

Experiential Learning Requirement Policy Statement and Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of Kent State's experiential learning requirement (ELR) is to provide students with direct engagement in learning experiences that promote academic relevance, meaning, and an understanding of real-world issues. Experiential learning opportunities exist in a variety of course- and non-course-based forms and may include community service, service-learning, undergraduate research, study abroad/away, and culminating experiences such as internships, student teaching, and capstone projects, to name a few.

CRITERIA

Each ELR course or activity must provide opportunities for students to meet the learning outcomes listed below. Students will be able to:

- Connect ideas, concepts, and skills developed at the University with their applications to new and different contexts;
- Demonstrate how this experience has broadened their understanding of the discipline, the world, or themselves as learners; and
- Reflect on the meaning of the experience.

Students will also be required to meet any additional learning outcomes as defined by the course, program or faculty member.

Each ELR course or activity must have a plan of assessment for the experiential learning that has taken place.

CURRICULAR GUIDELINES

- All students must satisfy the experiential learning requirement as part of the requirements for any baccalaureate.
- Experiential learning opportunities must be completed while a student at Kent State University; however, the experiences may occur on or off campus. The expectation is that students will complete the ELR after the first year of study.
- Experiential learning opportunities must meet existing University regulations and guidelines (e.g., institutional review board approval for research with animals or human subjects, memoranda of affiliation/understanding with community partners).
- In the case of a program-approved ELR course, satisfactory completion will be determined by the instructor of the course. In the case of a program-approved ELR Activity, satisfactory completion will be determined by the faculty member.
- If an ELR course also is designated as a diversity course, a Kent Core course, and/or a writing intensive course, the student shall receive credit for fulfilling requirements in all applicable categories.
- If a unit does not approve an experience as meeting the ELR, a student who wishes to appeal that decision should submit a letter of appeal to the dean's office in the student's degree-granting college.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES

The Experiential Learning Requirement was approved by Faculty Senate on February 14, 2011, to be in effect fall semester 2012. The following information from the document approved by Faculty Senate is provided for additional guidance about the nature of the requirement.

Definition:

Experiential learning at Kent State University is defined as “direct engagement in learning experiences that promote academic relevance, meaning, and an understanding of real-world issues.” Experiential learning opportunities exist in a variety of academic and non-academic forms at this University and may include community service, service-learning, undergraduate research, and culminating experiences such as internships and capstone projects, to name a few. Since diversity in student needs exists, Experiential learning may utilize deliberate and purposeful engagement outside the typical classroom environment to influence student knowledge, skills, and values, and to promote the public good.

Kent State recognizes five general categories of ELR: civic engagement, creative/artistic activities, practical experiences, undergraduate research, and study abroad/away. Approved activities might fit one or more of these categories. These categories are provided as a guide to consider what types of activities meet the requirement.

1. Civic Engagement

Civic engagement enables Kent State students to interact with people from diverse backgrounds; to challenge their understanding of community needs and the systems addressing those needs; and to explore ways of improving community life. The primary purpose for activities that fall into this category encompasses community involvement, awareness, learning, or reflection.

2. Creative/Artistic Activities

Creative/artistic activities enable Kent State students to engage in various forms of creative expression to produce works that reflect a synthesis of knowledge and skills. These works may be original or interpretative and may be expressed through performances, portfolios, exhibits, pieces of work, or other significant projects.

3. Practical Experiences

Practical experiences enable Kent State students to actively use the skills and concepts related to their career path while engaging in work-like settings that are common to their field of study, such as internships.

4. Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research activities enable Kent State students to engage in substantial systematic inquiry that contributes to the discovery or interpretation of knowledge significant to their field of study. This research can be applied, creative/artistic, descriptive, experimental, historical, inferential, observational, or theoretical. Research must be at the upper-division level and must be done as an individual investigation, senior honors thesis/project, or grant-related research. Research must be engaged with the external community, either through the research itself or in the dissemination of the research through publications or presentations.

5. Study Abroad/Away

Study abroad/away activities enable Kent State students to be immersed in an off-campus environment. These experiences contribute to a student’s understanding of culture, customs, diversity, history, language, politics, religion, society, and/or traditions.

Examples of Experiential Learning Activities

These examples are meant to give a general idea about possibilities within the five categories of ELR.

Civic Engagement Examples

Community development
Community-based action research
Community-based research
Service-learning

Research Examples

Community-based research
Creative activities
Field research
Oral history research
Substantial lab-based research (e.g., off-campus work, working as part of grant in the chemistry lab)

Creative Activities Examples

Architecture

Exhibits
Original designs

Art

Creative projects
Exhibits

Dance

Internship
Major dance performance
Original choreography
Student direction

English/writing

Creative projects
Oral interpretation
Original poetry
Original writing project

Fashion

Original design portfolio
Original designs
Runway show
Show

Journalism and mass communication

Editorial writing
General editing
Publisher

Music

Compositions
Concertos
Major roles
Recitals

Theatre

Directing
Major role
Playwright
Principal costume designer
Principal lighting designer
Principal set designer

Visual communication design

Original design portfolio

Generalized discipline creative projects:

Discipline-specific exhibits
Discipline-specific portfolios

Practical Experiences Examples

Applied workshops
Apprenticeships
Career/professional internship
Clerkship
Clinical fieldwork/practicum
Clinical research
Coaching
Cooperative education/experience
Counseling practicum
Curricular practical training (CPT)
(per U.S. citizenship and immigration services)
Experiential/lab experience
Exploratory courses
Entrepreneurships
Fellowships
Field experience

Freshman interest groups
(FIGs)Geology field camp
Independent study
Internships
Leadership/management experience
Learning communities
Optional practical training (OPT)
(per U.S. citizenship and immigration services)
Politics/public policy experience
Practicum
Practicum-oriented thesis project
Practicum-oriented research
Residency experience
Service-learning
Student teaching
Substantial research

Laboratory experience
(collaboration with faculty and/or graduate student research: e.g., psychology, animal, or human subjects research; sociology survey study; oceanographic or limnologic field work; or ecological field work)
Teaching practicum
Training program
Tutoring
Volunteer work in discipline/ area of study
Work experience
Work in clinical settings
Work study (related to study)

Study Abroad/Away Examples

Columbus program each fall
Faculty-led short-term programs
Fashion Design Studio in NYC
Internships abroad or beyond Northeast Ohio: CAPA program in Sydney; VCD internships at places such as Discovery Channel, Smithsonian, MTV, etc.
National Student Exchange

Overseas student teaching through COST
Semester, year-long, and summer programs:
Florence, Geneva, Dresden Summer Language Program, Leicester, Ulster, Uganda, China, etc.
Semester at Sea
Summer Intensive Study in Dance
WPNI program each spring