

Characteristics of High-Impact Internships (AAC&U)

Internships can be high-impact learning experiences when they are well-designed and well-implemented. According to Kuh & O'Donnell (2013), characteristics of high-impact learning experiences include:

1. Performance expectations set at a high level.
2. Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time.
3. Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters.
4. Experiences with diversity wherein students work closely with people and in contexts that differ from those with which students are familiar.
5. Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback.
6. Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning.
7. Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications.
8. Public demonstration of competence. (p. 10)

Kuh, G. D. (2013). Taking HIP's to the Next Level. In G.D. Kuh & K. O'Donnell (Eds.), *Ensuring quality & taking high-impact practices to scale*, 1-13. Washington, DC: AAC&U.

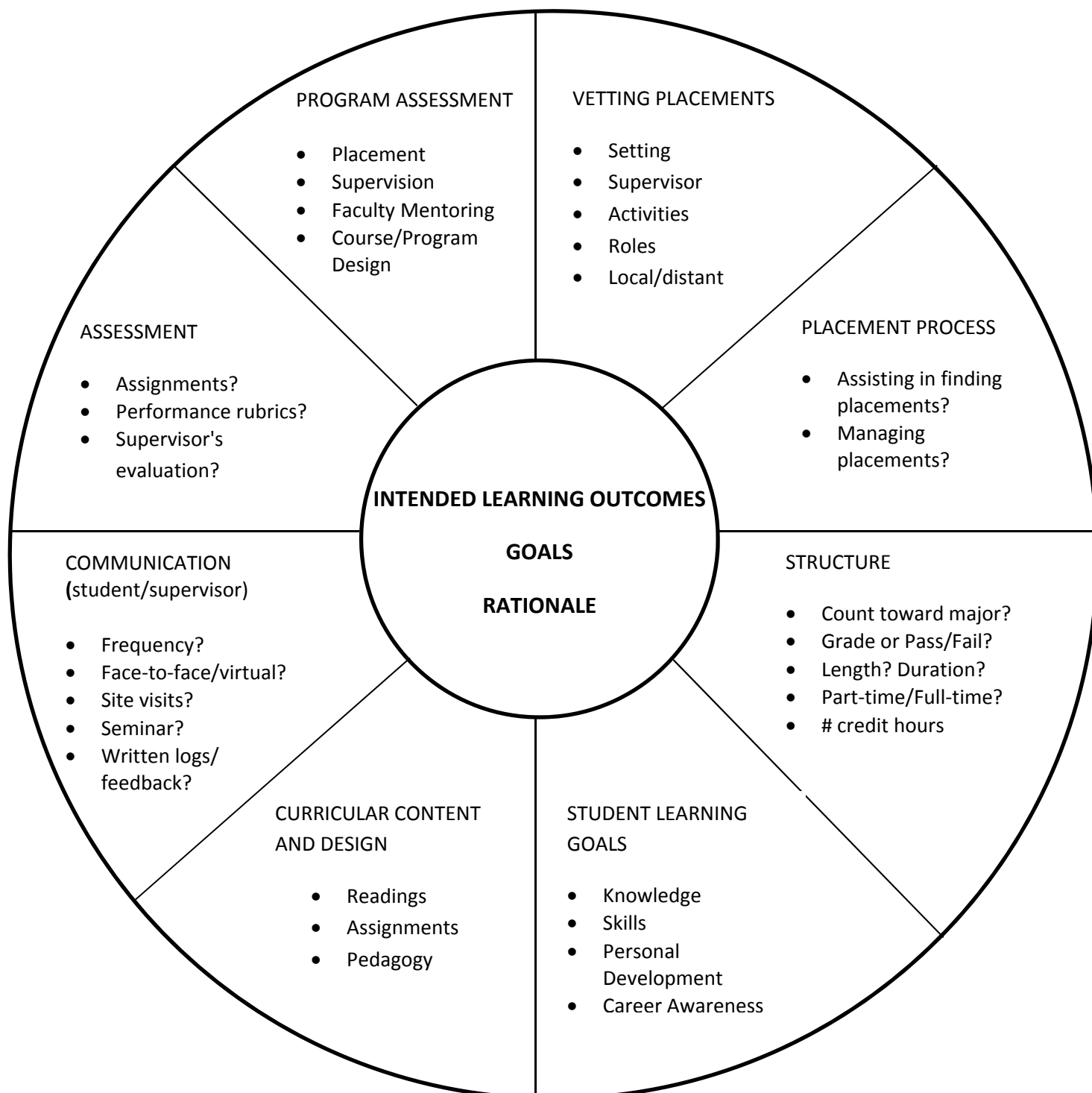
Eyler (2009) synthesizes findings from numerous sources to identify best practices in internships:

- Work related clearly to the **academic goals of the program**
- Well-developed assessments that provide **evidence of achievement of academic objectives**
- **Important responsibility** for the student
- **Site supervisors who understand the learning goals** for the student and **partner** with the academic supervisor to **provide continuous monitoring and feedback**
- An **academic supervisor or instructor who pays close attention to the student's work in the field** and **partners** with the site supervisor to provide continuous monitoring and feedback
- Attention paid to **preparing students for both the practical challenges** of their placement **and for learning from experience**
- **Continuous well-structured reflection** opportunities for students to help them link experience and learning **throughout** the course of the placement (p. 20).

Eyler, J. (2009). The power of experiential education. *Liberal Education*, 24-31.

Decisions in Designing High Quality Internships

The diagram below represents key faculty decisions in designing high quality internship programs from beginning to end. Rationale and goals for the internship sit at the center of each decision. Process begins at 1:00 and moves clockwise.



Decisions in Designing High Quality Internships

Starting in the center consider why you do internships and what kinds of learning you hope your students experience in internships. Then starting at 1:00 proceed clockwise and consider how each component of the internship might best be designed to achieve those goal.

