

UCD Community Engaged Learning Impact Case Study

Community, Volunteering and Leadership



University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath
Ireland's Global University

SCI20030



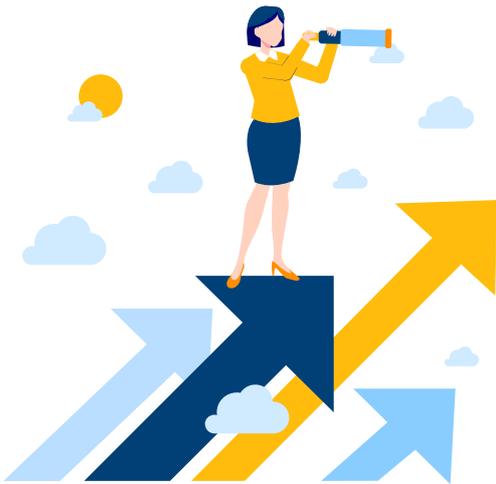
MODULE TYPE: Elective 5 credit, Level 2 module



LECTURERS: Professor Joe Carthy, Niamh Byrne, Theresa O'Leary



DEPT/SCHOOL: UCD in the Community



Module Purpose

This community-engaged learning module offers students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences from volunteering and community involvement. It is designed for those with prior and ongoing volunteer experience (50 hours of volunteer activity, done in advance or during the semester). Core subjects covered include leadership, project management, the nature of community, the role of volunteering, and how these areas interconnect. Students explore these themes through the lens of their own community involvement.

Community partners/ collaborators

Participating students volunteer with one or more community organisations, including on-campus roles. These organisations must verify the student's participation, but are not required to contribute directly to the module. Guest lecturers from the community and voluntary sector are invited to speak to the students, these have previously included Volunteer Ireland, Localise Youth Volunteering and UCDVO.



Lecturers: Theresa O'Leary, Niamh Byrne, Professor Joe Carthy

Methods of assessment

Students are assessed on:

- **WEEKLY QUESTIONS (40%)** on their lectures and guest contributors
- **A WRITTEN RESPONSE (20%)** to an article/text/policy document related to their volunteering
- **A PORTFOLIO (40%)** on their volunteering activity. This portfolio encourages students to reflect on the value of their volunteer experience. A template of questions is provided to prompt reflection.

IMPACT of Community Engaged Learning on students

This module allows students to hear directly from professionals and volunteers in the community sector, enhancing their understanding of the sector and the broader impact their volunteering has on society. It also makes students aware of the opportunities for employment in the voluntary sector.

"I took this module in my final year of my undergrad and I would highly recommend it to other UCD students. It allowed me to reflect positively upon my volunteering experience and all the expertise I have gained. The one-hour weekly classes are enjoyable and well-organised, and the module coordinators are friendly and consistently available for assistance. Plus having no exam to focus on towards the end of the semester was a blessing in disguise."



IMPACT of Community Engaged Learning on the community

This module gives community partners the chance to educate students about real-world challenges and opportunities in the community, fostering a reciprocal learning environment. It creates a greater understanding among students of the work and activities of community organisations, which can allow these organisations to attract more volunteers and support.

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Why do I do Community Engaged Learning?

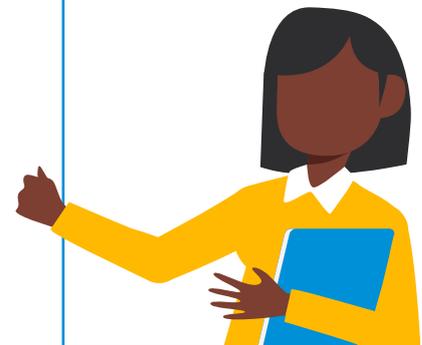
We believe that students who volunteer should have the opportunity to use this real world experience as part of their academic learning.

Over the years, we have seen first hand that including community-engaged learning in our teaching, not only enhances academic learning, but also promotes personal and civic development. Encouraging students to reflect on their volunteering experiences has deepened their understanding of why they volunteer and has helped them to see the wider impact their volunteering has on society. We have seen students develop critical thinking skills and a greater awareness of societal issues through class discussions and input from community speakers.



STUDENT QUOTE

"This module opened my eyes hugely regarding both the benefits of and the challenges facing the voluntary sector in Ireland. It also gave me the skills needed to reflect on my own volunteering and the benefits that I have gained from it."



COMMUNITY PARTNER QUOTE

"I always enjoy working with the civic engagement students of UCD. Exploring with them all the great volunteering they are doing, as we then look at the importance of grassroots volunteering both nationally and globally. The emphasis clearly remains on the intrinsic value of "caring in the community" and the skills and attributes we can develop as we strive to help others. Always embracing the philosophy that no matter what our situation, circumstances or background, we can make a real and lasting difference within society."

- DEREK CLEARY, LOCALISE YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

Tips for other lecturers interested in introducing CEL into their teaching



- Ensure that the community partner and the students will benefit mutually from the collaboration.
- Speak to colleagues who have successfully introduced CEL into their teaching.
- Start small, maybe bring in a guest speaker from a community organisation as a starting point, or collaborate with a community partner on one essay title.
- Building a relationship with a community partner takes time. Keep communication lines open and set realistic expectations from the beginning.



CONTACT DETAILS



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