

State Council for Higher Education for Virginia
Assessment of Competencies
Civic Engagement
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON
2020

Definition. An array of knowledge, abilities, values, attitudes, and behaviors that in combination allow individuals to contribute to the life of their communities. It includes course-based or extra-curricular efforts to identify and address issues of public or community concern and exploration of one's role and responsibilities in society.

Learning Outcomes. Civic Engagement proficiency was evaluated by measuring students' abilities across three criteria as expressed in writing assignments for community engagement (CE) courses.

Analysis of Knowledge: Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/ field/ discipline to community engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.

Identity/Commitment: Provides evidence of experience in community-engagement activities and describes what the student has learned about themselves and their own role in the community as it relates to a growing sense of public identity and commitment to public action.

Action and Reflection: Demonstrates independent experience, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of community action while making connections to other community issues.

Standard(s) for Proficiency. There are four rating categories (i.e., *limited, average, good, high*) for each SLO. 75% of students must pass each SLO with a rating of 2 (average) or higher. The evaluation categories are the same as those used in university assessments of Community Engagement, a subset of our General Education category "Beyond the Classroom."

Description of Methodology Used to Gather Evidence of Proficiency. Administrative, discipline-trained evaluators reviewed writing assignments from two Community Engagement courses to assess proficiency in the categories listed above. Final papers from Honors 201 (Service Learning), and multiple journal entry reflections from Psychology 499 (Internship), were read by two reviewers. A total of 54 writing assignments, covering 28 students, were evaluated. The individual administrator evaluations were compared with each other and, in cases where team members did not agree on an overall rating, the evaluators discussed each assignment until agreement was reached on each SLO category per student.

Civic Engagement Benchmark. For each SLO, the benchmark was at least 75% of students would achieve a passing score (2, average) or higher.

Results of Community Engagement Learning Outcomes

	SLO 1 A of K	SLO 2 ID/Comm	SLO 3/A&R
Students evaluated	28	28	28
Average	1.6	2.1	1.9
# Passing (2 and above)	11 (39%)	21 (75%)	20 (71%)

Civic Engagement Summary: For one of the three SLOs, Identity/Commitment, students met the benchmark of 75%. For the third SLO, Action/Reflection students were quite close to the benchmark, with 71% achieving 2 or higher. However, a large percentage of students are not meeting proficiency expectations in SLO 1, Analysis of Knowledge. Only 39% of students achieved a 2 or better, with many students scoring at 0 (missing or incomplete), which indicates they were not addressing the knowledge in their academic studies to their community experience in the assignment at all. This issue could be addressed by providing the Community Engagement learning outcomes ahead of time to students, as well as altering assignments to more clearly require that students reflect on how their community engagement experiences address facts, theories, and/or knowledge from their academic studies (in the CE class or beyond).

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