

## READ

# Emphasize Quality Criteria

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We refer to programs and projects as community-engaged learning when they meet four quality criteria.

### 1. Address a specific community interest, problem, or public concern.

Faculty, staff, and students who practice CEL strive to create a better world — to affect others in positive ways. You might click the link and connect your work to one of the [United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#); for example, reducing inequalities, developing affordable and clean energy, or improving good health and well-being.

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### 2. Include working with and learning from a community partner.

CEL involves partner organizations. The value you bring is working with a partner to meet their goals; the value a partner brings is for students to learn from their experience and knowledge. Collaboration is essential to achieving a mutual benefit for everyone.

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### 3. Connect and integrate community-engaged experiences with educational content.

CEL must include specific learning outcomes that enrich the academic experience. A comprehensive CEL curriculum might include several program- and course-level learning objectives, while a project might include one learning objective as part of a class. Either way, CEL is grounded in educational content that supports the achievement of learning outcomes.

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### 4. Include structured, documented critical reflection.

Critical self-reflection and reflection with others through dialogue is a hallmark of high-quality CEL. Participants reap the greatest rewards from an engaged-learning experience when they document what they learned, how they have changed, and how they can apply their learning in other areas of their life. “Critical” reflection challenges students to consider power dynamics and structures that have historically marginalized and oppressed certain groups.

In order to achieve success with each of the criteria, the development of a CEL course or program should include:

- Training and preparation for community engagement, including the health and safety of all participants



- Staff, and/or peer-advising and mentorship appropriate for the type of CEL program
  - Assessment of participant learning and ongoing evaluation of the partnership and community impact
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Visit the [Einhorn Center for Community Engagement](#) to read more.

Adapted from Richard Kiely and Amy Newman, *Community-Engaged Learning*, eCornell, 2023.

