

AC 5: Immersive Experience

2 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that offer sustainability-focused immersive experience programs. Sustained immersive experiences such as community-based internships and “study abroad” programs give students the opportunity to witness and learn in-depth about sustainability challenges and solutions. These programs provide a memorable way for students to deepen and expand their knowledge of sustainability.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that offer *immersive educational programs*.

Criteria

Institution offers at least one immersive, sustainability-focused educational study program. The program is one week or more in length and may take place off-campus, overseas, or on-campus.

To qualify, a program must have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability, the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems, and/or a major sustainability challenge.

For-credit programs, non-credit programs and programs offered in partnership with outside entities may count for this credit. Programs offered exclusively by outside entities do not count for this credit. See the Credit Example, below, for further guidance.

Scoring

An institution earns 2 points for meeting the criteria outlined above. Partial points are not available for this credit.

Reporting Fields

Required

- ☐ Does the institution offer at least one immersive, sustainability-focused educational study program that is one week or more in length?
If yes, provide:
 - ☐ A brief description of the sustainability-focused immersive program(s) offered by the institution (Include how each program addresses sustainability.)

Optional

- ☐ Website URL where information about the institution’s immersive education programs is available
- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission

- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Programs offered during the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission are eligible for this credit.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable.

Standards and Terms

Immersive educational programs

Consistent with Ball State University, immersive educational programs are learning experiences that are: ...designed to bridge content knowledge, skill of application, societal need, and life-long learning. The citizen of the 21st century needs qualities and competencies not easily developed in a traditional teacher-centered classroom: the ability to work in multidisciplinary teams; an appreciation for an array of cultures; an understanding of diverse and changing societies.

Immersive learning experiences require students to manifest their learning in a tangible outcome that lives on and has utility beyond the duration of the experience itself. Through such transformative experiences students should better understand societal issues in global, local, economic, or environmental contexts.

Immersive learning experiences may exhibit most or all of the following characteristics:

- Engage participants in an active learning process that is student-driven, but guided by a faculty mentor.
- Produce a tangible outcome or product, such as a business plan, policy recommendation, publication, or work of art.
- Involve a team of students, often working on a project that is interdisciplinary in nature.
- Include a community partner(s) and create an impact on the larger community as well as on the student participants.
- Focus on student learning outcomes.
- Help students define a career path or make connections to a profession or industry.

Credit Example: Immersive Experience

Example 1: Eco-village semester

Example Community College offers a semester abroad at one of eight affiliated overseas and domestic eco-villages. These eco-villages are sustainability-themed communities where students engage in sustainability skills and issues relevant to that culture and region. The semester experience includes academic content taught by resident faculty at each eco-village as well as practitioners of sustainable practices. In addition, the semester stresses immersion in the culture of sustainability by interacting and working with the people that live there as well as in surrounding areas to develop solutions to environmental, social and economic problems.

Example 2: Local service semester

Example University offers formal semester-long, full-time internships with three local non-profit organizations that serve to advance sustainability. Each organization has a designated faculty liaison that also serves as a mentor for students involved with a particular sustainability organization. As part of the internships, students must complete a substantial academic writing project. These reflections focus on sustainability learning and are presented to all students that completed academic internships that semester.