



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING DEFINITIONS POLICY

Policy Type	Academic	Initially Approved:	November 1, 2021
Policy Sponsor	Vice-President, Academic Affairs	Last Revised:	February 2024
Administrative Responsibility	Registrar	Review Scheduled:	2029
Approver	General Faculties Council		

A. Purpose

Experiential learning complements traditional classroom and laboratory-based learning. The Experiential Learning Definitions Policy governs the use and application of terms related to these types of experiences in programs and ensures programs are consistent with standards of quality for undergraduate and graduate education.

B. Scope

The policy applies to learning which takes place within credit programs (degrees, diplomas, and certificates).

C. Principles

1. Curriculum is developed in compliance with the guidelines of the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) or the Association for Biblical Higher Education or the Association of Theological Schools. The Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada 2007), the Alberta Credential Framework (Alberta Government 2018), and the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act also guide program development and thereby the description and interpretation of experiential learning activities.
2. Curriculum is informed by the mission, institutional values, educational principles, and learning outcomes of Ambrose University.
3. All experiential learning activities incorporate effective principles of learning.
4. Experiential learning activities represent a dynamic area of education pedagogy and therefore Ambrose will be attentive to evolving best practices and incorporate them commensurate with resources and curriculum development objectives.
5. Work-integrated learning components involve a signed agreement that clearly outlines the roles of the institution supervisor, the employer and the student. Work-integrated opportunities may be paid or unpaid, depending on category and circumstances.

D. Definitions

Experiential Learning at Ambrose is defined as learning by doing. Knowledge is translated into action

and with critical reflection these experiences transform perspectives, capacities and dispositions. The experiences are intentionally designed and assessed. Experiential learning includes work-integrated learning, co-curricular learning activities, research-based learning, culminating senior experiences and travel study. We measure experiential learning using the National Survey of Student engagement (NSSE) survey which describes these as high-impact practices. All Ambrose degrees include at least one element of experiential learning.

High-Impact Practices (HIPs): This is an overarching term used by NSSE to describe learning activities such as service learning, learning communities, research with faculty, internship, field experience, study abroad and culminating senior experiences which share the following traits:

- demand considerable time and effort,
- facilitate learning outside of the classroom,
- require meaningful interactions with faculty and students,
- encourage collaboration with diverse others, and
- provide frequent and substantive feedback.

E. Categories of Experiential Learning Experiences

1. Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Built by Ambrose, these kinds of activities introduce students to the world of work as part of their post-secondary program. This is a model and process of curricular experiential learning which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of at least: an academic institution, a host organization and a student. WIL can occur at the course or program level and includes the development of learning outcomes related to employability, personal agency and life-long learning. WIL activities include internships, coaching, mandatory professional practice, field experience, field placements, service learning, and community and industry research projects (CIRPS). (This definition is consistent with Alberta Advanced Education's definition published 9 November 2020.)

1.1 Internship: Supervised, structured work experience, typically lasting a semester or more, at or near the end of a study program.

1.1.1 In the School of Ministry and Seminary, this is a term for a full-time extended learning experience in a ministry location, usually several months in duration, supervised by a practitioner whom the institution has approved and for whom the institution has provided orientation. In the intercultural studies programs, the internship is cross-cultural, and this is sometimes an international experience. This WIL experience is guided by procedures in the Field Education Handbook.

1.1.2 In the School of Business, students can participate in an extended learning experience in a company or community organization. Internships can be unpaid or paid and may be full-time or part-time. They are typically between 2 - 4 months in duration, with a minimum of 90 contact hours, but can involve more, depending upon the placement. Supervision is provided by the workplace practitioner with the guidance of an Ambrose faculty member.

1.2 Coaching:

1.2.1 In the Seminary, Ministry Coaching is an alternative to Internship for students who are

already in ministry roles, to encourage further development of skills. Guided by procedures in the Field Education Handbook, Ministry Coaching involves project work, reflection on practice, and interaction with both the ministry coach in the field and faculty member on campus. Either Internship or Coaching is considered integral to professional ministerial formation in the Seminary.

- 1.3 **Mandatory Professional Practice:** Supervised work arrangement required for a professional license or designation. These experiences are under the supervision of an experienced registered or licensed professional.
 - 1.3.1 In the School of Ministry, this is a term for part-time professional experience (practicum) accompanied by in-class reflection; it is an integral part of ministry formation. The experiential learning experience is guided by the course syllabus.
 - 1.3.2 In the Seminary, this refers to Clinical Psycho-spiritual Education (CPE) courses connected to chaplaincy.
 - 1.3.3 In the School of Education, all professional training, full-time or part-time, supervised by certified teachers, is referred to as a practicum or field experience. This training is mandatory for the degree and guided by their Handbook and other procedures.
- 1.4 **Field Placement:** Work-related experiences that prepare students for professional or occupational fields, but are not required for a professional license. Field placement courses give students opportunities to apply their growing knowledge and skills in diverse workplace settings, under the guidance of a faculty member and the supervision of a workplace mentor.
- 1.5 **Community Service Learning:** Activities designed by Ambrose to achieve specific community goals. Combines classroom instruction and critical reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities. Students work in partnership with a community-based organization to address a challenge identified by the community.
 - 1.5.1 In the Certificate of Christian Discipleship, required community service learning courses combine theory, practice, and reflection to give students experience in church and community settings.
 - 1.5.2 In other Arts and Science programs, elective community service learning courses combine theory, practice, and reflection to give students experience in church and community settings.
- 1.6 **Community and Industry Research Project:** Activities within courses in which students apply their growing knowledge and skills to solve real-world problems, serving partners in business, industry, the non-profit sector, or the community.
2. **Research-Based Learning:** Students whose career plans involve professional research work with a faculty member on a research project (independent research or student-faculty collaborative research) within a mentorship model that includes structured learning outcomes. When an external partner is involved, these experiences may include a WIL component.
 - 3.1. Master of Theology Studies thesis.
 - 3.2. Independent Research Projects in the School of Business and in Arts and Science programs,

- including Behavioural Science, Biology, Chemistry, Christian Studies, English, History, Music, and Psychology.
- 3.3. Entrepreneurial Incubator in the School of Business, in which teams of students learn by starting companies based on business plans they have developed previously.
 - 3.4. Case Competitions or Challenges in the School of Business, which bring students from multiple post-secondary institutions together to solve challenging problems.
3. **Indigenous and Land-Based Learning:** Learning experiences undertaken in collaboration with Indigenous partners. When an external partner is involved, these experiences may include a WIL component.
 - 3.1 Activities and projects embedded in courses in Education, Theology, Business, and Arts and Science.
 - 3.2 Specific INDG courses, typically taught by Indigenous instructors.
 4. **Culminating Senior Experience:** Capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, Personal Growth Portfolio, etc. When an external partner is involved, these experiences may include a WIL component.
 5. **Travel Study/International Travel Program/Study Abroad**
 - 5.1. Several programs offer opportunities to travel as part of the experience of education at Ambrose (e.g. History, Biology, Business Administration). This experiential learning experience is guided by course syllabi. When an external partner is involved, these experiences may include a WIL component.

Work-Integrated Learning Cross-Walk Table

Ambrose Category	Advanced Education Category
Internship, Coaching	Internship
Mandatory Professional Practice	Mandatory Clinical Placement
Field Placement	Field Placement
Community Service Learning	Service Learning
Community and Industry Research Project, Research Based Learning (some), Indigenous and Land -Based Learning (some), Culminating Senior Experience (some), Travel Study (some)	Other