

Criteria For Experiential Learning Course Designation

Overview:

The purpose of Kent State's [experiential learning requirement \(ELR\)](#) is to provide students with direct engagement in learning experiences that promote academic relevance, meaning, and an understanding of real-world issues. Over the past six years, data has been gathered through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to obtain a better perspective of the role of experiential learning on college student outcomes. In 2009, Dr. George Kuh compiled this data and identified experiential learning as high impact practice, leading to higher course grades and completion rates, higher grade point average, and increased college retention. In 2008 and 2009, Kent State University completed the National Surveys of Student and Faculty Engagement (respectively). The results indicated that between 4% and 21% of faculty reported that students in their courses participate often in a community-based project (e.g., service-learning) as part of their course, while more than 80% of KSU faculty believed experiential learning is important for student development.

Rationale for the Experiential Learning Course Designation:

The Experiential Learning Requirement is significant in supporting the University's mission and strategic goals relating to "civic engagement", and "making a difference to local and global communities." As such, the Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement is proposing a process and criteria for designating Experiential Learning courses at Kent State University. The proposed ELR course designation process will benefit the:

- Institution:
 - Program presents an opportunity to validate experiential learning as an effective approach to overall student learning and development
 - To ensure courses utilizing experiential learning supports the University's mission and falls in line with the strategic plan
 - Establish consistent communications with students, faculty, staff, and community members regarding the meaning and intent of experiential learning
- Faculty:
 - Show how experiential learning components of a course meet recognized best practices
 - Highlight special characteristics of certain curricular activities
 - Opportunity to use experiential learning to complement their scholarly agenda
 - Can document their time spent teaching service-learning courses
- OEECE:
 - Promote experiential learning while simultaneously impacting the needs of the local community through supporting services and strong partnerships
 - The OEECE will improve the tracking of experiential learning course and subsequent university-community engagement efforts
 - Provide support and tools for course development and assessments
- Students:
 - Students obtain an enriching learning experience that influences interdisciplinary and professional development skills

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Each ELR course or activity must provide opportunities for students to meet the specified learning outcomes. A course will receive an Experiential Learning designation when it meets **all** of the following criteria:

1. It connects ideas, concepts, and skills developed at the University with applications to new and different contexts.
2. It demonstrates how the experience broadens student understanding of the discipline, the world, or themselves as learners.
3. It identifies any additional learning outcomes requirements as defined by the course, program, or faculty member.
4. It engages student reflection on the meaning of the experience.
5. It includes a plan of assessment for the experiential learning that has taken place.

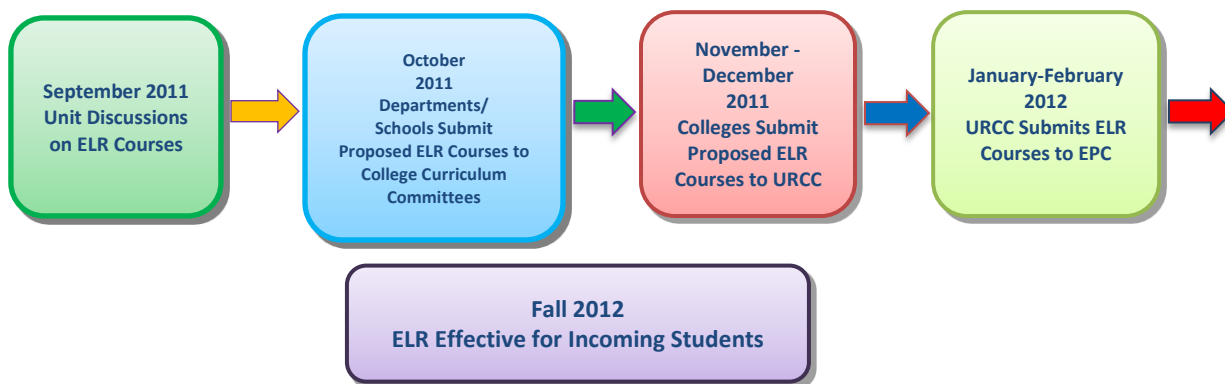
The ELR can be satisfied in four basic ways:

- **ELR -Designated course:** All students are involved in experiential learning as an integrated aspect of the course. ELR designations must be approved at the department/school, college, and EPC level. All sections of the course must incorporate experiential learning to create continuity of course design. This course must be approved at the unit and collegial levels in order for students to receive Experiential Learning transcript notation.
- **Experiential learning course section :** Students enroll in a course that includes an experiential learning component and explore ways their course or disciplinary expertise and competencies translate with real-world issues.
- **Experiential learning “add on”:** Students may complete a one-hour EXPR “add on” to an existing course with faculty permission. The “add on” or *Plus-1 Credit* allows students to append experiential learning to any undergraduate course that does not have an existing activity. Students use reflective analysis to document the integration of course objectives with the engaged learning experience.
- **Non-course-based experiential learning activity:** Non-course-based activities must be approved at the unit and collegial levels. Non-course-based experiential learning involves engagement in non-credit bearing activities which contribute to the understanding, growth and development of students. Non-course-based experiences may include community activities such as alternative break trips, immersion trips, study abroad experiences, and sustained and significant leadership roles.

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The Process for Course Designation:

Beginning the fall of 2012, the Experiential Learning Requirement will be in effect. Course proposals for ELR designations must be approved at the department, college/school, URCC, and EPC levels. To facilitate the approval process the following time line is offered to guide curricular activities. Information regarding the [experiential learning policy](#) is available on the CurriculumServices website.



Steps to Course Designation:

1. The faculty member completes the [Experiential Learning Course Proposal Form](#) with a clear description of how the course meets the ELR criteria by the deadline shown above.
2. Faculty who are new to experiential learning and want to submit a proposal, can start by contacting the [OEECE Coordinator](#) for consultation on strategies and best practices for incorporating experiential learning into a course.
3. If faculty are proposing a NEW or REVISED course for ELR designation, course information will already be included in the Basic Data Sheet (BDS). Faculty requesting ELR designation for an existing course, with no revisions, should include a copy of the current BDS for the course. Submit the proposal form, syllabus, and all relevant material to the departmental curriculum committee.
4. Course proposals must be submitted by mid-September to accommodate the governance process and to allow approved courses to appear in the course catalogue.
5. If a proposed course does not obtain initial approval, the faculty should follow up with the review committee for feedback and recommendations.
6. Faculty will receive notification of approval status of proposed courses from their college/school/unit chairs and directors.