

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING DEFINITIONS



March 2023

As recommended by the Task Force on Academic and Workforce Alignment, a workgroup composed of State University System academic and student affairs staff developed system-wide definitions for experiential learning.

These definitions are outlined in this document to serve as helpful guidance for institutions, students, and employers.



OVERVIEW

Experiential Learning Definition

Experiential learning engages students beyond the classroom and provides practical insight into world readiness while building knowledge and skills and establishing professional connections. Experiential learning encompasses a wide variety of enriching opportunities for students, including service learning, faculty-led research, study abroad, student employment, cooperative education, and internships. When engaging in these applied experiences, students can reflect on their unique value to the world of work and gain confidence in their career direction.

Adapted from the National Association of Colleges and Employers and the Society for Experiential Education.



Types of Experiential Learning

The State University System groups experiential learning into the following categories



Creative, Innovative, & Entrepreneurial Projects



Undergraduate Research



Global or Sociocultural Learning



Internship



Career & Professional Experiences



Leadership



Community-Based Learning

Each of these experiential learning types should adhere to the [Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities](#), developed by the Society for Experiential Education

CREATIVE, INNOVATIVE, & ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS

Definition



Substantive application of academic preparation in real-world settings outside & inside the classroom through creative projects not captured through academic research. Experience must include dissemination or sharing of the creative, innovative, or entrepreneurial project.

Examples

- Capstone project
- Case study
- Curating an art show
- Entrepreneurship or innovation project
- Project-based experiential learning
- Recital or exhibition of creative works



Experiential Learning in Action

FSU



InNOLEvation Challenge

The InNOLEvation™ Challenge is a Business Model Competition that provides students from all majors and all levels with the opportunity to gain valuable insight and experience in innovation and entrepreneurship. The focus is on identifying problems and potential solutions, building effective teams, precisely defining the assumptions of a new venture, testing those assumptions in the field, and then pivoting based on the lessons learned. Challenge winners can receive \$30,000 in prize money.

USF



Electrical Engineering Capstone Project

The Electrical Engineering Capstone Senior Design course allows students to participate in a team-based design experience that incorporates appropriate engineering standards and multiple realistic constraints. Capstone projects, supervised by an Electrical Engineering faculty member, are sponsored by an outside organization, including global and local institutions and companies such as NASA, Collins Aerospace, and Tampa Electric, among others. Industry partners define the projects, with requirements and specifications directly addressing their needs, to assist in the professional formation of Electrical Engineering students.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Definition



Collaborative research opportunities between a student and faculty, staff, or a professional. This collaboration involves a four-step learning process.

1. Identification of and acquisition of a disciplinary or interdisciplinary methodology
2. Setting out of a concrete investigative problem
3. Carrying out of the actual research
4. Dissemination of research findings

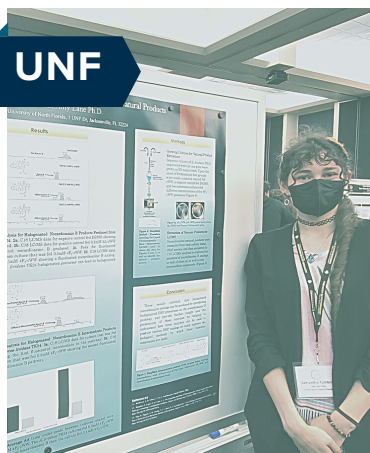
Examples

- Undergraduate research program opportunities
- First-year research experiences
- Research assistantships
- Honors in the major theses
- Directed independent study/independent research
- Scholar programs
- Community-based research



Experiential Learning in Action

UNF



Showcase of Osprey Achievements in Research and Scholarship (SOARS)

SOARS is an annual interdisciplinary conference at UNF in which undergraduate and graduate students showcase their research and creative projects in poster and multimedia formats. SOARS is a welcoming environment for students to share their work, which can be in various stages of development. This initiative is sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research and the Graduate School. In spring 2022, 96 undergraduate students presented projects at SOARS, and outstanding undergraduate and graduate projects were recognized, along with faculty mentors. Students who participate in SOARS also have the opportunity to have their poster converted for submission to PANDION: The Osprey Journal of Research and Ideas.

GLOBAL OR SOCIOCULTURAL LEARNING

Definition



Sustained engagement with and study of cultures other than one's own. This experiential learning can take place inside as well as outside the traditional classroom.

Examples

- Global scholars
- Intensive study abroad experiences
- Gap year fellows
- Virtual global exchange; global classroom experiences
- Domestic study away programs



Experiential Learning in Action

UCF



Global Learning Course Designation

In 2020, UCF expanded opportunities for students to have global learning experiences beyond the study abroad program by introducing the Global Learning course designation. Global Learning courses offer students a chance to explore symbiotic, international systems and their impacts on humanity from multiple points of view. Through global learning, students should become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences by seeking to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities and addressing the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

UF



International Scholars Program

The University of Florida's International Scholars Program helps students develop intercultural competence on a personal and professional level. This program allows students to engage in experiential learning on campus and abroad and guides them in the articulation of the career-related skills gained through these experiences. To complete the program and earn a graduation medallion, students complete international coursework, attend international campus events, have an international experience by studying a language or studying abroad, and develop an electronic portfolio that showcases their resume, intercultural learning, leadership experiences, and global skills.

INTERNSHIP/CO-OP

Definition



A paraprofessional work experience in the appropriate field for a student's major, field of study, or occupational interest. Internships require a time commitment from host sites, student supervision by a qualified professional, and student learning outcomes. Internships can be for-credit or not-for-credit, paid or unpaid.

Examples

- Internship, clinical, or other practicum
- Fieldwork
- Student teaching
- Apprenticeships
- Cooperative education
- Undergraduate, research-based work experience



Experiential Learning in Action

FAU



Professional Internship Course (IDS 3949)

FAU Career Center manages the award-winning Professional Internship course. This 0-4 credit course offers students the opportunity to gain real-world exposure and supervised experience related to their major, specific field of study, or overall career interests. The course is major agnostic and built for students to use the 8 NACE core competencies (Critical Thinking, Leadership, Communications, Teamwork, Professionalism, Technology, Career & Self Development, and Equity & Inclusion). The Professional Internship course is offered twice per semester, allowing more students to secure internships and earn college credit for their experiences. The 0-credit option is tuition-free.

NCF



NCF Community-Driven Internship Program

New College of Florida's Community-Driven Internship Program is a nationally award-winning internship program model that aims to increase equity and enhance access to paid internships in the arts, humanities, education, human services, healthcare, and other community-serving career fields that typically offer unpaid opportunities. By leveraging institutional resources, this program uniquely funds local nonprofits and government agencies to provide paid internships for NCF students. This model brings career educators, faculty, and employers in partnership to develop high-quality, work-based learning experiences that both meet community workforce needs and correlate with students' interests.

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Definition



Career and professional activities that allow students to develop competency attainment that occurs as an extension of the classroom.

Examples

- Projects involving practical application of coursework
- Job shadowing and externships
- Mentoring
- Credentials
- Micro-internship
- Common curricula
- First-year experience courses
- Scholar programs
- Part-time work



Experiential Learning in Action

FIU



Micro-Credentialing

At FIU, Micro-Credentials are digital representations of learning, designed so that students can identify skills to strengthen their competitiveness as a student and achieve post-graduation success. FIU leverages workforce data and strategic relationships with employers and industry partners to develop meaningful Micro-Credentials that address the most in-demand skillsets. All Micro-Credentials, whether aligned to the curriculum or offered outside of the classroom, are developed with rigor in mind. Faculty and subject matter experts assess student learning to ensure competencies are met.

FAMU



Google HBCU Career Readiness Program

The Google HBCU Career Readiness Program offers students digital skills training and career workshops that lead to certifications. The program is a partnership between the Career and Professional Development Center and the Department of Computer and Information Sciences. The certifications, delivered via the Coursera virtual learning platform, leverage a portfolio of high-quality, asynchronous course materials and virtual labs to allow FAMU to cost-effectively and quickly deploy critical supplemental learning materials to learners of all majors by leveraging job-aligned professional certificate programs for students and alumni.

LEADERSHIP

Definition



Engaging in a substantial, immersive leadership experience or participating in leadership training activities outside the traditional classroom. These can be curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular. The goal of these activities is to learn how to leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals or to use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

Examples

- Peer leadership/mentoring experiences
- Planning and executing projects or events with peers
- Student leadership role in clubs, organizations, or student government
- Leadership training, summits, or retreats
- Resident assistant



Experiential Learning in Action

FL Poly



Florida Poly U Lead

Florida Poly U Lead is a centralized application process for Student Affairs-based student worker roles and includes a year-long leadership experience. U Lead helps students develop transferable skills appropriate for STEM leaders, enhance their communication skills, become mentors and role models for the Florida Poly community, and become prepared to lead Florida Poly initiatives. The program includes the following student leadership positions: Campus Recreation student workers, Community Directors, Orientation Leaders, Peer Health Educators, Presidential Ambassadors, and Resident Assistants.

FGCU



Peers Care

The Office of Prevention & Wellness's Peers Care Program promotes a wellness-based lifestyle for FGCU students through education and leadership. Peer educators start with a service-learning experience, graduate to an internship with more responsibilities and learning outcomes, then finally elevate into a part-time paid role where they advocate for student empowerment for informed decision-making. This role improves student communication, presentation skills, teamwork, and leadership skills through educating about alcohol, drugs, stress, nutrition, and mental health.

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

Definition



Intentionally designed, coordinated, and executed learning experiences in community-based settings that enhance participants' academic learning, contribute to their personal growth, and increase their civic engagement while concurrently benefiting the community or communities in which these activities are embedded.

Examples

- Service-learning
- Community service projects
- Civic engagement (course-based, for credit)
- Alternative spring break
- Day of service
- Volunteering
- Field trips
- Living-learning communities
- Learning communities



Experiential Learning in Action

UWF



Argos Edible Campus

Launched in spring 2021, Argos' Edible Campus is an extension of the UWF community garden. Students in the environmental studies seminar class planted over 200 fruiting trees around campus with the aim of building a self-sustaining, low-maintenance addition to the larger farm. When ready for harvest, produce can be picked and enjoyed at no charge by students and community members. The students in this class gained knowledge and experience in conducting literature and program reviews, learned how to develop Geographic Information System (GIS) story maps, and demonstrated professional communication skills through video creation and professional poster displays at the UWF Student Scholar Symposium.