Experiential Learning at the University of Guelph

Defining terminology

The University of Guelph engages students in a wide range of experiential learning (EL). In the curriculum, EL outcomes are integrated within independent study, field experiences, research opportunities, and paid work terms, for example. Employability skills are woven throughout intentionally designed co-curricular experiences, such as paraprofessional roles, and some on-campus employment opportunities. In each instance, EL exposes students to hands-on learning and supports the development of skills that are critical to success in a range of workplace environments, graduate studies, and life beyond university.

In 2016/17, EL was defined by the University of Guelph’s Experiential Learning Task Force as *a pedagogical practice whereby students gain new knowledge, skills and abilities due to the intentional application of classroom learning in a workplace or simulated workplace setting. Experiential learning opportunities are grounded in an intentional learning cycle and clearly defined learning outcomes. They engage students actively in creating knowledge and critically reflecting on their experiences, allowing them to understand how to transfer their knowledge and skills to future endeavours.*

The following Table defines and reflects those co-curricular EL opportunities offered at the University.

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| **Co-curricular** | |
| Community Engagement | A mutually beneficial program intentionally designed to engage students in exploring, in depth, a societal issue or theme in a community, while supporting the mission of a community organization.  Example:  Project Serve Reading Week |
| Incubator/Accelerator | A program that allows students to leverage resources, space, mentorship and funding to engage in the early-stage development of start-ups and/or to advance external ideas that address real-world needs.  Example:  The Hub Incubator |
| On-campus Student Employment | An employment opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students that has structured learning outcomes and employability skills aligned with job responsibilities.  Example:  Orientation Facilitators |
| Paraprofessional Placement | A placement under the mentorship of professional staff and faculty, designed to provide services that contribute to the campus community while facilitating the development of employability skills.  Example:  Peer Helper Program  Residence Assistant |
| Work Study | A part-time employment program on campus for students with demonstrated financial need, whereby students undertake a job search process and gain employability skills while meeting their educational costs.  Examples:  Student Life Interns |

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