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Characteristics of the Experiential Learning Requirement at Elon University

Intentional Preparation with a Mentor

The student works with a faculty/staff mentor in advance of the experience/project to develop and/or understand written learning outcomes and assessment benchmarks in the areas of knowledge, skills, career and personal development, as well as learning the reflective and experiential learning process. All ELR experiences should have facilitated preparation, action and reflection, all involving critical analysis and synthesis.

Sustained Relationships

Completing the ELR involves a relationship between the student and mentor, and between the student and the community (campus or local), a culture, an employer, and/or research project. This is an ongoing, iterative experience that is deepened by frequent and structured interactions between the student and the faculty/staff mentor.

A Significant Out-of-the-Classroom Learning Experience

The experience requires active engagement outside the classroom. It must have both breadth and depth. The experience must provide opportunities for students to develop intellectually, creatively, personally, and socially. Moreover, it should require the student to learn, possess, and use analytical skills to conceptualize and integrate the experience so that they develop both personally and professionally. This experience requires a sustained commitment from both the faculty/staff mentor and the student.

Experience Supported by Scholarly Works and/or Foundational Disciplinary Approaches

The experience must provide opportunities for the student to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results. The experience must be couched within the context of a course, readings, or other scholarly framework, through which the student integrates his or her learning and development.

Structured Reflection and Integrative Assignments

Scholarship on experiential education emphasizes structured reflection as the *sine qua non* of student learning. Student reflections should include scholarly framing and analysis of the experience to support student learning. To be of greatest benefit, reflections should also be ongoing throughout the experience. In fact, a paucity of opportunities to engage in scholarly reflection can, in fact, lead students to faulty conclusions or reinforce previously held misconceptions. The role of the faculty/staff member in designing and implementing these reflective components of experiential learning is key.

Continuous Feedback and Evaluation

The faculty/staff member should support student learning by prompting and facilitating provocative and challenging questions and assignments. Students must receive ongoing feedback about their progress toward achieving pre-stated learning outcomes and goals, including (but not limited to) a final, integrative project, product or paper.

Integrative Project

The student must create product(s) or paper(s) demonstrating that they have met the agreed upon learning outcomes. They must demonstrate appropriate critical analysis, decision making, and problem-solving skills supported by scholarly works related to their experience.

Students should be prompted to consider how they may be able to apply new concepts and skills gained from the experience.

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research is a sustained, mentored, and iterative experience. It is expected that students will be engaged in all aspects of the research, creative, and/or scholarly process including:

- Identification and development of the research question
- Development of methodology
- Collection of data or production of creative works
- Analysis of the data/product
- Dissemination/display/presentation of the product

The undergraduate research process is facilitated by active engagement by the mentor and student in the planning, reflection, and processing of the research/creative/scholarly endeavor. These activities should be informed and guided by the theoretical disciplinary framing of the project. There should be frequent and regular interaction between the faculty mentor and the student throughout the undergraduate research experience.

A student may satisfy Elon's Experiential Learning Requirement through participation in mentored undergraduate research in the following ways as articulated in the Elon University Academic Catalog:

- Enroll in 1 credit hour of research (courses numbered 498 or 499) = 1 unit
- Elon's Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) = 2 units

One semester hour of undergraduate research credit requires a minimum of 40 hours of work over a number of days appropriate to the specific research setting, to be determined by the faculty mentor. The length of the SURE program is 8 weeks in length and is non-credit hour bearing.

Eligibility Requirements

- Sophomore, junior, or senior standing
- Minimum 3.0 GPA
- Approval of faculty mentor and department chair

Academic Service-Learning is "a form of experimental learning in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection" (Jacoby, 2015, p. 3) A student may satisfy Elon's Experiential Learning Requirement through participation in **direct service, project-based or indirect service, and the service-learning workbook** in the following ways as articulated in the Elon University Academic Catalog:

- Designated service-learning course = 1 unit or 4 credit hours
- Pre-approved service-learning experience mentored by the Kernodle Center = 1-2 units (40+ hours per unit)

Direct Service

Direct service "involves face to face interactions with the client population at site or elsewhere" (Jacoby, 2015, p. 21).

The Elon University Academic Service-Learning Faculty Advisory Committee requires a minimum of 15 days for students engaged in direct service. The number of hours per day is determined by the faculty mentor. Students participating in a one-credit Alternative Break Course are required to volunteer with a local community agency related to the issue topic that they will focus on during their Alternative Break in order to receive ELR credit.

Service-Learning Workbook

Students may satisfy their Experiential Learning Requirement through individual service projects in conjunction with the completion of the Service Learning Workbook. These students must develop a customized service experience that includes specific learning outcomes, a minimum of 40 hours of direct service to the community, intentional reflection activities, and periodic evaluations from direct supervisors and Kernodle Center staff. The service experience must:

- offer reciprocal benefit for the student and the community for whom the student serves
- meet an identified need in the community
- be of a direct or indirect nature (consulting, project development, research)

All students are eligible to complete this requirement using the Service-Learning ELR Workbook. However, students must begin the process outlined below prior to beginning the service experience. If a student wishes to fulfill the ELR in this manner, they must contact the Kernodle Center at the beginning of the term in which they plan to complete the requisite service hours. Kernodle Center staff will review the ELR workbook and process with the student before the service project begins.

The committee recommends that students completing the service-learning workbook, have a minimum of 15 days of direct-service with one community partner. The number of hours per day are to be determined by the advisor and community partner.

Once the workbook is completed, the Director of the Kernodle Center reviews and evaluates the materials and decides if it meets the ELR requirements before submitting a pass/fail notification to the Registrar's Office.

Academic Service-Learning Designated Courses

Service-Learning is fundamentally an academic endeavor in which service is an integrated component of a course. It is a credit-bearing, experiential education approach that involves an established community partnership guided by the expertise of professors and community-based practitioners, working together with students to address community needs. The partnerships between Elon and the community engage students in service primarily with non-profit organizations, schools, and government agencies. Under certain circumstances, academic service-learning at Elon might also include course-related work on campus that directly benefits the wider community. Academic Service-Learning is a unique form of engaged learning that includes:

- Direct contact between students and the community, requiring student preparation for community experiences.
- Engagement in projects and activities that are devoted to the public good.
- Service activity that is reciprocally beneficial to the community and students and is relevant to course objectives.
- Structured reflection that enhances student understanding of connections between course content and service.
- Recognition of how disciplinary knowledge contributes to our understanding of the world.

Academic Service-Learning courses contribute to a variety of cognitive, personal, and social outcomes including enhanced self-awareness, improved critical thinking, and an increased understanding of social responsibility, diversity, and societal structures.

For class-based (project-based) courses, in order to receive Service-Learning course designation and Experiential Learning Requirement credit, the project must engage students in at least 40 hours of experiential learning. For community-based courses, 40 hours are also required; it is recommended that 15 to 30 of these hours be completed through on-site, direct service.

Students engaged in project-based or indirect service work over a number of days to be determined by the faculty mentor.

Leadership

Leaders can serve two different roles. They can be in an elected or appointed position of authority and responsible for guiding the group's actions, or they can be any member of a group or community who is actively engaging with others and working to create positive change. Socially responsible leaders are inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and attentive to the group or collaborative process. In that context, *leadership* is the relational and ethical process of people working together to accomplish positive change.

Leaders engaged in change initiatives will:

- Identify a specific problem, challenge, or opportunity;
- Apply a scholarly framework to their understanding of the problem and/or implementation of change initiatives;
- Work in partnership or collaboration with others to identify a solution, project, or change initiative;
- Implement the solution or attempt change for the common good; and
- Reflect on their efforts throughout the process.

A student may satisfy Elon's Experiential Learning Requirement in Leadership in the following ways as articulated in the Elon University Academic Catalog:

- Taking a 4 credit hour course that has the Leadership ELR designation= 1 unit
- Completing a leadership experience that has been *pre-approved* by the Center for Leadership *and mentored* by the Center for Leadership or faculty / staff member = 1-2 units (40+ hours per unit)
 - The Common Good (change maker) project. This involves a proposal and execution of a project that is advised / mentored by a faculty or staff member and at least 40 hours in planning and implementing the project.
 - The Leadership ELR workbook. Students who complete the ELR workbook must have an approved leadership position*, a faculty / staff advisor through the process, and finish all assignments in a satisfactory manner as determined by the advisor and Director of the Center for Leadership.

One Leadership ELR credit requires a minimum of 40 hours of work over a number of days appropriate to the specific leadership role, to be determined by the Center for Leadership in collaboration with the leadership mentor.

* Approved leadership positions include a role / title within an organization, campus program, or classroom where the student has direct responsibility in the oversight of other peers or the execution of functions necessary for success in the context within which they are involved. The student must complete at least 40 hours within that role / title.

Internships

Internship experiences provide students opportunities to integrate disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary knowledge with experiences in various work settings. Through high quality, rigorous experiences, students test and apply previously acquired knowledge, acquire new knowledge, and develop deeper understanding of disciplinary perspectives. Additionally, students gain valuable opportunities for career exploration and acquire greater insight into the value of a liberal arts education in the workplace. Students may also experience significant personal growth as they grapple with complex issues, encounter diverse populations, and meet both academic and workplace challenges.

A student may satisfy Elon's Experiential Learning Requirement through participation in a professional development experience in the following ways as articulated in the Elon University Academic Catalog:

- Internship – 1 credit hour of internship= 1 unit
- Individual Professional Development Workbook- 40 hours= 1 unit

Internship

An internship is a carefully monitored, credit-bearing work experience that relates to the student's academic curriculum and/or career goals and earns a letter grade. As a unique form of engaged learning, an internship:

- integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with experiential work-based learning in a professional setting
- is an academic endeavor that is planned with intentional learning goals, careful observation, and structured critical reflection about the phenomena being studied
- enhances academic knowledge, personal development, and professional preparation
- is offered in most majors/minors
- can be part-time or full-time during any term
- can be paid or unpaid
- is noted on both the academic and the Elon Experiences transcripts
- a maximum of 16 internship credits may be earned

One semester hour of internship credit requires a minimum of 40 hours of work over a number of days appropriate to the specific internship setting, to be determined by the faculty mentor in collaboration with the on-site supervisor.

Individualized Professional Development Experience Workbook

Individualized Professional Development Experience pre-approved and mentored by the Director of Internships at the Student Professional Development Center, focused on self-exploration (values/interests/strengths), career exploration, professional communication and conduct, and developing emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, and other professional skills. These goals are facilitated by completing the IPDE ELR Workbook – a guided experience including professional and academic goal creation and measurement, action plans with timetables, supervisor feedback and evaluations, and writing/reflection (including resume). These are non-credit bearing experiences with 40 hours equating to 1 unit that take place in a professional workplace.

The number of hours per day is determined by the staff supervisor in conjunction with the on-site supervisor.

Eligibility Requirements

- Minimum 2.0 GPA
- Completion of departmental prerequisites
- Approval by Faculty Mentor/Internship Director

Global Engagement (Study Abroad/Study USA)

A global engagement experience in Study Abroad/Study USA is a globally-focused curricular experience that provides students with the opportunity to actively engage with cultural difference and/or biological diversity. Designed to be substantial intercultural experiences, Study Abroad/Study USA courses will help prepare students for life in a rapidly changing global society within and beyond the borders of the United States. Exclusively credit-bearing in nature, these experiences will challenge students to integrate content knowledge and skill application in a unique intercultural manner.

A student may satisfy Elon's ELR through participation in global engagement in the following ways as articulated in the Elon University Academic Catalog:

Study Abroad / Study USA

- Designated 4 credit hour Study Abroad/Study USA course = 1 unit
- Designated 8 or more credit hours of Study Abroad/Study USA = 2 units

A diverse range of Study Abroad/Study USA experiences is available through application in the Isabella Canon Global Education Center:

- Dual degree programs encompassing two years abroad,
- Semester- and year-long programs through approved affiliates and exchanges,
- Center-based semester programs with an Elon faculty member,
- On-campus semester courses with travel embedded (minimum of 45 instructional hours across the semester, including a minimum of 8 travel days),
- Cohort-based programs and open programs,
- Faculty-led short-term programs in winter and summer (minimum of 45 instructional hours across no fewer than 18 travel days),
- Other petitioned, individually vetted and specially approved curricular programs from accredited colleges or universities.

While academic requirements vary from program to program, any student in good academic and social standing is eligible to apply. Substantial scholarship support is available for students with demonstrated high need.

Due to the highly individualized curricular nature of global engagement experiences, Study Abroad/Study USA might meet the characteristics of an ELR in distinctive ways. For instance, students might work with one or multiple mentors, and receive continuous feedback on their progress in a correspondingly diverse manner. Scholarly work might be disciplinary, multidisciplinary, or interdisciplinary in nature and integrative projects might be actualized in experience-specific ways. Yet common to all these diverse global engagement experiences is the intentional preparation, purposeful engagement with difference, and critical reflection to promote understanding of the self, the world's peoples and cultures and/or environments, and provide a framework for lifelong intercultural learning.

Clarification of Policies and Procedures Related to the ELR

Changes to the Established Experiential Learning Requirements

By vote of the Elon Core Curriculum Council, the minimum amount of experiential engagement is determined by the curriculum committee (or advisory committee if no curriculum committee directly oversees the program) associated with the program. Changes to the minimum amount of experiential engagement or other modifications to the characteristics of the ELR as outlined in the document titled “Characteristics of the Experiential Learning Requirement at Elon University” that are approved by the program committee must then be reviewed and voted on by the Elon Core Curriculum Council. Per the faculty handbook, the Elon Core Curriculum Council makes recommendations to the University Curriculum Committee for curricular changes in the Core Curriculum and works with departments to ensure that department courses satisfactorily meet Core Curriculum requirement.

Any proposed changes to the minimum amount of experiential engagement or other related modifications to the aforementioned document should be discussed by the Experiential Education Advisory Committee to gather input and ensure awareness of ongoing work to enhance the Elon Experiences. The faculty handbook specifies that this advisory committee coordinates and deepens the curricular and co-curricular connections for those experiences that satisfy the Experiential Learning Requirement and assists in the program development of the Elon experiences.

Proposing Experiences that would potentially satisfy the ELR

In accordance with the faculty handbook, the Experiential Education Advisory Committee considers proposals for additional experiences that would potentially satisfy the ELR. Recommendations made by this committee are forwarded to the Elon Core Curriculum Council for consideration. The Elon Core Curriculum Council is responsible for making recommendations to the University Curriculum Committee.