Community Engaged Scholar Transcript Designation (CESTD) Operational Guide

Introduction

This document is intended to provide UNO students, advisors, faculty, and administrators with information regarding the design, structure, procedures, policies, requirements, and timelines related to the Community Engagement Scholar Transcript Designation (CESTD). It is not intended to be a binding agreement; rather, it is a set of foundational operating guidelines to improve the understanding of the CESTD and assist in planning appropriate coursework and service activity.

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Organizational Structure/Roles/Membership

Administrative Home

The UNO Office of Engagement (OE) serves as the administrative home of the CESTD. In this role, OAA maintains the The CESTD website provides strategic direction, offers marketing and communication support, and serves as a conduit for communication with UNO's colleges and their deans and academic advisors.

Lead Executive

The Chief Engagement Officer serves as the lead executive for the CESTD. This individual's role is to affirm policy, identify and coordinate financial support and serve as the primary communicator with the deans and other executive campus leadership. The lead executive is the last step in the appeals process for CESTD students.

Funding support

Funds from the NU Foundation support the Centennial Fellow for Community Engagement (Fellow), who provides day-to-day operational oversight of the CESTD. Funds from the Office of Engagement support operational and marketing expenses. The time and effort provided by members of the Executive Committee are part of their regular duties and do not require additional funding support.

Executive Committee Members and Roles

- **Julie Dierberger, Ph.D., Chief Engagement Officer and Paul Sather Distinguished Director of the Service Learning Academy, Office of Engagement**
- **Jason Jones, Associate Director, Office of Engagement**
- **Rosey Higgs, M.S.W., Associate Director, Service Learning Academy, Office of Engagement**
- **Toni Monette, Assistant Direct, Office of Engagement**
- **Anna Spethman, Volunteer and Civic Engagement Programs, Office of Engagement**
- **Robyn Loos, M.A., Communications and Special Projects Manager, Office of Engagement**
- **Lindsay Sanders, Service Learning Manager, Office of Engagement**
- **Centennial Fellow for Community Engagement, Office of Engagement**
- **Jeffrey Southall II, Associate Director, Student Service and Leadership Collaborative**

The Executive Committee is responsible for finalizing policies, exceptions, and Canvas course management. The Fellow for Community Engagement provides support for validating, reviewing, and approving components as needed and identified by the Executive Committee members.

Canvas Redesign/Upkeep
The Fellow maintains and updates the site throughout each semester.

Communications and Marketing of CESTD
The Fellow is responsible for planning and executing marketing and/or communications to recruit students and raise awareness among campus stakeholders.

Emerging Policy Revision/Development
The Executive Committee is responsible for establishing and revising policy in consultation with the Chief Engagement Officer.

Appeals
The Executive Committee serves as the official Appeals Committee for the CESTD if a student seeks an appeal of a decision related to applicable coursework, service, or a graded reflection.

Centennial Fellow for Community Engagement

The Fellow is the primary point of contact for students, faculty, and staff regarding the CESTD. Communications with the Fellow take place via the organizational email unoengagement@unomaha.edu. Specifically, the Fellow serves an advisory role for students as they complete the designation's components and is responsible for maintaining the Canvas site. Site maintenance includes updates or additions to content, monitoring student submissions and their status, and using Canvas to communicate with new and current student participants. They are also responsible for updating student data and progress each semester, ongoing support for marketing and outreach to students, and ordering engaged scholar cords for graduates.

In the event the number and/or needs of students signed up for the CESTD exceed the time and/or advising capacity of the Fellow and/or Executive Committee members, the Chief Engagement Officer will collaborate with the Executive Committee to determine if an additional staff member is needed.

Canvas

Administration and Access

The Executive Committee has administrative access to the Canvas site. The Fellow is the main point of contact and administrator for the Canvas site.

The Fellow monitors student progress and submissions and keeps track of new students. The Fellow generates a welcome email and provides new students with orientation and all necessary material. The Fellow first receives notifications when students request to join the CESTD page. Once the Fellow has received this notification, they will send out an email to the student with a greeting and information regarding the designation along with the Student Information Form. The Fellow subsequently receives notifications when the students submit material for the service learning and community-based learning components when they submit their final volunteer service hours, and when they submit reflections. The Fellow is responsible for providing support or notifying the respective Executive Committee members when a critical decision needs to be made in a particular component area or when a reflection is ready to be reviewed. Each reflection may be completed at any time following all documentation (i.e., submission) for each component (i.e., service learning is one of the components). Each student must complete the designation requirements consistent with the deadlines that align with their official graduation day. Deadlines will be identified and shared each semester through the Canvas site. The Fellow sends all deadlines and reminders through Canvas. Semester deadlines must be met to be recognized in the commencement program and at the ceremony.

Service Learning Component

For questions about this component please contact the Fellow at unoengagement@unomaha.edu.

Description of Service Learning

Service learning is a teaching method that combines classroom instruction with meaningful, community-identified service. This form of engaged teaching and learning emphasizes critical thinking by using reflection to connect course content with real-world experiences. Service learning instructors' partner with community organizations as co-teachers and encourage a heightened sense of community, civic engagement, and personal responsibility for students while building capacity and contributing to real community impact.

Requirements

Students in the CESTD must complete 6 hours of designated service learning courses. These courses must have a service learning designation in the "course attributes" column of the online UNO course catalog. Students must pass the course with a "C" or better to have them count.

Examples of Service Learning

Service learning courses connect classroom learning to community-identified service. These partnerships occur with nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, P-12 schools, and/or businesses. For a list of previous service learning courses and project descriptions, please visit this website.

Transfer of Service Learning Coursework from Non-UNO Institution

Students may transfer one service learning course from their previous institution with proof of course documentation and approval.

Documentation requirements for Service Learning on Canvas:

After joining the Canvas course and completing the student information form, students should submit and unofficial transcript using MavLINK. Final grades for the current semester are due seven days following the final exams from faculty.

Community-based Learning Component

For questions about this component please contact the Fellow at unoengagement@unomaha.edu.

Description of Community-based Learning
Community-based learning (CBL) entails professional experiences that provide an opportunity to put academic knowledge into practice or learn more about a specific profession. During these experiences, students are expected to gain intensive experience applying principles of civic and community engagement and/or disciplinary knowledge and skills in a community setting. Community is broadly defined and includes nonprofits, government, business, and K-12 partners. The goal for these experiences is focused on the student learning and experience for the project, not necessarily to fulfill a community-identified opportunity. Community-based learning courses are indicated in the "course attribute" section of the course catalog. Additionally, community-based learning course/section attributes can be assigned in the Catalog at the Curriculum level or any course section at the schedule level.

CBL is different than service learning. Service learning courses may be considered for the CBL requirement if they fit within the definition or experience of CBL and are not being used for the fulfillment of the service learning component.

Requirements
Students must complete one (1) CBL experience equivalent to three (3) credit hours __or__ 135 hours of effort. If there is academic credit involved, the student must pass with a C. Non-credit CBL experiences that have not previously been identified will be approved by the Executive Committee.

Examples of Community-based Learning
Examples of applicable CBL experiences include (but are not limited to): courses that are project-based and include community activities such as internships (paid/unpaid), capstone courses, practica that contribute to the student learning and/or community's well-being, student teaching, research papers that examine a community problem or potential solutions to a community opportunity, a full year as an intern in The Collaborative, involvement in the AmeriCorps VISTA Program or a global engagement/study abroad experience.

Documentation Requirements Canvas
To meet the CESTD's CBL requirement, students must upload verification documentation via Canvas that demonstrates that the course/experience meets the expectations and requirements of a CBL course or experience. It is highly recommended that students check with the Fellow before enrolling in a CBL experience to ensure that it is applicable to the Community-Based Learning Component of the Designation. To do this, please email the Fellow at unoengagement@unomaha.edu.

Examples for Completion Documentation
- Transcript showing completion of course with C or better
- Copy of The Collaborative final portfolio or proof of internship
- Course projects based on community activities

Volunteer / Service Component

For questions about this component please contact the Fellow at unoengagement@unomaha.edu.

Description
Volunteer or community service is defined as unpaid community involvement that occurs outside of the classroom and provides community or societal assistance, aiming toward community/societal improvement. In general, students receive no college credit for these activities although exemplary efforts may be recognized through scholarship, awards, recognition, and other rewards.

Requirements
To meet this requirement, students must complete 135 hours of volunteer/community service hours that are not part of a class requirement. These hours must be completed in the community or on campus as long as the service activity supports the community. Documentation should reflect that.

Examples of Volunteerism/Community Service
- Unpaid work in civic activities, community organizing, neighborhood associations, political campaigns, etc.
- Unpaid involvement with any nonprofit agency or other community organization, including one-time or ongoing service.
- Participation in campus-wide service days and events
- Participation in service through a student or campus organization

Transfer of Volunteer Hours from Non-UNO Institution
With permission and proper documentation, students may transfer up to 40 hours of documented volunteer/community service completed within the semester before enrolling at UNO, for example, while enrolled at another institution of higher education.

Volunteer Hours From High School/Dual Enrolled Students
Students may apply up to 40 hours of service completed within 4 months of after graduating high school. Hours earned prior to high school graduation may not be used.

Documentation requirements for Volunteer/Community Service on Canvas
These hours should be tracked and verified through a validation process in Canvas, using a document template for recording and submitting hours. This document may be submitted once the student has recorded 135 credit hours on the appropriate Volunteerism Canvas Module. When this information is verified, the student can complete the volunteer/community service reflection.

Reflections

Reflections are required after completing each of the three components and approval documentation submitted. After completing component reflections students are required to complete a final reflection and exit survey. All reflections must receive a passing score of 14 or better out of 20 points.

Definition of Reflections
Students must complete written reflections that connect their community engagement experience to their learning and personal development. Reflections provide an opportunity to contemplate, synthesize, and articulate their CESTD experiences and the knowledge, skills, and abilities they derived from them. The reflections are designed to help students understand that by through applicable community engagement experiences, they are fulfilling an obligation that every member of a democracy shares: to participate in one's community.

Students submit a written reflection piece upon completion of each of the primary categories: community-based learning, service learning, and volunteerism/community service that challenges them to think critically about how experiences of each component have enhanced their learning. The final reflection is an opportunity for students to connect the overall components to their professional goals, their roles as citizens, and their personal growth.

Timing/Due Dates for Submitting Reflections
Students will be given access to the reflection assignment for each component once 1) the student has submitted evidence that all requirements for the respective component have been completed and 2) this evidence has been reviewed and approved. Students will receive permission to complete the final reflection after they have completed all three components and received a passing score for all three reflections. Apart from graduating students (see below), there is no specific requirement as to when students should submit the component reflections, although this type of writing is easiest and encouraged to take place right after the experience. The final reflection is intended to incorporate and synthesize the student's academic and community engagement experiences, as well as look toward the student's professional aspirations. It might best be timed to be written closer to the student's graduation date.

Service Learning Reflections

For the service learning reflection, students must respond to the following prompts:

- Please briefly describe your service learning experiences.

- Reflecting on these activities, please describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities you gained through these experiences, providing specific examples.
- The contents should be limited to 300-500 words. To pass this component, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

Community-Based Learning (CBL) Reflections

For the CBL reflection, students must respond to the following prompts:

- Please briefly describe your CBL experiences.
- Reflecting on these activities, please describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities you gained through these experiences, providing specific examples.
- The contents should be limited to 300-500 words. To pass this component, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

Volunteer/Community Service Reflection

For the Volunteer/Community Service reflection, a student must respond to the following prompts:

- Please briefly describe your Volunteer/Community Service experiences.
- Reflecting on these activities, please describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities you gained through these experiences, providing specific examples.
- The contents should be limited to 300-500 words. To pass this component, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

Final Reflection

For the final reflection, students must include a brief introduction and conclusion, regarding the overall impact and relevance of their community engagement experiences. In particular, the final reflection is intended for students to consider how these experiences have affected them. Students are also asked to complete a quiz about their experience.

- Professional goals
- Personal goals
- Civic development goals

For the final reflection, students must answer the following questions:

1. How have the service learning, volunteerism, and community-based learning experiences through the Community Engaged Scholars Transcript Designation contributed to your: professional aspirations; role as a citizen in a diverse and evolving society; and personal growth and development?
2. What does it mean to be an engaged student and how does engagement enrich academic experience here at UNO?

Requirements of Final Reflection
The contents in the final reflection answers should provide specific examples and be limited to 800-1000 words. To pass, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

Scoring: The Fellow and/or the Executive Committee score the final reflection through Canvas using the scoring rubric.

Resubmission After Failing Scores/Limits
For any of the four reflections, students who receive an initial score of less than 14 (less than the equivalent of a C) may revise and resubmit their reflection or submit a new reflection. If the student does not receive a passing score, they have not passed this section and will not receive a CESTD. If they choose, they may seek an appeal through the appeals process described below.

Requirement Flexibility

The following includes, but not limited to, a list of experiences that may apply to one or more of the CESTD components. Please contact the Fellow for approval at unoengagement@unomaha.edu

- Academic learning community requirements (community engaged research, narrative portfolios, service hours, etc.)
- Global engagement experiences through study abroad
- Courses that operate with a service learning or community focus. Please note that in some cases a course may not be tagged as either service learning or community based learning but might apply as such. Proper documentation of communication with the instructor will be required.

General Policies

GPA Requirement

Overall GPA requirement for CETSD participants requires a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

Appeals Process

A student may submit an appeal for any of the transcript components. Appeals must be sent via email to unoengagement@unomaha.edu. The appeal will first go to the individual or group assigned to that component (see scoring). If not resolved, it will then be moved to the entire Executive Committee for further review. The Chief Engagement Officer is the final stop in the appeal process.

Process for Placing Designations in Student Transcripts

The Executive Committee is responsible for notifying the UNO Office of the Registrar when a student has completed all requirements for the Community Engaged Scholar Transcript Designation. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for designating whether a student has achieved "Engaged Community Scholar" status on their transcript. Once notated, this becomes a permanent designation on the student's transcript.

While students may complete the CESTD anytime during their enrollment at UNO, they cannot receive the designation before they complete their degree because of the cumulative 3.0 GPA at graduation requirement. Students must complete and submit all CESTD requirements, including reflections and required work products for CBL, by the given deadline in Canvas to receive the official designation on their transcript. Once a student completes all components and reflections, the Executive Committee will conduct an audit to confirm that all service-based learning and CBL courses were completed with a "C" or better and that the student graduated with a cumulative 3.0 GPA or better.

Once the Executive Committee confirms that the student has completed all CESTD requirements, the Fellow provides a list of students who will graduate with the designation to the Registrar.

Process for Recognition of Community Engaged Scholars at Commencement

To be recognized as a Community Engaged Scholar at Commencement (notation in the Commencement program and given cords), the students must complete the requirements for the designation based on official due dates provided in Canvas.

CESTD Digital Certificates

The Registrar's Office will also provide official digital certificates to students who have earned the CESTD. These certificates may be used as additional proof of completion on various social platforms and E-portfolios.

Student Engagement

Eligibility Requirements

- Any student may enroll in the CESTD through Canvas

- Students must earn a C or better in the two service learning classes as well as the community-based learning course (if applicable)
- Students must have a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the time of graduation to earn the designation (confirmation through final audit)

Enrollment Process in CESTD

Canvas

To enroll via Canvas, the student must first have access to the Canvas course link, which is available via the website. Once students click on the link, they may request to join the Canvas site. The Executive Committee and Fellow will begin the process for each new student as they join. The Canvas course link can be accessed here.

Communications

Recruitment/Communications

The Executive Committee and Fellow email students who are enrolled (or have been enrolled) in a service learning or community-based learning course during the fall and spring semesters. Each year the Executive Committee and Fellow work to establish and communicate with key campus contacts, including academic and non-academic departments that may work with students completing similar requirements.

For questions about outreach and future collaboration email us at unoengagement@unomaha.edu.