

Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning (IPBL)

Faculty Quick-Start Guide

What You Are Responsible For--Only two elements are required in every IPBL course:

1. Community/Industry Partner Engagement
 - Students interact with the community/industry partner
 - The partner provides guidance, context, and feedback
 - Students incorporate partner input into their work
2. Faculty Oversight
 - You guide the project and student work
 - You help students interpret partner needs
 - You ensure academic rigor and quality

What This Course Is (and Is Not)

This IS:

- A structured, real-world learning experience
- A collaboration between you, your students, and a community partner
- An opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways

This is NOT:

- A perfectly polished consulting project
- A complete redesign of your course

A Simple Way to Structure Your Course (suggestion only)

Early Semester

- Introduce the project and community/industry partner
- Clarify goals and expectations
- Complete any IRB requirements

Mid-Semester

- Students gather information
- Students actively work on the project
- Check-in assignments help identify progress and challenges

End of Semester

- Students complete a final deliverable
- Students present their work to an appropriate audience

Tips for Success

- Keep the project scope manageable
- Communicate early and regularly with the partner
- Allow students to work through challenges—this is part of the learning
- Address issues early when they arise

You Are Not Doing This Alone: The goal is to make this an enjoyable, manageable, and meaningful experience for you and your students. CCEAO is here to support you.

What is IPBL?

Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning (IPBL) is a course model centered on a **real-world project in collaboration with a community partner**.

Students apply what they are learning to an authentic need—gaining hands-on experience, developing professional skills, and exploring potential career pathways.

This model shifts learning beyond the classroom while maintaining your role as the guide and expert in the learning process.

IPBL courses are successful when students:

- Engage with a real-world problem
- Interact with a community partner
- Produce something meaningful

The focus is on learning through application, not perfection.

IPBL Syllabus Guide

We ask that you add the following components to your syllabus:

1. **An IPBL Description:** This course is an Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning (IPBL) experience. Unlike traditional courses, this class centers on a real-world project in collaboration with a community partner. Students will apply their disciplinary knowledge to address a current need, gaining hands-on experience, professional skills, and exposure to potential career pathways. This course emphasizes collaboration, problem-solving, and engagement beyond the classroom.
2. **IPBL Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, students will be able to:
 - Apply disciplinary knowledge to a real-world problem
 - Collaborate effectively with peers and external partners
 - Communicate professionally with stakeholders
 - Develop a product or solution that addresses a community need
 - Identify and reflect on relevant career pathways and professional skills
3. Multiple project **check-ins** or milestones. An example assignment can be provided.
4. Students **present** their final deliverable to an appropriate audience, for example community partner or ATU Scholars Symposium.

IPBL Budget

If this is your first time teaching an IPBL course, you receive a **\$500** to spend on your class. This can be used for a variety of things. Suggestions include buying materials needed to conduct the project, feeding students, or taking students on a field trip. You are asked to provide a budget at least two weeks before the class begins for approval.

Working with Community/Industry Partner

You want to maintain regular communication throughout the semester with your community partner. It is helpful to build these dates into the syllabus schedule (i.e., community partner check ins every other week), but allow for flexibility. As the project evolves the class needs for communication may evolve.

You may also want to consider allowing students to lead the communications. Encourage students to reach out to community partner to ask questions or set up meeting times. Students may need guidance in professional communication and working with partners. This is a normal and expected part of the learning process. If communication challenges arise with your partner, reach out to CCEAO for assistance.

Monthly Course Updates to CCEAO

Please share a brief monthly update (2-3 sentences) on course progress, highlights, or needs. These updates help CCEAO provide support for you and your students, and allow us to highlight IPBL work through storytelling and social media.

GETTING STARTED (BEFORE THE SEMESTER BEGINS)

- Establish how and when communication with the community/industry partner will occur
- Review the project to ensure it is manageable within a semester
- Submit budget to CCEAO for approval (if applicable)
- Prepare syllabus
- Prepare for IRB process