



TREK

HANDBOOK

for
STUDENTS

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TREK PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Trek Program is driven by one clear mission: to incorporate distinctive, experience-based programs, within the required curriculum, for students to enhance their self-knowledge and social awareness through career and graduate school preparation, intercultural engagement, and civic involvement.

Trek encompasses exploration of three components:

- CAREER
- CULTURE
- COMMUNITY

The Trek Program sets three main goals:

1. To integrate experiential learning into a traditional academic context, allowing students to link classroom learning with practical application.
2. To understand that social interaction with diverse people in varied cultural venues is an integral part of education.
3. To recognize responsibility for meeting the challenges facing an ever-changing world.

DEFINING THE TREK COMPONENTS

Definition of CAREER:

As part of Trek's mission for students to gain enhanced self-knowledge and social awareness through career and graduate school preparation, the CAREER component of Trek helps students to gain critical career related skills and to undertake systematic inquiry and analysis of potential careers. Students may satisfy the CAREER requirement through one of two pathways (see page 5-6).

Definition of CULTURE:

The CULTURE component of Trek provides opportunities for students to gain personal and intellectual insights through direct interaction with people of a different culture. These experiences enable students to understand how their own culture's values, beliefs, heritage and history shape their view of the people they encounter whether in the United States or abroad. Ultimately, participation in intercultural programs strengthens students' ability to communicate, work, and live with others. Students may satisfy the CULTURE requirement through one of two pathways (see page 7-8).

Definition of COMMUNITY:

The COMMUNITY component of Trek is more than volunteerism or fulfilling a number of community service hours required for graduation. The COMMUNITY component is a distinct program that combines rigorous learning with community service and includes written and/or oral reflection for academic credit. Students may satisfy the COMMUNITY requirement through one of two pathways (see page 9-10).

TIMELINES, CREDIT HOURS, AND DEADLINES

Recommended Timeline for Completion

In order to receive the maximum benefit from the Trek Components while connecting those opportunities to the academic curriculum, the Trek Committee recommends that students attempt to complete the Trek Components according to the time table below.

Trek Component	By the Completion of the
COMMUNITY (CO)	45 th credit hour / beginning of Sophomore year
CAREER (CA)	90 th credit hour / end of Sophomore year
CULTURE (CU)	105 th credit hour / end of Junior year

Completing CO credit early in the college career facilitates an understanding of experiential learning into an academic curriculum and serves as an introduction into merging scholarship and community. Completing CA credit by the end of the sophomore year allows students to explore careers with enough time to make curricular changes according to their professional goals.

Completing CU credit by the end of the junior year exposes students to global communities beyond local experiences. This deepens understandings of different cultures and prepares students to enter a global context upon graduating.

Credit Hours for Trek Components

Students must complete the following number of credit hours* associated with an approved Trek Component during one semester or academic period in order to be eligible to receive credit for that experience. All hours completed must be supported by the student's faculty and/or staff advisor or an approved community partner supervisor (CO only).

Trek Component	Credit Hours**
CAREER (CA)	0-2
CULTURE (CU)	0-2
COMMUNITY (CO)	0-2

*Credit hours are consistent with the college catalogue definition and use of credit hours (p.36).

**While the basic requirements for attaching credit to courses remains the same, flexible credit hours allow faculty/students the options to do independent work for credit or more expansive work. This credit must be based on Trek Committee approved activities that meet the college requirements for work that equals a credit hour.

Deadlines for Independent Proposals

Students choosing to create and propose independent experiences that include Trek Components must do so the semester before they attempt to complete the experience. The following chart outlines the deadlines by which students must submit their Independent Project to the Trek Committee for consideration. The Trek Committee will not accept late or retroactive proposals.

Semester of Project	Deadline
Spring Semester	November 1 st
Summer Semester	April 1 st
Fall Semester	April 1 st

The CAREER Component

Pathway 1: Trek Experiences

These faculty approved courses satisfy the CAREER component of the Trek graduation requirement.

CAREER STRATEGIES (CA 253)

Course Description: This course is designed to increase awareness of the career development process, explore career choices, and expand understanding of the relationship between education and the world of work. CA 253 emphasizes critical thinking as it relates to professional discernment and the 21st century career landscape, and professional development as it relates to job searches, resume building, issues related to hiring and the workplace, and the graduate school admissions process.

Course Objectives:

1. **Self-Assessment** – Students will identify personal interests, values, skills, and personality characteristics that will assist them with professional discernment and professional development throughout their lives.
2. **Professional Discernment** – Students will explore possible career pathways through the collection and analysis of occupational information. Media used for data collection will include written material, internet sites, informational interviewing and/or observation, and various other resources as identified by the instructor.
3. **Job Search Strategies** – Students will become aware of and learn how to utilize various job search methods and complete job application processes. Students will draft a professional resume and cover letter and practice interviewing techniques.
4. **Graduate School Preparation** – Students will become familiar with the graduate school admissions process and criteria used by admission selection committees. They will explore various graduate programs and draft personal statements.

CAREER CREDIT COURSES (CA 250)

Many courses in our academic catalog meet the criteria for CAREER credit. In general, such courses already combine substantive academic content with significant career-related experiences and serve as a bridge between the liberal arts education students receive at Centenary and workplace expectations. Faculty may submit a proposal to the Trek Committee for a new or existing course for CAREER credit.

For a complete listing of the current academic courses approved to meet the CAREER (CA) Trek graduation requirement, visit the Trek section of the Academic Catalogue.

Pathway 2: Individualized Trek Experiences

To earn individualized credit, students must work with a faculty or Trek staff member to submit an Independent Project Proposal Form to the Trek Committee by the corresponding deadline (page 4). The Trek Committee will not accept late or retroactive proposals.

New and existing projects may satisfy the CAREER component of the Trek graduation requirement. Projects may include internships, substantial co-curricular experiences, or guided research with faculty. These are a valuable part of the academic experience because they provide opportunities to:

- Apply classroom knowledge and skill
- Gain valuable work experience related to the student's academic program
- Identify alternative career opportunities or interests
- Grow professionally
- Network with professionals, organizations, and experts
- Make a positive impact on the community or field of scholarship

INDIVIDUAL CAREER PROJECTS (CA 251)

Independent CAREER Projects provide hands-on experiences in environments that complement classroom preparation.

CAREER GUIDED RESEARCH (CA 251)

Guided research at Centenary occurs under the supervision of a faculty member and provides excellent preparation for graduate or professional study. Students engaged in advanced research are typically highly motivated, and have a firm grasp on their personal and professional goals. Through guided research students learn to collect and analyze data significant to their field of interest.

Students, in consultation with a faculty or Trek staff member, may submit a proposal to the Trek Committee for individualized CAREER (CA) credit. Proposal forms and guidelines are available on the Trek website.

The CULTURE Component

Pathway 1: Trek Experiences

Students have three options to choose from in terms of their ability to immerse themselves in the study of a culture that's different from mainstream cultural experiences. These faculty-approved courses satisfy the CULTURE component of the Trek graduation requirement.

1. Students can study internationally in a foreign culture.
2. Students can study culturally distinct groups in the U.S. (such as the Amish or Native American reservations) who have substantially different regulations, norms, and ways of life from mainstream U.S. culture.
3. Students also have the option to study subcultural groups who are part of mainstream culture (varied ethnic, racial, class, sexual identity, etc.) but differ significantly from mainstream cultural experience. If students pursue that option, proposals must demonstrate that students will both explore and analyze the differences between these groups, as well as how they are interrelated and intertwined with their own group. The goal for the students is to understand both how this new subcultural group is distinct and yet functions in relation to dominant U.S. culture.

MODULE/IMMERSION COURSES (199)

Course Description: In order to enrich Centenary's curriculum, we offer a variety of short, intensive courses each May and August. These courses may be applied towards the hours required for graduation and must last for 14 days including travel time to a foreign country.

These courses may fulfill the CULTURE or COMMUNITY requirement of the Trek Experience. These courses are not required to contain a CULTURE or COMMUNITY component; however, due to the flexibility of location and content, some offer CULTURE and/or COMMUNITY credit.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE STUDY (See Foreign Languages)

Students taking foreign language study courses can receive CULTURE credit by successfully completing at least two courses focused on the same language at the 300 or 400 level. Through these courses, students are provided with knowledge of languages and cultures which will be useful to them practically, intellectually, and professionally. Students are equipped with the ability to understand, speak, read, and write the language. To this end, the target language is used extensively, in some cases exclusively, in the classroom.

Pathway 2: Individualized Trek Experiences

To earn individualized credit, students must work with a faculty or Trek staff member to submit an Independent Project Proposal Form to the Trek Committee by the corresponding deadline (page 4). The Trek Committee will not accept late or retroactive proposals.

INDIVIDUAL CULTURE PROJECTS (CU 351)

An individual CULTURE project allows students to study a culture that piques their interest. A student can select a culture to study and then create their own personal syllabus and itinerary to interact with and observe that culture for an appropriate period of time.

Students must interact with a living culture during a minimum of 14 days (travel time included) or complete no fewer than 45 hours of interaction domestically that is either:

1. Outside the United States
2. An isolated culture within the United States (examples include, but are not limited to: Amish communities, Indian Reservations, Hasidic Jewish communities).
3. A subculture substantially distinct from mainstream cultural experiences.

STUDY ABROAD (CU 300)

Students participating in a Centenary exchange program are enrolled both at Centenary and at the partner institution abroad, simplifying the admission, scholarship, and credit transfer process. Interested students must have a 2.75 GPA or higher to be considered for participation.

Students who participate in an exchange program pay tuition to Centenary and pay room, board, and other fees to the host institution. Students are expected to work closely with the Financial Aid Office to determine how studying abroad will affect the financial support that they receive.

Students, in consultation with a faculty or Trek staff member, may submit a proposal to the Trek Committee for individualized CULTURE (CU) credit. Proposal forms and guidelines are available on the Trek website.

The COMMUNITY Component Pathway 1: Trek Experiences

The COMMUNITY Component integrates service to the greater community with classroom instruction, connection to academic content, and personal reflection. Below is a list of opportunities for students to engage in service learning locally and globally.

These faculty approved courses satisfy the COMMUNITY component of the Trek graduation requirement.

LEARNING THROUGH COMMUNITY (CO 153)

Course Description: This course guides students to opportunities for service that exist in their community, helps students discover and share their own skills, gifts, and talents for service, as well as empowers students to apply their own unique and positive impact on the greater community for social and economic development.

COMMUNITY CREDIT COURSES (CO 151)

In this type of course, a faculty member incorporates a community-based learning component into one of their classes to allow students the opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom to a need in the surrounding community. Visit the Trek website for a list of approved courses.

For a complete listing of the current academic courses approved to meet the COMMUNITY (CO) Trek graduation requirement, visit the Trek section of the Academic Catalogue.

MODULE/IMMERSION COURSES (199)

A variety of short, intensive courses offered each May and August explore topics of general or specialized interest not normally offered in Centenary's semester and summer courses. These courses may be applied towards the hours required for graduation.

These courses may serve the additional purpose of fulfilling the CULTURE or COMMUNITY requirement of the Trek Experience. These courses are not required to contain a CULTURE or COMMUNITY component; however, due to the flexibility of location and content, some offer CULTURE or COMMUNITY credit.

Pathway 2: Individualized Trek Experiences

To earn individualized credit, students must work with a faculty or Trek staff member to submit an Independent Project Proposal Form to the Trek Committee by the corresponding deadline (page 4). The Trek Committee will not accept late or retroactive proposals.

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS (CO 151 IP)

In this option, a faculty or staff member advises a student through a service-learning project. The project does not directly coincide with a course, but is relevant to previous course work.

Students, in consultation with a faculty or Trek staff member, may submit a proposal to the Trek Committee for individualized COMMUNITY (CO) credit. Proposal forms and guidelines are available on the Trek website.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Each Trek component requires the student to reflect on and evaluate their Trek experience. Answers to each component's Trek Assessment should be as complete and thoughtful as possible and written in full narrative responses with a minimum of ½ page per question. All responses should be typed and double spaced and are due in either electronic or hard copy by the due date set by the Trek staff member or advisor and where applicable, no later than seven (7) days after the completion of each Trek component, unless otherwise communicated.

For the Trek Component Assessments, visit the Trek website

THE TREK COMMITTEE

The Trek Committee is responsible for the oversight, continued development and assessment of the Trek Program and components. The Committee also reviews and evaluates student and faculty proposals for Trek courses or projects within academic courses and co-curricular programs. The Committee must contain three (3) faculty, one (1) staff member, and an ex-officio representative of the Provost's Office.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR INDIVIDUALIZED TREK EXPERIENCES

The Trek Committee reviews all proposed individualized projects seeking to have a Trek component according to the component's guidelines. Proposals are due by the corresponding deadline (page 4). The Trek Committee will not accept late or retroactive proposals.

For Individualized Trek Experience Proposal forms, visit the Trek website.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TREK PROGRAM

The Offices of Professional Discernment and Global Engagement within the Division of Student Development are responsible for the continued development of the Trek Program's three components.

- CAREER – Office of Professional Discernment
- COMMUNITY – Office of Global Engagement
- CULTURE – Office of Global Engagement

Please contact these offices if you have questions about the Trek Program or any of the Trek Components using the contact information below.

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DISCERNMENT

Smith Building, Suite 205

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- centenary.edu/trek/career

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

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