

Experiential Learning Opportunities
CUNY Definitions and Lehman Guidelines
March 30, 2017

What is Experiential Learning?

At CUNY, experiential and applied learning opportunities should be a transformational component of the undergraduate experience. Educational research indicates that high-impact practices that take ideas and concepts beyond the classroom can increase rates of student retention and student engagement, and can be beneficial in shaping their longer-term personal development as critical and creative thinkers. These practices, known at CUNY as Experiential Learning Opportunities (ELO), take many different forms, all of which allow “learners to have direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop individual capacity to contribute to their communities” (Association for Experiential Education).

- Internship (page 2)
- Cooperative Education (page 3)
- Service Learning/Community Service (page 4)
- Clinical Preparation/Practicum (page 5)
- Research/Field Study (page 6)
- Campus– or University-Based Work and/or Leadership (page 7)
- Civic Engagement (page 8)
- International Applied Learning Opportunities (page 9)

Internship (formal or independent; paid or unpaid) (CUNYFirst Attribute: INTERN):

CUNY Definition: Formal Internship are academic programs integrating classroom learning and productive work experience in a field related to a student's academic and career goals. Formal internships provide students with learning experiences integrating theory and practice. As an academic program, it serves as a partnership among students, educational institutions, and employers. An independent internship is a form of ELO that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Independent internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths, as well as giving employers the opportunity to guide, and evaluate talent. These internships could be college- or university-sponsored.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

- The central focus of the course should be the internship experience. A reflection on the experience is not counted toward the experience itself in terms of assessing whether the course receives the attribute.
- The out-of-classroom experience should involve considerably more time than the in-class experience.
- The out-of-classroom experience should factor considerably in the assessment of the student performance and the final grade.
- Courses that have an internship component but do not meet the above criteria will not receive the attribute. Exceptions to these standards will be evaluated in the context of the field specific accreditation standards. In other words, external standards supersede our recommendations.
- Course requirements must be explained in the syllabus, including criteria for grading and consequences or options if students fail to achieve expected outcomes.
- Internships could also be classified as clinical experiences or practica, if the experience involves treating or teaching someone or something.

Additional information from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS):

<http://standards.cas.edu/getpdf.cfm?PDF=E86CFB4D-0B9E-4853-6D82720BE0779895>

- When course credit is offered for an internship, the amount of credit should be determined by the extent to which the student is engaged in work/activities related to identified learning goals and not solely by hours accrued at the site.
- Across the institution, common criteria are used for determining how course credit is awarded.

Cooperative Education (CUNYFirst Attribute: COPED):

CUNY Definition: Formally recognized as an academic program integrating classroom learning and productive paid work experiences in a field related to a student's academic and career goals. Co-op provides students with progressive learning experiences integrating theory and practice and serves as a partnership among students, educational institutions, and employers. This type of education is directly tied to a career and is always paid.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

Service Learning/Community Service (CUNYFirst Attribute: SLCS):

CUNY Definition: Ongoing and sustained volunteerism, service learning, and/or community service performed by students to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities. This may include structured projects (days of service), smaller group projects, fundraising events, or individual volunteerism, which is acknowledged by the campus.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

- A service learning course integrates meaningful community service with the educational goals of a course. By extending learning beyond the walls of the classroom, the goal of service learning is to provide facilitated opportunities for students to develop academic knowledge and critical thinking skills to meet genuine community needs.
- The service experience is integrally related to the academic subject matter and is a substantial component of the course. It is often characterized as “learning by doing.” As such, it includes “hands-on” activities, typically in collaboration with community based organizations.
- Service learning courses differ from community engagement and other types of courses due to their emphasis on both student learning and addressing the genuine needs of the community through hands-on experiences. Community engagement courses, internships, cooperative education and other courses have similar aims, but these courses do not necessarily involve direct experience within in the community to address real needs. Often, they focus on individual volunteerism and advocacy.
- Students have structured opportunities to reflect on their experience on its societal context, and on the benefits of their engagement.

Examples:

- Art students working with the elderly to teach them how to paint
- History students providing talks/tours of historical sites in NYC
- Biology students surveying the biodiversity in the Bronx River
- Finance students providing financial literacy to the community

Clinical Preparation/Practicum (CUNYFirst Attribute: CPP):

CUNY Definition: Practicum describes instruction in a supervised clinical/medical, social work or school (student teacher) setting where students have an opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

Clinical experiences or practica could also be described as internships that involve treating or teaching someone (or something). Assigning both attributes is an option.

Recommendations to meet CPP designations:

- Course credits, lecture hours, and lab/clinical hours must be designated in the course description.
- A course should have a minimum of 1 lab/clinical hours per credit.
- Courses are typically needed for licensure or certification of the program.
- Allocated time is dependent on requirements for licensure in individual programs.

Examples:

- Education: Supervised teaching in schools (as opposed to field work which could be purely observational and not supervised)
- Speech-language: Clinical observations
- Social work: Clinical hours
- Nursing: Clinical hours or lab with simulations
- Health sciences: Nutrition, recreation therapy
- Dance and Theater: ???

Research/Field Study (CUNYFirst Attribute: RFS):

CUNY Definition: Mentored, self-directed work that enables students to make an original, intellectual, or creative contribution to the discipline by exploring an issue of interest to them and communicating the results to others. The projects have inquiry, design, investigation, discovery and application.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

- The central focus of the course is mentored, self-directed work.
- It is not enough to summarize or reiterate the work of others. In the framework of the projects, students experience the range of steps involved in inquiry, design, investigation, discovery and application.
- Making original contributions does not necessarily mean that it has to be as groundbreaking as we generally see “original research.” Students explore subjects of interest in a unique way, i.e. even if research ground has been explored, students’ analyses explain the significance of revisiting the topic.
- Projects may range from scientific to artistic in nature.
- Students work under the direction of a faculty member. A syllabus or project description will provide information in the project.
- Some independent tutorials and virtually all honors theses & independent research courses, as well as some others, clearly meet these standards.
- The results of the research must be communicated to others. For that purpose, individual student presentation can be done in numerous ways by presenting paper, poster, research, original creative work, etc.
 - A presentation must be made beyond the class body at any other venue with allows the student to share their work with other individuals.
 - For example, presentation can be made to the department (during a departmental honors day or a gathering of faculty/courses specifically for this activity), or during a Lehman Scholarship day.
 - Digital dissemination of the papers (for example on a Lehman or CUNY website, on a library repository, or on other public websites) fulfills the communication requirements.

Campus– or University-Based Work and/or Leadership (CUNYFirst Attribute: CWL):

CUNY Definition: Productive work experience that serves the campus community by supporting the academic success of other students, the governance of campus life and student affairs through leadership, or campus operations through specialized skills acquired through formal training and in a paraprofessional capacity.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

Civic Engagement (CUNYFirst Attribute: CVEG):

CUNY Definition: A teaching and learning focus on educating students as citizens. Classes or programs include meaningful civic education and activities for social good. Classes and projects have components of reflection and engagement.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

- Civic engagement needs to be a significant component of the course and the final grade and needs to be reflected in the course description, learning objectives, and assignments (syllabus)
- It requires a component of active engagement (in addition to observation) with civic groups/organizations, legislative bodies, policy makers, community organizers, community groups or community centers, institutions (nursing homes, hospitals, schools) etc.
- Students need to reflect on societal context and benefits of their engagement. Each activity must be coupled with a reflection, e.g. paper, discussion, blog, etc.
- It can be a combination of active and passive experiences and/or explorations (for example: students observe a trial and research aspects of it)
- Active engagement includes in-person or web-based interaction or written communication (for example: letters to editors, opinion pieces, long-distance interaction with another group)

International Applied Learning Opportunities (CUNYFirst Attribute: IALO):

CUNY Definition: Experiential learning opportunities for matriculated students while abroad, including internships, cooperative education, service learning/community service, clinical preparation/practicum, research/field study, campus- or university-based work and/or leadership, and civic engagement opportunities.

ILC Focus Group Guidelines:

- The course must include an experience outside the U.S.
- It must involve a structured learning experience with defined learning goals. Course expectations, schedule, learning goals, and grading policies must be defined in the syllabus or plan of study.
- The course must be directly supervised or approved by Lehman faculty.
- Students need to demonstrate that they have met the goals specified in the syllabus or plan of study. For example, students will provide a report and reflection on the activities/research.
- The number of credits must be aligned with Lehman's academic standards.