

## Experiential Learning (EL) Hours Guide

**Consider your responses to the following questions:**

- 1) What are you doing to show commitment, communication, leadership, resilience, teamwork skills?
- 2) What connections are you making between experiences and your career goals?
- 3) What is your story? What will you bring to your chosen professional health program/career?
- 4) What will you talk about in your interviews? How will you set yourself apart?

**TIPS for SUCCESS** – in addition to good grades and a strong test score, you need a solid application/interview:

- *Have a well-rounded resume.*
- *Diversify your EL experiences and engage in EL activities every semester.*
- *Don't settle for the minimum number of EL hours. Your competition is doing more!*
- *Connect your experiences to career goals. How does this inform, prepare, or direct you to your career?*
- *Attempt to identify common threads between experiences, demonstrating your critical thinking skills.*
- *Be intentional, thoughtful and strategic when deciding on where to complete your EL hours.*
- *Keep a daily reflective journal, to help process and make meaning of experiences.*
- *No transportation? No problem! There is plenty to do on/near campus. Some campus programs provide transportation off campus to volunteer.*

**Activities that qualify for Experiential Learning (EL) hours:**

**Shadowing** – Anyone in scrubs, regardless of your career goal, optimally 5-10 times a year, in various settings (hospitals, clinics, private practice, rehab centers, mental health, memory clinics, assisted living facilities, nonprofits, urban, rural, etc.) in order to gather knowledge and make informed decisions.

**Clinical Training** – Training may be required in order to have direct patient contact/care experience. Therefore, clinical training qualifies for EL hours as long as the training can be verified by a supervisor.

**Other Trainings** – In addition to clinical training, other trainings may also qualify for EL hours, such as training/orientation required for volunteer/internship/paid positions, pre-approved leadership development training programs, cultural diversity training programs, Victim Advocate and Green Dot Bystander trainings.

**Clinical Experience** – Experience in the healthcare setting demonstrates your familiarity with and comfort in healthcare settings, that you know what you are getting into, and you have a desire to help patients. Clinical experience can be gained through volunteering, internships, or paid positions.

**Volunteering** – Meets/addresses a community need and helps a disadvantaged, underserved, marginalized or vulnerable population. Both clinical and non-clinical volunteer activities qualify for EL hours. It's important to be aware of social problems/circumstances that potentially impact health. Seek to learn about people with different backgrounds, social identities, lived experiences, cultures, faiths, etc. than yours. Connect your interests, hobbies, talents, etc. to service to the community.

**Research** – Research is highly valued in healthcare. There are many undergraduate research opportunities. Review resources and find an issue/topic of interest. Research experience demonstrates critical thinking, problem solving, organization, attention to detail, and interest in solutions, exploration and innovation.

**Refer to EL resources on the IMS website, and meet with the Community Coordinator regularly for advice.**