

Senate Policy

Experiential Learning Placement Program

Policy # 1.6

Description:

This policy outlines how students earn credit for experiential learning placements.

Approvals:

Approved by Teaching and Learning Committee: May 5, 2014

Approved by Academic Policy and Planning: June 3, 2014

Approved by Senate: June 19, 2014

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Approval Authority: Senate

Signature: Julian Goss, Chair

Experiential learning refers to courses, field placements and internships through which students may gain credit for workplace experience.

Policy:

The purpose of the Experiential Learning Placement Program policy is to:

- Create identifiable pathways for students, faculty, staff and partners to access and administrate placement opportunities
- Outline how OCAD University (OCAD U) supports and facilitates curriculum-aligned experiential learning opportunities that take place outside the institution
- Provide categories for identifying credit-bearing experiential learning opportunities
- Offer clarity in OCAD U's definition of terminology, language and position associated with experiential learning in relation to current art/design industries and higher education

1. Mission Statement

The Experiential Learning Placement Program serves as an extension of education beyond the standard university course structures. The program facilitates relationships with placement partners that create opportunities for students to apply their creative problem solving skills in credit-bearing, curricular contexts. Such partnerships are developed in consultation with faculty, students and partners in order to develop experiential pathways that connect OCAD U students with local, national and global communities of practice.

2. Mandate

Students who are actively building community, networks, skills and insights beyond the institution are at the forefront of the Experiential Learning Placement Program at OCAD University. The contemporary artist and designer must be responsive to both local and global creative contexts. The Experiential Learning Placement Program is a catalyst for these contexts through work-integrated, service- based, collaborative and situated learning. OCAD University students partake in learning situations that are not rooted exclusively in traditional work environments. The program prioritizes actively creative and ethically conscious learning partnerships that encourage students to develop their social networks, citizenship and professionalism within the creative economy at large.

3. Core Priorities for the Experiential Learning Placement Program at OCAD University

- I. Collaborative Learning
- II. Service Learning
- III. Situated Learning
- IV. Work-integrated Learning

The precise values for each of the above are to be defined in relation to the specific learning outcomes and other requirements in a given area of study. For additional

clarification and definitions, please refer to glossary of terms available in Appendix A.

4. OCAD University's Position on Unpaid Internships

In accordance with the Ontario government, the Experiential Learning Placement Program at OCAD University does not support non-credit unpaid internships which violate government employment standards as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

While OCAD U supports paid placement opportunities in any program where they can be sustainably and responsibly delivered, field placements or other placement opportunities supported by the Experiential Learning Placement Program at OCAD U are for-credit learning experiences with a focus on learning outcomes which complement classroom/studio learning, and the corresponding learning component must therefore be unpaid.

This is consistent with Ontario labour legislation: "The Employment Standards Act does not apply to an individual who performs work under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology or a university. This encourages employers to provide students enrolled in a college or university program...with practical training that adds to their classroom learning."

Source: Government of Ontario, updated June 26, 2024
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/employee-status#interns>

I. Programs

There are standards around what can be defined as legitimate for-credit opportunities. OCAD University offers a variety of for-credit courses and independent opportunities structured around external placements with an emphasis on service-based, collaborative, situated and/or work-integrated learning.

The norms for these programs are as follows:

- For every 0.5 credits, placements are 80 to 120 hours in duration
- Programs provide the opportunity to complete a credit-bearing placement within any of the fall, winter or spring/summer semesters
- Students are required to obtain all approvals and register for the placement course prior to commencing a credit-bearing placement, i.e. a placement completed prior to enrollment is not valid for consideration
- Eligible placements do not include a student's regular place of work
- Credit-bearing placement hours are to be unpaid (excluding workplace expenses), with a specific emphasis on learning over work, however these placement hours may be situated within a longer-term opportunity that is paid (*please reference Appendix B and the 'Learn-To-Work' model which follows*)

- Students are required to participate, to varying extents, in an interview or screening process with placement partners prior to commencing their placement

Undergraduate Student eligibility:

- Undergraduate students must have completed 10.0 credits; if the course or placement is required for their program, students are exempt from the credit requirement
- In recognition that grades are not the only indicator of a student's success or their suitability for Experiential Learning opportunities, there is no minimum grade average requirement
- Undergraduate students may take a maximum of 1.5 credits in independent study and/or field placement (see Senate Policy 2.9 Independent Study for details on independent studies), not including courses (including placement courses) which are a requirement of their program of study

Graduate Student eligibility:

- Graduate student eligibility is determined by the student's Graduate Program Director, who evaluates the student's preparedness and the suitability of the placement to the student's course of study
- In recognition that grades are not the only indicator of a student's success or a student's suitability for Experiential Learning opportunities, there is no minimum grade average requirement
- Graduate students may take a maximum number of credits in Placements, Residencies and Independent Studies (see Senate Policy 3.1 Graduate Studies Special Studies Courses for details on independent study) as defined by their program

Exceptions to these norms, or waivers, may be granted under exceptional circumstances by the student's Dean (or designate).

i. **Courses (Undergraduate)**

Placement-based courses are available in many OCAD U major/programs. These courses offer learning outcomes that engage students in the history, context, needs and benefits of learning outside of the classroom, while also taking advantage of the classroom environment itself. In these courses, one faculty member instructs and supervises a number of students simultaneously. As a component of the class, teaching and program faculty work with the Experiential Learning Placement Program to place students with industry and community partners. Placement-based courses may be graded as pass/fail, subject to curricular approval.

ii. **Field Placement (Undergraduate)**

Field placements are available to eligible undergraduate students. These independent, for-credit offerings require the student to source a supervising full-time faculty member and develop a learning contract, agreed to by the student, placement partner, supervising faculty and the student's Dean (or

designate). All placements are subject to verification by the Experiential Learning Placement Program that OCAD U safety and risk management protocols are in place. Students may choose to work with the Experiential Learning Placement Program to seek placements with vetted industry and community partners, or source their own placements which are then subject to review. Undergraduate field placements will be graded as pass/fail.

iii. **Placements and Residencies (Graduate Studies)**

Placements, or variations thereof (e.g. residencies), are a featured component of many graduate programs, and are a requirement for some. Placements take place largely during the summer semester. The length of each placement may be variable, based on program requirements and the approval of the students' Graduate Program Director. These independent, for-credit offerings require the student to work with a supervising Graduate Program Director, or other assigned full-time faculty member. All placements are subject to verification by the Experiential Learning Placement Program that OCAD U safety and risk management protocols are in place. Students may choose to work with the Experiential Learning Placement Program to seek placements with vetted industry and community partners, or source their own for review. Students will have successfully completed their first year of their program.

Placements may be paid or unpaid. Graduate placements and residencies are graded as pass/fail.

II. Roles & Responsibilities

i. **Faculty**

Tenured, Probationary, Continuing, Contractually Limited Term Appointment and Teaching Intensive Stream faculty are qualified to supervise students engaged in Field Placements and in Graduate Studies, as well as teaching courses. Sessional faculty are qualified to teach courses. Faculty members are responsible for:

- 1) Setting the learning outcomes and associated deliverables for the placement and/or course
- 2) Consulting with the Experiential Learning Placement Program regarding the identification of suitable placements and related projects/roles
- 3) Collaborating on the troubleshooting of all placement-based student issues
- 4) Assigning grades

ii. **Experiential Learning Placement Program**

The Experiential Learning Placement Program is responsible for:

- 1) Working with students directly to discuss eligibility, credit-earning options, placement opportunities, application of learned skills and professional expectations
- 2) Collaborating with the Office of the Registrar to administrate Field

- Placement
- 3) Consulting with faculty to develop placement partnerships and related opportunities
 - 4) Maintaining relationships with external partners, faculty, administration and students for different kinds of engagements
 - 5) Facilitating administration in areas of risk management, placement assessment and student development
 - 6) Delivery of co-curricular programming as a feature of courses, as required by faculty
 - 7) Creating context for the program and related information at www.ocadu.ca/explearning

iii. **Placement Partner**

Potential partners are responsible for:

- 1) A safe and healthy work environment that respects human rights
- 2) Conforming to regulatory compliances, including the provision of any necessary accommodations, as dictated by the AODA access legislation and guidelines
- 3) Protecting the confidentiality of any student information
- 4) Structured supervision and/or mentorship in a given field or industry
- 5) Relevant related tasks with an emphasis on differentiating learning over work
- 6) Contributing to the assessment of student performance
- 7) Facilitating access to broader professional networks
- 8) Completion of all required risk management procedures
- 9) Alignment with other relevant OCAD University policies and procedures

iv. **Students**

Students are required to:

- 1) Collaborate with the Experiential Learning Placement Program to ensure procedures and guidelines are being adhered to
- 2) Secure all the necessary approvals to participate in for-credit placement opportunities by all published deadlines
- 3) Meet all safety and risk management criteria, including declaring the need for any accommodations
- 4) Meet professional codes of conduct and fulfill learning standards as mandated
- 5) Maintain regular communication with supervising faculty to ensure learning outcomes and other related objectives are being met

III. **Risk Management**

The following risk management protocols are mandatory for students and placement partners to complete and submit in a timely fashion. Both course-affiliated and independent placements require students and placement partners to complete the paperwork outlined below in compliance with OCAD

University's Safety & Risk Management policies. The Experiential Learning Placement Program ensures that legal and conduct-related requirements related to off-site placements, which students pursue for credit, are being met.

Safety & Risk Management Package Includes:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Partner Agreement
- Health & Safety – Prior Checklist & Student Orientation
- WSIB
- Intellectual Property & Remuneration
- Detailed Project Descriptions
- Placement Assessment(s)
- Police Check (Required when working with minors)

Special Note for International Students:

OCAD University's International Student Support Office has received guidance from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to the effect that international students may use their study permit work authorization to participate in elective experiential learning placement courses, provided that students do not exceed their limit of 24 hours of off-campus work per week.

To be otherwise eligible for a co-op or intern work permit, international students need to be enrolled in a program of study which requires them to complete a mandatory co-op or intern work placement in Canada.

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Select Terms

Core **Priorities:**

These core priorities are in alignment with OCAD U's strategic goals and are based on values derived from studio-based education.

Collaborative **Learning**

Where two or more people learn together by leveraging each other's skills, knowledge and resources.

In the context of OCAD University's Experiential Learning Placement Program, this could be realized through engagements such as small group in-situ projects, charettes, artist/designer studio environments, design challenges and peer-based interdisciplinary placements.

Service Learning

Learning through reflection on community service or other forms of civic engagement.

In the context of OCAD University's Experiential Learning Placement Program, this could be realized through engagements such as placements with organizations whose mission seeks to address areas such as social justice or change, healthy city stewardship, sustainability, citizenship, poverty, marginalized and underserved groups or segments of the public sector. This is manifest within a range of community and social practices.

Situated Learning

Learning that takes place in the same context in which it is applied.

In the context of OCAD University's Experiential Learning Placement Program, this could be realized through engagements such as placements within galleries/museums, non-traditional exhibition spaces, production studios, education providers, research labs, publishers, fabricators, media producers, community arts organizations and the performing arts.

Work-Integrated Learning

Educational activities that integrate theoretical and skills-based learning with its application in the workplace.

In the context of OCAD University's Experiential Learning Placement Program, this could be realized through engagements such as placements within more conventional workplaces that operate largely in the private sector, from small-to-medium enterprises and entrepreneurial start-ups to major corporations.

Placements:

The term 'placement partner' is used to signify an organization or entity wherein a student is able to engage in learning that takes place outside of the studio or classroom environment. The 'placement' itself is the designated period where the student is undertaking a set of responsibilities within a specific role/project/creative endeavour. In a wider context, this is often referred to as an internship. Some points of differentiation between a placement facilitated by OCAD U and other related terms used in the vernacular include:

Co-op – Paid, full-time, not-for-credit, program or degree requirement

Volunteer – Arrangement for service(s) that is not intended to be in pursuit of a living

Apprentice – Directly-related skills training based on measurable competencies

Practicum – Incorporates academics and professional skills through emulation

Job – Employer-employee relationship, assumes expertise, compensation, performance measurement

APPENDIX B

Experiential Learning Placement Program: Placements & 'Learn-to-Work' Model

Students who wish to undertake a for-credit experiential learning placement, and yet might be situated within a longer-term paid opportunity, will still need to fulfill the requirements of the related learning components on an unpaid basis.

This flexibility ensures that students will not need to forgo relevant and meaningful work opportunities for the sake of finding an exclusively unpaid placement which will still earn them credit.

The unpaid status of the experiential learning component is necessary to ensure that formal learning outcomes and objectives are given a priority, particularly when considered in relation to earning academic credit. This model differentiates OCAD University from similar programs seen elsewhere in post-secondary education. The unpaid component can be structured into the longer term commitment in any number of ways - for example, as smaller blocks of time or as part of the transition into the organization – but must correspond to any associated academic deadlines.