

## Applied Learning Common Definitions

This document contains the current working definition of Applied Learning as defined by the Applied Learning Steering Committee, as well as a list of common definitions that are flexible enough to be used system-wide and can encompass the more specific institutional definitions and approaches used by SUNY campuses. The definitions are intended to facilitate use with SIRIS (SUNY Institutional Research Information System) to provide ease of identifying course-related applied learning activities; they are **not intended to holistically describe all approved applied/experiential approaches. This document should only be used in conjunction with the SUNY Criteria for Approved Experiential and Applied Learning Activities.**

### Definition of Applied Learning:

Applied learning refers to an educational approach whereby students learn by engaging in direct application of skills, theories and models. Students apply knowledge and skills gained from traditional classroom learning to hands-on and/or real-world settings, creative projects or independent or directed research, and in turn apply what is gained from the applied experience to academic learning. The applied learning activity can occur outside of the traditional classroom experience and/or be embedded as part of a course.

### SIRIS Data Dictionary Definitions of Applied Learning Experiences:

**Cooperative Education:** An applied learning experience that alternates classroom learning and productive paid work experiences in a field related to a student's academic and career goals. Co-ops are formal partnerships between an educational institution, an employer, and one or more students, and typically provide meaningful work experiences for students. Co-ops are off-campus and full time or part time.

**Internship—Credit Bearing/non-credit:** Applied learning experiences for which a student may earn academic credit in an agreed-upon, short-term, supervised workplace activity, which may be related to a student's major field or area of interest. The work can be full or part time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid. Some institutions offer both credit and non-credit bearing internships. Internships integrate classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills developed in professional or community settings. This definition does not include internships that are required components of a registered program leading to NYS licensure or certification (e.g., teacher preparation, social work, dental hygiene). An internship is distinct from community service or service learning.

**Clinical Placement:** Students rotate through a variety of health care agencies with faculty supervision focusing on the health care field process, with individual patients or groups reflecting diverse settings, across the lifespan. Emphasis is on mastering theoretical concepts, improving skill competency, and developing clinical reasoning skills with a focus on evidence-based practice..

**Practicum:** A period of practical experience undertaken in academic, professional or community settings/agencies/organizations as part of an academic course. This approach is grounded in application

and practice of theoretical/technical concepts/skills and cultural competency relevant to the course or to a profession.

**Service-Learning:** A credit-bearing educational strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities.

**Community Service:** Volunteerism and community service performed by students for community benefit. This service can be, but is not necessarily integrated with a particular program of study. This may include structured projects (days of service), smaller group projects, fund-raising events, or individual volunteerism, which is acknowledged by the campus.

**Civic Engagement:** A teaching and learning focus on educating students as global citizens. Classes or programs include meaningful civic education and activities for social good. Classes and projects have components of reflection and engagement.

**Creative Works:** A capstone, senior project, performance, or other creative work that occurs as a culminating experience for a student in an accredited class or program

**Research:** Mentored, self-directed work that enables students to make an original, intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline by exploring an issue of interest to them and communicating the results to others.

**Undergraduate Research:** An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline. <http://www.cur.org/>

**Entrepreneurship (program, class, project):** Students in an entrepreneurship program develop a broad-based entrepreneurial skill relevant to any organization – start-up, established, and for and not-for-profit agency, organization, community or industry. Entrepreneurship involves consistently thinking and acting in ways designed to uncover new opportunities that are then applied to provide value.

**Field Study:** Collection of information outside of an experimental or lab setting. This type of data collection is most often conducted in natural settings or environments and can be designed in a variety of ways for various disciplines. May be mentored, self-directed work, or comprise a full course. The projects include inquiry, design, investigation, discovery and application.

**International and Domestic Travel/Exchange:** An instructional program delivered in either an overseas location or domestic location. Often the program is delivered as a semester-long or intercession sequence of courses, the content of which is enhanced by the location of instruction, by distinctive historic or cultural features available in the location, or by a unique approach to the subject matter that is specific to the locale. Exchanges are often conducted by individual students traveling independently to a location that has been pre-approved by their home institution, and where they determine their specific course of study in collaboration with home and host institution faculty.