# **Considerations for Experiential Learning Online: A Checklist**

Here are some general considerations for how you might meet experiential learning outcomes in an online environment. If you answer “yes” to the questions below, you may be able to include your experiential learning activity online!

Of course, certain types of experiential learning simply won’t translate well to an online environment. Practical, hands-on, performative outcomes requiring **specialized equipment** that students will not have access to, do not translate online. If this is the case, consider simulations, demos or modelling as a substitute or partial substitute.

## **Experiential activities that may require significant resources and planning:**

Many different activities can be done online in the “real world” remotely through common technology, or in either virtual and simulated worlds. Keep in mind that remote real-world activities will often require additional resources to ensure that students are engaged in meaningful activities and have adequate support, supervision, and reflective opportunities. Virtual and simulated activities also usually require significant resources in planning, development, and programming, but there are many open educational resources that can be helpful.

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| **Internships, Service, Co-op** |  |
| Are there course relevant and meaningful online or digital services, projects, or activities that students could do in partnership with organizations or industries (e.g. conducting research, data analysis, developing proposals or recommendations, designing a communication or creative product, providing online tutoring, mentorship, advocacy, or companionship, etc.)? |  |
| Is there an organization or industry that you know of that requires these types of services and would be willing to work with students working remotely, likely from their homes and possibly from different time zones?  |  |
| Are you able to support the organization in providing structured communication with students remotely? |  |
| Can the activities be conducted entirely online and still ensure students are provided with sufficient supervision and feedback to succeed? |  |
| Students may face increased challenges in attempting to conduct themselves remotely (interpersonal skills, leadership, teamwork, etc.) Do you have resources to help support students navigate those challenges (check-ins, group discussion, peer support, etc.)? |  |
| Will students have an opportunity to reflect on their learning from this experience and receive feedback?  |  |
| **High-Tech Simulations** |  |
| Can the experiential learning outcomes key to your course be sufficiently met through simulated activities? |  |
| Are there existing resources (virtual labs, interactive modules, etc.[[1]](#footnote-1)) readily available for you to draw on? If so, are costs manageable? Will you have sufficient IT support for you and your students?  |  |
| If you were to invest resources in creating the simulation or virtual component, would you have sufficient time to get it ready? Would it be something you would be able to and would want to reuse in the future? (Is it worth the cost and effort?) |  |
| Do you have a plan for how students will demonstrate successful completion of the simulation?  |  |
| Will students have clear prompts from which to reflect on their learning from this simulation and how it applies to course content?  |  |
| Could you conduct a simulation using role-play or other techniques that do not involve complicated virtual resources? (If yes, see low-tech simulations below) |  |

## **Experiential opportunities that can translate online relatively easily:**

Many shorter, simpler experiential activities or simulations can be comparatively easy to conduct online. Networking or interviewing professional contacts, for example, would only differ in medium, but need not change substantially in purpose or content. Students can also be put into small groups and conduct role-plays or other simulated activities that can help them gain a more practical and applied understanding of course material.

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| **Networking, Interview, etc.** |  |
| Will the learning achieved by these activities align with your course outcomes or learning goals?  |  |
| Do these activities (or components of these activities) connect with course content in a meaningful way?  |  |
| Will the activity help support students to build relationships, either with other students in the course, or professionals in the field?  |  |
| Students may face increased social or personal risks by trying to do these activities online, rather than in person. If they do, do you have strategies in place to support them (safe space, practise session, peer assistance, group discussion, chat board, etc.)? |  |
| Will students have an opportunity to reflect meaningfully on this activity in relation to course content and their professional lives, and receive feedback? |  |
| **Role-Play, Modeling, Low-tech simulations** |  |
| Would it be possible to sufficiently meet your course learning outcomes through demos, role-play or similar types of low-tech simulated activities? |  |
| If outcomes involve lab work, would it be sufficient to demonstrate the procedures and then provide data for students to analyze?  |  |
| If using small group activities (e.g. consulting projects, applied research, etc.), could you have an authentic assessment (with a “real-world” genre, purpose and audience) set up for students to demonstrate their learning? |  |
| If using synchronous activities (such as role-play, moots, etc.), can you set them up so that each student has a clear role and objective?  |  |
| When using simulated activities, can you ensure that you have adequate opportunity to observe and give feedback to students along the way? |  |
| Can you identify a meaningful reflection activity that students might use to integrate the experience with either the course topics or their career and professional lives in relation to those course topics? |  |

1. The following link is a list of resources for a variety of disciplines, including virtual labs and simulations: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bxr2rylK9zUWh0KZCTv9r8ZRcm9QON3P7yLXfJMxmnU/edit#gid=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)