

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A CORE COMPETENCE



SCAN CARD · 03

DESCRIPTION

Universities are expected to prepare graduates not only with disciplinary knowledge but also with the ability to engage responsibly with society — working with diverse groups, understanding social challenges and communicating across differences. Some institutions are embedding community-based learning, service learning and engagement projects directly into curricula.

Implementation remains uneven — many programmes depend on motivated individuals rather than institutional frameworks, and assessment practices are often unclear. As societal expectations grow, pressure to standardise and assess engagement competences will expose limitations in current curriculum design and staff capacity.

RELEVANCE

Defining engagement as a graduate competence changes the purpose of higher education. It aligns teaching with societal needs and responds to demands from employers, public institutions and civil society for socially aware graduates.

However, it also raises questions about staff workload, quality assurance, and the risk of overburdening community partners.

NEED

Universities need clear definitions and frameworks for engagement-related competences, including how they are taught and assessed. Academic staff require support to design meaningful engagement-based learning without increasing workload unsustainably.

There is also a need to ensure reciprocity, so that communities benefit from student engagement rather than being used only as learning environments. Without institutional integration, engagement risks remaining uneven and overburdening both staff and community partners.

CATEGORY

Social · Ethical

SIGNAL STRENGTH

Medium



SCANNING METHOD

Curriculum analysis · Policy review

SOURCES

Doberneck et al. (2017) Engagement Competencies · KIC (2022) Service Learning Guidelines · Álvarez-Vanegas et al. (2024) Frontiers in Education · Council of Europe (2015) Student Engagement