



# Experiential Learning Manual

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a comprehensive resource for experiential learning at Canadore College. Following a brief overview of the strategic importance of experiential learning, a description of how experiential learning is defined and operationalized is provided to ensure a common understanding for users. Key information related to roles and responsibilities and quality assurance and control mechanisms are articulated, as are tools and tips for the planning and delivery of experiential learning activities. Additionally, placement administration and coordination activities are described to support these essential work-integrated learning activities.

This manual establishes a standard for experiential learning at Canadore, serving as a key support resource for faculty, academic support staff, and administrators. Through its commitment to key strategic and operational activities, Canadore can maintain and further strengthen its reputation as a leader in experiential learning.

# 1. Introduction

“Canadore College is an institution of applied learning and research **with a strong focus on experiential learning**” (Statement of Purpose 2026; *Canadore 2026: Canadore College Strategic Plan*).

Since inception in 1972, Canadore College has strived to be a college of choice for applied learning, connecting people, education, and employment. Canadore’s 5 Pillars – Student Success, Program and Service Excellence, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Connection to Community, and Sustainability (fiscal and environmental) – guide its decision making to ensure that it remains grounded in its fundamentals. A key strategic goal for realizing its purpose that aligns with all 5 pillars is to *lead in innovation, applied education, experiential learning, and entrepreneurship within its communities, province and abroad*. Among the enablers identified during the strategic planning process is Canadore’s *commitment to differentiate graduates through experiential learning and unique student experiences*.

Canadore’s prioritization of experiential learning is further evidenced in the Canadore College Academic Strategy 2026 in which goals and objectives are supported through annual business planning that map to the College Strategic Plan and align with the 5 Pillars. By ensuring that goals for experiential learning at a departmental level are mapped to the Academic Strategy and thus the Strategic Plan through business planning, Canadore is fulfilling its commitment for a *strong focus on experiential learning*.

Canadore is committed to ensuring that all students enrolled in a program of study that leads to Ontario college or degree credentials awarded by the College:

- a) are provided with practical training opportunities within their program of study;
- b) are exposed to diverse learning opportunities that integrate theory and practice;
- c) have facilitated opportunities to transform experience into knowledge through praxis (i.e., combining action and reflection);
- d) have opportunities to develop and expand essential employability skills; and
- e) have opportunities to extend curricular learning through practical co-curricular activities.

The [Experiential Learning Policy](#) outlines Canadore’s quality assurance commitments that support excellence in hands-on, applied learning delivery.



## 2. Experiential Learning Defined

### 2.1. Definition

Most simply described as learning by doing, experiential learning (EL) occurs when students engage in the cyclical process where a concrete experience leads to deliberate reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, which in turn provide opportunities for active experimentation in novel contexts (see Kolb, 1984; 2015).

Another way to describe EL is “learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied [...], not merely *observing* the phenomenon being studied but also *doing* something with it” (Keeton & Tate, 1978).

EL can occur in diverse locations including but not limited to on campus, in the community, on the land, or in a workplace.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) is a sub-category of EL. It refers specifically to activities that occur in workplace settings with an engaged third party such as placements, practicums, and community service learning.

### 2.2. Criteria

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (known today as the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security) published [MAESD's Guiding Principles for Experiential Learning](#) in 2017. Six criteria are identified that define curricular EL activities:

1. *The student is in a workplace or simulated workplace.*

The term ‘simulated workplace’ encompasses more activities than some might expect. The Guiding Principles elaborate: “Most-writing intensive-courses do not necessarily take place in a workplace or simulated workplace; however, a journalism student could be receiving a simulated workplace experience via a writing-intensive course designed to simulate the workplace. In that case, and provided the experience met all the other principles, the experience would count as experiential learning.”

2. *The student is exposed to authentic demands that improve their employability, interpersonal skills, and transition to the workforce.*

EL activities should support the student in adapting to a professional environment.

3. *The experience is structured with purposeful and meaningful activities.*

Thoughtful design of EL activities can help ensure they are relevant and beneficial for students.

4. *The student applies college program knowledge and/or essential employability skills.*  
Curricular EL opportunities at Canadore College must contribute to Program/Vocational Learning Outcomes.
5. *The experience includes student self-assessment and evaluation of the student's performance and learning outcomes by the employer and/or university/college.*  
Student self-assessment is ideally facilitated by Faculty but can also be informal as the student naturally reflects on the experience. Evaluation of the student's performance and learning outcomes is a critical element of curricular EL at Canadore College.
6. *The experience counts towards course credit or credential completion OR is formally recognized by the college or university as meeting the criteria above.*  
Curricular experiential learning at Canadore College must always count towards course credit or credential completion.

### 2.3. Types of Experiential Learning

The following list shows how EL is categorized at Canadore College. Keep in mind that not every activity named is always an EL activity. For example, not every capstone project will meet the criteria for EL.

- *Applied/Industry Sponsored Research.* Driven primarily by needs and problems identified by firms, governments, and other organizations in the private and public sectors, and is more often oriented towards developing new or improved products, processes, and services that contribute to competitiveness and organizational effectiveness.
- *Work/Field Placement.* A placement in the students' field of study here students apply theory learned in the classroom to authentic work settings and demands. The duration of work/field placements will vary depending on course and program requirements.
- *Clinical Placement.* A placement that consists of a set number of scheduled hours and that takes place in a health care setting. Students apply theory and skills learned in academic study in an authentic work setting with real patients/clients.
- *Service Learning.* Students engage in volunteer service within the community as an integrated component of a course to address community identified needs and course learning outcomes.
- *Formal Course Projects.* A community partner drives these projects as part of a course(s). This could involve, for example, the requirement to complete a marketing plan

for a real client, the requirement to serve real clients in the dining room, the requirement to complete repairs on a home for a real client, etc.

- **Job Shadowing.** Job shadowing provides students with an opportunity to learn about a particular occupation by accompanying an experienced worker as they perform their job. The job shadowing experience is often associated with a reflective assignment dealing with the student's perception of the profession before and after the experience.
- **Workplace/Lab Simulation.** Simulations imitate real situations, processes, and systems, which can occur in a workplace. The power of a simulation is that it provides a risk-free environment in which a learner can explore, make decisions and – importantly – make mistakes without any real consequences. Feedback is provided as the learners work throughout the simulation.
- **Performance/Artistic Production.** Student performances, productions or showcases presented to community audiences.
- **Capstone Projects.** A culminating project, typically at the end of an academic program designed to encourage students to think critically, solve problems and connect with community issues or problems.
- **Incubators/Entrepreneurial Activities.** An enterprise or facility that directly supports the early-stage development of new business ventures by providing things like office space, shared business or legal services and other forms of business assistance. These are formal or informal spaces catering to aspiring entrepreneurs who typically must apply to receive access to the space and its resources.
- **Boot Camps/Hackathons.** Boot camps are usually private educational opportunities that are short-term (9-12 weeks) intensive courses focused on practical skill development related to software or web development. In Ontario, camps receive MTCU approval. Hackathons are events in which developers team up to create usable software or hardware projects over a short period of time. They are typically focused on a particular theme, application type, or challenge. Hackathons provide opportunities for students to develop skills, network with other developers, and solve meaningful challenges. In many cases hackathons are sponsored by industry representatives who use the events as recruiting tools.
- **Land-Based Learning.** Designed to impart culturally based teachings about land, water and creation and link them back to roles and responsibilities we carry related to the environment and land use. Land-based learning projects aspire to reconnect students with the land, allowing them to acquire the skills of previous generations in an experiential learning environment.



## 2.4. Indigenous Education

Experiential learning is a pedagogical approach that has been well established and researched by mainstream education experts like David Kolb. However, EL is also a traditional form of Indigenous education (Cajete, 1994). Battiste (2002) describes a preference for experiential knowledge as “the first principle of Aboriginal learning” (p. 15). Battiste goes on: “Indigenous pedagogy values a person’s ability to learn independently by observing, listening, and participating with a minimum of intervention or instruction” (p. 15). It is an Indigenous quality assurance standard for Ontario colleges to provide experiential and land-based learning opportunities in-community (*Building a Strong Fire*, 2018).

## 2.5. Curricular vs Co-Curricular EL

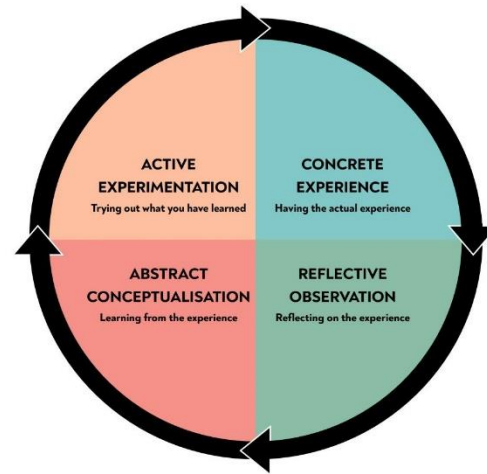
Curricular EL activities are integrated in the curriculum, evaluated for course credit, and contribute to Program/Vocational Learning Outcomes. All Canadore students studying in programs that lead to an Ontario college or degree credential awarded by the College shall have access to at least one curricular EL activity. The presence of curricular EL activities in course curricula and course outlines are documented. Note that MAESD’s *Guiding Principles for Experiential Learning* (2017) are focused on curricular EL; thus, the principles are not all inclusive of co-curricular EL activities which still can provide high value and impact to learners.

Co-curricular EL activities complement the formal curriculum but are not evaluated for course credit. These activities may be offered through a student’s academic program (such as an optional field trip) or made available through the broader college community (such as a hackathon). Students are encouraged to report these experiences for capture on their [Co-Curricular Record](#) to support improved employability.

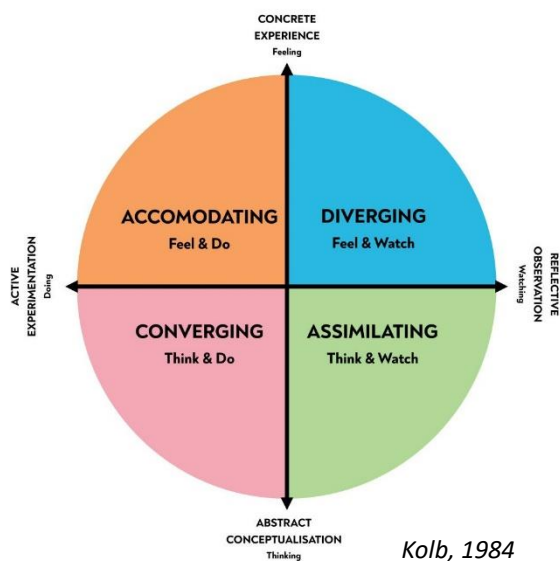
## 2.6. Theoretical background: Experiential Learning Cycle

David Kolb proposed the Experiential Learning Cycle in 1984 which has become widely accepted as a model for how EL happens.

According to Kolb, learners have a concrete experience. Then, they engage in reflective observation related to the experience. The learner then engages in thinking (abstract conceptualization) to learn from the experience and to form new theories and concepts to be tested. The learner then tests their theories and concepts in a new concrete experience, and the cycle starts again.



Kolb, 1984



Kolb, 1984

Kolb posited that people naturally give preference to a certain learning style and proposed a set of four learning modes that are based on the learning cycle. This model highlights two continuums: the *Processing Continuum* (how one approaches a task; watching ↔ doing) and the *Perception Continuum* (one's emotional response; thinking ↔ feeling).

Building on this work, Kolb and Kolb (2005) described six core tenets of EL:

- Learning is a process.
- Learning is grounded in experience.
- Learning involves mastery of four learning modes: diverging (*feel and watch*), assimilating (*think and watch*), converging (*think and do*), and accommodating (*feel and do*).



- Learning is a holistic process of adaptation.
- Learning occurs when an individual interacts with their environment.
- Knowledge is created through learning.

## 2.7. Benefits of EL

EL is an essential component in the learning journey for students at Canadore College. Government and sector advocacy groups (e.g., CEWIL Canada, EWO, HEQCO, etc.) recognize the many benefits of EL and seek to ensure that best practices are identified and communicated to parties of interest. Some of these benefits include:

### *Student Benefits*

- Strengthened comprehension of course content
- Development of essential employability skills
- Development of professional connections and improved employability
- Exploration of interests and clarification of career goals
- Enrichment of the student experience

### *Institutional Benefits*

- Increased student engagement in course delivery
- Strengthened relationships with community partners leading to further collaboration
- Attraction and retention of students through promotion of quality EL
- Alignment with government priorities and sector best practices
- Improved reputation as a College of choice

### *Employer Benefits*

- Increased opportunities for innovation and problem-solving through fresh perspectives
- Increased capacity to tackle daily operations and special projects
- Improved access to qualified graduates for employment
- Enhanced opportunities for adding voice to College strategic decision-making on program delivery and program mix
- Development of stronger reciprocal relationships that can lead to further engagement

*Burch et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis examining 13,626 journal articles covering a 43-year span shows that students experienced superior learning outcomes when experiential pedagogies were employed compared to students in non-experiential learning environments (e.g., lecture-based).*



### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The planning, delivery, and evaluation of EL at Canadore is lead and facilitated as follows:

#### *Vice President, Academic*

The Vice President, Academic (VPA), has overall responsibility for academic operations and the implementation of related policies. An annual Academic Business Plan, to which the Manager, EL, contributes on behalf of the EL department, guides key strategic and operational initiatives.

#### *Academic Lead*

Reporting to the VPA, Academic Leads provide overall operational, strategic, and fiscal leadership to the faculties. Academic Leads assign workload time (allocated 'below the line') to Faculty through the Standard Workload Formula (SWF) issuance which captures any specific duties required in the operationalization of EL. Academic Leads are also responsible for approving curricula and course outlines through the Annual Review of Curriculum (ARC) process.

#### *Faculty*

Faculty are responsible for the delivery of the program curriculum, which can include the delivery of curricular and co-curricular EL activities, planned or ad-hoc. Faculty are responsible for adhering to standards set out through course outlines for assigned courses and are responsible for establishing section specific information sheets to guide learners in their assigned courses. Curricular EL is identified in course outlines and section specific information sheets elaborate on such activities as well as any planned co-curricular EL activities.

Faculty that are assigned to teach a placement/practicum/clinical placement course may be allotted time 'below the line' on their SWF in accordance with the academic collective agreement and VPA-approved database for supporting the academic roll-out of the experience. Academic Leads are responsible for workload assignments for Faculty and should consult the Manager, EL, with any questions pertaining to scope of role to ensure that workloads for placement/practicum/clinical placement courses are applied consistently.

#### *Manager, EL*

The Manager, EL, reports directly to the VPA and is accountable for elements of the Academic Business Plan that pertain to EL operational, strategic, and fiscal responsibilities. The Manager, EL, provides departmental leadership and oversight and is the people manager for all



departmental support staff. Among other things, the Manager, EL, is responsible for leading relevant data tracking and evaluation initiatives.

### *Placement Office*

Reporting to the Manager, EL, Placement Office staff, comprised of Placement Coordinators and a Non-Academic Requirements Assistant, work collaboratively with program faculty as assigned to provide administration and coordination support to programs and students. All programs with a placement component receive administrative support, while placement coordination support is assigned to program areas based on the demands and structure of the delivery model. See Placement section below for more on Placement.

## 4. Quality Assurance and Quality Control

Canadore College is committed to ensuring that all graduates have access to EL opportunities during their studies. As such, planning, delivery, and assessment of EL is supported through various quality assurance and quality control mechanisms.

- ***Experiential Learning Policy.*** This academic policy outlines Canadore’s commitments to EL. The policy, posted to the Canadore website and on iCan, shall undergo review minimally every five years. See [Experiential Learning Policy](#).
- ***New Program Development.*** Through the New Program and Course Development process, all new programs are designed to include EL opportunities that support program and vocational learning outcomes. As an applied learning institute, EL activities represent one essential way in which Canadore prepares graduates for successful transition to in-demand employment opportunities.
- ***Annual Review of Curriculum (ARC).*** A key activity in the Academic Cycle, ARC is an opportunity for program areas to ensure ongoing alignment with industry needs and strong learner outcomes. Through the ARC process, curricular EL is identified, improving visibility of EL offerings and supporting data capture activities.
- ***Course Outline Development.*** Part of ARC, course outline development represents an opportunity to establish curricular EL activities by type (e.g., placement, land-based learning, lab/shop skills, etc.) and supports institutional data capture activities. Here, EL is identified where appropriate and evaluation weighting is assigned, providing high-level structure for faculty assigned to course delivery. See Course Outline and Section Specific Information [Policy and Procedure](#).
- ***Section Specific Information.*** Faculty assigned to teach a course should include relevant information about EL activities in their section specific information document posted in their iLearn course shell. Both curricular and co-curricular activities should be noted in the Teaching and Learning section, and Evaluation section if relevant. See Course Outline and Section Specific Information [Policy and Procedure](#).
- ***Student Success Guide.*** Canadore maintains a Student Success Guide for select programs. Among other factors, these guides are developed for programs that include EL activities for which guidance has been deemed essential to supporting student success. The guides undergo annual review to ensure that relevant information is accurate. Student Success Guides are posted to [iCan](#) for staff/faculty access and shared with students by Program Coordinators in the first class of the first semester.

- ***Program Advisory Committee (PAC)***. These committees, organized by program of instruction or cluster of related programs, are comprised of external industry professionals, employers, and subject matter experts. PACs meet at least once per academic year to discuss matters related to program quality. PAC recommendations, including those related to EL activities, are considered within the context of ARC activities and Program Reviews.
- ***Program Review Cycle***. All programs of instruction undergo a review on a three-year cycle. A review of EL is a required component of the process to ensure quality and ongoing relevance for graduate employability.
- ***Faculty Course Reflection Forms***. Faculty are expected to submit a Faculty Course Reflection Form at the end of each course wherein they share reflections on the course structure and delivery format. Feedback on EL activities provide insight to support the ARC Process and Program Reviews.
- ***Student Course Feedback Survey***. Students are encouraged to complete a Student Course Feedback Survey for all courses in their schedule within the last 4 weeks of each semester. This feedback serves in part as a quality control mechanism for EL activities.
- ***Ontario College Student Experience Survey (OCSES)***. This survey is distributed in February each year to all students except those in their first semester of their program to gather data on students' experience at Canadore. Work-integrated learning is one of the four survey constructs of the OCSES.
- ***Experiential Learning Survey***. Students in the final semester of their program are asked to complete the Experiential Learning Survey comprising questions on the quality, quantity, and value of EL activities. Data is used to validate and improve EL activities offered to students.

The Manager, EL, is responsible for reporting EL data to the VPA via the EL Annual Report in June each year. This summary report provides key highlights pertaining to EL activities from the past year and serves as an important quality control mechanism.



## 5. Faculty Resources

### 5.1. Planning Experiential Learning

Deliberate and thoughtful planning is essential for maximizing opportunities for students (and partners when applicable) to get the most out of an EL activity.

#### *Documenting EL in Program Curricula and Course Outlines*

As part of the Annual Review of Curriculum (ARC) process, curricular EL shall be identified in the program curriculum represented with a hashtag (#) next to each course code for which there is EL. All courses that include a planned curricular EL activity shall further indicate the type of EL that will be facilitated within the course outline. Instructions for documenting EL are found in the Course Outline Guide circulated to Faculty annually when the course outline system opens. If you would benefit from additional support when creating or reviewing course outlines or curricula, please contact the Manager, EL.

#### *Key Considerations*

When planning an EL activity:

- Ensure that the definition of EL, as well as the six criteria defined by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (for curricular EL), apply to the activity being planned (see Experiential Learning Defined section of this manual).
- Identify the Program/Vocational Learning Outcomes (e.g., Program Learning Outcomes, Vocational Learning Outcomes, Essential Employability Skills, etc.) that the students should achieve through this activity.
- Consider the accessibility of the activity. What accessibility supports might be needed to allow students to succeed?
- Understand what values, norms, and beliefs you have that may influence the design of the activity, considering the ways aspects of your identity are privileged in society. You can then take intentional steps to ensure your design breaks down barriers and eliminates exclusionary approaches (Stirling et al., 2024).

You may also find it helpful to ask yourself:

- How relevant to real life is the activity?
- What knowledge, skills, and values do students need to have before they engage in this activity to best take advantage of it?

- What specific tasks support the Program/Vocational Learning Outcomes?
- How will you measure whether students have successfully met these outcomes? (This will be covered in greater detail in the “Assessing EL” section.)
- What challenges or obstacles might you encounter in offering this activity?

Consider also that experiential learning does not have to take the form of a single isolated activity. In his 2005 book, *Using Experiential Learning in the Classroom*, Scott Wurdinger provides the following suggestion:

Assign one major project or field experience to guide learning throughout the course. When you have one major assignment, it provides students with a clear goal to accomplish and keeps them moving toward achieving this goal. It also keeps the project or field experience at the forefront of the learning process and becomes the driving force behind everything the student does in the class. Educators often require students to do projects and turn them in at the end of the course but fail to spend any class time working on them or discussing progress. From my experience, it seems to be more effective when time is dedicated to the project or field experience every class period. In my risk management course, for example, each class period was dedicated to a specific piece of the risk management plan. We would discuss the topic of the day to make sure everyone understood the concepts, and the remaining time was dedicated to working on risk plans in small groups. This format provided students with opportunities to raise questions and discuss various pieces of their risk plans, which ultimately allowed them to produce more accurate documents. When students know what they are aiming toward, they understand that each class has purpose because it provides a stepping-stone toward that overall aim. They understand the bigger picture and are more easily able to see how each class moves them closer towards their goals. (p. 63-64)

### *Planning Supports*

There are several supports available when planning any EL activity.

- If you are developing a new EL activity, making changes to an existing activity, or have any questions related to the planning, delivery, or assessment of EL, reach out to the [Manager, Experiential Learning](#).
- The [Centre of Academic Excellence and Lifelong Learning \(CAELL\)](#) offers supports for the design and delivery of learning experiences for students.
- Please contact [Student Success Services](#) for support related to the accessibility of EL activities.

- The EL department’s Placement Office has several Placement Coordinators who support administration and coordination of placements at Canadore.

## 5.2. Delivering Experiential Learning

Quality delivery of EL activities requires faculty to navigate various roles to support optimal learning.

### *The Four Roles of the Experiential Educator*

Through the Educator Role Profile (ERP), Kolb (2015) describes four roles that educators adopt during EL activities to guide learners through the EL Cycle.

The *Facilitator* role involves a more affirming style, helping learners to get in touch with their experience and reflect on it. The educator in this role establishes the conditions for learning.

The *Subject Expert* role involves a more authoritative, reflective style, helping learners connect their experience to the knowledge base of the subject at hand. The educator in this role also models and encourages critical thinking.

The *Standard Setter & Evaluator* role involves a more objective, results-oriented style. They set the performance requirements, help learners apply their knowledge and skills to meet those requirements, and evaluate whether those requirements have been met.

The *Coach* role involves a more collaborative, encouraging style, helping learners navigate the experience and apply their knowledge. They may provide feedback throughout the experience.

As an educator guiding students through an EL activity, you will likely play each of these roles at different times.

### *Setting Clear Expectations*

It is important that students understand the purpose behind the EL activity; otherwise, they may not learn anything from it (Wurdinger, 2005). The nature of the EL activity and its intended outcomes should be clearly articulated to students. This could include assessment criteria and/or examples of completed activities from previous courses.

“Experiential learning theory suggests that educating is not something one does *to* students through implementation of a set of techniques. Rather, it is something educators do *with* learners in the context of meaningful relationships and shared experiences.” (Kolb, 2015)



### *Encouraging Student Autonomy*

Making space for learners to take charge of their own learning can greatly enhance their ability to learn from experience (Kolb, 2015). Meaning and interest may be lost if an educator tells students what to do to complete the activity (Wurdinger, 2005). However, educators must use enough oversight to ensure students do not feel disengaged or lost and that the intended outcomes of the EL activity are met.

The following action steps listed by Stirling and colleagues (2024) can help empower students with autonomy in the structured work experience:

- Promote opportunities for authentic experiences;
- Encourage independent and critical reflection;
- Facilitate students' determination of personal learning goals and achievements;
- Encourage students to engage in self-assessment;
- Enable students' self-directed learning (i.e. self-management, self-monitoring and motivation with the structured work experience).

## **5.3. Assessing Experiential Learning**

The *process* of EL is as important as the *outcome* of EL. Therefore, assessment strategies should target process and outcome elements which will serve to meaningfully reinforce the EL cycle.

### *Methods to Assess EL*

There are many ways to assess an EL activity. Where possible, educators may want to consider giving students flexibility in how they demonstrate their learning from experiential activities.

Both formative and summative assessments may be used:

- Formative assessments are employed during an activity to monitor and provide feedback on in-process learning.
- Summative assessments are employed after an activity to measure learning against a benchmark or standard.

Educators may want to consider evaluating an output by the student. Some examples of possible outputs for assessment include:

- Documented observations of an EL activity
- Essays

- Graphic art
- Journals
- Performances
- Portfolios
- Presentations
- Products created in shops
- Answers to short-answer questions
- Student self-assessments
- Video diaries
- Written or oral reports
- Written or practical examinations

Where the student is participating in work-integrated learning such as a placement, students can be assessed by the employer/partner who is regularly engaging with the student. Clear assessment criteria should be provided to the employer/partner. See Placement section for more information.

### *Facilitating Stronger Reflections*

*Reflection* allows learners to step back from an experience to consider meaning and application (e.g., Daudelin, 1996; Kolb, 2015; Lewis & Williams, 1994). When done carefully and persistently, reflection about experiences can help learners develop new skills, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Done with intentionality, students can also gain insight into strengths and weaknesses, and their personal and professional growth can be enhanced.

Students also benefit from feedback on their thinking (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Stirling et al, 2024). *Assessments* offer an opportunity to provide this feedback while also allowing educators to gauge where students are in their learning.

While reflection is often spontaneous, and sometimes happens outside of an individual's awareness, the posing and answering of questions can significantly increase the learning power of reflection (Daudelin, 1996). Reflection is a learned skill, so educator support is vital.

Although there are many frameworks for reflection, one practical approach is the "*What? So what? Now what?*" framework as outlined by Driscoll (2006). This framework proposes approaching reflection from three perspectives:

- What: The description of the event
- So what: An analysis of the event
- Now what: Proposed actions following the event



When using this framework, the following list of questions may help encourage deeper reflection from learners. This list is adapted from Driscoll (2006) and Workforce WindsorEssex (2018):

- What?
  - What happened?
  - What did I see/do?
  - What were my reactions?
  - Was anything different from what I expected?
- So what?
  - What was the most valuable part of the experience?
  - What is the most interesting thing I learned?
  - What personal strengths did I develop?
  - How did I add value?
  - What did I notice about my behaviour?
  - What were the effects of what I did or did not do?
  - Do I feel differently about the experience in hindsight?
- Now what?
  - What could I do differently if I encountered a similar situation?
  - What difference does it make if I choose to do nothing differently?
  - Where can I get more information to better prepare myself for similar situations?
  - What help do I need to action the results of my reflections?
    - Which aspect should be tackled first?
    - How will I notice that I have succeeded in changing?

*Further Reading*

[A Practical Guide for Work-Integrated Learning \(2<sup>nd</sup> ed.\)](#)  
 Pages 76 to 77 explore some creative reflection exercises educators could use for assessment.

[IDEA Paper 44](#) explores the concept of a Learning Portfolio.

### *Reflection Rubrics*

Educators who are evaluating EL using a reflection exercise should consider creating a *reflection rubric to establish clear expectations for students through which evaluations can be completed*. Rubrics set out the criteria for grading and how different levels of achievement are demonstrated. Rubrics can be provided to students in advance of the EL activity to ensure



expectations are clearly articulated. A four-category scheme to assess levels of reflection is outlined by Kember and colleagues (2008), summarized here:

- Habitual action: the student performs actions without significant thought.
- Understanding: the student searches for underlying meaning and attempts to reach understanding, but concepts are understood as theory rather than being related to personal experience.
- Reflection: the student considers a concept in relation to personal experience. The student applies theory and demonstrates personal insights.
- Critical reflection: the student undergoes a transformation of perspective. There is evidence of a change in perspective over a fundamental belief.

Example reflection rubric.

Criteria	Habitual Action (Non-Reflection) (> 50%)	Understanding (50-69%)	Reflection (70-89%)	Critical Reflection (90-100%)
<b>Depth of Reflection</b>	Provides a description of events or actions without deeper analysis. Responses are mechanical or routine.	Demonstrates understanding of concepts but does not connect them to personal experiences or practice.	Applies concepts to practice, demonstrating insights from experiences. Shows self-awareness and learning from experiences.	Shows transformation in thinking or perspective. Critically evaluates underlying assumptions and beliefs, leading to significant personal or professional change.
<b>Use of Theory</b>	Does not attempt to relate experiences to theoretical concepts or principles.	Explains theoretical concepts but does not link them to personal experience.	Relates theoretical concepts to experience, showing an understanding of their relevance.	Critically analyzes theoretical concepts, challenging and re-evaluating them in light of experience.
<b>Analysis of Experience</b>	Provides a chronological account of events without analysis.	Identifies key aspects of the experience but does not analyze their significance.	Identifies key aspects of the experience and evaluates their impact.	Engages in deep analysis of the experience, questioning assumptions and exploring alternative perspectives.
<b>Personal Engagement</b>	Shows little or no personal engagement with the experience. Responses are passive or surface-level.	Engages with the experience at a conceptual level but lacks personal connection.	Demonstrates personal involvement and engagement, showing growth in self-awareness.	Deeply engages with the experience, leading to significant personal or professional transformation.
<b>Implications for Future</b>	No consideration of future applications or learning.	Acknowledges learning but does not indicate how it will influence future practice.	Identifies specific lessons and strategies for future practice.	Demonstrates a reformed approach to future actions based on critical insights. Shows evidence of deep change in thinking and behavior.



## 6. Placement

Placement (also known as field placement, clinical placement, practicum, or internship) is an essential component for some of Canadore's programs of instruction and can be a highlight of the student experience. Placement is a form of work-integrated learning (WIL) wherein students learn by doing with an engaged workplace partner. Usually, students participate in a placement by attending a partner site to engage in observational or participatory roles directly related to their vocation. Placement is an opportunity for students to apply theoretical and practical learning obtained in classroom, lab, and simulation environments while gaining real-world experience and making professional connections to future employers. In many cases, placement is a culminating experience offered in the final semester of a program when students are preparing to graduate and seek employment in their chosen field.

### 6.1. Types of Placements

#### *Paid vs Unpaid Placement*

Most Canadore student placement experiences are unpaid. For some programs, only unpaid placements are permitted. In these cases, the dual student/employment relationship represents a conflict of interest. However, for other programs, paid placements are welcomed as they provide students with the opportunity for employment that can be extended beyond the requisite hours for the academic placement. Whether or not a paid placement is permitted for a particular program is determined by consulting any standards and guidelines from any relevant governing body (e.g., for ECE placement, consult the College of Early Childhood Educators standards) and any program-specific placement policies described in a Canadore placement handbook/manual. Consult the EL department if unsure whether a placement can be paid.

#### *Local vs Out-of-District Placement*

Students can typically complete their placement in a variety of different settings and locations provided course learning outcomes can be met. While most students complete their placement locally, there are many students who will successfully complete their placement out of district. Whether a student can proceed with an out-of-district placement is usually determined in consideration of factors such as student preference and planned employment trajectory, availability of placement hosts, and professional suitability and likelihood of success. Faculty

take the lead in making these determinations and should consult the EL department for support.

### *Placement Outside of Ontario or Canada*

Sometimes opportunities exist for students to complete a placement outside of Ontario or Canada. Assuming the proposed placement aligns with course learning outcomes, there are three key elements that need to be considered to approve a placement outside of Ontario or Canada.

1. **Safety.** While safety is a top priority for all placements regardless of location, a placement outside of Ontario or Canada should be assessed to ensure that safety standards are acceptable and that any relevant safety measures are in place prior to approval. High-level factors that should be considered include but are not limited to:
  - a) Geopolitical stability of the placement host destination;
  - b) Regional safety standards for the profession in question; and
  - c) Nature of the activities proposed for the student while on placement.

Determining if a placement can proceed outside of Ontario or Canada should take into consideration these and any other factors not identified here that are deemed relevant. Such determinations shall be made collaboratively between the EL department, the International department (if outside of Canada), and relevant program faculty. When there is doubt about the safety of a proposed placement opportunity, that placement should not proceed.

2. **Suitability.** Students that participate in placement outside of North Bay and area will not have access to in-person support from faculty and other on-campus in-person supports (e.g., Student Success Services). Determining if a placement can proceed outside of Ontario or Canada should take into consideration the student's academic performance, and engagement and aptitude as a professional-in-training. Program faculty are usually in the best position to conduct a suitability assessment and should contact the EL department for support where needed. Canadore does not have a structured suitability assessment or protocol; rather, concerned parties shall use their professional judgment to make a determination of suitability for practice in the context of a proposed location wherein support might be less available than if the student participated in a placement in North Bay or area.
3. **Workplace Insurance.** All students must have workplace insurance coverage in place for the duration of their placement. The EL department is responsible for confirming that

student coverage is in place prior to approving a placement assignment and thus shall be consulted prior to an approval is given to the student to proceed with a placement outside of Ontario or Canada.

## 6.2. Placement Administration

Key placement administration functions and responsibilities are described below.

### *Unpaid Placement: Student Placement Agreements*

A Student Placement Agreement (SPA) is an agreement between the placement host organization and Canadore that outlines responsibilities for both parties in the relationship. SPAs are required for all unpaid placements. The EL department is responsible for maintaining existing and establishing new SPAs as needed to support placements. When a prospective host is identified for supporting a student placement, the EL department shall be engaged to ensure that a SPA is in force prior to the student commencing any hours. Note that a current Certificate of Insurance naming the host organization as additional insured is requested and filed by the EL department for forwarding to a host if requested (as per the SPA language).

### *Paid Placement: Employer Declarations*

Some partners offer paid placement experiences to Canadore students. In these cases, an SPA is not required because the student is serving as an employee of the organization. The College, via the EL department, will obtain a *Paid Placement Employer Attestation* from the organization confirming that the following conditions will be met prior to approving the academic placement:

1. The employer will provide a safe and well-supervised work experience;
2. The employer will provide the student with opportunities to meet learning outcomes;
3. The employer will provide performance feedback to the student and participate in evaluation activities as requested;
4. The employer will contact the student's faculty advisor in the event of problems including but not limited to issues of professionalism, attendance, performance, etc.;
5. The employer will carry industry-appropriate comprehensive general liability insurance while the student is participating in placement;
6. The employer will provide workplace insurance coverage (WSIB or private coverage) for the student for the duration of their placement experience.

### *Student Non-Academic Requirements for Placement*

Non-Academic Requirements (NARs) comprise medical (e.g., immunization) and non-medical (e.g., Vulnerable Sector Check) requirements that students may have to obtain/demonstrate to be eligible for participating in a placement. Information about NARs required for each program's placement(s) is available on the Canadore website [Placement page](#). The EL department establishes minimum NARs by program that must be achieved by students to be eligible for placement. Occasionally, host organizations have additional requirements that must be met for students to proceed with a placement. The EL department posts minimum NARs by program on the [Placement webpage](#). For programs directly supported by a Placement Coordinator, students submit NARs per instructions from the Placement Coordinator. For programs not directly supported by a Placement Coordinator, students submit NARs (if any) per instructions from faculty.

### *International Students: Co-op Work Permit*

International students participating in a placement in fulfilment of their program of study, whether paid or unpaid, are responsible for ensuring that they have the appropriate Co-op Work Permit prior to commencing placement hours. Students are informed of this requirement during mandatory International Student Orientation sessions. The EL department endeavors to provide reminders to International students of this requirement through language on the [Placement webpage](#) and in other program materials including but not limited to the program Student Success Guide and Field Placement Manual (if applicable) and through any interactions between EL department staff and class cohorts preparing for their placement experience. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are compliant with the [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#) permit requirements. For support, students can reach out to Canadore's [International Department](#).

### *Workplace Insurance for Unpaid Student Placements*

All students participating in an unpaid placement are required to complete and submit a *Workplace Insurance for Unpaid Placement – Student Declaration Form*. This form advises students that they are provided with workplace insurance coverage for the duration of their placement and that they are responsible for reporting any injury/incident as soon as possible. Responsibility for distribution and collection of completed forms is with the Placement Coordinator if assigned to the program, or the faculty if there is no Placement Coordinator support assigned. All organizations hosting an unpaid student for placement are required to complete and submit a *Workplace Insurance for Unpaid Placement – Employer Declaration Form*. The EL department is responsible for distributing, collecting, and filing this form.



### 6.3. Placement Coordination

Placement coordination refers to identifying placement host organizations and securing placements for students. This coordination is generally handled in one of three ways:

1. A Placement Coordinator from the EL department is assigned to the program area to coordinate placements on behalf of the students; or,
2. A faculty member is assigned responsibility by the Academic Lead to coordinate placements on behalf of the students; or,
3. Students are responsible for identifying and securing their own placement.

Regardless of who is responsible for identifying and securing the placement, the EL department shall ensure that either a Student Placement Agreement (for unpaid placement) or a Paid Placement Employer Attestation (for paid placement) is in place and workplace insurance is established for the student for the duration of the placement.

#### *Out of District Placements*

If permitted by the faculty, students may seek a placement outside of North Bay and area. Generally, 'out of district' refers to locations beyond Astorville, Bonfield, Callander, Corbiel, Hornell Heights, Mattawa, Nipissing First Nation, Nipissing Village, North Bay, Powassan, Redbridge, Rutherglen, South River, Sturgeon Falls, Sundridge, and Trout Creek. In such cases, students are usually responsible for identifying their own placement host and communicating their findings to the Placement Coordinator or Faculty as required for validation and confirmation. For programs supported by a Placement Coordinator, an out-of-district protocol is established and communicated to students.

### 6.4. Placement Evaluation

Faculty are responsible for establishing and communicating performance standards against which students are evaluated. Usually, students are required to engage in reflective exercises to consolidate and reinforce learning, though each course has its own unique criteria for successful completion. Placement host employers are sometimes engaged to contribute to student evaluation. Usually, employers are responsible for validating placement hours (e.g., by signing off on a tracking form) and are sometimes responsible for providing an assessment of performance indicators. Faculty are responsible for communicating expectations to placement employers pertaining to the employer's roles and responsibilities for evaluation. Generally,

students must demonstrate that course learning outcomes are met and are evaluated either on a pass/fail basis or through a graded assessment approach. Approved course outlines summarize success indicators and define how students will be evaluated against course learning outcomes. In program areas where there are multiple placement experiences required for graduation, students usually must complete these experiences in sequential order (i.e., successful completion of a placement is a prerequisite to a subsequent placement experience). Prerequisites for each course are outlined in the course outline.

## **6.5. Placement Data Reporting**

The EL department is responsible for tracking all placement experiences across all program areas. Through accurate reporting, Canadore will know which students and placement employers were engaged in a placement experience in each semester. Faculty are key contributors for programs that do not have an assigned Placement Coordinator. An EL department staff member will request a summary including but not limited to student number, assigned placement host employer, and number of planned placement hours. All data is reported to the Centre for Academic Excellence and Lifelong Learning (CAELL) and is summarized in the EL Annual Report submitted to the VPA in June each year.

## **6.6. Placement Incident Reporting and Tracking**

The EL department maintains Placement Incident Tracking forms and establishes reporting protocols with program areas. Any time a student is involved in an incident (including a near miss) while participating in a placement, the student is required to submit an Incident Tracking Form to the EL department and to the faculty lead for the placement course. The EL department collaborates with Canadore's Health and Safety department to ensure that any follow-up is completed as required, including but not limited to internal injury reporting and/or external workplace insurance reporting. Placement employers are advised of their responsibility to report incidents impacting students that occur on placement to the College via the Student Placement Agreement, program-specific Placement Manual (if applicable), and the *Workplace Insurance for Unpaid Placement – Employer Declaration Form*.

## 6.7. Fitness to Participate in Placement

Occasionally, a student's fitness to participate in a placement comes into question, either prior to the start of a placement or while a placement is already in progress. Concerns of fitness may be related to physical competencies. For example, a student may have sustained a broken arm and is in a cast, limiting their ability to perform certain duties safely; or, a student is pregnant and must take precautions as advised by their physician to modify duties to ensure the safety of the student and baby. Concerns of fitness may also be related to psychosocial competencies. For example, a student who suffers from a depressive or anxiety disorder may struggle with being emotionally or even physically present in placement; or, a student with a substance use disorder may be triggered by client behaviours impacting on their ability to remain professional. Whatever the concern, if there are questions of safety (for either the student, placement employer, or employer clients), an assessment of fitness to participate should be undertaken. Accordingly, everyone (faculty, Dean, placement host supervisor, student, peers, Placement Coordinator, etc.) should take ownership of identifying fitness to participate concerns.

When a fitness to participate concern is identified, the EL department should be notified as soon as possible. From there, the situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate action that respects the student's right to privacy, the employer's obligations to clients and employees, and the safety of all persons involved. Generally, there are three steps to handling a fitness to participate concern:

1. The placement should be paused indefinitely to prioritize the safety of all persons involved.
2. An assessment shall be conducted and a plan defined for moving forward if safe to do so. When appropriate, a *Placement Functional Abilities Form* will be provided to the student and shall be submitted to the EL department for further determination of next steps including whether the placement can proceed with modified duties.
3. The plan shall be carried out as defined. If there are changing circumstances, a reassessment shall be conducted. Frequent check-ins should be conducted by responsible faculty to ensure that the placement continues to be safe and productive for all concerned parties.

The EL department maintains the *Placement Functional Abilities Form* and associated process and will take a lead role in working through the concern.



## 7. Field Trips

Field trips are valuable opportunities for students to reinforce and extend learning gained in classrooms and labs on campus. Field trips can be curricular (i.e., evaluated for credit towards course completion) or co-curricular (i.e., optional and not evaluated for credit towards course completion). All field trips must be approved by the relevant Academic Lead and the VPA prior to proceeding. The EL department is responsible for establishing and implementing a Field Trip approval process. The Manager, EL, serves as the initial reviewer and facilitates approvals.

Field trip forms are maintained on [iCan](#) under Departments > Experiential Learning > Field Trip Files.



## 8. Experiential Learning Department Contact

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### **Manager, Experiential Learning**

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