



# ACE Pathways

SRU Center for Community Engagement

## ACE Pathway Application Questions

**Note: This worksheet is to support faculty preparation when applying for ACE designation through the ACE Pathway. It is NOT to be used as the application itself. All applicants must submit responses electronically through the [ACE Pathway Application](#) on RockServe to be considered for approval.**

### ACE Applicant Information

1. Full Name:
2. Course Subject and Number:
3. Course title:
4. Semester/year:
5. How many sections of this course will be ACE?
6. Will any HONORS course sections be included as ACE?

### ACE Community Partner Information

1. ACE Community Partner # 1
  - a. Organization/Industry
  - b. Primary Contact Name
  - c. Primary Contact E-Mail
2. ACE Community Partner # 2 (if applicable)
3. ACE Community Partner # 3 (if applicable)
4. ACE CommunityPartner # 4 (if applicable)
5. ACE Community Partner # 5 )if applicable)

## RECIPROCAL PARTNERSHIPS



**At Slippery Rock University, WE BELIEVE: that campus and community, working as equitable partners and co educators, can create transformative change**

**ACE Standard of Practice: Reciprocal partnerships and processes shape the community activities and course design.**

**Description:**

According to the Carnegie Foundation, “high-quality community engagement partnerships are mutually beneficial, reciprocal and asset based. Mutual benefit is the assurance that all parties involved achieve outputs and/or outcomes that serve their interests. Reciprocity includes all partners, especially community partners and students, as though partners and collaborators who help decide and inform the direction, activity, assessment, and dissemination of the partnerships’ efforts. Asset-based is recognizing and valuing the knowledge, capacities, resources, and resilience of all partners, especially community and student partners” (2025).

Reciprocity in ACE courses is most illustrated in the ways that a shared purpose or vision among collaborators informs decisions and actions related to the community activities that will be executed and that ultimately influence the design of the course itself. When operationalized, reciprocity often takes the forms of distinct, explicit, and tangible activities that promote collaboration such as exploratory discussions, consultations, planning meetings, orientations, progress check-ins, feedback mechanisms, interviews, presentations, and multi-perspective evaluations. Such activities promote a constructive sense of mutuality among collaborators. As a general rule of practice, the higher degree of asset-based reciprocity that can be fostered among collaborators; the higher degree of mutual-benefit will be achieved as an outcome.

### **ACE Pathway Questions for Reciprocal Partnerships**

1. How has/have your partner(s) influenced your actions and decisions regarding the design of your ACE course? Provide at least 2 examples of how community voice contributed to identifying the community activities and shaping the course design to meet academic and community engagement goals?
2. What roles will students have as collaborators in the partnership, and how will you support students in fulfilling those roles within the community activities and course design?
3. What is your level of knowledge/experience with the utilization of RockServe as a tool for managing collaboration and promoting reciprocity between students and community partners?

## **DIVERSITY OF INTERACTIONS AND DIALOGUE**



**At Slippery Rock University, WE BELIEVE: engaging across difference promotes an awareness of the interdependence between self and society, which serves to humanize others and build vibrant communities.**

**ACE Standard of Practice: Diversity of interactions and dialogue with others across differences occur regularly in the course.**

**Description:**

Diversity of interactions and dialogue refers to the ways that engaging across difference promotes an awareness of the interdependence between self and society, which serves to humanize others and build capacity for connection, understanding, and compassion. In ACE courses this attribute underscores the importance of students engaging with and learning from organizational partners, their constituencies, or community residents. It accentuates a two-way exchange of learning in the ACE endeavor, respecting and valuing the particular knowledge, capacities, and expertise of all stakeholders. Diversity of interactions and dialogue across difference supports students' cognitive and psycho-social development, and increasingly complex civic-related attitudes, values, and behaviors (Eyler & Giles, 2000).

In ACE courses, such outcomes can be promoted by enhancing the quantity and quality of interactions and dialogue between engaged student learners and diverse community collaborators. While reciprocity emphasizes activities that promote collaboration, diversity of interactions and dialogue emphasizes the frequency and quality by which those activities, and others, occur throughout the ACE course.

### **FUNDING**


Download the [ACE Pathway Fund Application](#) to see funding details.

Upload your completed ACE Pathway Fund Application. (Note: Funding applications will ONLY be accepted as part of the full ACE Pathway application)

### **ACE Pathway Questions for Diversity of Interactions & Dialogue**

1. How will interactions and dialogue be facilitated between students and organizational representatives, their constituents, or community residents in your ACE partnership, and what will be the total number of these engagements? Tip: For diversity of interactions and dialogue to be deep and pervasive in your ACE course, a minimum of 5 discrete student/community interactions is recommended.
2. What is the plan for the expected frequency of interaction/communication between you as faculty/instructor and the organization contact (i.e. planning, preparation, progress check-ins, evaluation, etc.)?
3. What strategies will you employ to maximize the quality of interactions and dialogue between students and organizational/industry representatives, their constituents, or community residents associated with this ACE partnership? Describe at least 2 strategies.

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

 <p><b>At Slippery Rock University, WE BELIEVE: engaging in activities that reflect the concerns and priorities of the community deepens both civic and academic learning and enhances community wellbeing.</b></p>	<b><u>ACE Standard of Practice:</u> Community activities enhance academic content, course design, and assignments.</b>
	<p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>Community activities refer to the applied or experiential activities that integrate academic and community engagement goals. Such activities should be relevant and meaningful for all stakeholders; addressing community-defined interests and priorities while supporting students' academic learning and sense of agency to contribute and make a difference. Community activities should also have sufficient duration and intensity to achieve student learning and community outcomes through the ACE experience.</p> <p>Community activities may take many forms such as students' volunteering with a community organization to provide services, planning/leading a fundraiser or drive, participating in a collaborative research or assessment project, or creating a product(s) that benefits a partner or the community in a meaningful way. While course outcomes should inform the nature of community activities, community activities collaboratively defined with community partners, should also inform course outcomes. Community activities should also enhance course assignments; enabling opportunities for learning and meaning to be derived from students' critical reflection on experience.</p>

### **ACE Pathway Questions for Community Activities:**

1. Briefly describe the community activities that will be executed for this ACE partnership. Tip: Community activities can take multiple forms such as volunteer placements, community-based projects, product design and creation, community engaged research, and supplemental activities.
2. List the student learning outcomes to be achieved and/or enhanced through academic community engagement (include academic, career, and personal learning outcomes). List as bullet points as they will appear in your ACE course syllabus.
3. List the services or deliverables to be created/provided to the community partner(s) and what the benefits of those outcomes will be for the organization, industry partner, and/or the community. List in bullet points using measurable and concise outcome statements.

## CIVIC COMPETENCIES



**At Slippery Rock University, WE BELIEVE: the public purpose of higher education is to promote the development of engaged citizens who will uphold democratic values and serve the public good.**

**ACE Standard of Practice: Civic competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills, dispositions, behaviors) are well integrated into student learning.**

### **Description:**

According to the definition of community engagement at SRU, one of the purposes of community engagement is to prepare educated, engaged citizens and strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility. ACE courses play an important role in supporting students to develop the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivations to be conscientious and engaged contributors to the betterment of their communities and society.

High quality community-university collaborations in ACE courses are powerful experiences that can promote civic responsibility among engaged student learners. For example, community activities infused with a high degree of reciprocity and/or diversity of interactions and dialogue across difference tend to humanize collaborations in ways that promote connection, interdependence, and a sense of social responsibility. The goal of promoting civic learning and development in ACE courses is to support students to form and negotiate personal and group identities as they relate to presence, role, and participation in public life, as well as empower their sense of civic agency to feel they can make a difference or meaningful contribution for the public good.

### **ACE Pathway Questions for Civic Competencies:**

1. Download the [SRU Civic Learning & Engagement Outcomes \(CLEO's\)](#).

*Instructions: Each ACE course should pick TWO of the following Civic Learning & Engagement Outcomes (CLEO's) from different categories. These outcomes should be listed in the syllabus and the student achievement of them enabled through academic community engagement pedagogy (i.e. integration of content with critical reflection from experience). The CCE will provide pre/post assessment instruments for each selected outcome that you choose to implement with your students. An 80% response rate for pre/post assessment surveys is REQUIRED for validity.*

2. Select only TWO (2) CLEO's from the list below for your ACE course. Incorporate these Civic Learning Outcomes into your course syllabus and assignments.
3. Based on your chosen CLEO's, identify and describe the learning strategies that you will employ to enable civic learning and engagement to occur in your ACE course.

## CRITICAL REFLECTION



**At Slippery Rock University, WE BELIEVE: critical reflection bridges service and learning in order to enhance and reinforce both, enabling meaning to be derived from experience, and hastening the creation of capable citizens**

**ACE Standard of Practice: Critical reflection is well integrated into student learning.**

**Description:**

Reflection activities engage students in the intentional consideration of their experiences in light of particular learning objectives. Students often do not immediately see the connections between the vivid, complex, and “messy” engagement experiences and course goals and content –they need structure and guidance in making those linkages. The goal for facilitating reflection in your ACE course is to thoughtfully construct a process that will challenge and guide students in connecting the community activities to course content; examining critical issues related to their community-based projects, enhancing the development of civic values, social responsibility and ethical problem-solving; and assisting students in finding personal relevance and meaning in the work.

Critical reflection activities can be drawn from a broad range of modalities, including written exercises such as journals and logs, reflective essays, websites, or grant proposals; oral exercises such as focus groups, presentations, storytelling, and class discussions; or specialized projects such as simulations, dance, music, art, or theater performances, role plays, video production, or photo essays/poster sessions. See [Samples of ACE Reflection Activities](#). The most effective approaches for critical reflection are those that are consistent throughout the engaged experience. Popular reflection models such as the [D.E.A.L Model for Critical Reflection](#) (Ash & Clayton, 2009), or [Bradley’s Criteria for Assessing Levels of Reflection](#) (2003) can be useful tools to draw from in designing and assessing reflection activities in your ACE course.

**ACE Pathway Questions for Critical Reflection:**

1. Describe the kinds of reflection activities you have chosen for your ACE course and for what purpose/objective you will employ them.
2. Describe how your individual reflection activities will comprise a reflection approach or strategy; in a way that is consistent, structured, and guided throughout the ACE course.

*Tip: The standard of designing structure, consistent, and guided reflection can be realized by embedding reflection activities throughout the engaged experience (before, during, after); or by diversifying with whom reflection activities will occur (individual student reflections, reflection activities with other students, reflection with community partners); or structured through a reflection paradigm or model, such as the D.E.A.L. model for critical reflection.*

## ASSESSMENT



**At Slippery Rock University, WE BELIEVE: assessment shows evidence of impact among multiple stakeholders for the purpose of continuous quality improvement, including teaching, learning, partnership, and community impact.**

### **ACE Standard of Practice: Assesses student learning and community-university partnership outcomes.**

#### **Description:**

The dual purpose of integrating community engagement with student learning necessitates that as much attention is paid to community outcomes as to student learning. One purpose is therefore never primary. Rather, community-driven outcomes and student learning outcomes must be held in balance with one another. As such, high quality assessment practices in ACE courses should also be dual purpose; balancing assessments of student learning with assessments of community-university partnership outcomes.

The diversity of ACE courses, often times with multiple community partners, or interdisciplinary collaborations, means that the most effective assessments will be those that are multi-purpose and multi-faceted. The combination of formative and summative approaches, with quantitative and qualitative methods, will often collect the most compelling data and reveal the most helpful findings. Furthermore, assessments in ACE courses should all include significant voice and feedback from collaborators, especially students and community partners

### **ACE Pathway Questions for Assessment:**

1. Civic Learning & Engagement Outcomes (CLEO's) Assessment. With your successful ACE course submission, you will receive from the CCE pre-post assessments with instructions for the timeframe by which they must be executed with your ACE student learners. A report of your data and findings will be provided at the conclusion of your ACE course (contingent on a minimum 80% student response rate for statistical validity).
  - **Please acknowledge by checking the box**
2. ACE Community Impact & Collaboration Survey. With your completed ACE course submission, you and your community partner(s) will be sent direct links at the beginning and conclusion of the semester to complete a survey to assess the outcomes and collaborative dynamics of your ACE partnership.
  - **Please acknowledge by checking the box.**
3. UPLOAD your ACE Course Syllabus (OPTIONAL)

