

## Experiential Learning

We propose that Trinity students would be required to complete two Experiential Learning units through experiences in two of four areas: community learning, internships, research, and study abroad. In most cases a given experience would count for only one of the two credits, but the Curriculum Committee would consider petitions for exceptions.

While each general area has its own practices and rules, what they all have in common is that they involve experiences beyond the parameters of a typical Trinity course. They might be affiliated with courses—especially in community learning and study abroad—or they might be separate experiences that require independent work—as in most internships and research. In every case, students would have mentors and/or supervisors who would help ensure that the experiences involve learning, reflection, and personal growth.

We list each experiential area here with details about its particular elements, according to the following general parameters:

- What are the learning goals?
- What specific experiences count?
- Who, reporting to the Curriculum Committee, would be responsible for certifying that a particular experience should count?

## **Experiential: Community Learning**

Through Community Learning, students deepen their understanding of local and global issues by building reciprocally-beneficial relationship with community partners.

### **Learning Goals**

Students will:

- Draw meaningful connections between their liberal arts education and the lives of community partners in the Hartford area or beyond.
- Deepen their learning by contributing in ways that help community partners advance their goals.
- Form relationships with community partners outside of their classroom to gain new perspectives on local and/or global issues.
- Communicate their knowledge with others via presentation, written work, or exhibition.

### **What counts:**

- 1 course designated as CLI by the Office of Community Learning
- Other credit bearing community learning experiences (such as Liberal Arts Action Lab, Community Learning Research Fellows, CLIC 301—Community Action Integrated Internship)
- 1 credit of community-based research with a faculty member (such as for a thesis, or independent study)
- 1 intensive non-credit bearing community research experience (such as the Public Humanities Collaborative summer research program)
- An approved community-learning experience undertaken in a study-away program

### **Process for Certifying**

- Faculty who wish to receive a CLI designation for their course must submit a brief proposal to the Office of Community Learning that justifies how it fulfills the three student learning goals above, and its centrality to their course (i.e., a student cannot pass the course without completing the community learning component). Faculty should request approval prior to pre-registration, to allow students and advisors time to plan ways to fulfill this graduation requirement. Also, the faculty member must request the CLI designation for each semester, and for each section of the course, because future instructors or other sections may not necessarily include the community learning component.

- The Director of Community Learning, in consultation with the faculty of the CHER advisory board, will recommend courses to the Curriculum Committee for CLI designation
- All other credit and non-credit bearing experiences will be approved by the Office of Community Learning and recommended to the Curriculum Committee for final approval.
- Students (and their faculty sponsors) may petition the Director of Community Learning and the Curriculum Committee for other means of satisfying the requirement (such as a community-based thesis, independent study, intensive non-credit experience, or study-away program).

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## **Experiential Learning: Study Away**

Study away encourages the pursuit of academic, cultural, and personal exploration in and beyond the classroom. Through place-based learning, students encounter diverse perspectives and communities, engaging actively with space, place, language and culture.

### **Learning Goals**

Students will:

- Develop a deeper understanding of another culture as well as a deeper appreciation of the particularity of their own culture
- Come to understand their own connectedness to social and cultural systems.
- Acquire an enhanced understanding of a skill or area of knowledge that the student is studying academically at Trinity, such as learning and using a foreign language in a country where it is spoken, or acquiring new skills, knowledge, and insights relating to one's major field of study, through culturally-specific education and practice.
- Demonstrate and communicate the personal and academic growth they have achieved through the experience, via presentation, written work, or exhibition,

### **What counts?**

- Spending at least one semester abroad as a full-time student studying on one of Trinity's signature study-away programs or on a Trinity-Approved External Program (AEP), or in the U.S. on an experiential, place-based program, such as Trinity's La MaMa Performing Arts Semester in New York City.
- J-Term and summer study-away courses approved by the process outlined below may count for half of an experiential unit, if they are deemed to be sufficiently experiential and place-based in nature.

### **Process for certifying**

- The Office of Study Away, reporting to the Curriculum Committee, will determine whether a study-away experience, generally in the form of a Trinity-approved program, adequately addresses the learning goals above.
- The Curriculum Committee, in consultation with the Office of Study Away will review requests for other means of satisfying the requirement. Students must have a faculty sponsor and approval prior to engaging in the experience.
- As part of the study-away application process, students will provide a written reflection on how their study away experience will address the above learning goals and relate to their overall academic experience. After the conclusion of their

program, students will provide a written or oral reflection on and evaluation of their experience that addresses the learning goals.

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## **Experiential Learning: Internships**

Students will gain work experience through supervised internships in professional work environments. They will enhance their academic understanding by reflecting on real-world challenges.

### **Learning goals for internships:**

- Apply knowledge, skills, and experience to a work environment
- Build and maintain positive professional/mentee relationships
- Identify, clarify and/or confirm professional direction as it relates to academic studies and life beyond Trinity
- Reflect on the content and process of the work experience in a supervised environment

### **What counts:**

- 150 hours of supervised work that promotes learning through attainable goals and values of measurement. (Must comply with Dept of Labor Fact Sheet #71) Hours could be satisfied by up to two experiences.

### **Process for certifying:**

- Approval by Internship Coordinator and a faculty advisory group, subject to approval by the Curriculum Committee.

## **Experiential Learning: Research**

Through supervised research experiences, students will engage independently in the analysis and synthesis of existing bodies of knowledge, as well as the creation and communication of new knowledge, in the context of one or more disciplines.

### **Learning Goals:**

Students will:

- Determine an initial research question as well as the appropriate methodology to use.
- Engage in the research process, learning
  - To modify the question or the approach or methods in response to new information (to learn how to fail productively)
  - To translate findings among different modes of knowledge
  - To use resources effectively and to take reasoned risks
- Communicate their knowledge to others via presentation, written work, or exhibition, as suitable to the discipline.

### **What Counts:**

- Credit bearing (1 credit or .5 credit) research experiences
- Non-credit bearing (summer research for stipend, on or off campus, a minimum of 5 weeks full-time) research experiences
- Research-focused senior theses

### **Process for Certifying:**

- Research experiences will be approved first by the department or program and then by Curriculum Committee.
- With the support of a faculty sponsor, students may petition for other means of satisfying the requirement to the Curriculum Committee, prior to engaging in the experience.