

Definition of Applied Learning: (SUNY Buffalo State Definition)

Applied learning refers to an educational approach whereby students learn by engaging in direct application of skills, theories and models. Students apply knowledge and skills gained from traditional classroom learning to hands-on and/or real-world settings, creative projects or independent or directed research, and in turn apply what is gained from the applied experience to academic learning. The applied learning activity can occur outside of the traditional classroom experience and/or be embedded as part of a course of study or program.

Definitions of Applied Learning Experiences: (SUNY Buffalo State Definition)

Cooperative Education: An applied learning experience that alternates classroom learning and productive paid work experiences in a field related to a student's academic and career goals. Co-ops are formal partnerships between an educational institution, an employer, and one or more students, and typically provide meaningful work experiences for students. Co-ops are off-campus and full time or part time.

Internship—Credit Bearing/non-credit: Applied learning experiences for which a student may earn academic credit in an agreed-upon, short-term, supervised workplace activity, which may be related to a student's major field or area of interest. The work can be full or part time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid. Some institutions offer both credit and non-credit bearing internships. Internships integrate classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills developed in professional or community settings. This definition does not include internships that are required components of a registered program leading to NYS licensure or certification (e.g., teacher preparation, social work, dental hygiene). An internship is distinct from community service or service learning.

Clinical Placement—Credit Bearing: A period of practical/field experience in health care and community agencies with faculty supervision focusing on individual patients/clients or groups reflecting diverse settings, across the lifespan. Emphasis is on mastering theoretical concepts, improving skill competency, and developing clinical reasoning skills with a focus on evidence-based practice.

Practicum: A period of practical or field experience undertaken in academic, professional or community settings/agencies/organizations as part of an academic course of study. This approach is grounded in application and practice of theoretical/technical concepts/skills and cultural competency relevant to the course of study or to a profession.

Clinically Rich Practice: Teacher candidates participate in a range of diverse school and community-based activities that connect theory and practice through reflection to develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to become effective educators.

Service-Learning: A credit-bearing educational strategy that integrates meaningful community service that meets identified community need with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities.

Community Service: Volunteerism and community service performed by students for community benefit. This service can be, but is not necessarily integrated with a particular program of study. This may include structured projects (days of service), smaller group projects, fund-raising events, or individual volunteerism, which is acknowledged by the campus.

Civic Engagement: A teaching and learning focus on educating students as global citizens. Classes or programs include meaningful civic education and activities for social good. Classes and projects have components of reflection and engagement.

Creative Works: A capstone, senior project, performance, or other creative work that occurs as an experience for a student in an accredited class, a course of study or program.

Undergraduate Research: An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that advances our knowledge and makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline. Research includes scholarly and creative activities and both the student and the mentor have a vested interest in the research/scholarly/creative experience. The four characteristics of undergraduate research include: mentorship, originality, acceptability, and dissemination.

Graduate Research: An inquiry or investigation conducted by a graduate student that advances our knowledge and makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline. Research includes scholarly and creative activities at a higher level of independence relative to undergraduate research.

Entrepreneurship (program, class, project): Students in an entrepreneurship program develop a broad-based entrepreneurial skill relevant to any organization – start-up, established, and for and not-for-profit agency, organization, community or industry. Entrepreneurship involves consistently thinking and acting in ways designed to uncover new opportunities that are then applied to provide value.

Field Study: Collection of information outside of an experimental or lab setting. This type of data collection is most often conducted in natural settings or environments and can be designed in a variety of ways for various disciplines. May be mentored, self-directed work, or comprise a full course. The projects include inquiry, design, investigation, discovery and application.

International and Domestic Travel/Exchange & Study Away: An instructional program delivered in either an overseas location or domestic location. Often the program is delivered as a semester-long or intercession sequence of courses, the content of which is enhanced by the location of instruction, by distinctive historic or cultural features available in the location, or by a unique approach to the subject matter that is specific to the locale. Exchanges are often conducted by individual students traveling independently to a location that has been pre-approved by their home institution, and where they determine their specific course of study in collaboration with home and host institution faculty.

Criteria for Approved Applied Learning Experiences: (SUNY Definitions)

When applied learning is embedded in a course, these criteria refer to the activity rather than the course as a whole. Regardless of the activity, both the experience and the learning are fundamental.

The Activity is Structured, Intentional and Authentic - All parties must be clear from the outset why this specific experience was chosen as the approach to the learning, and intentional about defining the knowledge that should result from it. The activity needs to be a structured experience with a formal process, which includes a course syllabus or learning contract between parties (students, faculty, and other supervisors as appropriate) and/or defined assessable learning outcomes. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined. Faculty and site supervisors (as appropriate) are expected to take the lead in ensuring both the quality of the learning experience and of the work produced. The applied learning activity should have hands-on and/or real world context and should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation.

The Activity Requires Preparation, Orientation and Training - Participants and mentors must ensure that students enter the experience with sufficient background and foundational education, as well as a plan to support a successful outcome. The training and plan should include learning expectations and be referred to (and potentially updated) on an ongoing basis by all parties.

The Activity Must Include Monitoring and Continuous Improvement - Applied learning activities are dynamic. Therefore all facilitators in the activity share responsibility for ensuring that the experience, as it is in process, continues to provide a rich learning environment and is meeting learning outcomes. Activities include a defined and flexible method for feedback related to learning outcomes and quality performance for all parties.

The Activity Requires Structured Reflection and Acknowledgment - There must be a structured opportunity for students to self-assess, analyze, and examine constructs/skills/insights from their experience and to evaluate the outcomes. Reflection should demonstrate the relevance of the experience to student learning, including the student's articulation of how the experience draws on and improves this learning and meets defined objectives. Post-experience learning should include a formal debriefing. All facilitators and students engaged in the experience should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment.

The Activity Must be Assessed and Evaluated - Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented with regard to initial intentions and quality outcomes. Students must receive appropriate and timely feedback from all facilitators.