The challenge

ASU is measured by whom it includes and how they succeed. The university embraces a commitment to ensuring that all students are afforded an enriching and holistic educational experience, encompassing all facets of student life in and outside the classroom.

As the university continues its efforts to expand experiential learning opportunities for all, there is recognition of potential barriers to access. A majority of meaningful internships, particularly in the public service and nonprofit fields, are unpaid. Faculty often express willingness to provide research opportunities to undergraduate students but lack the resources to offer paid positions.

In 2018, a third of ASU’s full-time, first-year students came from low-income households or were Pell eligible. Due to financial constraints and concerns for incurring additional debt, low-income students are less likely to engage or seek out experiential learning opportunities. Some students may even have to forfeit valuable professional experiences in order to seek out paid positions that are often less aligned with their career aspirations.

In order to remove barriers to access, the university relies heavily on external support in the form of scholarships and grants to offset the cost of programming. Scholarship and grant funding enables ASU to sustain engagement in experiential opportunities reflective of the student population it serves.

Our journey forward

Experiential Learning Grant Program: Experiences like these provide students with a pathway to build their professional identity, explore their future careers and attain invaluable skills along the way.

Fueled by your generosity, grants between $1,500–$5,000 will be offered to students in need of funding for unpaid research, unpaid internships and study abroad opportunities.

Learn more at provost.asu.edu/elgp.
Experiential learning

Experiential learning is defined as learning from experience or learning by doing. Skills and knowledge are acquired from firsthand experiences typically outside the traditional academic setting. These experiences include research, study abroad, internships, service learning and field practicums.

Impact

At Arizona State University, we recognize the exceptional impact experiential learning opportunities can have on student academic outcomes, growth of skillsets, and success in college and beyond. Experiential learning opportunities can:

1. Bridge gaps between theory and practice.
2. Deepen understanding of learning and application of skills.
3. Sharpen critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
4. Enhance oral and written communication skills.
5. Create stronger networks and relationships between students and professionals.
7. Deepen sense of belonging and affiliation.
8. Develop knowledge and leadership skills desired by employers across industries.

Experiential learning is a primary source for the development of career-readiness competencies.

- NACE Journal, 2015
- NACE Internship Survey, 2018

80% of employers noted they actively sought graduates who had studied abroad.

60% of 2018 hires came from employers’ own internship programs.

Programs and offices

ASU is committed to providing meaningful and diverse experiential learning opportunities to students across the university. Here are just a few examples:

Career and Professional Development Services

ASU Career and Professional Development Services offers comprehensive support to current students and alumni to find internships and job opportunities, participate in job fairs and professional development workshops, schedule on-campus interviews, and take part in professional networking and mentoring. In 2017–2018, 92 percent of undergraduate students were employed or received at least one job offer 90 days after graduation.

Study Abroad Office

Offering 330 programs, the Study Abroad Office supports 2,500+ students each year. Students earn ASU credits and grades while abroad, allowing them to maintain progress toward timely degree completion and gain valuable skills to help them succeed in the workforce.

Undergraduate Research programs

The School of Life Sciences Undergraduate Research, or SOLUR, program is one of several robust programs across the university that promote faculty-student research experiences. Alongside faculty mentors and at varying levels of engagement, participants take part in biological research that often involves interdisciplinary collaborations with peers from psychology, biochemistry, kinesiology, bioengineering, medicine and philosophy. Many ASU students who are involved in undergraduate research apply their unique experiences to jobs in industries, as well as graduate studies.

“Everything noteworthy that I have achieved has, one way or another, been a result of my involvement at ASU. Being a Microsoft Student Partner paved the way for me to get an internship at Microsoft last summer, and that opened the doors for a full-time position at Microsoft waiting for me once I graduate.”

— Hadley G.
Major: Computer science
Minor: Business
Certificate: Digital culture