



Fergusson College (Autonomous) Pune

Guidelines for Community Engagement and Social Responsibility (CESR) for S.Y.B.A./B.Sc./B.Voc. (NEP)

Introduction:

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) can play an important role to achieve the objectives of socio-economic development of New India through their active community engagement. This approach will also contribute to improve the quality of both teaching and research in HEIs as they will develop a better understanding of issues in the society. There is a need to focus on improving societal linkages and enabling students to become socially productive [1].

The **goals** of ‘fostering social responsibility and community engagement’ comprise of:

1. Improving the quality of teaching/learning, by bridging the gap between theory and practice through community engagement;
2. Promoting deeper interactions between higher educational institutions and local communities for identification and solution of real-life problems faced by the communities in a spirit of mutual benefit;
3. Facilitating partnerships between local communities and institutions of higher education so that students and teachers can learn from local knowledge and wisdom;
4. Engaging higher education institutions with local communities in order to make curriculum, courses and pedagogies more appropriate to achieve the goals of national development;
5. Catalysing acquisition of values of public service and active citizenship amongst students and youth, which would also encourage, nurture and harness the natural idealism of youth;
6. Undertaking research projects in partnership with local community through community-based research methods.

Forms of Community Engagement

a) Linking learning with community service

In this approach, students and teachers apply their knowledge and skills in a chosen community to improve the lives of people in that community. This can be achieved through the model of ‘service-learning’ (a globally accepted best practice), providing engagement opportunities to students from various disciplines and courses to apply their knowledge to address the challenges of a specific community. For example, students of chemistry can conduct water and soil testing in local areas and share the results with the local community.

b) Linking research with community knowledge

In this approach, various faculties and programmes of HEIs devise joint research projects in partnership with the communities and local agencies. The community’s own knowledge is integrated into the design and conduct of the research. New research by students helps them to complete their academic requirements, and at the same time the community’s knowledge is systematized. Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) approaches are gaining recognition in this regard.

Students of engineering, for example, can undertake research in partnership with the community on solid and liquid waste disposal.

c) Knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization

The knowledge available with students and teachers in various disciplines is made available to the local community to realize its developmental aspirations, secure its entitlements and access its benefits from various agencies and schemes. These can take the forms of enumerations, surveys, awareness camps and campaigns, training, learning manuals/films, maps, study reports, public hearings, policy briefs, cleanliness and hygiene teachings, legal aid clinics, etc. For example, students can undertake a ‘swachhta survekshana’ and/or nutrition survey for mothers and children, and educate them about hygiene and nutrition.

d) Devising new curriculum and courses

Many institutions of higher education develop new curricula in existing courses as well as design new courses to engage with the community. This enriches the curriculum of existing courses through locally-appropriate subject matter. It also creates new, locally appropriate educational programmes that interest a new generation of students. For example, new courses on financial inclusion, entrepreneurship development and nutritional value of local produce can improve knowledge and business opportunities for students.

e) Including practitioners as teachers

Local community elders, women leaders, tribals, entrepreneurs and civil society practitioners have enormous practical knowledge of a wide variety of issues—from agriculture and forestry to child-rearing, micro-planning, water-harvesting and project management. This expertise can be tapped by inviting such practitioners to co-teach courses both in the classrooms and in the field. Such instructors should be duly recognized, compensated and respected for their practical experience and knowledge.

f) Social innovations by students

The students can be encouraged to initiate learning projects with a social impact and supported by HEIs. Incubation of such social innovation projects by students can also have meaningful links to existing curriculum and courses. Some competitions for social innovation are being organized by some HEIs; they should be integrated into the curriculum.

Community Engagement and Social Responsibility (CESR) Course

The Community Engagement and Social Responsibility course is an immersive and transformative learning experience designed for second-year undergraduate students. In an era where the intersections of diverse disciplines are more critical than ever, this course stands at the forefront of transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary education. As the heartbeat of societal progress, this compulsory course seeks to connect students with their communities, fostering a deep sense of social responsibility. Rooted in the belief that academic knowledge should transcend classroom walls, the aim is to equip students with the tools to analyse, comprehend, and address pressing social issues. Through dynamic and interactive learning methods, students will not only explore the complexities of community dynamics but also actively contribute to the development of sustainable solutions.

General guidelines -

1. The implementation mechanism of CESR Course is to be decided by respective departments.
2. Each department should ensure collaborations/Tie-ups (in terms of MoU/LoI) with relevant industries/organizations/NGOs as per project requirements.
3. Expertise of Local community elders, women leaders, tribals, entrepreneurs and civil society practitioners can be tapped by inviting them to co-teach courses both in the classrooms and in the field. Such instructors should be duly recognized, compensated and respected for their practical experience and knowledge.
4. The CESR course has to implemented ONLY through the department. Students cannot approach to NGOs /Organisations individually for the same. All the communication to the NGOs/Organizations should be done through the department.
5. Departments should maintain the relevant documents (such as attendance records, proposals, CESR diary, MoUs/LoI etc) and correspondence regarding CESR course.

Objectives:

1. CESR Theory

- a) To develop an understanding of community needs and challenges.
- b) To equip students with skills to identify problem areas within the community.
- c) To guide students in creating effective project proposals.
- d) To apply classroom knowledge of courses to field realities and thereby improve the quality of learning.

2. CESR Field Work:

- a) To provide practical experience in implementing community projects.
- b) To assess students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world situations.
- c) To develop skills in project management, teamwork, and communication.

***Course outcomes should be designed at departmental level in alignment with above course objectives**

Course structure

CEP-201	Foundations of Community Engagement	[Credits-2]
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- As per the NEP guidelines, the UG students are expected to complete this program in their **third semester** from the academic year 2024-25.
- The academic schedule must be planned by the departments, 1 credit to be allotted to classroom and tutorials (15 hours) and 1 credit to field engagement – students learning hours (30 hours)
- **Classroom Engagement and Field Engagement:**
2 credits of classroom engagement and field Engagement comprises of following components:
 - Understanding Community Needs
 - Identifying Project Opportunities
 - Crafting and Finalising Effective Project Proposals
 - Lectures on community sociology and challenges.
 - Case studies and discussions on successful community engagement projects.

CEP-201	Foundations of Community Engagement	[Credits-2]
Community engagement –Basics (1 Credit)		
Topics Covered	Activities	
Introduction to Community Engagement	- Overview of theories and models - Importance of interdisciplinary approaches	
Social Issues Analysis	- Guest lecture by a social scientist or experts from diverse sectors - Group discussion and analysis of contemporary social issues	
Community Needs Assessment	- Theory on needs assessment methodologies - Field visit for practical application	
Stakeholder Engagement	- Guest lecture from a community organizer - Simulated stakeholder engagement role-play	
Community engagement –Field Work (1 Credit)		
Topics Covered	Activities	
Cultural Competence in Community Work	- Cultural sensitivity training - Case studies on community engagement	
Writing Project Proposal and finance resource management	- Develop a community project proposal and finance resource management - Timeline for implementation	
Field Work Skills Training	- Training in data collection, interviewing, and observation - Practical exercises in the community	
Ethical Considerations in Community Engagement	- Guest lecture on ethical dilemmas in community work - Case studies and group discussions	

	Credit	Contact/ learning Hours	Course component
Sem III	1	15 hrs.	Classroom engagement and tutorials
	1	30 (student learning hrs.)	Field Engagement (Requirement Gathering)

Note: Class engagement: 1 Credit = 1 Hour

For field engagement/ Field Project: 1 Credit = 2 Hours

Evaluation of Classroom Engagement and Field Engagement (Sem. III)

Evaluate each student for 50 marks per semester at department level –

- 20 marks for Continuous evaluation (CE)
 - Participation in class activities and discussions.
 - Submission of reflective essays.
- 30 marks for End Semester Examination (ESE)
 - Based on evaluation of Project Proposal.

FP-201	Community Engagement - Field Project	[Credits-2]
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- As per the NEP guidelines, the UG students are expected to complete this program in their **fourth semester** from the academic year 2024-25.
- 2 credits of **Field Project** comprises of the ways of implementing actual field engagement which needs to be determined by respective departments.

	Credit	Student learning Hours	Course component
Sem IV	2	60 hrs.	Exclusively Field Project

Note: For field engagement/ Field Project: 1 Credit = 2 Hours

Please note that the Following table is to be considered as general guideline and can be customised as per department specific needs.

FP-201 Community Engagement - Field Project		[Credits-2]
Foundations of Field Work (1 credit)		
Topics Covered	Activities	
Field visits, Field work Reflection and Analysis	- Reflective journals on field experiences - Group presentations	
Community Impact Assessment	- Methods for assessing project impact - Group project: Conduct impact assessment in a chosen community	
Advanced Field Work (1 credit)		
Topics Covered	Activities	
Field Work, Project Presentation Review and Integration	- Review of key concepts from previous credits - Integration of community engagement and fieldwork principles - Analysis - Submission of CEP/FP project report	

Evaluation consist of two parts:

Evaluate each student for 50 marks per semester at department level –

- 20 marks for Continuous evaluation (CE)
 - Progress report on project implementation. (Field diary)
- 30 marks for End Semester Examination (ESE)
 - Project Report
 - Final presentation of field project findings assessing project outcomes and reflections.

UGC Recommended field-based activities:

1. Interaction with Self Help Groups (SHGs) women members, and study their functions and challenges; planning for their skill-building and livelihood activities;
2. Visit Mahatma Gandhi National. Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGS) project sites, interact with beneficiaries and interview functionaries at the work site;
3. Field visit to Swachh Bharat project sites, conduct analysis and initiate problem solving measures;
4. Conduct Mission Antyodaya surveys to support under Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP);

5. Interactive community exercise with local leaders, panchayat functionaries, grass-root officials and local institutions regarding village development plan preparation and resource mobilization;
6. Visit Rural Schools/mid-day meal centres, study academic and infrastructural resources, digital divide and gaps;
7. Participate in Gram Sabha meetings, and study community participation;
8. Associate with Social audit exercises at the Gram Panchayat level, and interact with programme beneficiaries;
9. Visit to local Nagarpalika office and review schemes for urban informal workers and migrants;
10. Attend Parent Teacher Association meetings, and interview school drop outs;
11. Visit local Anganwadi Centre and observe the services being provided;
12. Visit local NGOs, civil society organisations and interact with their staff and beneficiaries;
13. Organize awareness programmes, health camps, Disability camps and cleanliness camps;
14. Conduct soil health test, drinking water analysis, energy use and fuel efficiency surveys and building solar powered village;
15. Raise understanding of people's impacts of climate change, building up community's disaster preparedness;
16. Organise orientation programmes for farmers regarding organic cultivation, rational use of irrigation and fertilizers, promotion of traditional species of crops and plants and awareness against stubble burning;
17. Formation of committees for common property resource management, village pond maintenance and fishing;
18. Identifying the small business ideas (handloom, handicraft, khadi, food products, etc.) for rural areas to make the people self reliant.
19. Any other Community engagement activity with approval of BOS and Academic Council. (Note that every department can also find CEP allied with their subject.)

Reference

1. **Guidelines on "Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions in India 2.0 (<https://www.ugc.gov.in/publication/ebook>)**