UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
Office of Service-Learning

Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement

Administered by the University of Georgia Office of Service-Learning
in partnership with the Graduate School

Overview and Purpose

The University of Georgia's ***Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement*** is a voluntary, non-credit recognition and professional development program for graduate and professional students at the University of Georgia from a variety of disciplines, programs, and interests. This program is intended to help graduate and professional students develop and document competencies relating to community-engaged teaching, research, and public service and outreach.

The Community Engagement Portfolio is designed to help students:
- Prepare for careers as community-engaged scholars.
- Connect research and teaching to community engagement principles.
- Understand and implement best practices in engaged teaching, engaged research, and/or engaged public service and outreach.
- Undertake and reflect on applied community engagement experiences through teaching, research, and/or public service and outreach.
- Document community engagement experiences.

In 2010 and 2020, the University of Georgia was recognized as a Carnegie Foundation *Community Engaged Institution*, due in part to the growing number of faculty and students integrating community-based work into their teaching, research, and service activities. Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. UGA's community engagement work can be classified into the following categories:

- *Community-engaged teaching* is conducted primarily through academic service-learning, a course-based activity in which students apply academic skills and knowledge to address community needs in order to enhance academic learning and provide mutual benefit to the community.
- *Community-engaged research* is characterized by reciprocity between the university and partners, with meaningful and respectful involvement of the community in developing and addressing a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of enhancing and improving quality of life.
- *Community-engaged public service and outreach* may take place at UGA through the work of Public Service & Outreach (PSO) units, students/staff/faculty engaged in university-community partnerships, and Cooperative Extension. Engaged PSO work should exemplify applying the knowledge and resources of the university to meet community-identified needs (e.g., educational, economic, social, environmental, etc.), in a context of reciprocity.

Students interested in taking part in the *Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement* program are encouraged to contact the Office of Service-Learning for assistance in planning and considering how best to incorporate their interests and work into this program. Students will also select a **faculty mentor** (often someone in their department) who can give guidance in their portfolio work.

Program Requirements and Review Process

1. Students sign up for the portfolio program with the Office of Service-Learning to indicate their intent to develop and submit a portfolio and to receive direct communications about the program. As part of this process, students indicate whether they already have a proposed faculty mentor for their community engagement work, or if they need assistance in finding a faculty mentor. Students also provide a one-page **overview of their proposed engaged project**. Use the "Declaration of Intent" PDF at https://servicelearning.uga.edu/student-resources/graduate-portfolio/.

2. Participating students take part, minimally, in a **portfolio workshop** covering the basics of 1) *Introduction to Community Engagement*; and 2) *Preparing the Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement*. This is usually offered once per semester by the Office of Service-Learning. Students who enroll in *either* GRSC 7870S ("Service-Learning Course Design"), GRSC 7880S ("Community-Engaged Research Methods") or GRSC 7970S ("Approaches to Community Engagement") will typically also fulfill the workshop requirements through those courses.
   - *Note: Students are strongly encouraged to build knowledge and competencies by taking part in professional learning workshops offered through the Office of Service-Learning, and/or via graduate coursework.*

3. Students develop and submit a **Portfolio** documenting their activities and outcomes, including an individually created supervised activity or project in which they implement community-engaged teaching, research, and/or public service & outreach. The submitted Portfolio should be no longer than fifteen single-spaced pages, professionally presented and carefully edited. Documentation should be combined into a single PDF document and submitted electronically to Dr. Paul Matthews, pmatthews@uga.edu by the stated deadline. Each portfolio includes the following components (described in more detail in the "Preparing the Graduate Portfolio" workshop and handouts)**:**
   a. Completed *Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement Cover Sheet*. (PDF, 1 pg)
   b. Statement of student's *community engagement philosophy* (describing/characterizing the key tenets of community engagement and engaged scholarship; your own rationale for involvement; links to your discipline and career goals). How these engagement tenets specifically relate to theory/practice in your own disciplinary field may also be addressed. (2 pages)
   c. Descriptive and reflective self-assessment of student's *community-engaged project/activity* (engaged research, teaching, or public service & outreach), including
      - Descriptive/narrative overview (The "what"?), describing the project/activity (community, community-identified need, project timing, goals, partners, activities, methods, outcomes). (1-2 pages)
      - Impact (or anticipated/prospective impact; the "so what?") of the engaged project/activity. E.g., how does/will the project meet the identified need and how do you know? (*summary* of evaluations, community feedback, products, materials, reports, publications, etc.); what will/could be done to capture longer-term impacts. (1-2 pages; note, actual documentation should be included in appendices)
      - Reflective assessment of exactly how the project/activity incorporated the best practices for community engagement outlined in the Engagement Philosophy statement, changes that took place (or modifications for the future) and adaptations to these changes, and impact of the experience upon the applicant's professional and/or personal future, etc. (2 pages)
   d. *Curriculum Vitae*, including activities related to the portfolio and any other involvement in community engagement. (2-4 pages)

e. *Letter of support from the faculty mentor*, contextualizing and commenting on the processes and outcomes of the student's community engagement work. (1-2 pages) (address to Dr. Paul Matthews, Office of Service-Learning)

f. *Appendices* with any additional supporting material documenting the project/activity, its outcomes, or impact. A *letter* or other feedback from the community partner, attesting to need and impact, should be included as well.

4. Submission deadlines are **April 1** (for spring and summer semester graduation) and **November 1** (for winter semester graduation). However, submissions at other times are also accepted.

5. Portfolios will be **reviewed and approved** by the Office of Service-Learning, using the *Portfolio Rubric* (see PDF on website) to guide the process. The review committee will consist of OSL faculty members and selected faculty with appropriate expertise in engaged work. Student feedback on the portfolio will be formative. Some Community Engagement Portfolios approved by the review committee are posted online (with applicant approval).

6. Graduate students whose portfolios are approved by the review committee as well developed and well documented will receive recognition via a *Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement* certification in recognition of the student's achievements in community-engaged teaching, research, and/or public service work at the University of Georgia.

Questions?

Questions relating to the *Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement* should be directed to Dr. Paul Matthews, UGA Office of Service-Learning, 706-542-0892 or pmatthews@uga.edu. Information and supporting resources are also available online at https://servicelearning.uga.edu/student-resources/graduate-portfolio/.

*Some **resources** for thinking more about community engaged work:*

- The Carnegie Foundation's definition: "Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good."
https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/elective-classifications/community-engagement/

- NERCHE's characterization of "Engaged Scholarship": "The term "scholarship of engagement" is an emergent concept first used by Ernest Boyer in a 1996 article by that title. The term redefines faculty scholarly work from application of academic expertise to community engaged scholarship that involves the faculty member in a reciprocal partnership with the community, is interdisciplinary, and integrates faculty roles of teaching, research, and service. While there is variation in current terminology (public scholarship, scholarship of engagement, community-engaged scholarship), engaged scholarship is defined by the collaboration between academics and individuals outside the academy - knowledge professionals and the lay public (local, regional/state, national, global) - for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The scholarship of engagement includes explicitly democratic dimensions of encouraging the participation of non-academics in ways that enhance and broaden engagement and deliberation about major social issues inside and outside the university. It seeks to facilitate a more active and engaged democracy by bringing affected publics into problem-solving work in ways that advance the public good with and not merely for the public." https://nerche.org/defining-community-engagement/

- Imagining America's concept of "Public Scholarship": "Publicly engaged academic work refers to scholarly or creative activity integral to a faculty member's academic area. It encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, it contributes to the public good and yields artifacts of public and intellectual value."
http://imaginingamerica.org/