



Wherever your
journey takes you,
**experience
matters.**

Contents

- 3 What is experiential learning?
- 7 Work-integrated learning at UCalgary
- 13 Milestones in our experiential learning journey
- 19 Experiential learning activities across UCalgary
- 28 What's next



Our rapidly changing world requires experiential learning

Message from Dr. Teri Balsler, PhD, provost and vice-president academic

Our world is changing fast. Socially, politically, environmentally and technologically, today's problems are tangled and messy, requiring adaptive and creative solutions and skills.

Experiential learning opportunities equip our students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. It is a transformational way of teaching and learning that nurtures innovators, entrepreneurial minds, boundary-pushers and creatives to contribute in their communities.

The University of Calgary is committed to nurturing and creating high-quality student experiences. Experiential learning helps our students discover their purpose. The practice draws out strengths, imagination and creativity, so our students can contribute to real change in our communities — during and after their time with us.

At UCalgary, we want to provide more students the opportunity to develop skills through experience, to help them in their future careers. That's why we've created [a plan for experiential learning](#). Our bold vision is one where every student engages in experiential learning opportunities during their time at UCalgary.

I started my own UCalgary journey during COVID-19, in April 2021. I was so impressed by the experiential learning opportunities I saw here, even during such a disruptive time. So many of our educators and community partners worked to build resilience, agility and innovation into their programs and activities.

During the pandemic, I saw teaching transform, new approaches to field education launch and community-based services expand. These are all examples of experiential learning! And I am proud of the students, faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars and our broader community who came together through these learning opportunities to inquire, address and solve our greatest challenges.

It is no question that experiential learning is meaningful, rewarding and challenging work. I invite you to read our first community report about how UCalgary delivers this vital form of education.

I hope our journey inspires you as much as it does me.



We want all students to grow their strengths and skills through authentic learning experiences

Message from Dr. Leslie Reid, PhD, vice-provost (teaching and learning)

When I think of experiential learning (EL), I am taken back to an opportunity I had as an undergraduate student that took me to Baffin Island for a summer in 1992 to work on a geological survey. It was a life-changing experience where I was able to apply what I was learning in the classroom to a real-world project and grow foundational skills like resilience, collaboration and problem-solving.

At the University of Calgary, we want all students to have opportunities to grow their strengths and skills through authentic learning experiences. We are creating a strong foundation for experiential learning, and, through our Experiential Learning Plan, we have identified ways to further understand, champion and scale EL so we can support our students, colleagues and partners who engage in this work.

Since launching our plan, we've worked to expand capacity and reduce barriers by convening and creating networks and communities of practice to understand and support EL activities. Our Experiential Learning Advisory Committee was launched in 2021, and the Office of Experiential Learning is currently supporting the development of a new citywide, cross-organization working group to expand work-integrated learning.

At UCalgary, we've also increased student opportunities by expanding research-based experiential learning, and we are launching a new, work-integrated learning course for undergraduate students, UNIV 304 (Experiential Learning in the Workplace). In supporting the development of *Elevate*, UCalgary's new career, advising and student-experience portal, we've also created space to showcase and scale opportunities for students. Our academic units and student services units are also working hard to expand opportunities for experiential learning in their programs.

As I reflect on our journey, I can't help but think of the many changes and challenges COVID-19 has brought us all since the launch of our Experiential Learning Plan in early 2020. The pandemic has transformed the way we approach experiential learning and has highlighted the importance of EL for our students. We know experiential learning fosters a thriving, diverse and engaged campus, and we need to improve access for all.

I would like to thank our colleagues from across UCalgary for the work they do to support, expand and enhance experiential learning opportunities for our students — their work is reflected throughout this report. I am so proud of the work that's already been done by so many to grow experiential learning at UCalgary and looking forward to what comes next. Please join us in celebrating this incredible work.

What is experiential learning?

Authentic. Innovative. Real-world.

Experiential learning (EL) is learning-by-doing that bridges knowledge and experience through critical reflection. EL activities are intentionally designed to empower learners to enhance individual and collaborative skills such as complex problem-solving, professional practice skills and teamwork. Reflecting critically on these activities helps individuals develop higher-order thinking to challenge and advance their perspectives. The EL process prepares students to take on roles as active citizens and thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Benefits of experiential learning



Student experience

Students find EL deeply engaging and relevant to their future career paths, helping them spark personal interests and their sense of purpose. Students work on projects that improve their civic consciousness and employability, enabling them to grapple with messy problems, sort through different perspectives and develop new ways of thinking.



Community partnerships

EL helps us to engage deeply and meaningfully with communities, fostering reciprocal relationships. It creates active citizens ready to drive positive change in the organizations and communities they belong to and serve.



The health of our economy

Not only is UCalgary the city's second-largest employer, our economic impact extends beyond our workforce. Through EL, we contribute life-changing research and future-ready, highly skilled graduates who contribute to the growth and diversity of the provincial and national economies.



“

As a university student, it can be difficult to know where to begin your journey in developing skills that will be beneficial and/or necessary for your future career. Incorporating experiential learning into a student’s educational journey gives students the opportunity to learn these skills inside and outside the classroom.

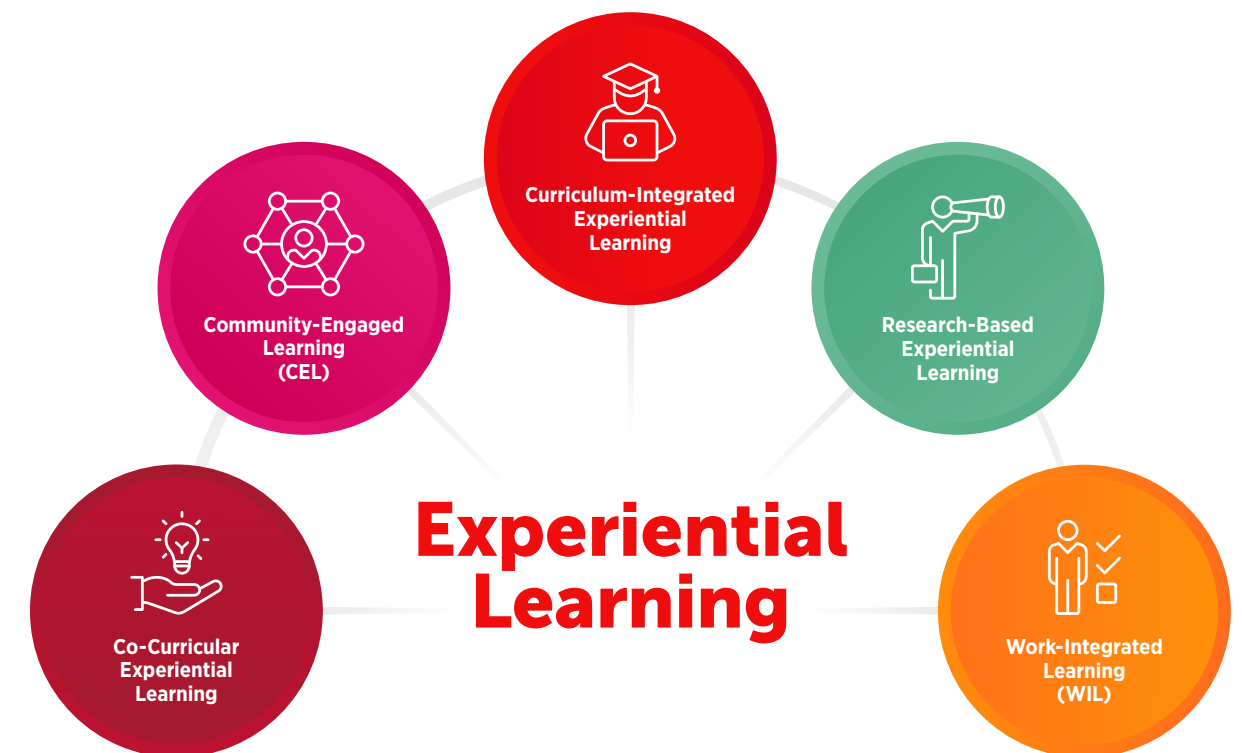
— Alex Paquette, PhD candidate, VP Academic for the Graduate Students’ Association (2020–22)

Our bold vision for experiential learning

By 2025, EL will be a cornerstone of the UCalgary student experience.

All undergraduate students will participate in at least two high-quality EL opportunities during their academic studies and all graduate students in a degree program will have the opportunity to participate in at least one EL opportunity.

Types of experiential learning at UCalgary



- Accelerators • Capstone projects • Case studies • Co-curricular CEL • Co-curricular internships • Community-engaged research • Competitions • Consulting projects • Co-operative education • Course-based research projects • Creative performance/exhibits • Curricular CEL projects/placements • Design/project-based learning • Field schools • Hackathons • Immersive personal development programs • Individual research projects/studentships • International/cross-cultural learning experiences • Internships • Knowledge Keeper-guided learning • Laboratories • Land-based education • Paraprofessional placement/on-campus employment • Pitch competitions • Professional/clinical practice/field experience/practica • Research assistantships • Simulations • Studios • Supported volunteer experiences

Our Experiential Learning Plan



UCalgary has always been a place of transformative teaching and learning.

A priority of our teaching and learning is **experiential learning (EL)**. UCalgary’s bold commitment to EL, as described in our **Experiential Learning Plan**, makes learning-by-doing a cornerstone of our student experience and positions our university to become a leader among Canadian post-secondary institutions.

The plan provides a framework that includes common language, criteria and categories, allowing us to effectively describe and promote EL opportunities to students and partners. A common framework also allows us to measure our progress, recognize efforts, and collaborate across units and disciplines to build capacity in EL and collectively create new ways of teaching and learning.

Read the plan and learn more at ucalgary.ca/experiential-learning



“

My co-op experience really allowed me to operate beyond my comfort zone and learn how to work in a team setting. Prior to my work experience, I had limited knowledge on how to effectively collaborate and communicate in team settings.

Thus, through my work term I was able to gain valuable experiences that pushed me to enhance my communication and collaboration skills.

— **Sigma Azad**, Bachelor of Commerce student, Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources, Experiential Learning assistant

The Office of Experiential Learning (OEL)

Located in the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, the OEL acts as our central hub for EL, working in partnership with teams across campus. The office is guided by the priorities set in the Experiential Learning Plan to build capacity for, enhance access to and promote high-impact EL opportunities for all UCalgary students.

What we do:

Provide pedagogical support in the development and assessment of EL in courses and programs

Support institutional projects and initiatives that advance EL at UCalgary

Connect networks across UCalgary and the broader community to expand and enhance EL

Work-integrated learning at UCalgary

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a form of experiential learning (EL) focused on career and skills development, integrating academic studies into the workplace or practice setting. It is a partnership between the academic institution, host organization and student. WIL experiences vary by discipline, but what underlines all offerings is work experience for students that enhances their skills, helps them explore career pathways and grows their professional networks.

WIL has long been the core component of several degree programs at UCalgary, and, since the launch of our Experiential Learning Plan, units across campus have worked to further co-ordinate, support and scale WIL.

82% of UCalgary academic programs provide opportunities for work-integrated learning



“

Whether it's working on a project with a non-profit partner, completing a clinical placement or getting paid work experience through a co-op or internship position, we want all students to have the opportunity to explore their interests, enhance their skills and grow their professional network.

Our teams at UCalgary are increasing our program offerings and digging into what's needed to make EL and WIL accessible to all students.

— **Erin Kaipainen**, director, Experiential and Work-Integrated Learning, Office of Experiential Learning

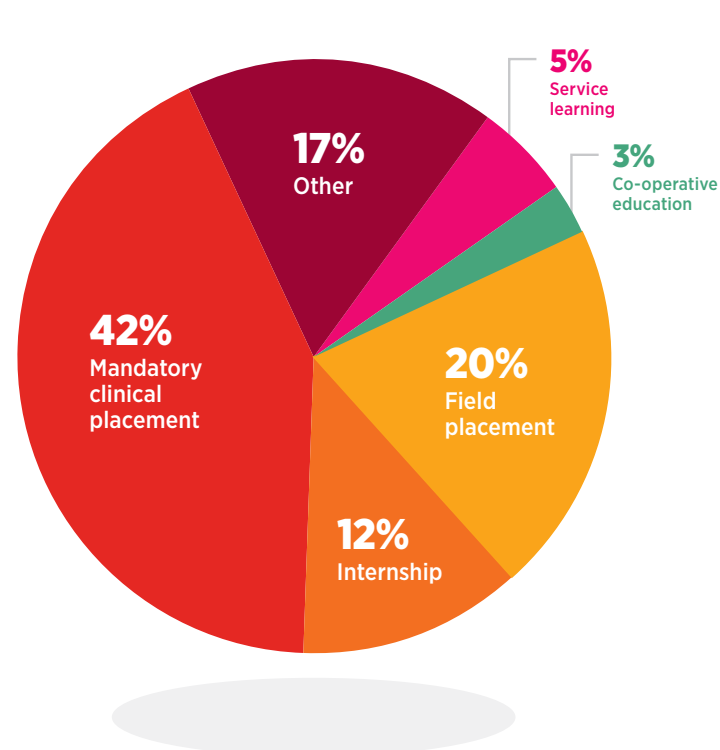
Reporting on work-integrated learning

WIL is gaining provincial and national attention. It is important to track key metrics in this form of learning, so we can establish baselines of student participation. In the province of Alberta, WIL has been identified as a performance metric for post-secondary institutions. We have been tracking opportunities and participation in WIL across our programs to ensure we meet student and community needs and identify areas for growth. We are also working with student demographic data to ensure all students have access to WIL.

There are several types of WIL including internship and co-op placements, community-engaged (service) learning, field and clinical placements as well as partnered capstone, consulting or research projects.

In the 2020–21 academic year
24% of undergraduate • 19% of graduate students participated in a WIL activity

Types of work-integrated learning in 2020–21



- Co-operative education & internship**
 Full- and part-time work terms with an industry or community partner. These programs are typically paid and vary across disciplines at UCalgary.
- Service (community-engaged) learning**
 Courses engaging students directly with non-profit partners around a community-identified challenge.
- Field placement & mandatory clinical placement**
 Practical, hands-on experience that is typically unpaid, such as clinical placements in nursing, field placements in education and social work, and optional practicum placements in kinesiology.
- Other forms of WIL** that include directed field study, research, consulting and capstone projects that partner with community or industry.

Percentages in pie chart show the distribution of the types of WIL undertaken by all students during the 2020-21 academic year.

Tracking student participation in WIL courses

The table below shows the total number of full- and part-time students who have registered in at least one WIL course over the last three academic years, broken down by undergraduate and graduate students. Also included is what each number represents as a proportion of each course-taking student group.*

Academic year	COURSE-TAKING STUDENTS IN WIL					
	Undergraduate			Graduate		
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total number of course-taking students who completed WIL	7,152	6,922	7,260	1,191	1,279	1,582
Percentage of total course-taking students	25.7%	24.6%	25.2%	22.7%	22.9%	26.9%

Although there were fewer work placement opportunities during COVID-19, participation in WIL stayed relatively consistent during the pandemic.

Around 1/4 of undergraduate students benefited from a WIL experience each year between 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Breakdown by international and Indigenous course-taking students in WIL**

International	509	523	651	207	285	268
Percentage of total course-taking international students	18.7%	16.9%	19.6%	18.2%	19.5%	16.9%
Indigenous	193	208	275	53	36	69
Percentage of total course-taking Indigenous students	25.8%	26.1%	29.6%	27.9%	17.0%	28.8%

Proportion by gender of course-taking students enrolled in WIL courses***

Male	2,819	2,709	2,883	420	503	646
Percentage of total course-taking male students	22.2%	21.3%	21.9%	19.2%	21.2%	25.2%
Female	4,328	4,211	4,373	769	775	934
Percentage of total course-taking female students	28.6%	27.2%	27.9%	25.0%	24.1%	28.2%

* Course-taking students represents a unique count of full- and part-time students registered in at least one course. Students are counted within the first academic career they are enrolled in during an academic year. Course-taking student counts are less than the total student population count as total student population counts include those students not taking courses (such as PhD, master's thesis and Postgraduate Medical Education).

** Currently at the University of Calgary, we are only able to report on participation rates of students by some demographic groups including gender, Indigenous and international students. UCalgary is working to collect and track demographic student data from all equity-deserving groups through initiatives such as the Student Equity Census. As institutional data becomes available through the EDI Dashboard and EDI Data Hub we will be tracking participation rates in EL and working to create equitable pathways for all students.

*** Participation rates for non-binary, transgender and undisclosed gender-status students cannot be reported following Statistics Canada best practices of suppressing data counts of less than five when sharing or publishing data.

“



Students have been incredibly vocal about their interest towards engaging with experiential learning from early on in their university degrees. They are eager to take on additional opportunities that complement the theoretical knowledge they acquire in their courses.

Experiential learning is incredibly important for students as it provides them with real-life, hands-on experience to be better equipped to transition into the workforce and be an active contributor, both in their field of study and greater society.

— **Renzo Pereyra**, BA'22, VP Academic for the University of Calgary Students' Union (2021-22)

Exploring ways UCalgary has amplified WIL across our campus and in the communities we serve



Tracking WIL in our courses

Leaders from academic units, Office of the Provost, Registrar's Office, Office of Institutional Analysis and Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) are working together to identify, tag and track courses that align with WIL. Identifying courses consistently taught as WIL within PeopleSoft enables the university to pinpoint opportunities for growth and accurately report WIL availability to governing bodies. In the future, this same data can be used to help students identify and enrol in WIL courses.



Supporting new programs in incorporating EL and WIL

The Program Innovation Hub works with academic units to support the development and approval of new academic programs. They work closely with the OEL to help units embed EL and WIL opportunities into these programs, ensuring a valuable student experience.



Increasing access to WIL for undergraduate and graduate students

Through the creation of a flexible, for-credit undergraduate WIL course »

In Fall 2022, the Faculty of Arts and the OEL will pilot UNIV 304 (Experiential Learning in the Workplace), a new course for students to simultaneously integrate a work, volunteer or career-exploration experience with professional and personal development-related learning activities and critical reflection. Designed with flexibility in mind, the course is open to students across faculties who want to experience WIL amidst other commitments and responsibilities, or who are looking to confirm their interest in pursuing more of these experiences.

Through the expansion of graduate internships »

The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) offers the Transformative Talent Internship (TTI) program, in which graduate students in programs without a required co-op or internship course can undertake an optional, skills-based internship through enrolment in an Internship (INTE) course. These internships support graduate students in exploring careers and growing professional networks. Meanwhile, the flexibility of an internship allows employers to engage graduate students to complete short-term projects and test out the ideas of highly trained graduate students. Internships can help both students and employers find the right fit.

Outcomes from the graduate internship program are overwhelmingly positive, with employers regularly reporting on the positive injection of the critical thinking and innovative problem-solving skills of UCalgary graduate interns into local business.

FGS is currently piloting more robust self-learning and reflective experiences, as well as more opportunities for connection with other interns and employers. FGS is also proposing an expansion of the TTI program and INTE courses to make it simpler for any graduate program to include an optional internship. The faculty is also looking to develop shorter-term field placements, externships, job-shadowing and service-learning experiences to support graduate students in their career planning.

“

Through my internship, I got to experience the work environment, culture and atmosphere first-hand in Canada. More importantly, I have also learned to communicate and cooperate more effectively with my colleagues.

— **Yue Xu**, MSc'18, Mathematics & Statistics



Co-creating the Calgary Consortium for WIL

UCalgary is partnering with Calgary Economic Development, Alberta University of the Arts, Ambrose University, Bow Valley College, Mount Royal University, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and St. Mary's University to establish a regional hub for talent development and WIL. Once developed, the Calgary Consortium will include a central team to support WIL at the partnering institutions, as well as a common platform for industry and community partners to recruit student talent.



Secured funding to create paid student placements during COVID-19

During COVID-19, UCalgary leveraged just under \$1 million in federal funding to create co-op and internship roles with teams across campus, from research labs and student services to teaching and learning, through the Student Work Placement Program. Despite the rapid contraction of WIL placements across Canada due to the pandemic, partners at UCalgary worked together to create new paid-work opportunities for 147 undergraduate and graduate students.



Leveraging Mitacs funding to expand WIL opportunities

One of UCalgary's experiential learning partners is the national not-for-profit organization, Mitacs. Mitacs connects post-secondary institutions with businesses and community partners to solve problems and drive research and innovation, offering funds to support internships for students and postdoctoral researchers.

Since 2019, UCalgary nearly doubled Mitacs funding and student opportunities, having leveraged more than \$15 million to support our students, communities and economy.

Mitacs-funded internships at UCalgary 2019-2021

	2019	2020	2021
No. of students	158	280	288
Total value	\$3,918,147	\$5,059,698	\$6,230,645

“This internship is in perfect alignment with what I wanted to do in sustainability, and the skills I wanted to learn from a business point of view.”

— Eric Salkauskas, BSc (Eng)'20, MMgmt'21, intern, CMC Research Institutes (MITACS Business Strategy Internship Program)

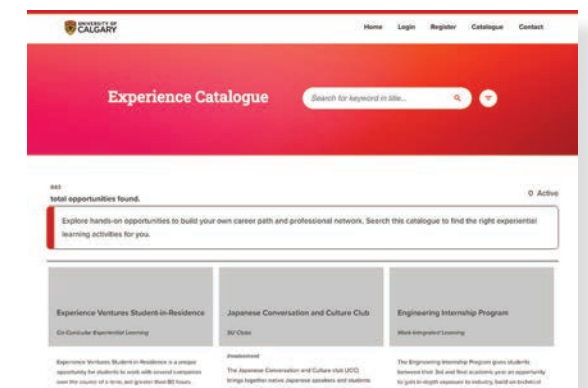


Milestones in our experiential learning journey

Elevate, UCalgary's career, advising and student-experience portal launched

Elevate harmonizes several tools into one career, advising and student-experience portal. The platform links students, faculty, staff and community partners to experiential learning (EL) opportunities. Traditionally used by co-op and internship programs, the platform is now being explored and adopted by leaders of other forms of experiential and work-integrated learning (WIL), including case competitions, field placements and practicums.

Elevate increases the visibility of EL opportunities and supports the administration and metrics tracking of EL activities. Current and prospective students can search the Experience Catalogue on Elevate for more than 800 different opportunities.



“Having a one-stop-shop experience in the Elevate platform for experiential learning is a huge step in making these activities a priority. Having these opportunities accessible and visible for students makes it that much easier for us to find and secure important experiences during our degrees.”

— Chaten Jessel,
UCalgary Students' Union Faculty of Science representative (2020-22)



Expansion of research-based EL opportunities

Since the launch of the plan, the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) has worked to increase course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs), expand and enhance the Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) program, explore digital tools to increase the visibility of undergraduate research opportunities, and integrate equity, diversity and inclusion and Indigenous-engagement practices and principles into undergraduate research.

Read more about the work towards expanding access to undergraduate research opportunities in our [Undergraduate Research Initiative Report](#).



When we collect data from a community, we should always have the intent to return to that community with findings to improve circumstances or facilitate change.

One of the biggest lessons (supervisor) Dr. (Turin) Chowdhury taught me is that, as researchers, we must strive to use our knowledge in meaningful and proactive ways. Translating our findings into action is an essential part of research.

— Jenna Salem, Bachelor of Health Science student, PURE research student



Support to teach experientially

The OEL team continues to develop pedagogical resources to support educators in developing and facilitating EL activities, including a [badge program in EL Foundations](#) and an [online module on critical reflection in EL](#). The team has also provided workshops and consultations to support faculty and staff. To date, 144 consultations have occurred and 647 people have been engaged through custom workshops.

647
engaged through
custom workshops

EL in the Curriculum mapping project completed to understand curriculum-based EL across UCalgary courses

Further understanding the breadth of EL happening within and across academic programs enables the OEL to:

- » recognize and celebrate EL activities;
- » amplify what is happening across the campus; and
- » see the potential of where more EL opportunities could be offered.

This project started collaborative and rich conversations with all facilities and initiated the gathering of data to understand the nature and impact of EL initiatives. So far, 1,470 UCalgary courses have been mapped as having an EL opportunity for students.

1,470
UCalgary courses have
an EL opportunity for
students (so far)

Students inform equitable pathways to EL

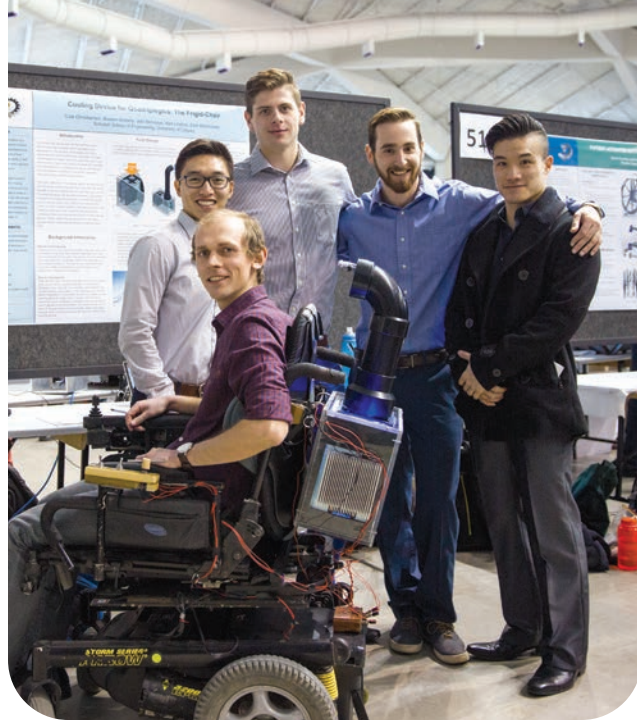
In August 2021, the OEL launched the research project, [Equitable Pathways to Experiential Learning](#), to better understand student perspectives on barriers to participating in EL, and students' recommendations to minimize such barriers. This research project was designed through an inclusive, cross-campus approach and captured feedback from 2,002 students.

Students identified the following as barriers to participating in EL:

- » financial pressures;
- » limited resources;
- » lack of time and/or energy;
- » design of EL activities;
- » lack of confidence, difficulty seeing themselves in EL;
- » limited information and/or information about EL;
- » difficulty finding EL activities;
- » mental health concerns; and
- » need for guidance in pursuing EL.

Participants recommended the following to improve access and inclusion in EL at UCalgary:

- » adopting principles of universal design in the planning of EL activities;
- » increasing the number and variety of EL activities, including making EL available early in degree programs;
- » enhancing messaging to students about EL and increasing communication about EL opportunities;
- » providing financial support for students to participate in EL; and
- » ensuring diverse representation in promotion and co-ordination of EL activities.



Experiential learning allows students to not only improve their job prospects after university, but helps them grow and develop a strong sense of self. While these opportunities improve student experience, there are barriers that can prevent participation. It is essential that these activities are designed and executed with inclusion and accessibility at the forefront to meet the needs of all students.

— Shaziah Jinnah, VP Academic for the University of Calgary Students' Union (2021-22)

Experiential Learning Advisory Committee created

Launched in 2021, a new institutional committee was created to guide, support and help track the implementation of UCalgary's Experiential Learning Plan. The Experiential Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) brings together EL stakeholders from across academic and non-academic units and includes representation from student associations.

Central website for EL launched

The OEL has worked with various stakeholders to build a **central website** to house EL resources and connect more students to opportunities. The site will socialize and break down EL activities, share progress on the Experiential Learning Plan, connect faculty and staff to more EL resources, and act as a central hub to connect industry and community partners to faculties and units at UCalgary to create more opportunities for students.

Grants secured to support and expand EL

Funded by the Office of the Provost, the **University of Calgary Teaching and Learning Grants** are designed to enhance student learning experiences through the integration of teaching, learning and research. Grant streams explore development, innovation, and the scholarship of teaching and learning across UCalgary faculties and units.

Outcomes of these projects will help expand opportunities for and contribute to knowledge that helps us better understand and improve student learning experiences across UCalgary.

In 2021, more than 35% of the grants awarded directly related to EL and undergraduate research. In 2022, this increased to 50% of the funded grants. In the past two years, more than \$700,000 has been dedicated to funding projects related to EL and undergraduate research through the UCalgary Teaching and Learning Grants program.

\$700k
in grants dedicated to EL research awarded in 2021 and 2022

Educators recognized through awards for excellence in EL

Since 2014, the University of Calgary Teaching Awards have recognized 12 individuals and/or teams of educators who have made outstanding contributions to EL and WIL across academic programs. Our award-winners from 2021 are highlighted below.



Catherine Heggerud (Haskayne School of Business),
UCalgary Teaching Award for Work-Integrated Learning 2021

Heggerud's students describe her courses as having a lasting impact on their career decisions and their overall career happiness. She continues to lead a field project program that has rapidly grown in popularity since its introduction in 2016.



Dr. Mindi Summers, PhD (Faculty of Science),
UCalgary Teaching Award for Experiential Learning 2021

Summers' students described her courses as creative, innovative, collaborative and reflective. They highlight her unique ability to work with students as co-designers of their learning experiences. Her courses are grounded in community engagement and undergraduate research.



We must recognize that engaging in experiential learning may come with extra demands and competing priorities for both students and instructors. In acknowledging this, we need to provide appropriate support to address these concerns. However, the benefits of experiential learning may profoundly impact the wellbeing of the campus community and to those we serve through a sense of purpose, increased connection and a sense of belonging among peers and communities.

— **Dr. Andrew Szeto, PhD**, director, Campus Mental Health Strategy, associate professor, Department of Psychology





●●● Experiential learning activities across UCalgary

The **Cumming School of Medicine's** Bachelor of Health Sciences Health and Society undergraduate students develop critical thinking skills while visiting Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, located in the Siksika Nation. They learn about colonialism, language, culture and traditions that shape the health of Indigenous communities. This activity is now in its third year, with 48 students having taken part.

The **Faculty of Arts'** INDG 502.4 course prepares undergraduate students to apply ethical approaches in working with, by and for Indigenous-focused organizations and communities. Students explore Indigenous and blended applied research methods and protocols to help find practical solutions and build services by using community-based approaches.

The **Faculty of Graduate Studies** offers the Transformative Talent Internship (TTI) program, in which all graduate students in programs without a required co-op or internship course have the opportunity to take an optional, skills-based internship through enrolment in an Internship (INTE) course. Since launching in 2016, 275 master's and PhD students have participated in the TTI program.

The **Faculty of Kinesiology's** Master of Kinesiology program in applied exercise science and physiology prepares graduate students to work in various settings by offering two practicum placements, a capstone project, and other EL and WIL opportunities. Since 2016, a total of 53 students have graduated from the program.

The **Faculty of Law's** Business Venture Clinic (BVC) offers students the opportunity to provide pro bono legal counsel to local entrepreneurs, helping students learn invaluable practical skills in business law and supporting new, innovative businesses. As of August 2021, more than 95 students have participated in the BVC, generating more than 740 legal insights for more than 490 entrepreneurs and startups.

“

My experiential learning at the Faculty of Law provided me the hands-on experience I needed to get a head start in my career. Being able to already think on my feet in court and know a lot of the procedural issues that only come with experience in the courts was imperative to gaining confidence in my career in becoming a lawyer.

— Gregory Whiteside, JD'18, Law



The **Faculty of Nursing's** Clinical Simulation Learning Centre prepares students for transition and readiness to practice by integrating simulation and technology into the classroom. Growing proficiency and confidence, students receive exposure to real-life scenarios in safe and controlled environments, leading to enhanced patient care and safety. Hundreds of students have gained experience in the Centre.

The **Faculty of Science** organizes students to participate in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) projects, which connect them to international partners to enhance discipline-specific learning. Recent projects include analysis of public health data, fisheries and sustainable consumer seafood, and conservation biology analyses. 313 students have participated in six projects spanning 2017-2021.

The **Faculty of Social Work** works with an Indigenous wellness Elder who teaches senior social work students about the integration of cultural protocol, ways of being and Indigenous cultural practices in SOWK 553. Experiential and cultural components of learning and a debriefing circle happen each class. So far, 236 students have taken part in the program.

The **Faculty of Veterinary Medicine's** Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program is one of only a few in the world to employ a community-based teaching model. The program gives students insights and connection to local rural and urban communities and organizations throughout Alberta, while building their technical and practical skills and knowledge of agriculture and animal welfare.

The **Graduate Students' Association** supports the Peer Beyond Graduate Research Conference, where grad students gain experience by presenting their research to peers, while gaining valuable networking opportunities and feedback to continue their work. A total of 136 graduate students presented at the 2022 conference to more than 300 attendees.

“

As nursing students, experience is key to our learning. Being able to apply the theories and skills taught in class with real people is both awkward and exciting.

We learn to embrace that feeling of awkwardness in our simulations and placements and reflect on them and use those experiences to focus our efforts and sharpen our skills.

— **Greg Mulzner**, BN'21, Nursing

“

Honestly, the greatest help is getting feedback from your peers and faculty members in attendance. I attended Peer Beyond during my MA and received a ton of feedback on my project, much of which went into enriching my proposal.

Now, in my PhD, I am excited to attend again as it will be close to my candidacy exam, so the opportunity to practice speaking about my work will be very helpful!

— **Harrison Campbell**, MA'19, PhD student in education

The **Haskayne School of Business'** Master of Management pairs small businesses, new ventures, social enterprises and non-profits with students who provide pro bono consultation on business problems or projects. Students get the opportunity to build business work experience and apply skills from the classroom to real-world projects. In 2021, 100% of students surveyed felt the program added value to their degree.

Library and Cultural Resources (LCR) hires students in areas such as information and technology services, museum and curatorial practice, collections and preservation, and the Military Museums. More than 55 students from both internal and external UCalgary communities were employed in 2021, alone.

The **Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI)** welcomed its inaugural cohort of seven students to its new internship program, Equity and Inclusive Leadership (EIL), this past March. EIL draws upon and supports student leaders of diverse identity backgrounds and lived experiences. During the program, students will gain competencies, knowledge, skills and experiences as they work on various projects including research, policy reviews and institutional scans.

The **Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking** enables 2,025 students across nine Canadian post-secondaries to gain paid EL opportunities through Experience Ventures, a program that partners students with real-world innovators. A total of 150 students from the program compete in a national hackathon, working with community leaders to apply entrepreneurial thinking skills to pressing challenges.





“

My position as the Indigenous librarian assistant has enabled me to take my learning beyond the classroom, applying my passion for Indigenous advocacy and education to several projects. My mentors continually challenge me with opportunities to develop my skill set while providing a safe space to take meaningful risks. I'm incredibly grateful for my time working as a student in LCR and will carry what I've learned into my future studies and career opportunities.

— Emilee Bews, BA'22, Indigenous librarian assistant

The **Office of Indigenous Engagement** supports EL opportunities for Indigenous students and provides guidance to many units and programs across campus including the Indigenous Summer Student Program led by **Human Resources**. This annual work-experience program promotes career development through Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, connecting and being. In 2021, 27 students were hired across campus, nearly doubling the number of positions from previous years.

The **School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape's** Co-Created Practice (CCP) is a student-led research effort to understand collaborative processes in city-making. Students take on leadership roles and engage with local communities, stakeholders and interest groups in their research. Past projects included consultation on the Calgary ring road and the Plus-15 system.

University of Calgary in Qatar's Undergraduate Nursing Program actively engages its local and global community through EL opportunities such as students participating in outreach events to support public health. Most recently, students staffed a free blood-pressure clinic at a local mall.

The **Office of Sustainability's** Campus as a Learning Lab (CLL) supports EL activities that foster sustainability. In 2021, participating students developed sustainability-leadership competencies while engaging in research projects such as food resiliency, energy-efficiency and circular economy. More than 1,500 students participated in CLL initiatives in 2021-22.

Student and Enrolment Service's Career-Skill Articulation Program (CAP) is a semester-long professional-development opportunity where university-employed students receive the support of a mentor to develop their professional communication and meta-cognition skills. To date, 135 students have been through the program since its start in Winter 2021.

UC International's Global Community Challenge creates opportunities for students to work in cross-cultural and transdisciplinary teams to identify solutions for real-world challenges faced by community organizations. To date, 319 students from UCalgary and 16 of our international partner universities have participated in the challenge, working to support 27 local organizations.

The **Campus Mental Health Strategy's** embedded Certificate in Mental Wellbeing and Resilience's capstone course brings together interdisciplinary teams of students to develop solutions to topics on campus and with partner organizations. The certificate is the first of its kind in Canada and has won a Teaching Award for Curriculum Development. At present, 148 students are enrolled in the certificate.

Werklund School of Education Bachelor of Education students undertake 20 weeks of in-classroom practicum, or field experience, organized into four, cohort-based courses. All field experiences involve school learning experiences supported by an online classroom environment. To date, 1,891 student placements have been filled.

The **Schulich School of Engineering (SSE)** has one of the largest engineering internship programs in Canada, providing students with 12-16 months of paid work experience. The program has grown year over year and, in 2021, placements increased by 30% from 396 in 2020 to 569 in 2021. SSE continues to add new ways to enhance students' career preparation including the early degree career practicum program and an externship.



“

When you're in the class, you don't have as much time to learn all concepts deeply. My internship with HiFi Engineering gave me the opportunity to think deeply about how to solve a problem.

The work was all hands-on. And, during the manufacturing process, I really improved my problem-solving skills.

— Niloufar Ghazavi, BSc (Eng)'19, Mechanical Engineering



“

My placement and time spent at my field experience school was, to say the least, outstanding. Perhaps the two greatest takeaways I've gained from this experience are:

- 1) teaching is an extraordinarily demanding profession, and
- 2) I cannot possibly see myself doing anything else.

You've helped confirm for me my passion to be a teacher and, for that, I thank you all so much.

— Werklund School of Education
field experience student, 2021

Supporting professional and lifelong learning

Our work doesn't stop after a degree program. UCalgary supports recent graduates in finding career experience and transitioning their careers.

Continuing Education is a key partner in the Energy to Digital Growth Education and Upskilling Project (EDGE UP). The flexible training program supports people displaced from the oil and gas sector looking to secure jobs in tech. The program includes a work-integrated activity, where participants work with an organization on a real-world project. So far, 70 students have graduated from the program.

The **Office of Advancement** piloted a new Communications Articling Program, starting in 2021. These positions provide extensive on-the-job training over a two-year fixed term. The program offers opportunities to develop real-world work experience and professional communication skills.

Collaboration and community

EL provides opportunities for students and knowledge experts across disciplines, communities and organizations to come together to expand understanding of, explore and tackle society's biggest challenges.

UCalgary students participate every year in the **International Genetically Engineered Machines (iGEM) Competition**. With the support of student mentors and faculty advisors, multidisciplinary teams develop solutions to address everyday issues. UCalgary students have gained recognition worldwide over the years with award-winning projects on topics such as food nutrition, energy, entrepreneurship and the environment.

Libraries and Cultural Resources partners with programs across campus to integrate curricular EL opportunities using the library, archives and special collections. English and history courses are designed with hands-on experiences using archival materials and primary sources, allowing students to develop their skills in critical literacy while working with historical materials, digitization and curation.

The multi-faculty, course-based **Master of Science in Sustainable Energy Development** provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to energy and environmental management by combining five disciplines: business, engineering, law, policy and environmental science. Coupled with EL opportunities, this interdisciplinary curriculum prepares graduates for roles within renewable energy, government, environmental consultation and more.

The **Werklund School of Education** partners with a range of community and campus partners to offer service-learning initiatives. In these experiences, students work with children and youth, apply course concepts to the real world, and get co-curricular credit while building a professional network. Partner organizations have provided more than 1,000 placements for Werklund students so far.



Programs in the **School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape (SAPL)** engage students in designing solutions to real community issues. SAPL offers an intercultural, community-based design studio in partnership with Tsuut'ina First Nation, demonstrating a necessary commitment to learning from Indigenous communities. The project includes opportunities for students to learn-by-doing and engage meaningfully with Traditional Knowledge Keepers and community leaders.



Local and global impact

EL empowers and equips our students to be changemakers in their communities.

Launched in 2021, **Research 2 Social Action Hub** is a community-engaged initiative embedded within the Social and Structural Vulnerabilities program at the O'Brien Institute for Public Health. It brings together students, researchers and community partners to generate, mobilize and translate research into impactful social change, either through improved programmatic design or changes to public policy.

A cohort of **Faculty of Social Work** students completed their senior practicum in Fort McMurray during a rural-placement pilot project. With supervision from AHS professionals, students used social work modalities and techniques to deliver a range of services to persons living with mental illness and/or addictions.

The **COVID-19 Wastewater Monitoring Project** is an award-winning multidisciplinary project in partnership with the City of Calgary. Students work with faculty and staff on the monitoring of wastewater in the city for cases of COVID-19. Students are involved in each stage of the process, from sample-gathering to processing and data analysis. *(Pictured above)*

Countless undergraduate nursing students were hired by AHS throughout the pandemic as part of the **Faculty of Nursing's** degree program to support the health-care system during the strain of COVID-19. The initiative may carry forward even after the impact of COVID becomes less acute.

Experiential learning during COVID-19

UCalgary leaders responded to the disruption and uncertainty of the pandemic by developing innovative approaches to EL.

UC International's Virtual Group Study Programs (GSPs) provide opportunities for students to enrol in a block of globally themed online courses that involve a variety of EL elements, including collaboration with students from international partner universities. Instructors use creative pedagogical practices developed during COVID-19 to deliver programs best suited for their student communities, partners and disciplines, and to provide increased student access to global learning.

Faculty of Science academics and technical staff brought hands-on experiences to life for students while working online through the pandemic with at-home lab kits. Students used a custom-built website to interact with lab equipment, access real-time data and control equipment remotely. Students also used at-home kits with springs, magnifying glasses and optical filters, and collected data for analysis by filming experiments on their phones. Organizers won a 2021 UCalgary Teaching Award for Non-Academic Staff (Group).

The Faculty of Law's Student Legal Assistance (SLA) provides legal services to low-income Calgary-area residents, students and disadvantaged clients. These services are delivered by student caseworkers who appear in court as agents for SLA's clients and represent them before the provincial court. The SLA transitioned operations during the pandemic to digital and remote client service delivery, including adapting to remote court-appearance protocols for provincial courts.

The **Faculty of Social Work** implemented self-directed practicums during the onset of COVID-19, after a successful pilot of self-directed practicums in 2019. These practicums are now offered alongside other options such as agency-based, workplace or research to expand experiences for students. Practicums are supervised by a qualified social work field instructor and are supported by peers learning in the same model.

The **Faculty of Kinesiology** pivoted to support students no longer able to go on practicums with training from Career Services. This support allowed students the opportunity to strengthen skills and apply their learning for the professional world. Practicum programs now permanently incorporate resources from Career Services.



What's next

Our campus community has identified what we need to do next to achieve our bold targets:

Enhance and expand equitable pathways to experiential learning (EL)	Ensure students from equity-deserving groups have inclusive and equitable access to EL, building on UCalgary's foundational commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion. Build on the findings of the Equitable Pathways to Experiential Learning Update , the Undergraduate Research Initiative report and the equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility work happening in units across campus.
Further connect Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, connecting and being to the Experiential Learning Plan	Identify how EL activities and programs across campus can help advance the recommendations of UCalgary's Indigenous Strategy, ii' taa'poh'to'p , including the embedding of Indigenous epistemologies, pedagogies and methodologies into EL programs.
Build capacity to support EL across UCalgary	Enhance the infrastructure, staffing and resources needed to support the expansion of EL and the creation and delivery of new EL and work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, while supporting existing ones.
Create more campus-wide student opportunities for EL and career development	Create more opportunities across campus for EL participation, networking, skills development and articulation, and reflection for students. Ensure students are aware of EL opportunities within their programs and across UCalgary.
Elevate the benefits of EL to all UCalgary students, from recruitment to graduation	Attract and connect more students to EL opportunities by connecting to more individuals and units across campus. Build on strong communications and advertising of EL opportunities to students.
Build out a reporting process for all forms of EL	Build on the process to track participation in WIL courses to develop robust reporting on all forms of EL. Ensure transparent reporting across campus on EL activities and growth.
Strengthen and expand community partnerships for WIL	Develop proactive approaches and simplified processes to connect to industry and community for WIL partnerships. Support and lead activities across campus and across Calgary that help build partnerships for student EL opportunities.
Increase opportunities early in undergraduate programs	Apply findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2020 EL Report and the Equitable Pathways to Experiential Learning Update , which indicate students' desire for EL opportunities earlier in their degree programs, emphasizing opportunities in first and second year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge our colleagues from across UCalgary for their contributions to the content and development of this report.

Special thanks to the Experiential Learning Advisory Committee, the Teaching & Learning Committee of the General Faculties' Council, the Registrar's Office, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Provost team, the Office of Experiential Learning, and the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning.



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

ucalgary.ca/experiential-learning