

Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary Clemson University

QEP Title: CU-ExL
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Clemson University's QEP, CU-ExL (pronounced, "see you excel"), is dedicated to improving students' academic experience through access to quality experiential learning (ExL) opportunities. Our QEP was intentionally developed alongside the University's new strategic plan, Clemson Elevate, during AY2022-23. As a result of this synergetic development, CU-ExL serves as the incubator for *Initiative 1: Excel in Experiential Learning* that is a key component of the first of three pillars of the [Clemson Elevate](#) plan: *Deliver the No. 1 Student Experience*.

Opportunity: Literature has demonstrated many times over that modern employers are looking for candidates who bring the ability to work in a team, and leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills to the workforce (e.g., Roberts, 2018). Moreover, scholarly findings indicate that ExL opportunities engender learning environments for students to hone both hard *and* soft skills such as those just mentioned. These findings became the foundational justification for ExL as a focal point for the University.

To guide our work, we operationalized recognized definitions (e.g., The Association for Experiential Education, 2022; AAC&U, 2022; Kolb, 1984) for ExL in alignment with the University's mission, goals, and cultural contexts to define ExL as *learning through deliberate and thoughtful student engagement in: (a) direct concrete experience in combination with (b) reflection/observation, (c) abstract thinking or conceptualization or analysis, and (d) active experimentation for learning, discovering knowledge, creating tangible or intangible works, developing skills, or clarifying values*.

Assessment: We will assess our ambitious QEP through two primary student-focused outcomes:

1. Students apply classroom knowledge to real-world, concrete experiences as evidenced by abstract thinking, active experimentation and reflection (student learning outcome); and
2. Students feel prepared and competitive for their post-graduation plans (student success outcome).

We also identified three programmatic outcomes related to instructor engagement (PO1); student engagement (PO2); and activities aimed at shifting institutional culture (PO3).

Target Populations: By utilizing strategies targeting (a) students, (b) instructors and (c) the overall institutional culture, we can build a sustainable path that supports quality current and future ExL opportunities. The scope of CU-ExL will include ExL activities that are considered undergraduate-level, "transcriptable" experiences; the term "transcriptable" is used to capture course-based activities that appear on the student's curricular transcript.

