Procedural Manual on Experiential Learning

2nd draft (12 December 2011) of a document for ultimate approval of Senate

Aim

These procedures serve to govern the implementation of the Policy: Experiential Learning.

Context

The Council approved Policy: Experiential Learning qualifies experiential learning as processes of making meaning from direct experiences; a teaching method that facilitates the exposure of students to realistic experiences; there is interplay between theory and practice; and learning is derived through reflection on doing.

The Policy: Experiential Learning differentiates between real-work experiences and artificial learning environments to enhance or replace a student's actual experience within the world of work. These procedures are further differentiated and provide guiding procedures for:

- Work-integrated learning within an appropriate real-life context
- Applied learning experiences such as laboratory experiments, workshop training, organised field-work, facilitated practica, etc.
- Various modes of simulated learning experiences

The FRAMEWORK for the implementation of a TEAM APPROACH to curriculum and learning development (FTA)

The Senate approved FTA and associated (a) due diligence certificate for the process for programmes; and (b) certificate of compliance for the process for modules—with specific reference to steps (d) & (e), right-side below—apply with regard to all forms of experiential learning.

FTA steps in the process for programmes	FTA steps in the process for modules
1. Academic review and/or feasibility study 2. Curriculum planning 3. Internal checking and approval 4. Programme-level planning and development 5. Internal checking, approval, accreditation and registration	a. Academic review and/or feasibility study b. Curriculum planning c. Internal checking and approval **d. Learning design** **e. Learning development**

6. Evaluating Impact as part of academic review	f. Learning facilitation g. Module review

The design, development and facilitation of work-integrated learning (WIL)

Good design of work-integrated learning involves adequate representation from the occupational field. Well designed WIL entails discovery learning in the absence of the lecturer—learning materials must enable the required learning and the workplace mentoring. The following serves as checklist involved in the process:

- Design/revision of a programme curriculum
- Mustering support from the occupational field for placements of students for WIL, including the relevant Skills Education Training Authority/ies (SETA/s)
- Design or redesign of 12 credit WIL-module/s, including
    - Outcomes to be accomplished from the experience
    - Learning guidelines for the student and her/his workplace supervisor
    - Specifications with regard to learning evidence
    - Criteria for a 'good' learning experience in WIL
- Pre-registration and registration of students
    - Clarification of what the WIL-module/s entail
    - Provision of the WIL learning materials
- Securing of placements for students to enable completion of credit-bearing WIL
    - Establishment of an efficient support system and resources within The university to coordinate student placements for WIL
    - Relationship building within the occupational field
    - Partnering with appropriate and willing hosting organisations and entering into memoranda of undertaking (MoU)—since there are zero direct financial implications for The university, the due diligence form for the conclusion of agreements need not be completed and MoUs need not be submitted to Legal Services.
    - Where feasible, facilitate SETA discretionary grants for *workplace experience*
    - Contracting of the work-integrated learning required and entering into a memorandum of agreement (MoA) for each student—since there are zero direct financial implications for The university, the due diligence form for the conclusion of agreements need not be completed and MoAs need not be submitted to Legal Services.

- Monitoring (formative assessment) of the learning progress of students and quality of learning derived
- Summative assessment both within the workplace—obtaining the assessment input from the workplace supervisor and/or mentor—and of the learning evidence submitted by each student
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures pertaining to WIL
- Quality assurance of the WIL module/s within programme as well as satisfying the imperatives of professional and/or statutory bodies
- College/school/academic departmental structure with regard to WIL, for example:
    - A functional advisory process with adequate representation from and/or consultation of the occupational field
    - A teaching & learning committee focussing of WIL matters
    - An adequate administrative support structure

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) advocates a typology of WIL. What The university call WIL is according to the CHE essentially synonomous to Workplace learning (WPL) and the CHE consider WIL a broader phenomenon including three additional curricular modalities in the typology namely:

- Work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL)
- Problem-based learning (PBL)
- Project-based learning (PJBL)

The design, development and facilitation of applied learning experiences

Within certain disciplines—such as Agriculture; Animal Health; Life and Consumer Sciences; Environmental Sciences; and Engineering—applied learning is inevitable for the delivery of competent graduates, regardless if the mode of education is distance. Such learning may be contracted to an independent provider and/or offered by the academic department concerned—with or without professional/statutory body involvement and/or contribution. A checklist of aspects to take into consideration includes:

- Set the outcomes of the applied learning experience
- Design the learning, teaching and assessment plan, or a facilitation plan
- Develop learning materials
- Arrange and/or order required facilities, equipment, resources, chemicals, safety precautions, etc.
- Contract technical expertise and/or providers

- Schedule event/s and reserve venues, facilities, accommodations, transportation
- Arrange attendance administration and payment (if applicable)
- Generate invitations/notifications
- Administer bookings and keep records
- Facilitate the lab experiments, workshop training, field-work, practica, etc
- Assess students and record marks; or alternatively develop guidelines and standards for assessment by external facilitators
- Evaluate the success of the intervention
- Conclude the learning experience
- Make sure all equipment and resources are appropriately returned
- Conclude the administration of the specific learning experience

The design, development and facilitation of simulated work experiences

A typology of modes of simulations can be represented as a continuum of differentiation, with low-technology on the one end and high-technology on the other:

Written simulations, including assignments through e-portfolios and complex case studies	3-D models, such as a mannequin, low fidelity & part-task	Screen-based simulation software, DVDs, virtual realities	Standardised real or role play, e.g. trained actors	Intermediate fidelity PC controlled, programme-able; but not fully inter-active	Interactive PC controlled model driven; known as high-fidelity simulation platforms

Neither end of the continuum is better. Relevance of the mode selected is important. In addition to the typology-continuum of modes of simulations a range of six simulation modalities can be identified:

- Low-fidelity simulation modalities — generally static models allowing very little learner interaction
- High-fidelity simulation modalities, e.g. complex simulators
- Standardized patient educators — specially trained 'actors' to portray or demonstrate how
- Serious gaming — uses video game technology

- Desktop simulations and virtual worlds
- Virtual reality and visualisation

The creation an educational simulation is not merely about mechanically performing a series of tasks; instead designing simulations involve imagination, values, and consistency. Four basic design questions are recommended, which are not to be regarded as steps; but rather represents a conscious underlying methodology. The four questions that follow should not be answered explicitly. Well designed simulations contain implicit answers to the four questions:

- What is the problem? — issue, situation (or what is the event about? — general picture)
- Who are the participants? — roles, identities, powers
- What do they have to do? — job, decision-making, function
- What do they do it with? — documents, materials, instructions, existing knowledge

When giving consideration to selecting a ready-made simulation for use or for adapting; the following inventory of conditions upon which to base choice may be used:

- Budgetary constraints and value for money
- Number of students that can participate
- The required timeframe for the complete training or training session
- The abilities required from the target participants
- Involve industry representation in the planning and development of simulations and ensure acceptance of simulations by the relevant industry
- Materials required
- ICT bandwidth insensitivity and inherent technical requirements
    - Simulation will be online or venue based
- The extent to which the objectives of the simulation match the intended learning outcomes
- The potential conveyance of facts and/or information
- The model inherent in the simulation
- The openness (or closed) nature for enabling decision-making
- The communication skills inherent in the simulation
- Language usage requirements
- The behavioural objectives
- The relationship/team-building value
- The prediction practice it offers

High-end technical simulations in the form of PC-based virtual-experiences require specialised (probably external) expertise and substantial capital investment. The development of such simulations comprises a number of stages or sub-processes:

- Production of a funding proposal; tendering specifications; and adherence to the Legal Services guidelines for entering into agreements
- Planning the simulation systematically and the development (in conjunction with the provider selected through procurement process) of:
    - Inputs and outputs to guide the simulation user
    - Establish a framework/blueprint/story
- Use the simulation script to shape the prototype of the software, for example:
    - Physical context in concrete but neutral terms
    - The opening scene sets the stage for the simulation
    - Designate the roles of participants in the simulation
    - Unfolding of events, the nature/climate of the crisis or problem—the term 'crisis' originate from Greek *krinen*, which means to separate; to judge—a simulation is essentially a turning/branching point which participants are required to address
    - Development and incorporation of embedded participant 'thinking space'
- Trial of the simulation software, critical evaluation and reflection
- Refining the software
- Implement the simulation and post simulation debriefing and reflection