EQUITABLE APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH - MICRO-CREDENTIAL

The University of Colorado Boulder Community-Engaged Research micro-credential program focuses on equipping researchers with the knowledge and skills required to meaningfully engage and partner with local communities. Participants will learn how to build and sustain equitable community research partnerships. The curriculum incorporates Shared Equity Leadership approaches, Indigenous Knowledge, and equity lens principles. This program is open to all CU Boulder researchers.

Eligibility

- CU Boulder students (degree-seeking only)
- CU Boulder employees

Delivery Mode

Hybrid of in-person and online delivery

Credit Status

Noncredit

Academic Level

- Graduate
- Professional

Time to Completion

One semester

Fee

No

Requirements

1. **Foundational coursework**: Foundational work will be completed using an asynchronous Canvas course comprised of six open-access modules (Impacts of community-engaged research, researcher values, dialogic skills, building community partnerships, using an equity lens, and sharing project results). Each module outlines specific learning goals and is followed by principles of the topic, expert advice, case study examples, reflections, and a repository of resources.

2. **Workshops**: Four interactive and collaborative workshops have been developed for micro-credential participants. These workshops are focused on skill-building, scenario practice, and reflection. The topics include values, dialogic skills, community partnerships, and equity lens, providing continuity and expansion of the topics in the self-led Canvas course.

3. **Written assignments**: The assignments include: a personal values statement, a community partnership plan, a timeline for engagement and a reflection on a hosted public event. These assignments will have flexibility in completion dates, though they must be completed by the end of the program (at the completion of the academic semester). Participants will choose one artifact to display with their badge.

Criteria

To fulfill the requirements for this micro-credential, learners must demonstrate a synthesis of theoretical knowledge, self-reflective practice, and applied design within the field of CER. The criteria for successful completion are organized here into three core pillars: foundational theory, positionality and ethics, and strategic application.

Foundational Knowledge & Principles

Learners must demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the mechanics and ethics of community involvement. This includes defining the CER Landscape and distinguishing between different levels of the community involvement continuum, identifying and applying global standards for data equity, and articulating the importance of data sovereignty and digital accessibility for varied populations.

Reflexive Practice & Cultural Intelligence

A significant portion of the credential relies on the learner's ability to analyze their own role within the research ecosystem. Criteria include evaluating how personal social identities, life experiences, and core values influence day-to-day research decisions and communication styles. In addition, learners must distinguish between dialogue and debate through the lens of cultural intelligence to foster collaborative environments.

Applied Design & Equity Integration

Learners must move beyond theory to create actionable research frameworks. Demonstration of competency includes applying an equity lens to the design and implementation phases of research, defining community interests by analyzing power dynamics, history, values, and institutional assets, and integrating community leaders to facilitate knowledge exchange. Learners will be tasked with developing a realistic timeline for relationship building and designing a comprehensive engagement plan for broad, non-academic audiences.

Evidence of Competency (Assignments)

The criteria are validated through four summative assignments. These assessments require learners to synthesize CER concepts into written professional frameworks and apply learned models to real-world or simulated research scenarios. Learners will reflect critically on their evolving positionality throughout the research lifecycle.

Skills

- Community-engaged design
- Cultural intelligence
- Dialogic skills
- Digital accessibility
- Equitable data sharing
- Research planning