



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY

St. Francis Xavier University (StFX)
DRAFT (5) Experiential Learning Framework

Draft Conceptual Overview

Abstract

This draft is intended to frame collegial consultation across academic and student services areas. The goal is to identify shared principles, gaps, opportunities for providing supports for faculty and units for integrating EL and enable design, evaluation, and phased development

Prepared by Elizabeth Yeo

October 26, 2025, updated as of Nov 10, 2025

Purpose

The StFX Experiential Learning (EL) Framework provides a unified structure for phased development connecting academic, co-curricular, and community-based learning. It ensures that every experiential opportunity contributes to student growth, institutional mission, and national quality standards.

Experiential learning at StFX is built on collaborative partnerships among students, faculty, the university, and community or organizational partners. These partnerships are foundational to creating authentic, reciprocal learning experiences that benefit all stakeholders. Community and organizational partners play a critical role by providing real-world contexts, mentorship, and projects that align with both student learning outcomes and community priorities. This reciprocal approach ensures that experiential learning strengthens relationships, supports local and global needs, and advances StFX's mission of social responsibility.

Grounded in StFX's traditions of **academic excellence, community engagement, and social justice**, the framework positions graduates to lead with empathy, integrity, and purpose. This framework also affirms StFX's commitment to the formation of students as ethical, self-aware, and community-minded leaders. Experiential learning serves as a core vehicle for leadership identity development, enabling students to move from self-awareness to relational leadership and civic action.

In alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action Calls to Action 62 to 65, the framework integrates Indigenous ways of knowing and being. It supports land-based learning, the inclusion of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as co-educators, and the use of storytelling and relational accountability as core pedagogical practices. These elements foster culturally respectful, holistic learning experiences and affirm StFX's commitment to reconciliation, decolonization, and the respectful engagement of Indigenous communities in the co-creation of meaningful educational opportunities. This approach strengthens students' capacity for ethical leadership and deepens their understanding of diverse worldviews.

Specifically, the framework responds to:

- **Call to Action 62:** by supporting the integration of Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into post-secondary classrooms.
- **Call to Action 63:** by building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect through experiential learning.
- **Call to Action 64:** by encouraging education on Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices in collaboration with Elders.
- **Call to Action 65:** by contributing to research and practice that advance understanding of reconciliation in higher education contexts

Framework Overview

Tier	Focus	Framework Alignment	Purpose at StFX
Tier 1	Pedagogy-Experience-Reflection-Assessment	Kolb's Learning Cycle	Core elements for all EL activities
Tier 2: Program-Specific Outcomes & Design	Discipline or context-specific outcomes and practices.	Program accreditation and faculty outcomes.	Supports flexibility and innovation while maintaining consistency.
Tier 3: Undergraduate Learning Outcomes	Core transferable capacities developed through EL experiences.	21st-Century Competencies, OECD Learning Compass, UNESCO Key Competencies, Conference Board Employability Skills, AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes.	Provides shared institutional language for student learning.
Tier 4: 15 Types of Curricular Experiential Learning (Parallel Typology for Co-Curricular EL definitions to be developed)	EL Delivery Type	Provincial Definitions (closely aligned with CEWIL Canada Typology)	Provides shared institutional language for describing EL Activities
Tier 5: Core Experiential Learning Attributes	Shared design principles across programs.	POD Framework, NSEE Principles	Defines quality and ensures alignment and equity across all EL experiences.
Tier 6: EL Standards	Shared quality standards across programs	EL Standards (CAS and CEWIL)	Defines quality and ensure alignment across all EL experiences

Framework Details

Tier 1: Kolb's Learning Cycle: Reflection → Integration → Action → Impact

In 1984, Social Psychologist and adult educator David Kolb published the Experiential Learning Theory, which states that “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

Grasping experience refers to taking in information that occurs in 'Concrete Experience' and 'Abstract Conceptualization' stages. Transforming experience refers to how individuals interpret and act on that information in 'Reflective Observation' and 'Active Experimentation' stages. Kolb's EL model posits that learning is a 4-stage process, and in 2014 Kolb added information about the various roles that educators assume within the four stages.

Kolb's 4-Stage Process

Stage	Definition
Concrete Experience (CE)	The educator is a facilitator. Immediate or concrete experiences occur, and they are the basis for observations and reflections.
Reflective Observation (RO)	The educator is the subject matter expert, leading the reflection by making relevant texts and lectures available, creating space and a framework for systematic analysis through reflective practice.
Abstract Conceptualization (AC)	Reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. The teacher is the standard-setter and evaluator, helping learners master the application of knowledge and skill in order to meet performance requirements.
Active Experimentation (AE)	These implications can be actively tested and guide learners in creating new experiences during AE. Here, the educator is a coach helping learners apply knowledge to achieve their goals in their learning context

At the heart of the framework is an iterative learning cycle that:

- Guides student growth and reflection
- Informs program evaluation and improvement
- Aligns institutional reporting with CEWIL and provincial KPIs

Reflection within this cycle includes examination of personal values, identity, positionality, relational accountability, and leadership practice—key stages in developing self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001) and leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005).

Tier 2: Program Application of Experiential Learning

Each program applies the **POD model (Purpose–Outcomes–Design)**:

- Define **purpose** (career readiness, civic engagement, research, etc.)
- Map **outcomes** to the four graduate attributes and/or program specific learning outcomes.
- Align **design** and assessment with EL attributes.
- When defining outcomes, faculty and staff are encouraged to include personal and leadership development goals alongside academic or professional outcomes, using reflection prompts that help students articulate growth in self-awareness, collaboration, and ethical reasoning.

A POD worksheet supports faculty and staff in designing and evaluating experiences.

Tier 3: StFX Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

Experiential learning at StFX contributes to the development of key undergraduate attributes:

Outcome	Example of Outcome Definition
Critical thinking	Students demonstrate curiosity, reflection, and strategic judgment.
Problem solving	Students plan, evaluate, and use evidence and resources to address complex issues and make informed decisions
Communication	Students communicate ideas with clarity, empathy, and respect for diverse audiences, engaging collaboratively to build understanding and community.
Academic Writing	Students demonstrate advanced academic writing skills by producing clear, coherent, and well-structured scholarly work that adheres to disciplinary conventions, integrates evidence-based arguments, and reflects critical engagement with complex ideas.
Digital, media, and data literacy	Students develop digital, media, and data fluency as cross-cutting competencies that support inquiry, collaboration, and ethical information used across all learning outcomes.
Equity, inclusion, and intercultural understanding	Students demonstrate ethical and intercultural reasoning, respect for difference, and commitment to equity and social and ecological justice in local and global communities.

Proposing a new learning outcome for consideration

In addition, we recommend expanding the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes to include a **Leadership and Community** outcome. This outcome would recognize existing Leadership Development Programs at StFX (McKenna Centre for Leadership, Athletics Leadership Academy, Student Services Leadership Program) and support those programs to recognize student leadership within the proposed framework. This outcome draws upon evidence-based leadership development models (Komives et al., 2005; HERI, 1996) emphasizing relational, inclusive, and ethical leadership. Leadership development at StFX is

scaffolded progressively through curricular and co-curricular experiences (see Table 2), supporting students as they move from self-awareness to mobilizing and developing others. This recognizes StFX's historic and ongoing commitment to developing ethical, community-minded leaders and could be framed as follows:

Leadership and Community: Graduates demonstrate integrity, empathy, and social responsibility through collaborative action and civic engagement. They apply their learning to inspire, mobilize, and contribute meaningfully to communities within and beyond StFX.

Tier 4: Provincial Bilateral Curricular Experiential Learning Typology and Definitions

Appendix 1: Schedule J – Provincial Curricular Experiential Learning Typology and Definitions

J.1 Introduction

Experiential Learning (EL) means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking. One goal of an EL experience is to improve students' employability and support their transition to the opportunities beyond the classroom. During EL experiences, students apply and expand on the program subject matter knowledge and essential employability skills that they acquired in their programs and that are valued by future employers. Curricular EL describes experiential learning that is for academic credit and/or serves as an academic program requirement. The use of 'curricular' differentiates this type of EL from extra- or co-curricular EL.

J.2 Types of Curricular EL

This typology recognizes 15 forms of curricular EL:

1. **Apprenticeship:** An agreement between a person (an apprentice) who wants to learn a skill and an employer who needs a skilled worker and who is willing to sponsor the apprentice and provide paid related practical experience under the direction of a certified journeyperson in a work environment conducive to learning the tasks, activities and functions of a skilled worker.
2. **Community and Industry Research Project:** Students are engaged in research that occurs primarily in or associated with workplaces, includes: consulting projects, design projects, community-based research projects. The concept of workplace should be broadly understood: the corporation, small business, start-up, government department, not-for-profit, international organization, hospital or clinic, community garden, stage, writer's nook, museum are all examples of workplaces. To be very flexible, the idea of a 'place of impact' can be considered alongside a workplace – a place beyond academia in which a student hopes to impact or influence.
3. **Community Service Learning:** Students work in partnership with a community-based organization to apply their disciplinary knowledge to a challenge identified by the organization that helps strengthen communities. CSL is intended to benefit the service provider (the student) and the recipient (the community partner) while maintaining a focus on learning.

4. Co-Operative Education (CO-OP): Co-op consists of alternating academic terms and paid work terms. Co-op internship consists of several co-op work terms back-to-back. In both models, work terms provide experience in a workplace setting related to the student's field of study. The number of required work terms varies by program; however, the time spent in work terms must be at least 30% of the time spent in academic study for programs over 2 years in length and 25% of time for programs 2 years and shorter in length.

5. Creative Performance and Production: As part of a course or academic program requirement, students produce, manage, curate or participate in a dramatic, artistic, literary, dance or musical performance, exhibit or publication for an audience (virtual, live).

6. Entrepreneurship: Students engage in the early-stage development of business start-ups and/or advance external ideas that address real-world needs for academic credit.

1 Adapted from: Lewis, L.H. & Williams, C.J. (1994). In Jackson, L. & Caffarella, R.S. (Eds.). *Experiential Learning: A New Approach* (pp. 5-16). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass and the MAESDPolicy Statement on Experiential Learning, 2017

7. Externship: This type of EL is intended to serve as category for CEL experiences that currently are described using words such as Apprenticeship, Internship, Practicum or Placement differently than the typology definition intends. Often these CEL experiences have learners engaging part-time with a workplace as part of a single academic course. The experience is structured and has opportunities for feedback to the learner. It can be paid or unpaid.

8. Field Trips, Field Courses and Field Schools: Structured, for-credit group learning experiences which take place outside the traditional classroom. Teaching focuses on topics which are enhanced by the academic, cultural, or environmental resources of the field course location. Can be domestic or international. In some cases, the entire course is outside the traditional classroom, in other cases the field element sits alongside classroom learning. Finally, a field course might also describe a scenario where a concrete experience that would usually take place outside of the traditional classroom is brought into the classroom to enhance learning.

9. Field Placement: Provides students with an intensive part-time/short term intensive hands-on practical experience in a setting relevant to their subject of study. Field placements may not require supervision of a registered or licensed professional and the completed work experience hours are not required for professional certification. Field placements account for work- integrated educational experiences not encompassed by other forms, such as co-op, clinic, practicum, and internship.

10. Internship: Usually offers one discipline-specific, supervised, structured paid or unpaid, and for academic credit work experience or practice placement. Internships may occur in the middle of an academic program or after all academic coursework has been completed and prior to graduation. Internships can be of any length but are typically 12 to 16 months long.

11. Land-Based Learning: Land-based learning is education, community and skills building or training that takes place outdoors in particular places of local significance, often on traditional Indigenous territories. The importance of building relationships and the bonding that occur on the land is emphasized, both with participants and educators as well as relationships with non-human relations.

12. Professional Practicum/Clinical Placement: Involves work experience under the supervision of an experienced registered or licensed professional (e.g., preceptor) in any discipline that requires practice-based work experience for professional licensure or certification. Practica are generally unpaid and, as the work is done in a supervised setting, typically students do not have their own workload/caseload.

13. Simulation: As part of a course or academic program requirement, students adopt a character and represent this role within an approximation of the real world as part of the learning process.

14. Undergraduate Experiential Research: Student works to conduct a systematic and in-depth examination of a question / problem by applying the research traditions of their discipline. This form of EL provides students with an opportunity to consider a career in research. The knowledge translation (communication of findings) element of research, which is applicable to many workplaces, should be part of the experience.

15. Work Experience: Intersperses one or two work terms (typically full-time) into an academic program, where work terms provide experience in a workplace setting related to the student's field of study and/or career goals. This term is generally used as an alternative to co-operative education when students engage in a single work-term (as opposed to alternating work-terms).

[end of schedule]

Tier 5: Core Experiential Learning Attributes

All StFX experiential learning opportunities share these design principles:

- **Intentionality:** Clear purpose and articulated outcomes.
- **Integration:** Learning bridges theory and practice.
- **Reflection:** Embedded and critical reflection throughout.
- **Assessment:** Measured learning outcomes and feedback loops.
- **Partnership:** Reciprocal collaboration with community and employers.
- **Equity & Access:** Inclusive participation and barrier reduction.
- **Authenticity:** Real-world relevance and meaningful engagement.
- **Leadership & Agency:** Students are empowered to take initiative, practice collaborative decision-making, and reflect on their capacity to influence positive change
- **Sustainability:** Scalable, resourced, and cost-recoverable design.

Tier 6: Standards for Experiential Learning

CAS Standards for Experiential Learning

CAS Standard Domain	Recommended EL Practices
---------------------	--------------------------

Mission	EL activities articulate clear learning outcomes and support institutional mission and equity commitments.
Program	Structured pre-placement preparation, clear learning agreements, academic reflection, and evaluation processes are in place.
Organization and Leadership	Qualified individuals supervise EL programming with clear roles, training, and oversight.
Human Resources	EL supervisors and partners are selected for capacity to support students and meet legal/safety requirements (e.g., VS Checks).
Ethics	Students sign conduct, confidentiality, and risk waivers; ethical expectations are integrated into training.
Equity and Access	Placement matching considers diverse student needs; accommodations and inclusive practices are built into the process.
Campus and External Relations	MOUs and partnership agreements formalize expectations with host sites; partnerships are developed and sustained intentionally.
Assessment and Evaluation	Regular feedback loops with students, hosts, and faculty support continuous program improvement.
Law, Policy, and Governance	Legal requirements (e.g., insurance, screening checks, compliance with industry standards) are tracked and communicated clearly.
Financial Resources	Costs to students (e.g., VS Checks, travel) are minimized or supported where possible through bursaries or fee waivers. Support across programs should be equitably distributed.
Technology	Central tracking systems are used for placement documentation, learning contracts, and risk management.
Facilities and Equipment	EL placements are only approved at sites with adequate physical safety, access, and supervisory infrastructure.

(Based on the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and CEWIL Canada Standards)

Checklist for Experiential Learning Programs Standards

Pre-Placement Screening and Risk Management Required

- ☐ Are Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks required for placements involving vulnerable populations?
- ☐ Are immunization records and health requirements collected where necessary (e.g., healthcare, childcare)?
- ☐ Has the student completed required workplace safety training (e.g., WHMIS, OH&S)?
- ☐ Have risk acknowledgment or insurance waivers been signed?

Learning Agreements and Documentation

- ☐ Has a learning agreement been signed by all parties (student, site, university)?
- ☐ Has the student signed confidentiality and conduct agreements?
- ☐ Have clear expectations regarding hours, duties, supervision, and assessment been communicated?

Supervision and Mentorship

- ☐ Does the placement site provide a qualified supervisor with mentoring capacity?
- ☐ Are there regular check-ins between student and university supervisor?
- ☐ Is there a clear issue escalation pathway for students?

Academic Integration

- ☐ Is there a pre-placement preparation process (e.g., professionalism, equity, reflective learning)?
- ☐ Are students required to engage in structured reflection (e.g., journals, presentations)?
- ☐ Are assessment criteria for learning outcomes clearly defined?

Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

- ☐ Are students supported in finding placements that consider their access needs (e.g., transportation, finances, disability)?
- ☐ Is there a process for implementing accommodations in collaboration with Accessibility Services?
- ☐ Are students and sites offered training in anti-oppression or cultural humility, if applicable?

Partnership and Host Site Engagement

- ☐ Is there a formal agreement or MOU in place with each host site?
- ☐ Has the site been vetted for safety, relevance, and supervision capacity?
- ☐ Does the site provide a formal orientation to workplace policies and expectations?

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- ☐ Are students asked to provide feedback after placement?
- ☐ Do host sites provide feedback on student performance and university preparation?
- ☐ Are placement experiences reviewed annually to support quality improvement?

EL Assessment and Evaluation

Recommendation: The StFX EL Quality Framework integrates the CEWIL Canada QUALITY WIL FRAMEWORK and CAS STANDARDS for Experiential Learning Programs such as internships, student employment and community engagement. These specific standards, along with broader CAS Learning and Development Outcomes, provide the framework for designing, implementing, assessing and reporting experiential learning across StFX.

Alignment and Impact

This framework integrates:

- **Institutional priorities:** Academic Plan, Student Experience and Opportunities Plan (SEOP), and PACAR Action Plan
- **Provincial deliverables:** Bilateral EL standards and curricular growth
- **National standards:** CEWIL Quality Framework and CAS Standards
- **International standards:** SEKEHE Framework, HIP Framework (AAC&U), World Association for Cooperative & Work-Integrated Education (WACE), UNESCO Guidelines, ACEN Quality Assurance Framework (Australia)
- **Global competencies:** OECD, UNESCO, 21st-Century learning and Conference Board of Canada models

By integrating leadership and community engagement within experiential learning, StFX positions its graduates not only as skilled professionals but as ethical citizens capable of collaborative leadership in diverse contexts

Appendix 1

DRAFT StFX Core Competency & Experiential Learning Pathways- SAMPLE

Introduction

StFX EL is cohesive, academically grounded, and reflective of best practices across the fields of Experiential Learning, Student Development, and Higher Education pedagogy. It is informed by foundational theorists including John Dewey (experience and reflection), David Kolb (experiential learning cycle), Jack Mezirow (transformative learning), Colin Beard (Holistic Experiential Learning Model (HELM)), and Donald Schön (reflection-in-action). The developmental structure also draws from Chickering and Reisser's vectors of student development, situating growth in competence, identity, and purpose. In addition to these established frameworks, the StFX Experiential Learning model honors other ways of knowing, including Indigenous epistemologies that emphasize relationality, reciprocity, and learning through connection to land, community, and story. These perspectives affirm that knowledge is not solely constructed through individual cognition but emerges from lived experience, interdependence, and respect for place and culture. Additionally, as StFX develops its experiential learning curriculum, it is to incorporate Indigenous worldview of connection to place. Despite their distinct cultural foundations, both perspectives assert that learning arises from active, relational interactions with the land (Pearson & Pitt, 2025). From a design perspective, the model aligns with George Kuh's (AAC&U) theory of High-Impact Practices, emphasizing belonging, reflection, and applied learning as drivers of engagement and retention. It also reflects research linking purpose and motivation to student wellness, persistence, and academic success (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Astin, 1993; Tinto, 2012), reinforcing that personal meaning-making is central to thriving in postsecondary education. The leadership dimensions of this model draw from Komives et al.'s Leadership Identity Development model, Baxter Magolda's theory of Self-Authorship, and the Socially Responsible Leadership Model (HERI, 1996). Together, these frameworks emphasize relational leadership, responsibility and service to community and personal integrity as developmental outcomes of experiential learning.

The pathway is distinctively StFX—rooted in community, service, and social justice. It operationalizes our long-standing commitment to educating the whole person by blending intellectual challenge with ethical reflection and meaningful engagement beyond the classroom. The StFX model also brings academic, co-curricular, and career development together in a mutually reinforcing way: when students feel a sense of belonging, they build confidence and purpose; that sense of purpose strengthens motivation and persistence; and greater motivation supports academic success, well-being, and employability.

This approach also supports student wellness and growth by drawing on a strengths-based philosophy and helping students build **career resilience**—the capacity to understand their strengths, adapt to new situations, navigate uncertainty, and make informed choices about what comes next.

The StFX Core Competency & Experiential Learning Pathways, taken together, guide the learning of what it means to be Xaverian: engaged, reflective, community-minded, and prepared to contribute with resilience and purpose to the world beyond campus.

Purpose:

These four-year, parallel curricular and co-curricular developmental pathways support academic and co-curricular learning and provides pathways for phased development.

Alignment:

Co-curricular and Curricular Experiential Learning (EL) opportunities complement and deepen student learning across the student journey, aligned with the Academic Plan and the Student Experience and Opportunity Plan.

To ensure academic integrity and developmental impact, each curricular EL experience includes structured reflection, feedback, and assessment. These EL opportunities share the characteristics of Intention, Integration, Reflection, Assessment, Partnership, Preparation, Feedback, and Equity & Access. Faculty and staff are supported by the Institute for Experiential Learning (aspirational goal)*, the EL Faculty Advisor, and the Centre for Experiential Learning team. This support includes designing reflective activities and grading rubrics that meet these standards as well as managing verification, tracking, and student access.

To ensure academic excellence and sustainability in experiential learning, StFX will establish both a Centre for Experiential Learning and will explore the establishment of an Institute for Experiential Learning, modeled after the successful examples of the Mulroney Institute of Government, the Dahdaleh Institute for Innovation in Rural Health, Coady Institute, and the emerging Institute for Indigenous Governance and Social Justice. The Centre for EL will focus on coordination, standards, and supporting delivery of experiential learning across academic and co-curricular domains, while the Institute will serve as an academic hub—advancing research, pedagogy, and innovation in experiential education. Together, they will ensure that experiential learning at StFX is pedagogically grounded, academically led, institutionally integrated and appropriately supported.

The *Curricular Experiential Learning Pathway* supports departments in expanding for-credit experiential opportunities within their programs, while the *Co-Curricular Student Development Framework* illustrates how Student Services, Academic Affairs, Student Union, the EL team, and other partnerships foster complementary growth in employability, belonging, and leadership. Together, they represent the full developmental journey of a StFX student — academically rigorous, experientially rich, and community-minded.

Table 1: Curricular Experiential Learning Pathway (Academic Focus)

Purpose: To support academic departments in scaffolding for-credit experiential learning (EL) opportunities

Support and Verification: For some curricular EL experiences (i.e. Co-op Education, Internship Courses, and Service Learning) have verification processes. As part of the EL framework, new support and

verification processes will be identified and developed in collaboration with the standards and internal partners.

Year / Stage	Focus	Typical Curricular EL Types (Provincial Typology)	Academic Purpose & Learning Outcomes	Support & Verification
Year 1: Foundations	Exploration and exposure to disciplinary application of knowledge.	Micro-EL (see Appendix 1): Simulations, Creative Performance, Community Service Learning (intro).	Link theory to observation; develop curiosity, reflection, and awareness of community or professional contexts.	Tbd
Year 2: Application	Skill development and applied inquiry.	Community/Industry Research Project, Field Placement, Entrepreneurship, Co-op Education, Service Learning	Build technical, professional, and research skills; demonstrate ability to apply disciplinary methods.	Tbd
Year 3: Integration	Professional identity formation and ethical engagement.	Internship, Co-op, Practicum/Clinical Placement, Advanced Community-Based Project, Field School, Service Learning, course projects.	Integrate theory and practice; apply ethical reasoning and problem-solving in real-world contexts.	Tbd
Year 4: Synthesis & Capstone	Demonstration of mastery and transition readiness.	Capstone Research Project, Community or Industry Research, Creative Production, or Applied Innovation Project, Competitions	Synthesize disciplinary learning; communicate outcomes; demonstrate graduate learning outcomes.	Tbd

Table 2: Guided Pathways and Co-Curricular Development Framework

Purpose: To illustrate how Student Services, the EL team and other campus partners scaffold employability, belonging, and leadership development alongside the academic experience. The Guided Pathways model (Table 2) translates leadership identity development theory into practice, illustrating how Student Services, Academic Affairs, and community partners co-create a progressive co-curricular experience that cultivates self-awareness, relational leadership, and lifelong commitment to community service.

Year / Stage	Focus	Sample Co-Curricular Elements	Developmental Outcomes / Leadership Growth
Year 1: Foundations (Belonging & Self-Awareness)	Exploration, connection, and multiple opportunities to “test and try.” Students build community, discover strengths, and begin linking personal purpose to learning.	Living Learning Communities, early volunteering, clubs, societies, work experiences.	Self-Mastery & Belonging:
Year 2: Application (Career Foundations & Skill Building)	Applying learning and developing transferable skills through experience. Students explore career fields and gain early work exposure.	Peer leadership roles, volunteer/community projects, clubs & societies (member), work and volunteer experiences, leadership roles.	Emerging Leader & Career Explorer Leadership Pathway: Emerging Leader
Year 3: Integration (Relational Leadership & Mentorship)	Deepening career engagement and leadership through service, mentoring, and community collaboration.	Residence Life Staff; Equity & Wellness Peer Mentors; Student Union Executives; Research Assistants; clubs, societies, work & volunteer experiences; career coaching and networking events.	Community Engagement & Impact Leadership Pathway: Mobilizing Others
Year 4: Capstone (Transition & Legacy)	Synthesizing learning and preparing for post-graduation success. Students mentor others and articulate their growth to future employers and communities.	Residence Life Staff, Peer Mentors, Student Union roles, clubs & societies (executive roles), leadership roles. Capstone of leadership & service awards.	Career Readiness Leadership Pathway: Developing Others

Guided Development: StFX Signature Elements to Support Student EL Engagement, Development, and Career Resilience

Year / Stage	Focus	Sample Co-Curricular Elements	Developmental Outcomes / Leadership Growth
Year 1: Foundations (Belonging & Self-Awareness)	Exploration, connection, and multiple opportunities to “test and try.” Students build community, discover strengths, and begin linking personal purpose to learning.	Xaverian Community Foundations modules;(Online Consent, Belonging, Health Relationships, Academic Integrity) REACH Day(peer-led); Explore Experiential Engagement Pilot, Services Fair,; Societies Fair; early volunteer roles; Living Learning Communities	Self-Mastery & Belonging:
Year 2: Application (Career Foundations & Skill Building)	Applying learning and developing transferable skills through experience. Students explore career fields and gain early work exposure.	Career Foundations workshops, Career Studio (Past programs included SAINT Alumni Mentorship Program, XConnects)	Career Explorer Leadership Pathway: Emerging Leader
Year 3: Integration (Relational Leadership & Mentorship)	Deepening career engagement and leadership through service, mentoring, and community collaboration.	Career Foundations workshops, Career Studio (Past programs included SAINT Alumni Mentorship Program, XConnects)	Community Engagement & Impact Leadership Pathway: Mobilizing Others
Year 4: Capstone (Transition & Legacy)	Synthesizing learning and preparing for post-graduation success. Students mentor others and articulate their growth to future employers and communities.	Career Foundations workshops, Career Studio (Past programs included SAINT Alumni Mentorship Program, XConnects)	Career Readiness Leadership Pathway: Developing Others

Pedagogical & Systemic Design Principles

- **Academic Rigor:** Each EL type includes guided reflection, feedback, and assessment. Faculty engage in curriculum design support via the EL Faculty Advisor and other resources tbd such as the Institute for Experiential Learning
- **Governance:** Faculties determine which courses meet EL definitions using provincial typology, supported by the Centre for Experiential Learning. Badges and Microcredentials Framework and proposals will flow through the relevant Curriculum Committee, Faculty and Senate approval processes.

- **Equity and Access:** All programs ensure that students, including those from equity-deserving groups, have access to quality EL. Data will be reviewed annually for participation and impact.
- **E-Portfolios:** Students maintain a longitudinal learning portfolio to collect evidence, reflection, and assessment artifacts, later sharable externally through MyCreds.
- **Evaluation Cycle:** The pathways will be reviewed biennially using CEWIL's Quality Framework to ensure continuous improvement and evidence-informed refinement.
- **Scalability:** A phased rollout will engage champions, supported by the Centre for Experiential Learning, ensuring sustainable integration and workload balance.
- **Leadership Development:** Co-curricular EL experiences intentionally foster leadership capacities, including self-management, collaboration, ethical decision-making, and mentorship. These capacities are assessed through reflective portfolios and co-curricular records.

Recognition Framework for Students and Faculty

- TBD. Badging system that aligns with My Creds has been suggested.
- Recognition method desirable for Faculty in tenure and other processes

Risks and Mitigation Strategies to EL Engagement

The following table identifies potential risks to faculty, student and partner EL engagement. key purpose of the project is to put in place approaches, supports, and capacity to help mitigate the identified risks.

Overarching Risks Across Faculty, Students, Community/Employer Partners

- For some EL types (especially those involving external partners or off campus/remote contexts), the logistics, risk management, and partner capacity issues stand out.
- Many barriers are common across types (e.g., time & scheduling, resource/financial constraints, alignment of academic and partner expectations, access/equity) the table contextualizes them by type.
- Equity/access is a recurring theme — multiple sources highlight underrepresentation of certain student groups in EL opportunities.
- Faculty workload and recognition remain a major barrier — models that ask faculty to build everything from scratch without institutional support tend to face sustainability issues.
- Employer/partner buy in is critical — supervision, alignment, value for partner all matter for sustainability and quality of experience.

Specific stakeholder-group risks summary

Faculty risks

- Feeling **overloaded**: many EL types demand more preparation, supervision, and coordination than typical lectures.
- Lack of support/training in EL pedagogy: faculty may not have been trained in designing EL, or may feel uncertain.
- Unclear academic credit and recognition: EL may not be valued in tenure/promotion systems, so faculty may deprioritize it.
- Variability of student outcomes: Because EL occurs off campus/externally, faculty may worry about consistency, quality control.

Student risks

- Access and equity: under-represented students may have limited access due to cost, travel, networks, or belonging concerns.
- Time/financial constraints: Extra commitments may conflict with paid work, family, other courses.
- Inadequate preparation: Students may not have the skills (e.g., professional behaviours, reflection) to fully benefit from EL.
- Misalignment of expectations: If the placement or experience does not meet their expectations or academic goals, they may disengage.

Employer/Partner risks

- Cost and supervision burden: Hosting students takes staff time, mentoring, orientation; small businesses or nonprofits especially may struggle.
- Misalignment of goals: If student tasks do not align with business needs (or academic goals) partner may feel no value.
- Sustainability and turnover: If partner staff leave or projects are one-offs, the institutional memory is lost — making scaling hard.

Mitigation Strategy Summary Across All Experiential Learning Types

Faculty Mitigation Strategies (Cross-Cutting Themes)

Curriculum & Assessment

- Develop standardized guidelines, rubrics, and learning contracts to ensure academic rigor across diverse EL formats.
- Use structured reflection activities to tie experiential work back to learning outcomes.
- Implement competency-based assessment for non-traditional deliverables (creative work, entrepreneurship, simulation).

Coordination & Oversight

- Use project charters, clear timelines, and centralized coordination tools to reduce complexity.
- Establish check-in points and supervisor evaluations to monitor student progress and quality.
- Conduct site audits and maintain vetted partner databases for quality assurance.

Resource & Scheduling Management

- Utilize shared resource booking systems (studios, labs, field equipment).
- Align project/production timelines with the academic calendar.
- Secure institutional funding, grants, and partnerships for resource-intensive EL types.

Compliance, Safety & Risk Management

- Develop risk management plans, insurance coverage, and cultural competency training (especially field, land-based, clinical).
- Maintain accreditation and regulatory compliance where required.

Faculty Support & Recognition

- Provide professional development (research mentorship, simulation training, entrepreneurship pedagogy).
- Advocate for recognition in workload and promotion for faculty engaged in EL.

Student Mitigation Strategies (Cross-Cutting Themes)

Preparation & Skill Development

- Offer pre-experience training (research methods, professionalism, safety protocols, workplace communication).
- Provide clear expectations through orientations, detailed role descriptions, and project briefs.

Workload, Time, and Academic Balance

- Integrate EL tasks into graded components to reduce perceived “extra work.”
- Provide flexible deadlines, staggered timelines, and workload planning tools.
- Use online or hybrid options for co-op, CSL, fieldwork, and simulation when feasible.

Financial & Access Supports

- Provide bursaries, stipends, travel funds, housing support, and financial transparency.
- Offer virtual alternatives for students with travel, cost, or accessibility barriers.
- Ensure equitable access through targeted support for underrepresented groups.

Wellbeing & Performance Support

- Offer mental health resources, mentorship, and debrief sessions for stressful or high-stakes EL (clinical, performance, entrepreneurship).
- Provide rehearsal support, peer mentoring, and structured reflection.

Clarifying Academic Value

- Communicate how EL contributes to skills, employability, program outcomes, and degree progress.

Employer / Community Partner Mitigation Strategies (Cross-Cutting Themes)

Clear Expectations & Agreements

- Use MOUs, NDAs, and learning agreements outlining deliverables, confidentiality, roles, and timelines.
- Provide supervisor guides, onboarding templates, and role descriptions to minimize ambiguity.

Capacity & Workload Management

- Align student workload and project scope with partner capacity and skill levels.
- Set up contingency plans for project delays or partner constraints.
- Limit group size and rotate involvement to prevent partner fatigue.

Communication & Collaboration

- Maintain regular check-ins, feedback loops, and progress reports.
- Provide a single institutional point of contact for troubleshooting and support.
- Co-design activities with partners to ensure mutual benefit and meaningful engagement.

Scheduling & Timeline Alignment

- Communicate academic calendars early; allow flexible start dates where feasible.
- Schedule activities during low-demand partner periods (industry research, clinics).

Value Proposition & Incentives

- Recognize partner contributions (public acknowledgment, awards, profiles).
- Highlight benefits such as talent pipelines, community impact, and branding.
- Offer institutional support to reduce partner burden (training, cost-sharing models).

Risk and Mitigation Strategies by EL Type and Stakeholder

EL Experience	Faculty	Students	Employer/Partners
Community & Industry Research Project	Risks: Coordination burden; ensuring rigor; external logistics; risk of stalled projects	Risks: Lack of research skills; unclear deliverables; time constraints; access/transport issues.	Risks: Confidentiality issues; misalignment of scope; timing misfit; partner fatigue; risk of no deliverable.
	Mitigation Strategies: Project charters, standardized guidelines, vetted partners, scheduled check-ins, contingency	Mitigation Strategies: Pre-project training, clear briefs, timeline alignment, virtual options.	Mitigation Strategies: NDAs, scope alignment, business-cycle scheduling, partner rotation, interim deliverables.
Community Service Learning	Risks: Integrating service with curriculum; academic value in large classes; limited recognition.	Risks: Transport/logistics challenges; workload balance; perception as extra work.	Risks: Limited capacity; student reliability; risk of tokenistic service.
	Mitigation Strategies: Structured reflection, scalable models, advocate for promotion recognition.	Mitigation Strategies: Transport solutions, service integrated into grading, clear communication of benefits.	Mitigation Strategies: Supervisor training, accountability tools, meaningful co-designed projects.
Co-op Education	Risks: Low oversight; difficulty integrating work-term learning; placement shortages.	Risks: High cost/relocation; course conflicts; financial strain; graduation delays.	Risks: Onboarding time; calendar misalignment; inconsistent student quality.
	Mitigation Strategies: Employer evaluations, reflective assessments, employer network development.	Mitigation Strategies: Financial supports, flexible calendars, transparent fees, academic planning.	Mitigation Strategies: Pre-training, flexible start dates, structured feedback loops.
Creative Performance & Production	Risks: High resource needs; scheduling conflicts; subjective assessment.	Risks: High workload; performance anxiety; balancing academic load.	Risks: Limited external venues; IP issues; production failure risks.
	Mitigation Strategies: Resource planning, aligned schedules, clear rubrics.	Mitigation Strategies: Wellness supports, integrated credit, flexible timelines.	Mitigation Strategies: Formal agreements, IP clarity, realistic expectations and contingencies.

EL Experience	Faculty	Students	Employer/Partners
Entrepreneurship	Risks: Non-traditional assessment; faculty expertise gaps; venture failure risks.	Risks: Limited mentorship; financial burden; unequal access.	Risks: Reluctance to mentor early ventures; uncertainty of outcomes.
	Mitigation Strategies: Competency rubrics, incubator partnerships, normalize failure.	Mitigation Strategies: Mentorship networks, micro-grants, equity supports.	Mitigation Strategies: Structured mentorship, highlight mutual benefits.
Field Trips / Field Courses / Field Schools	Risks: Safety/liability; logistical complexity; weather/access issues.	Risks: Cost/time barriers; accessibility limits.	Risks: Operational disruption; unexpected incidents.
	Mitigation Strategies: Risk plans, centralized logistics, contingency routes.	Mitigation Strategies: Subsidies, strategic scheduling, alternative assignments.	Mitigation Strategies: Low-demand scheduling, group size limits, emergency protocols.
Field Placement	Risks: Uneven site quality; academic integration challenges.	Risks: Stress; unpaid work; travel/time burden.	Risks: Supervisor capacity; liability; misaligned goals.
	Mitigation Strategies: Standardized agreements, audits, learning contracts.	Mitigation Strategies: Orientation, advocacy for paid work, local/virtual options.	Mitigation Strategies: Supervisor training, insurance, co-created objectives.
Internship	Risks: Assessment consistency; academic rigor; finding placements	Risks: Financial strain; unclear expectations; misaligned roles.	Risks: Training burden; risk of low-value work; reluctance to host.
	Mitigation Strategies: Rubrics, reflective assignments, vetted database.	Mitigation Strategies: Bursaries, orientation, matching placements to majors.	Mitigation Strategies: Onboarding templates, meaningful task standards, recognition.
Land-Based Learning	Risks: Cultural sensitivity needs; safety/logistics challenges.	Risks: Travel/cost barriers; physical demands.	Risks: Protocol requirements; limited hosting capacity; seasonality.
	Mitigation Strategies: Cultural training, risk planning, community engagement.	Mitigation Strategies: Subsidies, pre-trip orientation, accommodations.	Mitigation Strategies: Co-design, group limits, seasonal alignment.

EL Experience	Faculty	Students	Employer/Partners
Professional Practicum / Clinical Placement	Risks: Accreditation pressure; inconsistent site quality.	Risks: Strict standards; stress; unpaid demands.	Risks: Liability; supervision burden; regulatory compliance.
	Mitigation Strategies: Compliance checklists, agreements, supervisor training.	Mitigation Strategies: Prep workshops, mentorship, mental health support.	Mitigation Strategies: Insurance, clear expectations, documentation guidance.
Simulation	Risks: High technology cost; faculty training needs; realism alignment.	Risks: Tech access limits; perceived artificiality; scheduling conflicts.	Risks: Cost-sharing concerns; time/resources for involvement.
	Mitigation Strategies: Institutional funding, faculty training, co-designed scenarios.	Mitigation Strategies: Equitable lab time, virtual options, flexible scheduling.	Mitigation Strategies: Recognition/sponsorship, defined roles, minimal time load.
Undergrad Experiential Research	Risks: Mentorship time; funding constraints; unrealistic expectations.	Risks: Inexperience; time conflicts; equity barriers.	Risks: Unrealistic deliverables; limited capacity.
	Mitigation Strategies: Group mentoring, grants, clear scope-setting.	Mitigation Strategies: Methods training, flexible timelines, stipends.	Mitigation Strategies: Clear scope, interim updates, limited cohort sizes.
Work Experience	Risks: Low control of learning quality; integration difficulty.	Risks: Misaligned roles; unpaid work.	Risks: Low-value tasks; limited mentorship.
	Mitigation Strategies: Reflective assignments, credit options.	Mitigation Strategies: Advising, elective credit, financial supports.	Mitigation Strategies: Learning objectives, supervisor training.
Apprenticeship	Risks: Complex coordination; regulatory compliance.	Risks: Long commitments; equity issues.	Risks: Training/supervision burden; regulatory scheduling.
	Mitigation Strategies: Formal agreements, compliance support.	Mitigation Strategies: Flexible schedules, relocation aid, targeted outreach.	Mitigation Strategies: Institutional support, incentives, aligned timelines.
Externship	Limited oversight; logistical challenges.	Risks: Travel cost; limited depth of experience	Risks: Reluctance to host short-term externs.
	Mitigation Strategies: Structured reflection, centralized matching.	Mitigation Strategies: Stipends, virtual options, academic assignments	Mitigation Strategies: Highlight benefits, reduce onboarding burden.

Reference List

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2001). *Making their own way: Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-development*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Beard, C. (2023). *Experiential learning design: Theoretical foundations and effective principles*. Routledge.

Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996. *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development Guidebook*. University of California. [Web site](#)

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Komives, S., Owen, J., Longerbeam, S., Mainella, F.C., & Osteen, L. (2005). Developing a Leadership Identity: A Grounded Theory. *Journal of College Student Development* 46(6), 593-611.

Kuh, G. D., & Schneider, C. G. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: what they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>

Tinto, V. (March 2012). Enhancing student success: Taking the classroom success seriously. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 3(1), 1-8.