

**Western Michigan University  
Faculty Senate  
Memorandum of Action**

MOA – 25/03

Revise the Undergraduate Catalog-Academic Policies-Glossary of Terms  
Experiential Learning Definition

**Name of Council/Committee:**

Undergraduate Studies Council

**Approval Date:**

10 April, 2025

**Implementation Date:**

Upon Administrative Approval

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Undergraduate Studies Council, in conjunction with the Experience-Driven Learning working group under the direction of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, recommends that the definition of experiential learning in the Western

*Diane E. Riggs*

Diane E. Riggs (Jun 26, 2025 15:56 EDT)

Jun 26, 2025

Diane Riggs, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council

Date

☐ Approve    ☐ Disapprove    ☐ Other Action

Comments:

*Amy Naugle*

Amy Naugle (Jun 26, 2025 20:51 EDT)

Jun 26, 2025

Amy Naugle,

WMU Faculty Senate President

Date

☒ Approve    ☐ Disapprove    ☐ Other Action

Comments:

*Q. C. Cheatham*

Jul 2, 2025

Christopher Cheatham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date

☐ Approve    ☐ Disapprove    ☐ Other Action

Comments:

*Russell A. Kavalhura*

*Russell Kavalhura*

WMU President

Date

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(Supersedes MOA-14/05 and MOA-18/09)

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Undergraduate Studies Council, in conjunction with the Experience-Driven Learning working group under the direction of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, recommends that the definition of experiential learning in the Western Michigan University undergraduate catalog be expanded to highlight recent changes in the program.

**RATIONALE/PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Memorandum of Action is to realign the Undergraduate Catalog Glossary of Terms definition of Experiential Learning in the 2025-26 undergraduate catalog to reflect current and future practices at Western Michigan University. This definition **augments replaces** prior definitions of Experiential Learning as detailed in MOA-14/05: Experiential Learning, Service-Learning, Co-Curricular Learning, and Volunteerism and MOA-18/09: Creation of Service Learning Course Approval Procedures.

A subcommittee of faculty members of the Undergraduate Studies Council and the Provost Office working group in Experience-Driven Learning joined together to produce the text of the catalog copy. This group includes representatives from the Provost office, Marketing, WMUx course designers, faculty, and the Executive Board of the Faculty Senate. The catalog copy will be reviewed and voted on by the Undergraduate Studies Council and the Faculty Senate.

The revision of the undergraduate catalog to accurately describe the opportunities for experiential learning at Western Michigan University will provide clarity to undergraduate students, parents, academic advisors, college deans and faculty members. Stakeholders also include the Provost Office, Academic Affairs, Career and Student Employment Services, the registrar, Student Affairs, the Haenicke Institute and WMUx.

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICE(S) AND ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL(S):**

Registrar's Office

**STAKEHOLDERS**

Faculty  
Students  
Staff

**HISTORY:**

- a) Effective date of current version: fall 2025-26
- b) Date first adopted: 2014
- c) Revision history:
- d) Proposed date of next review: spring 2028

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**CURRENT POLICY MODIFICATION** (additions in bold and deletions with strikethrough):

***Undergraduate Catalog  
Academic Policies***

## **Glossary of Terms**

Western Michigan University defines “experiential learning” as that which “informs many methodologies, in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities” [Association for Experiential Education and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)]. Experiential learning includes, but is not limited to:

**Experiential Learning** is a broad educational approach that includes a variety of high-impact practices that may take place on campus, in our local community or in connection with a global learning experience. It is an important aspect of a student’s academic progress because it inspires students to apply their learning and clarify their career goals through direct experience and reflection. A given experience might represent one or more of these opportunities:

- **Experience-driven Learning**

- *Service Learning:* Service learning is a mutually beneficial endeavor

- **Global Learning**

**Experience-Driven Learning (EDL)** is Western’s approach to education that integrates hands-on, practical experiences with traditional instructional methods. Students engaged in EDL apply classroom knowledge to career-relevant situations in which course real-world contexts through a range of different opportunities, including internships, simulations, problem and project-based learning objectives are met by addressing community identified needs—putting academics into practice **global learning, service learning, co-curricular learning, and undergraduate research and creative scholarship.** Experience-Driven Learning involves all three of the following components:

*Co-Curricular Learning:* Co-curricular learning takes place outside formal academic studies. It is similar to volunteerism, but includes structured reflection.

*Volunteerism:* Refers to work done without financial remuneration in order to give back to the community and may be completed by individual students or organized group activities. It may be done on a voluntary basis or as required for an academic course, program or other campus organization.  
(MOA 14/05)

- **Enhancing Learning** through problem-solving and creative thinking; team-oriented experiences; and application of learning to timelines, budgets and communication.
- **Shaping Professional Purpose** through work with industry and sector partners that enable students to build connections and references; engage in creative research; and develop a compelling career narrative that evolves from course content, knowledge of the discipline, and employer expectations.
- **Empowering Students** by focusing on their perspectives and developing skills of inquiry, intentional reflection and assessment, and bridging the gap between theory and practice. This helps prepare students to transition into chosen careers.

**Service Learning** is a mutually beneficial application in which students apply course content to address community identified needs.

**Global Learning** provides opportunities for students to explore academics from a global perspective through focused study abroad programs and collaborative online international learning (COIL).

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## **REFERENCES**

See attached document: High-impact-practice-experiential-learning.pdf