

POLICY GROUP: NCT 100 – Student Records, Rights & Responsibilities

POLICY TITLE: Experiential Learning

A. Background and Definitions

Experiential and Work Integrated Learning are an integral component of a Niagara College – Toronto education and an important element of practical training that meets employer needs. There are several different types of experiences offered at Niagara College – Toronto that support the integrated nature of curriculum. Work Integrated Learning has been identified as a subset of the broader concept Experiential Learning. In reports such as; Building a Workforce for Tomorrow (Conway, 2016) and Work Integrated Learning in Ontario’s Postsecondary Sector: The Experience of Ontario Graduates (HEQCO, 2013) these concepts have been identified as an essential component to a postsecondary educational experience.

Applied Research Projects: Applied Research Projects provide students the opportunity to integrate theory and practice through projects that address specific business or industry problems. Such projects can be course-based and a formal requirement within a Program of Instruction, or institutional research-based as an opportunity for students within specific programs.

Experiential Learning: The process of learning, developing and applying knowledge, skills and abilities within a practical setting, so that students can learn while doing. In partnership with employers, community organizations, and campus groups, this may include, mentoring, volunteering, service learning and internships.

Field Experience: Practical experience in a real work setting. These opportunities may include workplace activities, simulated activities or virtual activities for educational purposes whereby the student gains experience in a specific field of study or career area. They are commonly referred to as Placement or Practicum in Programs of Instruction. They may be a mandatory component of the Program of Instruction, a partnership with a business, or a complementary activity. Such experiences are normally unpaid. The duration varies by program, and they are accomplished through block and concurrent delivery.

Internship: Program-related experience in a professional work environment that is focused on the integration of theory and practice. Such experiences are normally unpaid. These opportunities are generally for a defined number of hours and can occur as single blocks within a program (alternating with academic semesters) or at the end of a program (capstone).

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Mandatory Professional Practice: Work hours required to obtain a license to practice, or professional designation, or to register with a regulatory college/professional association. They are commonly referred to as Clinical Placement or Practicum in Programs of Instruction and are simulated or workplace-based experiences through which students can demonstrate the attainment of professional competencies.

Program of Instruction (POI): A group of related courses leading to a diploma, certificate, degree or other credential awarded by the College Board of Governors.

Service Learning: Student projects to address identified community needs or global issues. Experiences can be delivered as Field Experience, Co-ops, Internships, or Applied Research Projects. These opportunities can be graded. Or receive no academic recognition.

Work Integrated Learning: A formal program or arrangement between partners to enable students to learn while working on the job. This activity is commonly associated with an academic POI.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- a) All College students are provided with practical, as well as theoretical training;
- b) Students experience the integration of practice and theory through exposure to real or simulated workplace settings;
- c) Students have opportunities to enhance their essential employability skills; and
- d) Students have exposure to a broad range of opportunities.

C. Scope

This policy applies to all Niagara College students registered and attending classes at the Niagara College - Toronto (NCT) campus.

D. Policy Statements

1. The College is committed to providing students with outstanding applied education. Accordingly, the College will ensure that all students will have access to Experiential

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Learning opportunities both within their programs and across the broader college community.

2. The College will ensure that students have access to Experiential Learning opportunities that facilitate the practical application of theoretical learning.
3. All programs at Niagara College – Toronto will identify the Experiential Learning opportunities that are within their POI.
4. During the program review process, each program will reflect on the integration of practice and theory within their program and how such experiences can be enhances for students.

E. Related Documents

None

F. Document History

Date	Approval/Review/Key Change(s)
March 3, 2023	New