National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS) Experiential Learning Policy

Related Documents	A001 Academic Courses & Unit Development Policy SS016 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
HE Standards Framework 2015	1.2 Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 3.1 Course Design 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support

Contents

1.   Policy Rationale

NAPS believes that Experiential Learning should be an important component of professional education. Experiential activities may be formative or summative. They may occur as part of the activities of a particular unit and as a progression in the course or involve a formal internship experience with an outside organisation such as a business or law firm.

2.   Definition

While there is no universally accepted definition of experiential learning and it takes many forms, essentially it involves the process of learning through experience, and involves the learning gained in applying knowledge to action and reflecting upon that experience. Experiential learning is distinguished from rote or didactic learning, in which the learner plays generally a much more passive role.

3.   NAPS Commitment to Experiential Learning

At NAPS we believe in the value of experiential learning and strive to incorporate the practical application of skills as a significant component of the learning experience. This experiential learning starts with orientation, where we organise members of the profession to come in and speak about what they do and advise about possible career paths for students. Law students, for example, are encouraged to join the Young Lawyers Association and we organise court visits and other experiential opportunities.

Inside the classroom NAPS encourages its lecturers to organise learning activities that involve students in 'doing' a task which resembles something they may do in their career, and bring them into contact with the professional world. This may involve, for example, drafting letters of advice, participating in moots, examining case studies, visiting firms/businesses, court visits and more.

Advantages of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning activities deliver positive impacts for students, businesses, law firms and the local community. Participating in experiential learning offers students opportunities to put their knowledge into action and thereby learn important skills while also deepening their knowledge.

The literature[1] on experiential learning has found that it promotes higher retention and graduation rates and can augment academic achievement while preparing students for careers and bridging the gap between formal study and the world of work and continuous learning.

Employers also benefit from experiential learning arrangements as a way to advance their profession, identify potential talent and help students to be ready for full-time employment once they graduate. Employees who are involved with experiential learning gain opportunities to build leadership, mentoring, and communication skills.

4.   Development of Experiential Learning Opportunities at NAPS

Stage 1: Strategic Planning

Further develop Experiential Learning Policy and outline a developmental plan by which NAPS will introduce formal external elements of experiential learning and integrate it into its programs.

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[1] See eg, David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Pearson Professional 2014); Colin Beard & John P. Wilson,

Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Education, Training and Coaching 3ed (Kogan Page: 2013).

Stage 2: Experiential opportunities as part of the structured learning activities of units.

2.1 Embedding Experiential Learning in the curriculum.

NAPS is realistic in understanding that it takes time and considerable resources to establish a full-blown external experience program. Thus in the first three years, our experiential program will focus on including experiential learning where relevant and practical and encouraging our academics to engage students in 'learning by doing' activities in the classroom. As mentioned above, examples of this are case studies, excursions to different employment and other settings, inviting speakers in from the professions, including promotion of reflective practice, and so on.

In the case of Law, for example, the teaching of professional skills are often an integral part of the learning process, eg legal research, analysis and writing. Other skills include:

Professional Skills	
1.	Legal analysis and reasoning
2.	Written communication –
3.	Legal research (print and electronic) –
4.	Drafting legal documents –
5.	Listening –
6.	Oral communication
7.	Working cooperatively as part of a team –
8.	Factual investigation –
9.	Organization and management of legal work –
10.	Interviewing and questioning – \
11.	Problem-solving –
12.	Recognizing and resolving ethical dilemmas –
13.	Pre-trial discovery and advocacy –
14.	Counselling –
15.	Negotiation –
16.	Mediation –
17.	Leadership

18.	Trial advocacy –
19.	Technology Literacy
20.	Intercultural awareness;
21.	Statutory Interpretation
22.	Reflective Practice

2.2: *Experiential Learning via Student Societies; extra-curricular activities.*

Additionally, NAPS will encourage and assist students to form active professional societies (eg Business Students Society, Law Students' Association) with a major focus on opportunities to link the worlds of study and professional employment. NAPS will also build up a career site and provide counselling and guidance that further bridge the divide between formal study and working as a professional.

Stage 3: Formal Experiential Learning Program.

As the program develops, NAPS will seek partnerships with businesses, law firms and other organisations for internships and other work/experiential learning opportunities for our students. Examples of such programs include:

- Extended Field trips,
- Work-site visits,
- Service learning,
- International learning opportunities,
- Job shadowing/job twinning,
- Work experience,
- Co-op placements,
- Clinics offering pro-bono assistance, and
- Formal placement programs in different work settings.

5. Policy Review

NAPS may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to their supervisor or to the relevant Dean.

6. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further advice be required staff should contact the relevant Dean.

7. Additional Resources

Council for Experiential Learning; Resources: http://councilforexperientiallearning.ca/en/about-us/experiential-learning/

Learning Solutions; *Using Digital Experiential Learning to Deliver Corporate Policy Training*: https://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/280/using-digital-experiential-learning-to-deliver-corporate-policy-training

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