

# Experiential Learning Handbook



> Your Link To Success <

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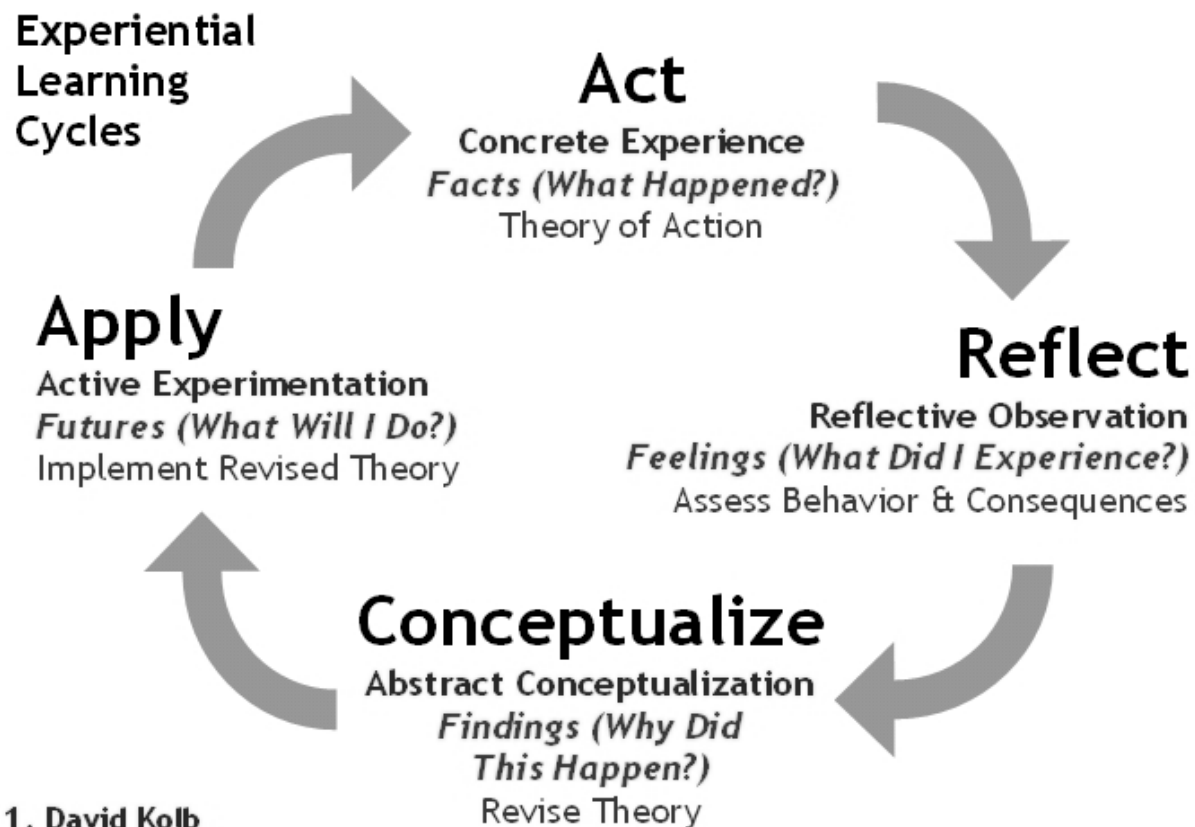
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# What is Experiential Learning?

“Experiential Learning is an umbrella term for student work and observation experiences: internships, co-ops, externships, practicums, and job shadowing are all types of experiential learning.” (NACE 2014)



1. David Kolb
2. Roger Greenaway
3. Chris Argyris & Donald Schön

compiled by Andrea Corney

[www.edbatista.com/2007/10/experiential.html](http://www.edbatista.com/2007/10/experiential.html)

“When students are given opportunities to learn in authentic situations on campus or in the community like those provided in internships, field placements, clinical experiences, research and service-learning projects, the learning becomes significantly more powerful. By engaging in formal, guided, authentic, real-world experiences, individuals:

- deepen their knowledge through repeatedly acting and then reflecting on this action
- develop skills through practice and reflection
- support the construction of new understandings when placed in novel situations”  
(Experiential Learning Defined)

# Internship

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An internship is a great way for students to explore new career opportunities. Typically, an internship is a short-term work experience related to your major or career goals. In short, an internship provides students an opportunity to:

- “test” the waters in a career field
- Apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom to on-the-job experience
- Gain practical experience in a chosen career field
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Network and develop important career contacts in the professional world
- Acquire work experience to list on resumes and employment applications

Internships can be paid or unpaid, part-time or full-time basis during the academic year or summer months.

## Non Credit Internships

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A non-credit internship is any carefully monitored work or service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what she or he is learning throughout the experience. Although internships vary widely from organization to organization, some common characteristics include the following. An internship:

- Is a time-limited experience that usually lasts about three months and occurs during the fall, spring, or summer semesters
- Is generally a one-time experience and may be part-time or full-time
- May be paid or non-paid
- Is different from a short-term job or volunteer work because it has an intentional “learning agenda” in a structured work environment
- Includes learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation, and assessment
- Has an existing employee working in the department/position to mentor and supervise the intern
- Seeks to establish a reasonable balance between the intern’s learning goals and the specific work tasks of an organization
- Promotes academic, career and/or personal development

## Job Shadowing

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Job shadowing is less structured than an internship experience, and is more for observation than for hands on experience. Job shadowing is a great tool for students unsure of their major, or students seeking confirmation regarding a major they have selected.

# Why should I care?

Experiential learning teaches students the competencies they need for real-world success. Although we can simulate the real world in the classroom, authentic experiential learning creates an invaluable opportunity to prepare students for a profession or career. Each of the skills listed below are grown and perfected through internships and job shadowing experiences.



Source: *Job Outlook 2015*, National Association of Colleges and Employers

# Where do I begin?

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## Activate your CareerLink Account

Your CareerLink Account allows you to receive part-time, full-time and internship job opportunities. You may upload resumes, cover letters and supporting documents in order to apply for internships online.

NSU students currently enrolled are pre-loaded to the CareerLink Account. If you have never logged into CareerLink, you will need to activate your account by following the steps below:

- Visit [www.HireNSUgrads.com](http://www.HireNSUgrads.com)
- Select “CareerLink” under the Student section
- Select the “Student Login” link
- Enter your NSU username and password
- Update your contact information and view your profile

## Assess your Interests

Take some time to examine yourself and your goals. Now is the time to make some decisions! Ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of learning experience am I looking for?
- Do I know my Career Goal? If so, what is it?
- What can I offer an employer?
- What skills do I need to develop or improve?
- How will Experiential Learning assist me with my future plans?
- Where do I want to participate in job shadowing or an internship?
- When can I complete this? Summer, Fall, or Spring?
- How much time can I commit?
- What jobs or volunteer experiences have I already had which I liked or disliked?

## Plan Ahead

Finding job shadowing and internship opportunities requires some research and planning; therefore, it is recommended to begin the search process at least one semester in advance. Summer internships have deadlines as early as September or October.

## **Create a Network List**

A network of contacts can be one of the best ways to learn about internship and/or job shadowing opportunities. Whom should you include when creating your contact list? Career Services staff, faculty, academic advisors, family and friends; let everyone know you are seeking an experiential learning opportunity.

## **Research Companies**

- Research websites for possible internship and/or job shadowing opportunities listed on the company's website
- Contact the Human Resource Department for the company to inquire about opportunities
- Your CareerLink Account contains an employer database that can serve as a resource when searching for opportunities
- Visit with your Career Counselor for assistance in finding an experiential learning opportunity that fits your skills and interests

## **Create a Resume**

Develop a professional resume that includes any relevant coursework and/or accomplishments, organization you may belong to, and work experience. Visit Career Services to have a Career Counselor review it for suggested enhancements.

Utilize the free resume builder, provided by Career Services called Optimal Resume. If you have never logged into Optimal Resume, you will need to create an account by following the steps below:

- Visit [www.HireNSUgrads.com](http://www.HireNSUgrads.com)
- Select "Optimal Resume" under the Student section
- Select the "Login" link
- Click "Login" in the top right corner
- Enter your NSU username and password
- Input your information to create your profile

# Resources

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## Services Provided by Career Services

- One-on-one Career Counseling Appointments
- Career Assessment / Major Exploration
- Free Business Cards & Resume Paper
- Resume Critiques
- Experiential Learning Assistance: Internships and Job Shadowing
- Practice Interviews
- On Campus Recruitment Programs
- Walk-In Wednesdays
- Job Search Database
- Employer Networking
- Informational Workshops on Career Readiness

## Experiential Learning Forms

[Step 1: Experiential Learning Student Interest Form](#)

[Step 2: Experiential Learning Contract](#)

[Step 3: Mid-Semester Reflection Form \(Internship Only\)](#)

[Step 4: Post Experiential Learning Reflection Form](#)



# Career Plan

## STAGE ONE: SELF-ASSESS

- ✓ Update resume; monitor social media accounts; meet with academic/career advisor; attend career readiness workshops, events; establish relationships with upperclassmen, faculty and administrators
- ✓ Update your LinkedIn profile with accomplishments such as Experiential Learning
- ✓ Reflect on your first-year experience. What would you do differently? What would you like to explore next related to classes, internships or career-related opportunities?
- ✓ Take "Essential Business Skills" class
- ✓ Take part in Experiential Learning opportunities
- ✓ Participate in Professional Development opportunities such as the Networking & Etiquette Dinner
- ✓ Focus on coursework within your major
- ✓ Become involved in the "N-Link Alumni Mentor Network"
- ✓ Take an active leadership role in a student organization
- ✓ If you haven't declared a major-talk with an academic advisor about course selections and meet with a Career Counselor to review major/career options

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- ✓ Monitor social media accounts; meet with academic/career advisor; attend career readiness workshops, events; establish relationships with upperclassmen, faculty and administrators
- ✓ Explore majors and career options through FOCUS Career Assessment to help you identify career options by examining your interests, values, abilities, and personality to find a major and/or profession that best suits you
- ✓ Create a LinkedIn profile; make sure it is complete and use a head shot
- ✓ Take "Career Readiness & Exploration" class
- ✓ Take a wide variety of classes to explore potential career options
- ✓ Connect with Career Services to take part in job shadowing opportunities in your area of interest
- ✓ Research potential internships and the internship process
- ✓ Begin building a professional resume, attend a resume writing workshop
- ✓ Get involved with Student Affairs and become actively involved in an organization
- ✓ Join the Future Alumni Network "FAN"

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## STAGE TWO: EXPLORE

- ✓ Update resume; monitor social media accounts; meet with academic/career advisor; attend career readiness workshops, events; establish relationships with upperclassmen, faculty and administrators
- ✓ Maintain your grades. The classes will become more difficult, so continue your focus on succeeding in your studies
- ✓ Update your LinkedIn profile with accomplishments such as Experiential Learning
- ✓ Practice interviewing skills with Career Services
- ✓ Attend alumni-sponsored events to establish important connections for after graduation
- ✓ Learn how to market yourself and join a professional organization associated with your related major or career interest
- ✓ Begin to build a professional wardrobe for interviews
- ✓ Consider actively participating in an internship; participate in either a for-credit or non-credit internship
- ✓ Review and evaluate your short-term and long-term career goals with your Career Counselor

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## STAGE THREE: EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Monitor social media accounts; meet with academic/career advisor; attend career readiness workshops, events; establish relationships with faculty and administrators
- ✓ Update resume to ensure it effectively showcases your knowledge/education, achievements, skills and abilities
- ✓ Update your LinkedIn profile with accomplishments such as Experiential Learning
- ✓ Complete an internship
- ✓ Check in with your advisor: Are you on-track for completing graduation requirements?
- ✓ Develop a prospective list of employers and research these organizations
- ✓ Continue networking with new and former contacts
- ✓ Utilize the Career Services' CareerLink and job agent services
- ✓ Ask three people to serve as professional references, remember to give them a copy of your resume so they are familiar with your skills and qualifications
- ✓ Review and evaluate your short-term and long-term goals with your Career Counselor
- ✓ Sign up for on campus interviewing and begin job search
- ✓ Attend networking events, etiquette dinners and career readiness workshops
- ✓ Apply to graduate and/or professional schools, OR
- ✓ Apply for jobs and year-long internships and fellowships. Start early. **Don't wait until after you graduate to apply for jobs.**
- ✓ Complete the graduate Outcomes Survey to share your success.

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## STAGE FOUR: TRANSITION



# STUDENT CAREER PLAN



## **Helpful Articles**

*Coming Soon.....*