

# Procedural Manual on Experiential Learning

1<sup>st</sup> draft (8 November 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 differentiate further 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	a. Academic review and/or feasibility study
2. Curriculum planning	b. Curriculum planning
3. Internal checking and approval	c. Internal checking and approval
4. Programme-level planning and development	<b>d. Learning design</b>
5. Internal checking, approval, accreditation and registration	<b>e. Learning development</b>
6. Evaluating Impact as part of academic review	f. Learning facilitation

## 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 entail discovery learning in the absence of the lecturer—learning materials must enable to required learning and the workplace mentoring. The following serves as checklist in this regard:

- 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
- 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
  - Relationship building within the occupational field
  - Partnering with appropriate and willing hosting organisations and entering into memoranda of undertaking
  - Where feasible, facilitate SETA discretionary grants for *workplace experience*
  - Contracting of the work-integrated learning required and entering into a memorandum of agreement for each student
- 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

In addition to Workplace learning (WPL), the Council for Higher Education advocates a typology of WIL to include three additional curricular modalities, namely:

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

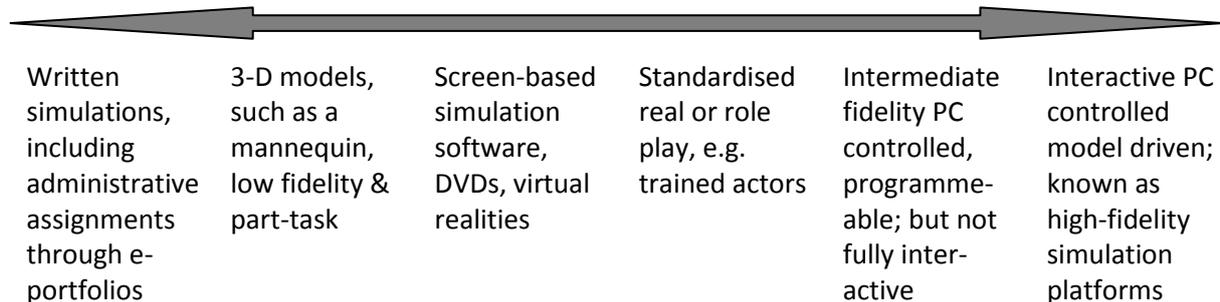
### **The design, development and facilitation of applied learning experiences**

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 objectives of the applied learning experience
- Design the intervention 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 participants (students) and record marks
- 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:



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
- Serious gaming — uses video game technology
- Desktop simulations and virtual worlds
- Virtual reality and visualisation

The creation an educational simulation is not about a series of tasks; instead designing simulations involve imagination, values, and consistency. Four basic design questions are recommended, which not be regarded as steps; but rather 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
- The abilities required from the target participants
- Materials required
- ICT bandwidth insensitivity and inherent technical requirements
- 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 to the simulation
- The openness (or closed) nature for enabling decision-making
- The communication skills inherent to 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 and tendering specifications
- 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