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 curricular EL opportunities offered at the University.

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| **Terminology** | **Definition** |
| **Curricular** | |
| Applied Research | Research conducted by a student under faculty guidance in an academic, industry, or community setting. Students engage in systematic investigation and research in their field and are evaluated by faculty supervisors or staff.  Example:  PSYC\*3240 – Independent Research Project  SOC\*6400 – The Principles and Practices of Community Engaged Scholarship |
| Certificate Program | A program comprised of a required number of curated courses that promote specialized knowledge acquisition and skill development through hands-on experience and classroom learning, undertaken alongside a degree.  Example:  Certificate in Civic Engagement and Global Citizenship  Certificate in Leadership |
| Co-operative Education | A program that integrates academic with paid workplace learning and skill development in a relevant field, through alternating work and study terms. Students receive a co-operative education certificate upon completion.  Example:  COOP\*1000 – Co-op Work Term I |
| Community Engaged Learning (CEL) | A course that requires students to connect their learning and skill development to theoretical concepts through learning activities designed with a community organization to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.  Example:  CIS\*3750 – System Analysis and Design in Applications  UNIV\*3000 – Civic Engagement and Service Learning |
| Field Course | A course that prepares students for professional work through first-hand investigation and analysis in a field location, led by faculty, for part of or the full duration of a semester.  Example:  GEOG\*4690 – Geography Field Research |
| Professional Practice | A course or program that requires students to shadow or work under the guidance of a professional, such as a practicum, internship, or externship, in order to gain experience and develop skills related to a field of study.  Example:  VETM\*4900 – Veterinary Externship  FCSS\*2040 – Foundation Practicum I |
| Course-Integrated | A course that intentionally integrates activities such as structured projects, laboratory work, design, simulations, performances, case studies, or entrepreneurship to enable students to display their academic learning and skill development.  Example:  NUTR\*4120 – Applied Clinical Skills  MDST\*4210 – Media Practices |

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