

Experiential Engagement Teaching Guidelines

Date: Created and approved by the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC), February, 2021.

General Course Description/Overview

In fulfilling the experiential engagement (EXP) requirement for the Integrations Curriculum, students will exercise responsibility, initiative, and judgment as they apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context and/or in an applied setting or situation. Through structured, written reflection, students will be challenged to move beyond the performance of the experiential task to discover and internalize knowledge about themselves and the world around them in a way that is cyclical (think-act-reflect, repeat) and meaningful. A summative reflection will become an artifact in students' Integrated Portfolios.

The EXP requirement for the Integrations Curriculum may be met through approved academic courses, co-curricular experiences, or student-designed experiences. All proposals must be reviewed and approved by the EXP Advisory Board.

For Academic courses to carry an EXP, they must additionally be approved by the General Education Curriculum Committee; these academic courses may include, but are not limited to:

- A regularly-offered course in any discipline
- Education Abroad courses
- Undergraduate research and creative projects included in capstone courses
- Credit-bearing internships
- Disciplinary practica (nursing clinical, student teaching, etc.)
- Courses that employ service-learning

Whether met through a curricular, co-curricular, or student-designed experience, the EXP-designated experience is expected to be meaningful to the students and of sufficient intensity and duration to enable the students to 1) apply their classroom knowledge and skills, 2) develop/refine skills, attitudes, and/or ways of thinking, and 3) engage in cyclical reflection. A summative reflection of the students' EXP experiences must become an artifact in the students' Integrated Portfolios.

Experiential Engagement Learning Goal

Students apply their knowledge and skills outside the classroom and document their learning through reflection.

Engagement Requirement Overview

The Engagement Requirements ask for faculty, staff, or students who apply to meet the requirement to include events or activities that put the content into a "real world" experience. This could involve asking students to attend events outside the classroom. But it could also involve bringing people into the classroom that students engage with directly. For example, a

GLO experience might involve having international students on short-term programs be part of the class for three weeks. Meeting the Engagement Requirements does not commit one to a semester long experiential activity; rather it requires only that one find ways to engage experientially with people and practices that are normally outside of the classroom. This could be a semester long service-learning project, or a set of activities outside the classroom, or it could be bringing outside people into the classroom.

Best Practices in Experiential Learning

The four criteria for best practices were adopted by the faculty in the Integrations Curriculum. The criteria are based on eight best practices developed by the National Society for Experiential Education. The four criteria are: Intention, Preparedness and Planning, Authenticity, and Reflection.

Intention: All parties must be clear from the outset why experience is the chosen approach to the learning that is to take place and to the knowledge that will be demonstrated, applied, or result from it. Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience.

Preparedness and Planning: Participants must ensure that they enter the experience with sufficient foundation to support a successful experience. They must also focus from the earliest stages of the experience/program on the identified intentions, adhering to them as goals, objectives and activities are defined. The resulting plan should include those intentions and be referred to on a regular basis by all parties. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds.

Authenticity: The experience must have a real-world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. This means that it should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation.

Reflection: Reflection is the element that transforms simple experience into a learning experience. For knowledge to be discovered and internalized, the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential-based learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. Reflection is also an essential tool for adjusting the experience and measuring outcomes.

Required EXP summative reflection prompt:

Experiential Engagement DEAL Reflection Prompt

Describe: In a brief paragraph, describe the experiential learning project you completed.

Examine:

1. How did your previous classroom learning contribute to your understanding of your Experiential Engagement experience?
2. How did your Experiential Engagement experience change the way that you think about your previous classroom learning? Provide specific examples of concepts, theories, or frameworks that were changed.

Analyze Learning

1. How has your understanding of the world changed as a result of your Experiential Engagement experience?
2. Identify some of the lessons that you have learned as a result of your Experiential Engagement experience and evaluate how significant those lessons are.