**Morgridge Center
for Public Service**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

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Community-Based Learning at University of Wisconsin-Madison Definition and Recommended Practices
(Adopted by the University Academic Planning Council June 20, 2011; Revised 2017)

Definition of Community-Based Learning
A credit-bearing educational experience that integrates meaningful community engagement with guided reflection to enhance students' understanding of course content as well as their sense of civic responsibility while strengthening communities.*

Criteria**:
1) Service or other engagement activity is integrated with course content and supports its academic focus, with a minimum of 25 hours of community contact if direct service, or a deliverable (product or project outcome) to the partner if project-based community engagement, by each student in the course.
2) Students are involved in engagement of value to the community, as designed in collaboration with the community itself. Evidence of contact and agreement from community partner/s is required in the course proposal.
3) Students receive appropriate preparation and training before entering communities, with particular focus on vulnerable populations.
4) Structured opportunities for guided reflection such as writing assignments, discussions, presentations, or journals are required during the course. Guided reflection activities:
   • Examine critical issues related to their community-based learning project
   • Connect the community-engaged experience to coursework
   • Enhance the development of civic and ethical skills and values
   • Find personal relevance in the work
5) Clear explanations of learning outcomes and their assessment are included in syllabus. These must address both the academic and community engagement outcomes of the course.

Essential Learning Outcomes
Each community-based learning course will have its own content-specific learning objectives that align with the Wisconsin Experience Essential Learning Outcomes,

(https://blendedtoolkit.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/welo2010.pdf), and particularly with Essential Learning Outcome #3, "Personal and Social Responsibility":

1) Civic knowledge and engagement; local and global (awareness and understanding of community/social issues)
2) Intercultural knowledge and competence (respect for people and diversity in all its forms)
3) Ethical reasoning and action (greater self-leadership: understanding critical issues and different perspectives; developing empathy, critical thinking, and personal development)
4) Foundations and skills for lifelong learning; anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.

Other Recommended Best Practices for Community-Based Learning Courses

1) Include assessment criteria for student learning as well as assessment of community impact.
2) Make year-long or multi-year commitments to partnerships, folding in new students each semester, or, if possible, students make a year-long commitment to the same partner.
3) Provide a course syllabus to community partners in advance of the semester, and invite partners to make class presentations when possible.
4) Evidence of community-based learning agreements or memoranda of understanding, outlining expectations agreed upon by the student, instructor, and community partner.
5) Agree on method of ongoing communication that works best for all partners.
6) Faculty, staff, students and partners review course content to assure that planned activities are safe for students and community members with special attention to unintended harms and cultural sensitivities.

Examples of Course Models***:

Model A. Standard semester-long course. Course is instructed as a standard semester-long community-based learning course (discipline or project based) and includes a minimum of 25 hours of service or work on a community project. When course is project-based, the 25 hours may include project work time if students are in close contact with community partners.

Model B. Semester-long course with service during spring break or early summer. During the spring semester, the course will meet regularly to prepare students for the on-site visit and will include a post service reflection component.

Model C. Semester-long course with service during winter break. During the fall semester, the course will meet regularly to prepare students for the on-site service and include a post service reflection.

Model D. Summer community-based learning course. Course is instructed as a minimum of 4 week-long summer experience. If travel is involved, the course will include: pre-service classroom preparation and reflection, including intensive study of the culture of the country or location being visited; on-site service that includes at least 25 service hours and reflection upon return.

*Courses must initially be approved through the Divisional Committee approval process. Sectional designations as a community-based learning course may adopt these guidelines for approval and listing course Guide.

** These criteria are supported by the AAC&U's High-Impact Practices (K uh, G.D., 2008, High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities)

***Other course models may be designed. Please contact the Morgridge Center for information or support.

UW-Madison Community-Based Learning Designation Process

Community-based learning sections of existing courses may be designated in the Course Guide by following the steps outlined below. New courses that focus primarily on community-based learning, and that will be taught on a regular basis, will use the existing processes as designated by the divisional committee guidelines.

Designation as a community-based learning course is strongly recommended to alert students of the out-of-class time commitment and to formally identify community-based learning courses for risk management considerations. The approval process is as follows:

1. Faculty or instructor proposes a community-based learning designation to an existing course to their Department and submits material to curricular representative to enter in ISIS per standard procedure.
2. For the designation, the instructor or departmental curricular representative will complete the Course Designation Qualtrics survey for the proposed course section.
3. The request will be reviewed by the Morgridge Center's Review Committee using the criteria as specified in the Recommended Criteria and Essential Learning Outcomes for Community-Based Learning (see pages above).

4. Morgridge Center notifies the Registrar's Office and the instructor regarding approval within a month. If approved, the searchable attribute will be added to the course for display in the Course Guide. Notes about the community-based learning requirement will appear in both the Course Guide and the Class Search. If the course is not approved for community-based learning, the Morgridge Center will notify the instructor who may choose to revise or have the Registrar's Office add notes accordingly, but not designate as an official community-based course.
5. Formal designation as a community-based learning course section will not require the approval of Divisional Committees as part of the formal course approval process. The proposed process retains flexibility to not teach a course section using community-based learning in the event that either the instructor or community partner is unable to participate during a given semester.
6. It will be assumed that once approved, no further approvals will be necessary unless the instructor changes the course design with respect to community-based learning significantly. Instructors will ultimately decide when to request a new approval for their courses if courses are modified.

*Professional training, internships, clinical, practica, or mandated community learning experiences for degree programs are exempt -- this process is meant strictly for standard community-based learning courses.