

Experiential Learning Attribute Flagging Procedures

The key consideration in supporting the experiential learning flagging project is how do you determine that a class is “experiential” and deserves to have this noted in the class attributes?

Experiential Components

The TLARC (Teaching, Learning, Academic Resource Committee of Council) endorsed definition of experiential learning requires the following three components be present for a class to be considered experiential.

Direct Experience

We define direct experiences as those that are structured to actively engage students in learning by doing. The experience may, for example, involve posing questions, investigating, experimenting, solving problems and creating artifacts. The experience will be at a specified level appropriate for the student(s) ranging from those prescribed by the instructor to student determined and led activities

Focused Reflection

A process of thinking about the experience in an effort to make sense of it, in the context of what is already known by the student and what they want to do next. In most cases the process of thinking will be guided by the instructor through, for example, questions or facilitated discussion.

Authentic Assessment

A process of assessment, including provision of feedback, in which students demonstrate the specific gains (e.g. knowledge, skills, values) anticipated from the experience. If the experience, for example, was focused on application of knowledge and skills, authentic assessment will allow students to meaningfully demonstrate that application. Authentic assessment will resemble the direct experience intended to facilitate learning in: the assessment task, the physical and social context in which it takes place, and the assessment result or form (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004). The assessment may contribute toward the student’s grade in the course (summative) or may be done to facilitate student learning with no marks given (formative).

Ultimately, the class instructor is your best reference to determine if a class includes these three components and is therefore experiential. Alternatively, you may be able to determine this through discussion with a colleague, supervisor, or an academic lead in your college or department. Colleges and departments are asked to use their best judgement in determining whether the three components exist.

Experiential Type

Although we recognize that there are other high impact teaching practices that would be considered experiential, our approach at the U of S has been to focus on five specific types or

priority areas for experiential learning (each type has been given a unique attribute code for the course build process):

- Community engaged learning (EXL 1)
- Clinical placement or practicum (EXL 2)
- Field based (EXL 3)
- Study Abroad or Taught away (EXL 4)
- Undergraduate research (EXL 5)

Definitions of these five types of experiential learning is available at the following website http://www.usask.ca/vpteaching/strategic_initiatives/experiential-learning/index.php

Internal consultation and using your best judgement will be required to examine whether a class incorporates the three components described above, and is one or more of the five priority types listed. We ask that you collect this information in a way that best fits with your class build process. You are welcome to contact Frank Bulk in the GMCTL to discuss further as needed.

When a class is determined to be experiential then you are asked to add the appropriate type or types of experiential learning in the attributes column of the course build interface. It is likely that a class could include several of these types and as such should be flagged as both. For example, a field based course could also include an undergraduate research component, and would be flagged as EXL3 and EL5 in the attribute column.

Note that the experiential learning attributes, once added, will stay with the class information when it rolls forward for future builds. In subsequent years you will need to consider if the attribute still applies and remove it if not. Alternately, a flag should be added to classes that have undergone change to meet the conditions and are one or more of the five types that receive the experiential attribute.