

# Shawnee State University

POLICY TITLE:	EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT
POLICY NO.:	2.30
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EFFECTIVE DATE:	04/17/2026
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RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	PROVOST
APPROVED BY:	BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## 1.0 PURPOSE

This policy establishes the framework for integrating experiential learning into undergraduate education at Shawnee State University. It aims to enhance student learning through real-world engagement, foster career readiness, and strengthen community and industry partnerships.

## 2.0 SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

2.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate students enrolled in degree programs. It covers credit-bearing and non-credit experiential learning activities relevant to the student's area of study, including but not limited to:

2.1.1 Internships and co-ops.

2.1.2 Service Learning.

2.1.3 Undergraduate research.

2.1.4 Clinical and field placements.

2.1.5 Study abroad and global experiences.

2.1.6 Creative and entrepreneurial projects.

## 3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

All undergraduate students entering Shawnee State University beginning August 2026 must complete at least one approved experiential learning activity prior to graduation. This requirement ensures that students have had the opportunity to apply academic knowledge in practical settings, reflect on their experiences, and develop transferable skills.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply to this policy:

- 4.1 **Approval Experience.** Activity that meets institutional criteria for supervision, duration, reflection, and assessment.
- 4.2 **Experiential Learning.** Structured learning that occurs through direct experience and reflection, guided by intentional learning outcomes.
- 4.3 **Work Experience.** Work experience involves learning practical skills and gaining insights in a work setting in order to understand specific roles, companies, and/or career paths. This may include activities typically done without any payment.
- 4.4 **Internship.** An internship is a partnership between students, the University, and an employer(s) that formally integrates academic study with work or community service experience. Internships:
  - 4.4.1 Are of a specified and definite duration;
  - 4.4.2 Evaluate each participating student's performance from both the University and employer's perspectives;
  - 4.4.3 May provide the student with academic credit upon successful completion and/or may provide students with compensation in the form of wages, salaries, stipends, or scholarships; and
  - 4.4.4 May be full-time or part-time during the internship period.
- 4.5 **Cooperative Education (Co-op).** A Co-op is a partnership between students, the University, and an employer(s) that formally integrates academic study with work experience in cooperating employer organizations and:
  - 4.5.1 Alternates or combines periods of academic study and work experience in appropriate fields as an integral part of student education;
  - 4.5.2 Provides students with compensation from the cooperative employer in the form of wages or salaries for work performed;
  - 4.5.3 Evaluates student performance in the co-op position from both the University and cooperative employer perspective;
  - 4.5.4 Provides academic credit upon successful completion of their cooperative education; and
  - 4.5.5 Is part of an overall degree or certificate program for which a percentage of the total program is acceptable to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education and involves cooperative education.

- 4.6 **Service Learning.** Service learning (can be credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing) is a structured experience that integrates meaningful community service with academic instruction and structured, individual reflection. The experience enhances student learning by fostering civic responsibility, deepening understanding of course content, and addressing real-world community needs in partnership with local, regional, or global organizations. Acceptable service-learning activities should include one or more of the following characteristics:
- 4.6.1 Curriculum-based: Tied to academic content and learning objectives.
  - 4.6.2 Community-focused: Addresses real needs identified by the community.
  - 4.6.3 Reciprocal: Benefits both the student and the community partner.
  - 4.6.4 Reflective: Includes structured reflection to deepen understanding and personal growth.
  - 4.6.5 Developmental: Encourages civic engagement, critical thinking, and social responsibility.
- 4.7 **Undergraduate Research.** Faculty-mentored, inquiry-based learning experience in which students engage in the systematic investigation or creative exploration of a topic of interest. The process contributes to the discovery, interpretation, and/or application of knowledge and is grounded in the standards of the relevant academic discipline. Undergraduate research:
- 4.7.1 May occur within or beyond the classroom and culminates in a product that is shared with others through presentations, publications, exhibitions, or performances.
  - 4.7.2 Should foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, while preparing students for graduate study, professional careers, and lifelong learning.
- 4.8 **Clinical and Field Placements.** Structured, supervised experiential learning opportunities that occur in professional practice settings outside the traditional classroom. These placements are integral to academic programs in fields such as health sciences, education, and social work, and are designed to help students apply theoretical knowledge, develop professional competencies, and meet licensure or certification requirements.
- 4.9 **Study abroad and global experiences.** Structured academic or co-curricular programs that immerse students in international or intercultural contexts to enhance their global awareness, cross-cultural competencies, and academic

learning. Experiences can vary in duration from short-term faculty-led programs to semester- or year-long exchanges.

4.10 **Creative and entrepreneurial projects.** Student-initiated or faculty-guided endeavors that involve the development, design, or implementation of original ideas, products, performances, or ventures, and which:

4.10.1 Emphasize innovation, problem-solving, and creative expression;

4.10.2 May include, but not limited to academic, artistic, or business-oriented experiences.

4.10.3 Should culminate in a tangible outcome—such as a prototype, performance, business plan, or portfolio;

4.10.4 May be conducted individually or collaboratively.

4.10.5 Should foster critical thinking, initiative, and real-world application of disciplinary knowledge, and may be integrated into coursework, capstone experiences, or co-curricular programs.

## 5.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 All experiences must comply with Board of Trustees Policy 2.22 and all other university policies on safety, liability, and data privacy.

5.2 Students participating in off-campus experiences must complete a risk acknowledgement form.

## 6.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This policy will be reviewed biennially.

### Important Links:

[Policy 2.22, Student Work Experiences, Internships, And Cooperative Education Programs](#)

### History

Effective: 04/17/2026