THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Experiential Learning Requirements for the
Postgraduate Diploma in Education Programme – Full Time (PGDE-FT)

I. Aims and learning outcomes of experiential learning
II. EL placement/ project
III. Assessment
IV. Appendix I & II
I. Aims and Learning Outcomes of Experiential Learning

Aims:

In broad terms, the implementation of Experiential Learning (EL) in the Faculty of Education aims at:

- Enhancing students’ learning by connecting theory with experience and thought with action;
- Assisting students to understand the relevance of their respective academic disciplines to the real world;
- Developing a richer context for students’ learning;
- Exposing students to social and global issues; and,
- Cultivating students with critical thinking, creativity and problem solving skills.

Learning Outcomes (LOs):

More specifically, students are expected to have attained the following LOs after completion of the EL components in our Faculty’s programmes:

1. Planning, pedagogy and problem solving
   - Design, conduct, complete and present EL projects on identified issues independently and collaboratively;
   - Develop abilities in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, creativity and other ‘learning to learn’ skills;
   - Learn how to deal with ill-defined problems through careful planning, consultation, research and practice; and,
   - Develop and contribute expertise to a wider community.

2. Social and global issues
   - Identify, investigate and understand more about issues related to social, economic, political, environmental and cultural developments in Hong Kong and beyond; and,
   - Develop a role as a local, national and global citizen.

3. Supporting stakeholders and beneficiaries
   - Develop teaching and learning resources that cater to the diverse needs of stakeholders across a range of EL projects;
   - Plan and implement projects which promote stakeholders’ and beneficiaries’ capacities;
   - Work collaboratively with staff and members of partner schools/organisations to ensure a satisfactory outcome to tasks and projects; and,
   - Develop a better understanding of the ethical issues surrounding EL.
4. Professional conduct and reflections

- Develop and display critical reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of own practices;
- Propose and implement changes as a result of these reflections to ensure ongoing personal and professional development; and,
- Conduct themselves professionally when engaged with stakeholders and beneficiaries during the EL period.

* You may use some of these LOs as the starting point for your reflective writing.
II. **EL Placement/ project (6 cp)**

All PGDE students are required to undertake broadening EL in or outside Hong Kong as part of their graduation requirements. The overall EL component in the PGDE programme consists of 18 credits, with a combination of 12 credits for Professional Practicum (refer to PGDE and Partnerships Office Handbooks) and 6 credits for the Experiential Learning (EL) placement.

PGDE full-time students will undertake an EL placement in Semester 1 of the programme. The experiential placement normally lasts for 5.5 weeks of out-of-classroom learning activities, e.g. conducting school talks, educational workshops and exhibitions, internships, overseas or mainland service learning trips, etc. Students can either enroll in an EL project offered by the Faculty of Education, or nominate their own project (which must be approved by the Faculty first). Details of the projects are available at the EL website: el.hku.edu.hk

*Please note that Chinese and English FT majors have their immersion programmes at this time and these will contain EL components.*

Please note the following:

- Students are normally expected to work 5 full days per week at the partner organisation. Weekend or evening duties may be required on a case by case basis with compensatory leave arranged on weekdays subject to community partners’ approval. Individual community partners will decide the work schedule at the outset of the project.
- Students are expected to comply with requirements set by individual community partners and these will also be negotiated with the Faculty.
- After students sign up for a particular project, the Faculty expects them to remain committed throughout the duration of their engagement with the respective institution/ organisation. If students fail to complete their projects due to unsatisfactory attendance or by leaving the project early, they will not receive any credits for this compulsory part of the programme.
III. Assessment

PGDE students' performance in EL will be assessed on the following key dimensions:

(1) Professional conduct and,
(2) Written reflections, satisfactory completion of EL projects including feedback from project supervisors.

Professional conduct: Levels of Performance and Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiential Learning</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student teachers receiving a pass grade are expected to fulfill the EL outcomes in their EL projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student teachers receiving a fail grade would NOT have fulfilled the EL outcomes in their EL projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is evidence of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Effective engagement and participation with the student teacher’s EL project;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective engagement and participation with the student teacher’s EL project;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Satisfactory completion of the projects set by the NGO or stakeholder;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Satisfactory completion of the projects set by the NGO or stakeholder;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Professional conduct at all times;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional conduct at all times;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additionally, they demonstrate evidence of critical self-reflections on their involvement with the EL project, and the impact of their experiences on their personal and professional development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Additionally, they demonstrate LITTLE or NO evidence of critical self-reflections on their involvement with the EL project, and the impact of their experiences on their personal and professional development.</td>
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</table>

Important Notes:

1. Evidence of Professional Conduct assessment should be based on official feedback collected from the EL project supervisors from EL partners and the project coordinator(s), as well as the EL team.
2. An overall ‘Satisfactory’ evaluation of a student teacher's professional conduct and reflective ability is a prerequisite for student teachers to attain an overall Pass grade for EL.
3. In the case of any unsatisfactory report/feedback/evidence on the professional conduct of a particular student-teacher, a case conference
will be conducted with the presence of the student-teacher concerned, the respective project supervisor(s), the relevant Programme Director and/or Deputy Programme Director, and the Associate and (Learning and Teaching). A representative of the community partner for which the student teacher was assigned might also be asked to attend.

**Pre-departure essay**
A pre-departure essay (approximately 1000-1500 words) to be submitted at least one week before your EL project commences. (Refer to Appendix I for details)

**EL Reflection**
EL reflections (2 entries of approximately 500 words each) – one mid-way reflection to be submitted approximately two weeks into the project and one end-of-EL reflection to be submitted within two weeks after the EL block period. (Refer to Appendix II for details)

**PGDE Capstone Event**
Students will be participating in a capstone presentation event with an individually designed poster at the end of the academic year. (Details of the event will be provided by the PGDE programme office nearer the time)
PGDE - FT Experiential Learning
Assignment Specification and Assessment Rubrics - Pre-departure Essay

Aims:

The pre-departure essay serves the following purposes:

- To allow you to write an essay that will act as a starting point for your EL project;
- To allow you to convey your expectations and worries ahead of the EL block.
- This pre-departure essay will be an important reference point as the course progresses.

Task:

In this part of the assignment, you are expected to write approximately 1000-1500 words (before your EL block or project starts) on your thoughts, expectations and concerns about the EL project you have chosen. You are free to write your own starting prompt, but you might also include one or more of the following prompts and questions:

- What made you choose this EL project?
- What are you most looking forward to in this project, and why?
- What are some of the personal and professional challenges you anticipate on this project?
- How have you prepared for this project?
- What do you know about the community partner you are working with?
- What do you most hope to learn over the next few weeks of the EL project?
- To what extent does the work you are doing address inequalities or social injustices?
- Does it work to challenge some of the forces that created the need for an NGO in the first place?
- To what extent is the EL opportunity based on the disadvantage of others? Or your own privilege?
- What do you hope to apply to your EL project that you have learned on the course so far?
* You may also refer to the Learning Outcomes (LOs) listed above for prompts and ideas.

**Assessment:**

The EL team and/or your Methods / Integrated Inquiry tutors will read your pre-departure essay before you start your EL project and might provide you with comments or feedback via Moodle, email or through face-to-face means.

Please note:

- **You should write around 1000-1500 words.**
- **Please make sure you submit your pre-departure essay via Moodle one week before your EL block/ project commences.**
- **Your pre-departure essay can also be used later in subsequent assignments.**
- **Moodle link for PGDE FT: you will be assigned to different Moodle pages according to the EL project you are participating in**

Your work will be assessed based on the criteria described below:
## PGDE Grade Descriptors for Pre-Departure Essay in Experiential Learning (EL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding, Analysis, Synthesis, and Application of Knowledge in essay</th>
<th>PASS</th>
<th>FAIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An original prompt or question is chosen for discussion. Consistent perceptive and critical engagement with issues and themes based on comprehensive understanding of the EL project chosen.</td>
<td>An appropriate prompt or question is chosen for discussion. Generally perceptive and critical engagement with issues and themes; some shortcomings in understanding the EL project chosen.</td>
<td>An appropriate prompt or question is chosen for discussion. Occasional perceptive and critical engagement with key issues and themes; essay tends toward rather superficial understanding of the EL project.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure / Organization of essay</th>
<th>PASS</th>
<th>FAIL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction states clearly writer’s thesis or position, and conclusion clearly summarizes main arguments and points. Paragraphing is appropriate at all times.</td>
<td>Introduction states writer’s thesis or position, and conclusion summarizes main arguments and points. Paragraphing is appropriate.</td>
<td>Introduction and conclusion are included but do not fully capture the essence of the topic and discussion. Evidence of ability to paragraph, but some paragraphs lack a central idea or supporting detail.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research and Discussion of Project and NGO chosen</th>
<th>PASS</th>
<th>FAIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writer is able to integrate a multitude of viewpoints in discussions, including those raised in the community by reputable secondary sources, including journalistic articles or research studies where relevant.</td>
<td>The writer is able to identify viewpoints in discussions, including those raised in the community by secondary sources. However, the material is not well integrated.</td>
<td>The writer is able to identify viewpoints in discussions, including those raised in the community by secondary sources. However, the sources referenced are limited or obvious.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics of essay</th>
<th>PASS</th>
<th>FAIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The language contains very few, if any, errors in grammar and vocabulary. If slips are present, the meaning is still clear. Conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.) are followed meticulously.</td>
<td>The language is mostly accurate but contains a few systematic errors in complex grammar and vocabulary. Conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.) are mostly followed.</td>
<td>The language is sometimes inaccurate, although errors, when they occur, are more often in complex grammar and vocabulary. Conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.) show significant inconsistencies and may contain errors.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics of essay</th>
<th>PASS</th>
<th>FAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errors in language and vocabulary are so frequent and distracting that the essay is largely incomprehensible. Does not adhere to the conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.).</td>
<td>A weak prompt or question is chosen for discussion. No critical engagement with issues, and themes. Essay characterized by inaccuracies and misunderstandings.</td>
<td>Introduction and conclusion are unclear, lack detail or missing altogether. Very little evidence of an ability to organize the essay into paragraphs with one central idea and supporting details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PGDE – FT Experiential Learning
Assignment Specification and Assessment Rubrics – *EL Reflections*

**Aims:**

The reflections / blog entries serve the following purposes:

- To allow you to make critical reflections during your Experiential Learning (EL) and Professional Practicum (PP) blocks;
- To illustrate your perceptions and understanding of target communities/social groups, learning and teaching, personal and professional development, ethical considerations, project impact and intercultural communication (where applicable);

**Task:**

For this task you are expected to write and submit 2 individual reflections of approximately 500 words each during and after your EL blocks. Ideally, you should submit one mid-way reflection two weeks into the project and one end-of-EL reflection within two weeks after the EL block.

- What have you learned about yourself on this project/ practicum / visit that you didn’t know before?
- What are some of the successes and/or challenges you have faced when learning in a different learning context (away from the university classroom)?
- How has your EL project / practicum / class observation helped you to broaden your experience?
- What was your significant learning over this last week / last two weeks?
- What can you take from this learning experience and use in your teaching?
- How has it helped to inform you about educational issues such as teaching and learning that you might have learned in MM/II or CLI?
- How has the project contributed to your personal, social and intellectual development?
- Is the impact of your work temporary or longer lasting? Does it work to challenge some of the forces that created the need for an NGO in the first place?
- To what extent does the work you are doing address inequalities or social injustices?
- To what extent is the EL opportunity based on the disadvantage of others? Or your own privilege?

*You may also refer to the Learning Outcomes (LOs) stated above and use these as starting points for your reflections.*

**Assessment:**

The EL team and/or your Major Methods (MM) / Integrated Inquiry (II) tutors will post comments and feedback on some or all of your MOODLE reflections during and after the EL block.

Please note:

- You are welcome to write more than the suggested no. of words on a reflection.
- Please make sure you upload your reflections to MOODLE and do not email Word Documents to your tutors (tutors will use their own time to respond to individual reflections).
- Moodle link for PGDE FT: you will be assigned to different Moodle pages according to the EL project that you are participating in.

Your work will be assessed based on the criteria described below:
## Grade Descriptors for EL Reflections in Experiential Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PASS</th>
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<th>FAIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Addressing the Prompt or Research Question (set by student)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies and addresses the main question(s) or prompt being posed in your reflection and the subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects, addressing their relationships to each other.</td>
<td>Identifies part of the main question(s) or prompt being posed in the reflection and some of the subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Engagement with Experiences, Knowledge and Practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflections consistently demonstrate informed, thoughtful and sustained engagement with a broad range of relevant experiences, theories and issues (where appropriate). The writer draws insightful connections between the experiences and other related issues in the students’ knowledge of related theory and practice. Points are well supported through the use of evidence.</td>
<td>Reflections mostly indicate informed intellectual engagement with concepts, theories or issues but not always with sufficient depth, breadth or understanding. The writer draws rather simplistic connections between the experiences and other related issues in the students’ knowledge of related theory and practice. Points are generally supported through the use of evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develops extensive and highly perceptive self-understandings from reflective postings. Is able to draw upon personal examples in everyday life and consistently demonstrates a willingness and ability to subject own beliefs, values and behaviours to critical scrutiny and an openness to change.</td>
<td>Develops some limited self-understandings from reflective writings. Shows willingness to examine own beliefs, values and behaviours but mostly without sufficient questioning of them. Occasionally, shows openness to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>The reflections show evidence of diligent editing and proof-reading and a desire to make the reflections accessible to a reader. The language contains very few, if any, errors in grammar and vocabulary.</td>
<td>The reflections are fragmented and/or inconsistent. The language is sufficient for meaning to be understood with effort. However, the language contains frequent errors in simple and complex grammar and vocabulary.</td>
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**Grade Descriptors for EL Reflections in Experiential Learning**

- **PASS**: Identifies and addresses the main question(s) or prompt being posed in the reflection and the subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects, addressing their relationships to each other.
- **FAIL**: Identifies part of the main question(s) or prompt being posed in the reflection and some of the subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects.