization should be informed about the student's involvement.
- Be mindful of the amount of time student supervision may require and ensure that you and/or another staff person have made an appropriate plan to accommodate the student(s) need.

CEL PROJECT/DELIVERABLE

- Ensure the necessary resources and supports are available for the project/deliverable to be completed.
- Determine the feasibility of projects/deliverables given time-frame and number of hours students are able to commit.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Partnering organizations may be asked to give a presentation to the respective class they are collaborating with to inform student(s) about their organization and the particular tasks and project(s) they intend to have student(s) involved with.

- Providing feedback to faculty and/or CEL coordinator regarding the CEL experience/involvement.

- Clarify roles and understand responsibilities of the CEL coordinator, faculty member, students, and designated supervisor from partnering organization.

After carefully evaluating these factors, decide whether or not CEL is right for your needs and your organization. If it is, please contact the Community Engaged Learning team at cel@uwo.ca or Careers & Experience (519.661.3559) to learn how to form a partnership or to discuss other experiential learning opportunities offered at Western University.

WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED SUPERVISOR?

A Partnership Agreement signed between the community organization and Community Engaged Learning at Western will outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties. They include but are not limited to:

- Meeting with the students at an agreed upon time at a designated space within your organization during the first week of partnership to provide:
  - A tour of your organization (if applicable).
  - A brief history of your organization.
  - A safety orientation highlighting any regulated safety requirements as well as any site-specific safety items that participants should be aware of.
  - Any additional training or orientation requirements that would enable students to effectively complete their assigned project(s) or task(s).
- Have and maintain active liability insurance for the duration of the placement. If your organization does not have liability insurance, this must be disclosed to Western prior to signing this agreement.
- Complete 'Community Partner and Student Expectations' template (where applicable) with the student(s) to ensure that mutual expectations in terms of project scope, communications plans, and the intended deliverables of the partnership between the organization and the students are clear at the beginning of the placement or project.
- Provide necessary guidance and resources to students who partner with your organization as they complete assigned projects or tasks (e.g., answer student questions, assist with troubleshooting, provide feedback and suggestions).
- Communicate any concerns about Western Student(s)', conduct, performance, safety, and project progression with the designated Western faculty/staff contact immediately.
- Communicate any incidents (workplace accident, medical emergency, etc.) that occur during the placement with the designated Western faculty/staff contact immediately.

TIPS FOR MANAGING STUDENTS DOING AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PLACEMENT OR PROJECT

- Hold an initial meeting with the student(s) in your organization if possible. During this meeting, please provide the students with a background of your organization and the work you do as well as discuss any expectations that you would have of the student. This would be a good time to review the *Student and Community Partner Expectations Agreement* with the students to ensure everyone is on the same page, understands the work they are to complete, and the deadlines by which it should be achieved.

- Regular communication is key. It is our hope that both the community partner and student keep open lines of communication, and that any problems, concerns or questions are addressed appropriately.

- Be aware of the learning outcomes of the course and take time to discuss with the student(s) how the work they are doing with your organization is linked to the learning outcomes.

- Recognize that while the student has dedicated his/her time to your organization, the Experiential Learning course represents just one course out of a regular 5-course workload. Please discuss expectations with the students and adjust placement hours and project scope accordingly.

- Share your experience! Students appreciate the opportunity to hear about the professional paths of their community partner supervisors. Share your educational background, why you chose your specific career, and the steps you took to get where you are.

- If any concerns arise about student conduct or performance, please contact your respective CEL Coordinator to discuss these concerns. The CEL Team will work with the faculty member and the student to resolve any concerns.

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