

# Experience-Based Inquiry (Community Placement)

## Master in Leadership and Community Engagement (MLCE)

Graduate Program in Education, York University

---

In the Master of Leadership and Community Engagement (MLCE) degree program, students are required to complete two community-based placements, which are complemented with coursework.

The following document provides information and processes for students relating to the community-based practicum and related coursework.

---

## Course Information

In order to participate in the required community practicum placements, students must enroll in two courses, which are described below.

### EDUC 7015: EXPERIENCE-BASED INQUIRY I (3.00 CREDITS)

This online course facilitates development of participants' professional capacity through a community placement and structured reflection and dialogue on leadership, politics and policy enactment in the placement in connection with EDUC 7010, *Enacting Leadership and Policy*.

#### Expanded Course Description:

The overall goal of the online course is to provide an opportunity for the course participant to develop professional skills and deepen understanding of relations between theory, research and practice. Structured reflections and collaborative dialogues are used to help participants identify how leadership and policy are enacted in organizations and communities, develop their leadership skills, understand how context influences practice, and articulate a plan toward on-going professional growth.

The theoretical underpinning of the course emerges from Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle as described in *A Case for Change: Experiential Education Integration at York University* (2013): "experiencing (the activity phase), sharing (exchanging reactions and observations, processing "discussing patterns and dynamics", generalizing (developing real-world principles) and applying (planning effective uses of learning)." The course is further based on the assumption that reflective capacity is an essential characteristic for professional competence and considers the work of Dewey (reflective thinking in learning and education), Habermas (critical reflection) and Kolb (experiential learning) amongst others. The resulting trajectory is thus both iterative (Boud, Keog, and Walker, 1985; Schøn, 1983) and vertical. (Dewey,1983; Hatton and Smith, 1995; Mezirow, 1991; and Moon, 1999). It is iterative in the sense that the process of reflection is the result of an experience, which then produces a new understanding and the potential to act differently next time.

Reflection also has a vertical dimension, with the deeper levels seeming more remote, complex, and robust in their ability to enfold contradictions (Mann, Gordon and Macleod, 2009).

In a practical sense, the course considers, complements, and builds on, the placement.

Through the e-journal, online dialogues and short assignments, the course provides the participants with an arena in which to reflect, consolidate, integrate, synthesize and deepen understanding of their future roles as leaders in their specific professions and communities.

## EDUC 7025: EXPERIENCE-BASED INQUIRY II (3.00 CREDITS)

This online course facilitates development of participants' professional capacity through a community placement and structured reflection and dialogue on program design, interpretation, and evaluation in the placement in light of connections with EDUC 7020, Initiatives in Program Design, Interpretation and Evaluation.

### Expanded Course Description

The overall goal of the online course is to provide an opportunity for the course participant to develop professional skills and deepen understanding of relations between theory, research and practice. Structured reflections and collaborative dialogues are used to help participants identify challenges and possibilities for program design and evaluation, understand how context influences program interpretation and enactment, and determine possible outcomes from various program options.

The theoretical underpinning of the course emerges from Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle as described in *A Case for Change: Experiential Education Integration at York University* (2013): "experiencing (the activity phase), sharing (exchanging reactions and observations, processing "discussing patterns and dynamics", generalizing (developing real-world principles) and applying (planning effective uses of learning)." The course is further based on the assumption that reflective capacity is an essential characteristic for professional competence and considers the work of Dewey (reflective thinking in learning and education), Habermas (critical reflection) and Kolb (experiential learning) amongst others. The resulting trajectory is thus both iterative (Boud, Keog, and Walker, 1985; Schön, 1983) and vertical. (Dewey, 1983; Hatton and Smith, 1995; Mezirow, 1991; and Moon, 1999). It is iterative in the sense that the process of reflection is the result of an experience, which then produces a new understanding and the potential to act differently next time. Reflection also has a vertical dimension, with the deeper levels seeming more remote, complex, and robust in their ability to enfold contradictions (Mann, Gordon and Macleod, 2009). In a practical sense, the course considers, complements, and builds on, the placement.

Through the e-journal, online dialogues and short assignments, the course provides the participants with an arena in which to reflect, consolidate, integrate, synthesize and deepen understanding of their future roles as leaders in their specific professions and communities.

## Guidelines for MLCE Community Placement Approval

### Placement Requirements:

- The MLCE program requires students to engage in **two community placements**: one in the fall and one in the winter.
- Placements are intended to be **different than each student's regular day job**. If there is a potential opportunity in your workplace, prior approval must be given.
- Placements are **unpaid**. (This means that the student will not receive money, gifts, products, or other types of compensation.)
- The placements are **50 hours each** and will take place in **public sector organizations**.
- MLCE students are expected to **coordinate their own placement experience**; in exceptional circumstances, they can request assistance from the Associate Director, Experiential Education to assist in searching a placement experience from established partnerships within the Faculty.

- Placement supervisors should not be family members.
- MLCE students may need to provide a **Criminal Record Check** with vulnerable sector screening (VSS) prior to starting a placement if they are working with minors, seniors or others who are considered by law to be vulnerable.
- All required **paperwork must be completed** before the placement is considered as being part of the MLCE degree program. If students enter a placement without obtaining required permissions and completing compulsory paperwork, the placement will not be considered.
- When students have completed their required paperwork and steps, they will be permitted to enroll in EDUC 7015 and EDUC 7025. These courses are required for the completion of the degree program.

## Required Steps Checklist

### Step One: Placement Set-up

- Complete your Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) (*as required; see below*)
  - If you are going to be working with minors, in a Community Centre, with the elderly or others who are considered (by law) as vulnerable, obtain [Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening](#) (VSS).
  - If you **live in Toronto**, obtain an appropriate application form for the Toronto Police Services. Contact [communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca) to obtain the link to the secure form, which needs to be completed, along with the submission of your required documents.
    - Please note that you will need to provide student ID and the completed signed Practicum Seminar Proposal Form in order to receive this application.
    - Please leave a minimum of *six weeks* for this process to be completed.
  - If you **live outside of Toronto**, visit your local Police Station in order to apply for a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening.
  - Please note that obtaining documentation from the Police Services may take several weeks to receive.
  - Please note there is a fee required, payable to the Police Services.
  - When you have completed Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) from the Police you are legally able to enter your placement. You may not begin the placement until you have this original document in place.
- **Approach the public sector organization** of your choice in order to secure their agreement for your participation in the placement.
  - Provide the placement with your **introductory letter** in order to initiate the discussion (*if this step is helpful*)
- Complete the **Community Placement Proposal Form** (typed, signed by the student and placement supervisor *prior* to submission) and obtain signed approval from:
  - Community Placement Supervisor
- **Submit the completed Community Placement Proposal Form** to the Associate Director, Experiential Education (134 Winters College).

- Ensure that the placement's full mailing address is provided and accurate.
- **Answer any further questions** and provide additional information to the Associate Director, Experiential Education as required.
- The approved proposal will be signed by:
  - Associate Director, Experiential Education
  - Graduate Program Director
- **Receive the appropriate paperwork/agreements** from the Associate Director, Experiential Education, [communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca).
- **Complete and submit** required documentation.

**Please note:** if this paperwork is not completed and submitted on time. Students will not be able to enroll in experiential courses. (EDUC 7015 & EDUC 7025).

## Step Two: Placement Orientation

On your **first day of placement**, you are required to complete the following processes:

- **Obtain two original copies of the signed *Agreement for Practicum Experience***
  - The Associate Director, Experiential Education will provide an *Agreement for Practicum Experience*. This document will need to be signed by the placement hosting public sector organization by the first day.
  - Please let the placement know that one copy will be returned to them after it is signed at York University.
- **Collect the signed WSIB declaration** form from the hosting public sector organization.
- **Complete and sign the WSIB declaration form** for students.
- **Complete Health and Safety orientation and documentation:**
  - All students must complete the required [Health & Safety training](#) on their first day of the placement.
  - On the first day of placement, complete the required [Health & Safety checklist](#) and tasks that are outlined with placement supervisor.
- **At the end of the day of the first day of placement, submit all of the collected forms to the Associate Director, Experiential Education.** Send the originals by mail (or drop off in person) to:

Experiential Education Office, Faculty of Education, 134 Winters College York University  
4700 Keele Street Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

## STEP THREE: IN CASE OF ACCIDENT AT THE PLACEMENT

- While you are at your practicum placement, if you are involved in an accident, **you must** complete the accident reporting processes within 24 hours. Complete the following steps ASAP (**same day**):
  - Inform your placement supervisor right away.
  - Deal with the injury and get treatment as required. If you require medical treatment, tell the healthcare professional that it is a workplace injury.
  - Inform the Associate Director, Experiential Education [communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca) **within 24 hours.**
  - Complete the following forms within 24 hours:
    - [Incident Report](#)
    - [Insurance Claim](#)
    - [Employer's Report](#)
- Scan and email completed forms to [communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:communitypracticum@edu.yorku.ca) within 24 hours.

### **Important Information:**

The students are responsible for ensuring timelines are met and processes are complete. Associate Director, Experiential Education is available to support students throughout the documentation process.

All documentation will be kept in your student file. Your Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) from the Police department will be noted and the original will be returned to you; keep this original document on your person each time you are at your placement.

## Community Placement Proposal Form

Master of Leadership and Community Engagement (MLCE)  
Graduate Program in Education, York University

**General Information:**

Date of Submission	
Student Name	
Student Number	

**Placement Information:**

Placement/Public Sector Organization (Name)			
Placement/Public Sector Organization (Address)			
City		Province	
Postal Code		Phone Number	
Supervisor Name			
Supervisor Title			
Supervisor Direct Phone Number			
Supervisor Email			
Proposed Placement Start Date*			
Proposed Placement End Date*			
Day(s) of the Week to be Worked (circle all)			
Hours of Work (e.g., 8:30 am to 4:30 pm)			
Placement Title/Role			
Proposed Schedule of Placement			
Will student be paid by employer? (includes honorarium, salary and/or gifts)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the work take place on the York University Campus?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the work in the placement involve youth, the elderly or other vulnerable individuals? (See legal <a href="#">definitions</a> )		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the placement be with a public sector organization (please explain/specify)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the placement meet the 50 hour requirement?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

\* Actual starting date will depend on the agreement between the placement and York University being signed, and all paperwork being submitted (including criminal record checks, where required).

**Brief Placement Description (50-100 words):**

The placement description should include a general description of your role in the public sector organization, the tasks you will be completing and how it will support your goals/inquiry/course objectives. This description should situate the placement within the EDUC7015 and EDUC 7025 framework and should indicate the focus of engagement within placement experience.

**Agreement:**

I have read all documentation pertaining to the community practicum placement, and I agree to complete all of the required processes *prior* to entering my practicum placement, and to abide by both York University's policies and procedures, the workplace's policies and procedures and all laws.

--	--	--

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

I approve this proposal and agree to the placement, as outlined.

--	--	--

Community Placement Supervisor

Community Placement Supervisor Signature

Date

**To be completed after form is submitted to the Experiential Education Office:**

I approve this proposal and agree to the placement, as outlined.

--	--	--

Associate Director, Experiential  
Education Name

Associate Director, Experiential Education  
Signature

Date

--	--	--

Graduate Program Director Name

Graduate Program Director Signature

Date

**Note that *all* components of placement set up and processes on the first day must be completed prior to starting the placement.**

**Submit completed form *and* Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening (if required) to:  
Experiential Education Office, Faculty of Education, 134 Winters College.**