

# CEL Syllabus Design Guide

## Community Engagement & Leadership (CEL) Certificate Program

### Basic Three-Step Process

1. Read through this Faculty Syllabus Design Guide, the CEL Application Form, and the CEL Signature Form.
2. Update your syllabus to reflect the design guidelines and fill out the CEL Application form. Please also note here if your course is for the **undergraduate** \_\_\_\_ or **graduate** \_\_\_\_ level (note that graduate-level courses will require additional structural considerations).
3. Submit your updated syllabus, the completed CEL Application Form, and CEL Signature Form (with applicable signatures at the department level) to the College of Liberal Arts Dean's Office – Attention: Dr. Selfa A. Chew ([sachewsmithart@utep.edu](mailto:sachewsmithart@utep.edu)) for College of Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee submissions or Dr. Lorraine Torres ([lorit@utep.edu](mailto:lorit@utep.edu)) for College of Health Sciences Curriculum Committee submissions, and please "cc" Dr. Areli Chacón Silva ([achaconsilva@utep.edu](mailto:achaconsilva@utep.edu)), CEL Program Chair, on all submissions for processing.

### Important Notes:

**\*If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Associate Dean Chew at the Dean's Office for additional information and guidance through the process.**

**\*The review process will be conducted by the Community Engagement & Leadership Review Committee (which may request revisions/updates before approval; certain exceptions may also be granted with committee approval for courses with special circumstances), and final approval will be granted through the appropriate college curriculum committee.**

**\*Once your syllabus is reviewed and approved, the Dean's Office will work with you and your Department Chair (and department administrative assistant) to request that the registrar have your course designated (a.k.a. "tagged") as a "CEL" course.**

### Course Requirements

The College of Liberal Arts, along with colleagues from the College of Health Sciences, is designating courses that count towards the Community Engagement and Leadership (CEL) Certificate Program. Liberal Arts and Health Science majors will be encouraged to complete at least one "CEL" (Community Engagement & Leadership) designated course as part of the UTEP experience (as well as ideally within their degree plan/program of study) and will have the option to take additional courses (which will earn them a proposed certificate in Community Engagement and Leadership) at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

*\*Please note that the proposed program will be concurrently established as the first pilot courses begin for the 2020-2022 academic years.*

Departments are asked to inventory their course offerings and determine whether courses currently taught can potentially meet the criteria to classify those courses as "CEL" courses. To designate a course as a "CEL" course, this Faculty Syllabus Design Guide must be reviewed and

the following criteria should be reflected in the CEL Application Form, along with a copy of the syllabus to be submitted for program approval.

## Purpose of Courses

To strengthen students' understanding of their role in society as engaged citizens and to build the knowledge and competencies that will enable them to be socially responsible and participating community leaders.

## Community Engagement & Leadership (CEL) Course Definition:

These are courses with integrated, structured community-based (*direct* and *indirect* outside of the classroom) projects and activities connected to course learning objectives where engagement with community partners is equally beneficial to the student and community partners. Participation involves reciprocal teaching-learning experiences over the course of the academic semester and students may gain additional leadership and interpersonal skills while applying their knowledge in the community-setting.

## Examples of this type of engagement with leadership development activities include:

- Community-based internships, clinical, fieldwork, and student teaching
- Community engagement placements in the community where “direct service hours” are performed
- Planning and implementation of a community engagement activity or project
- Design, consultation, or creation of a community product or tool
- Pro bono specialized services performed by faculty and students (e.g. consulting) in connection with course or academic objectives
- Student community-based research to include surveying, observations, and field notes

**Note:** *Academic based community engagement is **not basic volunteerism or community service** and should not be left up to the student to conceptualize and organize without proper guidance and direct connection to the course objectives in partnership with a community organization and need. Ideally, a significant portion of a community-based activity will be group-based with faculty accompaniment.*

## Recommendations:

- **Course learning objective(s)** - Community engagement experience connected to *at least one course learning objective* and articulated as such in the syllabus.
- **Skills and knowledge** - In addition to course learning objectives, students should master *at least two of the following leadership-related skills*, which should also be indicated on the syllabus:
  - a) Develop and strengthen ethical skills
  - b) Increase social justice and social responsibility awareness
  - c) Build communication skills
  - d) Develop critical thinking skills
  - e) Team work interpersonal skills
  - f) Community-based research skills and knowledge

- g) Practice initiative and responsibility
  - h) Self-driven and change-making skills
  - i) Develop innovation and entrepreneurial skills
- **Grading, reflection and evaluation** - Community engagement activities must be graded and should make up at least 20% of the grade (minimum – there may also be related assignments with separate grades that supplement this minimum). Depending on the course design, the credit for such activities could be up to 80% of the grade (maximum).
    - Evaluation methods might include:
      - On-site visits
      - Progress reports, journaling, and ongoing reflection
      - Project, poster, and documentation
      - Midterm and Final reflections
      - Final presentation
      - Student and community partner evaluations
    - **Note: Reflection** is a mandatory component of all academic-based community engagement activities. Some of the evaluation methods might also assist with reflection. However, reflection should be facilitated throughout the semester and should not consist solely of one activity or assignment, and not occur solely at the end of the semester. Reflection facilitates progressive learning and should allow for peer and/or faculty feedback.
  - **Hour commitment** - Community engagement hours, whether direct or indirect, must constitute a minimum of 20 direct hours (indirect hours, or preparation time might equal more than 60 hours).
  - **Community partner and preparation** – A pre-identified community partner(s) and project should be identified for the course community engagement activity, and where appropriate, a community partner agreement should be in place. The UTEP Center for Community Engagement (CCE) can aid faculty with the initial task of identifying and connecting with a community partner.

### Course Designation Process and Reapplication

Courses to be designated as “CEL” courses will carry such designation once “tagged” upon request through the registrar and will appear as such on student transcripts (unless tagged retroactively). Initial approval through the College of Liberal Arts (or College of Health Sciences) Dean’s Office is required to ensure that all requirements are met and so that the course may count towards a proposed “CEL” certificate program. When the course is offered again as a “CEL” course, it needs to be reapproved for each subsequent semester, which often will constitute a very simple and straightforward renewal for designation of the new section and should not burden the faculty member (e.g., minor changes would likely be slightly updating a syllabus/calendar and otherwise renewing an already acceptable format). Once approval/confirmation of the proposed syllabus is granted, the Dean’s Office will work with faculty to notify their Department Chair and administrative assistant to request that the registrar be contacted to add the “CEL” designation.

## **Additional Resources for Help and Guidance**

\*For additional information on Community Engagement and Leadership Studies at UTEP, as well as information on UTEP's mission vis-à-vis best practices, UTEP Edge initiatives, principles of partnership, community organizations and sites, and the variety of ongoing training opportunities, you may contact the following:

Azuri Gonzalez ([azurig@utep.edu](mailto:azurig@utep.edu)), Director of UTEP's Center for Community Engagement

Dr. Areli Chacón Silva ([achaconsilva@utep.edu](mailto:achaconsilva@utep.edu)), Director of UTEP's Leadership and Community Engagement Program