

MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement, 2016-2017 MENTORED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

Updated Fall 2016

PURPOSE OF MENTORED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

The mentored community engagement experience is second requirement for the MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement. It is an opportunity for you to collaborate with a community partner and a mentor on a scholarly outreach or engagement project in a real-world, community setting. The goal is to implement key ideas and practices introduced during the program's seminars/workshops, when possible, and to gain practical experience with communications, relationship building, collaboration, and reflection with your community partner(s).

Mentored community engagement experiences vary by discipline, college, and personal interests. They may be any form of community engaged scholarship, including community engaged research and creative activities, community engaged teaching and learning, community engaged service, community engaged commercialization activities, and/or any combination. They may involve any type of community or community partners. They may occur at any scale—from simple partnership structures to complex, networked structures.

For a majority of learners, the mentored community engagement experience is associated with their graduate degree program and may be a practicum, internship, thesis or dissertation research, graduate assistantship work, teaching responsibilities, or work experience. The mentored community engagement experience does **not** have to be a new or additional community engagement activity unless you would like it to be.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATION'S OTHER REQUIREMENTS

While some learners complete the seminars/workshops and the mentored community engagement experience simultaneously, it is recommended that you take the seminars/workshops before completing your mentored community engagement experience if possible. A description of your mentored community engagement experience and your critical reflections on it will form a major part of your written portfolio and presentation.

REQUIREMENTS

To meet the requirements of the Graduate Certification in Community Engagement, your mentored community engagement experience must:

- Be approved in advance by the program coordinator
- Meet MSU's definition of community engaged scholarship (especially the scholarly dimensions)
- Involve community partners from beyond campus
- Be collaboratively undertaken with community partner(s) and a mentor
- Involve significant, direct interaction between you, the learner, and your community partner
- Include reflection on communication, collaboration, and partnering skills with a mentor
- Include critical feedback from the community partner about your collaborative work together
- Be 60 hours at the minimum and documented in a log of activities (example below)

ON-GOING REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK FROM YOUR MENTOR

You are expected to identify a mentor, someone who can serve as a sounding board, reflection partner, and informal advisor for you on your mentored community engagement experience. This person may be your major professor, graduate advisor, field placement supervisor, faculty mentor, member of the University Outreach and Engagement faculty and staff, or a professional from your community setting. Their role is to support you throughout your mentored community engagement experience and reflect with you about your experiences. They are to offer practice ideas and advice as well as serve in a sense-making role. If you do not have a mentor, please talk with the program coordinator who will match you with a mentor who has similar interests and relevant experiences.

When you first meet with your mentor, you may want to clarify:

- Availability (e.g., teaching schedules, scheduled travel).
- Preferred communication styles (e.g., emails, in person meetings, phone calls).
- Expected frequency of meetings.
- How to be in touch if something exciting or particularly challenging comes up.
- Past experiences with community engaged scholarship.
- Details about your mentored community engagement experience.
- Resources that might address anticipated challenges.

At the **end of your experience**, you should gather constructive feedback from your mentor. He or she should comment on the various issues you discussed throughout your mentored community engagement experience, your strengths, and areas for improvement, if any. In the past, most mentors have written a letter or an email for you to include in your written portfolio. Keep in mind, many mentors are busy, so be sure to ask for this letter well in advance of your written portfolio deadline.

ON-GOING REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK FROM YOUR COMMUNITY PARTNER

Throughout your collaboration with your community partner, you should be in conversation with them about how your work together is going. Reflecting on what is working well and what might be improved should be part of an on-going conversation or dialogue between you and your community partner.

At the mid-point of your mentored community engagement experience, you should ask for critical, reflective feedback from your community partner. More specifically, you should check in with your community partner to compare your expectations and theirs, identify potential adjustments to improve your relationship, and revisit (and revise if necessary) your agreement about the details of your final contributions or project.

We have developed a **Community Partner Feedback Form** for you to use with your partner to facilitate this mid-point check in conversation. Please share this form with your community partner at the beginning of your experience and schedule a time to discuss the form's main points with your community partner at the mid-way point.

At the **end of your experience**, you should gather constructive feedback about your performance, including your strengths and areas for improvement in your community partnership skills. This critical, reflective feedback on your experience may take different forms, depending on the circumstances. In the past, most community partners have written a letter or an email for you to include in your written portfolio. Keep in mind, many community partners are busy, so be sure to ask for this letter well in advance of your written portfolio deadline.

LOG OF ACTIVITIES

You are expected to keep an activity log of dates, hours, and activities to document your collaboration with your community partner. This log will become part of your written engagement portfolio. See example below:

Date	Hours	Log of Activities
Sept 15, 2015	1 hour	Met with community partner to brainstorm ideas for upcoming meeting. Partner asked me to look into fun, large group techniques for brainstorming and prioritizing.
Sept 25, 2015	2 hours	Looked at collaboration techniques books, surfed the web for 5 choices, wrote up summaries to share back with community partner.
Oct 6, 2015	1 ½ hours	Met with community partner to review techniques choices. Decided on combining two of them. Also decided on final agenda for upcoming big meeting. Divided up roles.
Oct 9, 2015	1 hour	Revised the big meeting agenda, prepared the materials for everyone.
Oct 23, 2015	2 hours	Attended the big meeting, facilitated part of the large group techniques and took notes for the rest of the meeting.
Oct 27, 2015	½ hour	Wrote up draft notes and sent to community partner for final review.
		More entries as the project unfolds....
Total Hours		

If you are already keeping track of your hours and activities for another purpose (i.e., assistantship, field placement, grant tracking), feel free to include that record of your activities in your portfolio instead of this proposed log of activities.