

Experiential Education Landscape Analysis Executive Summary

>70% of programs have defined structure and student learning outcomes



>70% of programs engage most/all students in reflection



>95% of programs say students gain career-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities



58% of programs are affiliated with a course; 31% of programs are not

Introduction

A landscape analysis of experiential education (ExEd) was conducted at Purdue University West Lafayette, and the project included extensive surveying of known contacts of prospective ExEd programs. The three-part process included a pre-survey, the landscape analysis survey, and focus groups with program administrators. The results in this document focus on the 260 survey participants who responded to the survey and provided information about 355 programs. This landscape analysis provides the best available information for understanding present offerings in experiential education serving PWL undergraduates. However, it is important to remember that these results do not include survey non-respondents, programs as yet unknown to us, and programs under development. These numbers are thus the “floor” and the real prevalence of ExEd programming is somewhat higher.

What we have learned

There is a tremendous variety of ExEd programming at Purdue. Programs are diverse and distinctive, designed to best meet the needs of students and specific career fields. This is a testament to Purdue educators’ student-centeredness and commitment to career relevance. It also presents challenges for campus-wide initiatives, requiring sensitivity to the variety of program designs, student needs, and learning outcomes across the universe of ExEd programming.

There is a wide variety of ExEd programs at Purdue WL:

- 12 types of ExEd have been identified with the most common being project-based experiences, service-learning or community-based learning, field work, and study abroad.
- Many survey participants reported that their programs involve at least two or more types of ExEd. Only 23.5% reported that their program involves only one type of ExEd.
- Many programs are affiliated with courses (58% always connected to a course, 12% sometimes connected to a course); 31% of programs do not have a course affiliation.
- ExEd program personnel includes faculty, staff, *and* students.
- 80% of programs partner with other sites and organizations.
- 65% of programs include faculty/staff time spent at a partner site during the program.
- 90% of programs indicated faculty/staff engage with students throughout the experience.

The most common types of ExEd are project-based learning, service-learning, and field work



Many ExEd programs include two or more types of ExEd



Programs may include faculty, staff, AND students as program leaders



90% of Purdue program leaders engage with students throughout the entire experience

When the Office of Experiential Education was created, establishing a common definition of experiential education was a priority. Experiential education at Purdue is **a planned pedagogy centering on an authentic experience to strengthen students' knowledge, skills, and abilities, paired with student reflection**. Results from the landscape analysis show that many programs are already well-aligned with this definition.

- More than 70% of programs have a defined structure.
- More than 70% of programs have student learning outcomes.
- 65% of programs indicated most or all students apply what they have learned in current or previous courses during their ExEd experience.
- More than 95% of programs reported that most or all of their students develop career-relevant knowledge, skills, or abilities during the experience.
- More than 70% of programs engage most or all students in reflection during the experience.

Recommendations

The landscape analysis report includes several recommendations to guide future actions of the Office of ExEd and its collaborators. The report suggests that the office:

- Create a process for central ExEd tracking, including ExEd program profiles, experiences, personnel, student participants, and (potentially) external partners.
- Use institutional data sources to track variables already reported, such as course and student data. This will improve the accuracy, completeness, and ease of tracking ExEd data.
- Identify a tracking platform that is flexible enough to work with a range of existing program-level tracking tools but also allow programs without a current tracking tool to use a new centralized platform.
- Prioritize professional development offerings and other program support to address areas of greatest need, keeping in mind that some programs need help with ExEd definition alignment, while larger numbers of programs are ready for more advanced development.

Questions

If you have questions about this report or the Office of Experiential Education, please contact Jennifer Dobbs-Oates, Director, at jendo@purdue.edu. You may also request a copy of the full Landscape Analysis report from Kat Stremiecki at kwidman@purdue.edu.