

**Experiential Learning at H-SC:
Working Documents for Course Approval and Assessment.**

(This language in this section is provided for information purposes and is not part of the material to be voted on. The Course Approval document will be for use by AAC, to be posted on the Dean's web page. SLOs are in draft form.)

Categories of Book & Beyond courses

1. “On the Hill” (one to three credits)

Hampden-Sydney students may take on-campus experiential courses that feature applied or integrated learning through an active learning experience. Such courses will also require students to complete reflective analyses of the results of their work and on the process(es) of achieving those results. In order for these courses to count as experiential learning, those offering them will need to demonstrate in advance how these elements are integrated into the syllabus in a way that shapes student engagement with course material.

2. “Off the Hill” (one to three credits)

Hampden-Sydney students will take at least one experiential course to expand their learning options beyond the confines of the academic campus. This coursework could be part of a short-term study abroad or study away program; a semester, summer, or full-year program abroad; an internship (currently 395 courses); or a service learning experience. Again, for these courses to count as experiential learning, those offering them will need to demonstrate in advance how the elements of Hampden-Sydney's approach to experiential learning are integrated into the syllabus in a way that shapes student engagement with course material.

Experiential Learning Course Template and Checklist

- Experiential learning courses will integrate application of theory and sustained reflection.
- Determination of an EL designation will be based on review of both the course description and course syllabus.
- To be considered an EL course, the majority of class activities must be discipline appropriate, intentional, open-ended, and responsive as defined below:

Discipline Appropriate.

Application of theory: Experiential activities must involve the active application of theory/course material in discipline-relevant ways. In other words, the student does the “work” of that discipline.

Reflection: The activity must require students to

- consider how the application of course material alters, refines, or otherwise impacts their understanding of doing the work of the discipline,
- critically evaluate how the application of theory/course material may have been limited given the immediate academic context.

How the rule creates exclusions: As an example, because the primary “work” of engineering is not to sit in a room listening to lectures, then a course where the majority of class activities involve attending lectures would not meet this criterion. Similarly, because taking photographs is not the primary “work” of engineering, having students complete a photo essay activity as part of the course would not make it experiential—even if it would be a fun, active assignment. Finally, taking your engineering class to work at a food pantry does not require the active application of course material and also would not count.

Intentional.

Application of theory: Experiential learning activities are designed so that students are required to apply theory/course material to make choices and initiate actions.

Reflection: The activity must require students to

- make clear what factors (including relevant course material) they considered when making their choices and initiating their actions,
- explain how their choices/actions resulted from the consideration of these factors (i.e., connect their choices to these factors),
- identify what the outcomes of their choices/actions were,
- explain how these choices, actions, and outcomes impacted their understanding of the course material.

How the rule creates exclusions: For example, it suggests that most field trips would not count as an EL activity. Having the professor select a play/movie/museum for the class to visit and then visiting with the class does not require the student to use course material to make choices. Although an EL activity could be built around a field trip, the field trip itself would not be sufficient. Further, simply “reading” or “discussing” are not immediately experiential under this criterion—although they are an active form of learning, they don’t necessarily require the application of course material, the making of choices, the defending of those choices, and the analysis of the outcomes of those choices.

Open-ended.

Application of theory: Although the course content to be mastered will be set by the instructor and shared across all students, activities should be designed so that the outcomes resulting from the application of theory/course material by the student can differ across all members of the class. In other words, the results are consequential and extend beyond the completion of the activity and evaluation by a professor.

Reflection: The activity must require the student to

- understand how the choices and actions that he initiated impacted his outcomes,
- understand how alternative choices could have change the outcomes produced in the activity,
- recognize and understand how *and* why his outcomes did (or did not) differ from what would have been predicted by the theory/course material,

- recognize and understand how *and* why his outcomes did (or did not) differ from his peers’.

How the rule creates exclusions: Excluded from consideration are any activities where the student is “active” but the result is pre-determined and cannot vary across class members (unless someone makes a mistake). Problem sets, “canned” lab assignments, etc. would fall into this category.

Responsive.

Application of theory: In addition to changing his/her plans and actions in response to professor feedback, in an experiential learning activity the student will adjust his/her behavior in response to interactions with other students, with community members, and/or with environmental cues (physical and psychological).

Reflection: The activity must require the student to

- solicit or otherwise obtain feedback from relevant individuals and/or identify relevant environmental cues to be responded to,
- evaluate critically this external feedback,
- where appropriate, explain his choices and actions to outside individuals (i.e., not the professor) in the context of the theory/course material,
- adjust his choices/actions to accommodate this external feedback.

How the rule creates exclusions: The activity must be designed so that the student is expected and is given space to incorporate feedback during the activity. The feedback cannot be limited to a professor’s evaluation and so, writing an essay and getting professor comments or a grade won’t be sufficient. Further, because changes must also be in response to “interaction” with people or with a situation, a service project that involved students working parallel to each other and without contact with community members would not meet this criterion.

Proposed SLOs

SLO 1 - The student will be able to connect applied experiences derived from participation in an experiential learning course with relevant, discipline-appropriate knowledge in the College setting.

SLO 2- The student will be able to adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies acquired in in the College setting to address novel situations or problems in applied settings.

SLO 3- The student will engage and articulate critical reflection about their application of skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies acquired in in the College setting.

SLO 4 – The students will adjust their choices/actions based upon critical reflection and accommodate external feedback.