

CEL Community Partner *Orientation Manual*

A Step-by-Step Guide to Support Community
Partners in Navigating CEL at Western University



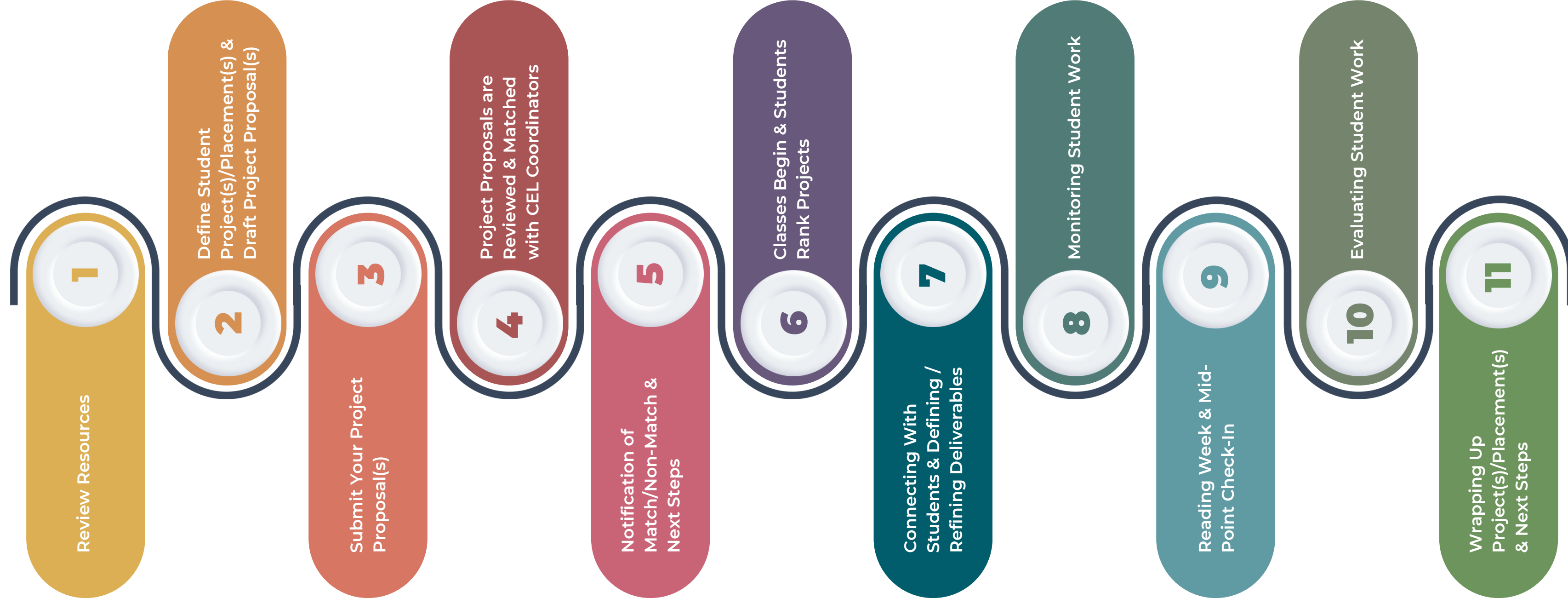
How to Use this Manual

This *CEL Community Partner Orientation Manual* is intended to be used as a step-by-step guide to support prospective, new, and returning CEL community partners in navigating the timeline and responsibilities associated with community engaged learning (CEL) partnerships at Western University.

It is recommended that all community partners review this manual prior to beginning their CEL project(s) or placement(s), as it includes helpful information, resources, and reminders intended to support you in attaining meaningful partnership outcomes.

Should you have any further questions, comments, or concerns about CEL at Western University, you are always welcome to contact the CEL team through the contact information at the end of this manual.

CEL Timeline



Review Resources

1

BEFORE & THROUGHOUT
PARTNERSHIP

Before getting started with CEL at Western, it is important to **understand what CEL is, how the process works, and whether it is a good fit for your organization**. Please review this information in the [Community Partner Guide to CEL](#) on our [website](#) prior to submitting your Project Proposal(s).

Define Student Project(s) / Placement(s) & Draft Project Proposal(s)

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PRIOR TO LATE-AUGUST (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **LATE-DECEMBER** (WINTER COURSES) SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Before submitting your Project Proposal(s), you may wish to **review the questions you will be asked in advance and draft some responses**. You can find the Project Proposal document on our website in the Resources section.

The [CEL Course Guide](#) is a key document to review prior to submitting your Project Proposal(s). It includes **important details for all CEL courses offered in the upcoming academic year and examples of past projects** that have been completed by students in previous years. You may wish to review this document and note which courses you are interested in matching with, to then **write your Project Proposal(s) in line with the course objectives and expectations**. If you are open to matching with students from any course or multiple courses, you can indicate that in the Project Proposal as well.

If you would like more **inspiration on the kinds of deliverables that CEL students could produce**, please see [Project Deliverables for CEL document](#).

It may be helpful to note that it is possible to submit Project Proposals that extend beyond the length of a single term or full-year course timeframe. If you have a **long-term project** that you would like to collaborate with students on, or a project that could benefit from collaborating with students from different disciplines at different academic levels, you can outline these plans in one Project Proposal. The CEL Coordinators will connect with you to discuss how to divide the project between courses based on scope and final deliverable requirements.

Submit Your Project Proposal(s)

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JULY-AUGUST (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **NOVEMBER-DECEMBER** (WINTER COURSES)

You should receive an **outreach email from the CEL Coordinators inviting CEL Project Proposal submissions in July (Fall and Full-Year courses) and December (Winter courses)**. Or, if you are not on our mailing list, you can also find the Project Proposal document linked on our [website](#).

To submit your Project Proposal(s), you are asked to **email the completed document(s) to the CEL Coordinators at cel@uwo.ca**. You should receive a follow-up email confirming receipt of your document(s).

Project Proposals are reviewed by the CEL Coordinators on a regular basis until late-August (Fall and Full-Year courses) and late-November (Winter courses). We recommend submitting your proposal(s) sooner than later, as we typically receive a surplus of applications for participation in the CEL program.

Project Proposals Are Reviewed & Matched with CEL Courses



.....● **LATE-AUGUST** (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **LATE-DECEMBER** (WINTER COURSES)

The CEL Coordinators will do a final review of all CEL Project Proposal submissions in late-August (Fall and Full-Year courses) and late-December (Winter courses). They will then **send instructors their tentatively matched proposals for approval** to ensure they are appropriate partnerships for their course.

Notification of Match/Non-Match & Next Steps

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.....● **EARLY-SEPTEMBER** (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **EARLY-JANUARY** (WINTER COURSES)

Once the CEL Coordinators have received approval from course instructors, they will **email community partners to notify them which course(s) they have been matched with, and important dates and details about the course(s)**. It may be beneficial to read through the course details at this time to refamiliarize yourself with course expectations and learning objectives .

In recent years, we have typically received a surplus of Project Proposals. If your project is not matched with a CEL course, the CEL Coordinators will connect with you at this time to discuss next steps. Often, it is possible to match your project with a course in another term, or to match you with a placement student or co-curricular CEL (volunteer) opportunity instead.

Classes Begin & Students Rank Projects

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MID-SEPTEMBER (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **MID-JANUARY** (WINTER COURSES)

Fall and Full-Year courses begin in the first week of September, and Winter courses begin in the second week of January. For exact dates, please visit the [Sessional Dates Calendar](#).

Most **students will review the CEL Project Proposals mid-September and mid-January**. They are expected to understand the tasks and goals of the projects, and familiarize themselves with the partnering organizations. They then **select their top 3 project/placement preferences** for the CEL Coordinators or instructors to review. It is important to note that **some course instructors will invite community partners into class virtually or in-person to introduce their organization and project**, while others will simply have the students read through each Project Proposals independently. Coordinators will notify community partners and clarify dates, times, and locations if they are invited into class. Information about each course's timelines can be found in the [CEL Course Guide](#).

Connecting with Students & Defining/Refining Deliverables

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.....● **MID-SEPTEMBER** (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **MID-JANUARY** (WINTER COURSES)

Once students have been matched with their projects/placements, community partners will receive an email from a CEL Coordinator, or the student leader, introducing them to their assigned student group. Students will be instructed to follow-up with their community partner to schedule a convenient date and time for all participants to meet virtually or on-site.

In this initial meeting, students will bring the Student and Community Partner Expectations Agreement. It is important for community partners and students to complete this document together during this meeting. This allows all participants to collaboratively refine the project deliverables (or define them, if they have not been), outline methods and frequency of communications/meetings, define tasks and roles, and determine deadlines throughout the project(s)/placement(s) progression. **This document should be completed in detail to ensure all expectations and responsibilities that will serve as an outline for the project/placement to develop are understood by all participants.** Once it is completed, students submit the document to a CEL Coordinator and/or their instructor.

Monitoring Student Work

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THROUGHOUT
PARTNERSHIP

As student groups work through completing their project/placement deliverables, you may wish to be more or less involved in receiving updates and check-ins from students. **Your expectations for involvement throughout the project/placement timeline should be clearly indicated in the Student and Community Partner Expectations Agreement**, and as agreed upon by students. For example, if you wish to receive weekly check-in emails, or any other frequencies that are suitable to your organization and the project/placement, please indicate that.

As you engage with your student group, you may find the [Tips for Engaging Students Remotely](#) document helpful. If you encounter any challenges with your students or project/placement progress, you can contact the CEL Coordinators anytime, and/or you may notify the course instructor to help troubleshoot.

Reading Week & Mid-Point Check-In



.....● **MID-OCTOBER** (FALL & FULL-YEAR COURSES) OR **MID-FEBRUARY** (WINTER COURSES)

It is important to note that **students have Reading Week in October and February** (see [Sessional Dates Calendar](#) for exact dates). During these weeks, classes are paused, and students typically use this time to study for exams. They may or may not be working on their CEL projects, but students are often unavailable for check-in meetings.

The CEL Coordinators use Reading Week as a time to connect with community partners to offer support and check in about how project(s)/placement(s) are progressing. Though they are available to contact at any time throughout the duration of your partnership via email or phone, you can expect an email from them during this week.

Evaluating Student Work

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EARLY-DECEMBER (FALL COURSES) OR **EARLY-APRIL** (WINTER & FULL-YEAR COURSES)

Depending on the course, community partners may be required to submit a Community Partner Evaluation to the course instructor and/or CEL Coordinator. It includes a rubric to help guide your assessment. The **evaluation helps instructors understand and assess the groups' and individual students' contributions to your organization**. The evaluation often counts for a small percentage of students' overall final grade in the course. If the course you are partnered with requires community partners to submit an evaluation, it will be indicated in the CEL Course Guide, and the Coordinators will send email reminders and deadlines for evaluations to be completed and received.

It may be helpful to **review the rubric before beginning the project/placement** to familiarize yourself with it and keep each category of evaluation in mind throughout the term or year.

You may wish to **schedule a wrap-up meeting with your student group** to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, provide and receive feedback regarding the project, and discuss strategies for improvement with regards to future partnerships. To guide this meeting, you can refer to the Community Engaged Learning Final Debrief document, which lists some ideas for discussion questions.

Wrapping Up Project(s)/Placement(s) & Next Steps

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EARLY-DECEMBER (FALL COURSES) OR **EARLY-APRIL** (WINTER & FULL-YEAR COURSES)

While the **official last day of classes is in early-December (Fall courses) or early-April (Winter or Full-Year courses)**, the CEL project may be scheduled to wrap-up earlier than this. You can find specific dates in the [CEL Course Guide](#). You should discuss these dates and deadlines with students during your initial meeting to include them in the Student and Community Partner Expectations Agreement.

Around this time, you will receive emails from the CEL Coordinators with **options for providing feedback about your experience working with CEL students**. You will have the opportunity to schedule a 1-on-1 meeting with a CEL Coordinator, or submit a feedback survey to share your experience, and/or attend a CEL Community Partner Roundtable event to collaborate with other community partners.

If your student group was unable to complete all of the deliverables initially outlined, you can connect with CEL Coordinators to **discuss if your project could continue in another upcoming CEL course**.

 **Community Engaged Learning,
Western University**

Contact Our Team



cel@uwo.ca



cel.uwo.ca



Western University, University
Community Centre (UCC) Room 210