

Experiential Learning at the Friedman School



Gerald J. and Dorothy R.
Friedman School of
Nutrition Science and Policy



A Guide for M.S. Students

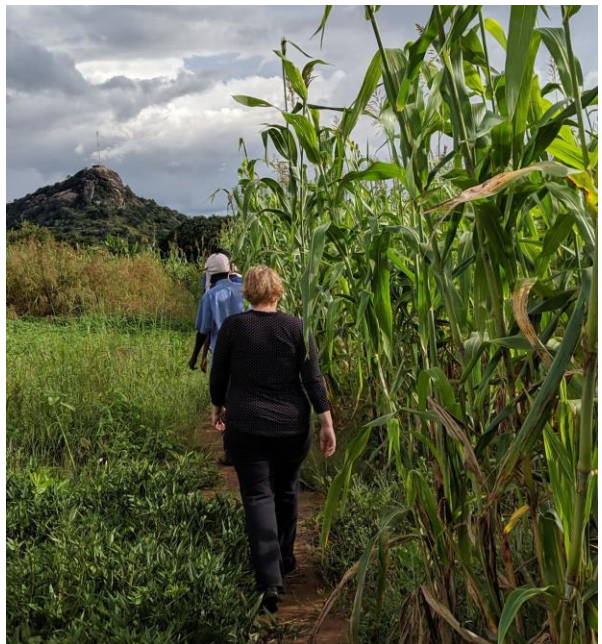
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Experiential Learning at the Friedman School

Experiential Learning is a core requirement for your degree!

Overview

- Every Friedman M.S. student will complete at least 120 hours of Experiential Learning (EL) before they graduate.
- Each EL experience gives you an opportunity to design your own hands-on learning project with an emphasis on classes you've taken and develop ideas you have about your future career and skills you want for after graduation.
- You will work with your academic advisor and a project sponsor to write a proposal for your EL experience – but first you get to decide what you want to do!
- Whether you are on campus or online, your EL experience is a great chance to explore a field you're interested in, work with a professor on a research project, connect with a community organization in Boston or in your own community, or try something completely new.
- EL experiences can be in-person, remote or hybrid. They can be paid or volunteer.
- You will need to identify a project sponsor (internal to Tufts or outside the school) who will supervise your experience and support your learning.
- Each EL experience must include *at least* 40 hours of hands-on learning, so you may complete up to 3 EL experiences (3 X 40 hours =120 hours)



Experiential Learning at the Friedman School

Getting started!

We're here to support you, and here are a few steps to help you get started:

1. Identify Your Interests

Begin by reflecting on the areas of [expertise](#) at the Friedman School that excite you most — for example, food policy, community health, global nutrition, communications, or research. Consider what types of roles or environments you might enjoy. What topic or topics would you like to explore during your EL experience(s)?

2. Conduct Preliminary Research

Use your favorite search engine or an AIChat to look for organizations, companies, research centers, and agencies doing work that aligns with your interests. Explore their career pages, programs, or ongoing initiatives to get a sense of possible roles or projects. Also, look at the Friedman faculty pages to learn more about areas of research you might be interested in.

You can find past examples of [internships](#) and [presentations](#) completed by Friedman students—these can spark ideas and help you see what is possible.

3. Consider Skills You Want to Develop

Think about the [professional competencies](#) you want to build or strengthen, such as data analysis, program design, research skills, policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, or communications. Let the skills guide the types of opportunities you pursue. Your EL experience must align with competencies, so build them in from the beginning!

4. Organize Your Ideas

Prepare a short document or list that includes:

- Your top interests and focus areas
- A few organizations or project ideas you'd like to explore
- Skills and competencies you'd like to gain
- This preparation will help you connect with your advisor, or reach out to a project sponsor outside of Friedman and describe what you are looking for.

5. Leverage Your Friedman Network

Bring your research and ideas to your academic advisor, faculty members, and/or a [Block Career Center advisor](#). They can help you refine your direction, connect you with potential mentors, and introduce you to Friedman alumni or partners who may be working in your areas of interest.

By combining self-reflection with proactive research and meaningful conversations, you can create opportunities that align with your goals and help you build a truly impactful Experiential Learning experience!

Experiential Learning Requirements and Policies

Types of Experiential Learning experiences

Experiential Learning experiences can be completed in-person, online, or hybrid. EL options include research projects, volunteering, designing a curriculum, working in a community, creating a unique experience – you decide! Each EL project must include *at least* 40 hours of hands-on learning and must be approved by your academic advisor.

Examples:

- Practicum
- Research Assistantship
- Community work
- Internship
- Master's Thesis
- Current Work Experience
- Immersive Experience (such as Delta Greens Spring Break Trip)

Academic Credit

You may choose to receive academic credit for your Experiential Learning experience through a Directed Study. The Directed Study proposal will be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs and must include the support of your academic advisor and the instructor of the Directed Study. Directed Study offerings based on internships and other types of Experiential Learning are graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading basis.

Compensation

You may receive payment for work you do to complete the Experiential Learning requirement. The Block Career Center has funding that may be available to support otherwise unpaid projects.

International Students

International students should consult with International Center about their experiential learning plans before submitting an experiential learning proposal. Please contact Neriliz Soto-Gonzalez at Neriliz.Soto_Gonzalez@tufts.edu.

Experiential Learning Proposal

Before you begin your EL experience you will submit a proposal form (via Quali) that must be approved by your Academic Advisor and your project sponsor. If you complete more than one EL experience, you will submit a separate project proposal form for **each** individual experience.

You will find a link to the EL Proposal form [here](#) and on the last page of this document!

- The **proposal form** will ask for your personal and academic information, details about your Experiential Learning sponsor, and a short description of the proposed project
- Your **project sponsor** may be affiliated with an organization, company, community group external to Tufts, or within Friedman/Tufts. They will serve as your main point of contact and project approver along with your academic advisor.
- Your **project description** will include: a title, estimated hours, deliverables, and an explanation of how your project aligns with Friedman MS competencies, outlined in the table below.
- Each project must demonstrate synthesis of **at least two of the competencies** to ensure academic rigor and connect your learning to career outcomes. You will provide a meaningful deliverable such as a written report or presentation.
- Your project must be approved by your project sponsor and academic advisor before you start work!



Experiential Learning Proposal and Competencies

Experiential Learning Competencies

Each Experiential Learning proposal should demonstrate at least two of the competencies outlined below. The four areas of competency are critical elements of your Friedman education.

Mapping your experience to the defined competencies will help you better understand the purpose and relevance of your work, articulate what you've learned, and demonstrate measurable growth. This ensures that your Experiential Learning project is a structured, high-impact educational experience that advances your mastery of your field.

Competency	Examples of Associated Skills
Scientific & Disciplinary Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the function of macro and micronutrients as they relate to health and disease Basic grasp of food and nutrition policy history and key players Demonstrate the ability to conduct research in chosen discipline and in real-world contexts Apply knowledge gained through field experience to evidence-based research Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions Apply professional and field experience to policy and program development
Data Analysis & Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze data using statistical methods Interpret and assess statistical reports Ability to critically review the current literature
Communication & Presentation Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate writing and presentation skills Interpret and communicate scientific literature for a lay audience Report the findings of data analysis in figures and text Develop and refine communication strategies for different audiences and sectors Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) nutrition science and policy content, both in writing and through oral presentation
Leadership, Collaboration, & Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership skills Engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration Be able to recognize problems and apply disciplinary expertise to their resolution

Experiential Learning Completion and Reflection

Experiential Learning Completion Form and Presentation

After you complete your EL experience, you will submit the **EL Completion Form**.

- This form documents how **many hours you completed, where the experience took place, and whether you received academic credit**.
- You will also **submit a short reflection** about your EL experience (for example: 5–7 slide presentation; 3–5 minute video; short paper).
- This reflection is an important part of the learning process, helping you connect your hands-on experience to your academic work, identify key takeaways, and articulate your growth and skills.
- Your reflection will be reviewed by your project sponsor and academic advisor, and they will have the opportunity to share feedback with you.

After submission, **you will be invited to present your Experiential Learning project to the Friedman community**.

- Presentations include: a brief overview of your project and organization, key takeaways about your learning and career goals, connections to your coursework, competencies and skills developed, and how this experience informs your future plans or how you might describe it to a potential employer.
- Times and dates for these presentations will be determined.



Links

- [Experiential Learning Proposal Form](#)
- [Experiential Learning Completion Form](#)
- [Directed Study Proposal form](#)
- [Examples of past Experiential Learning internships and presentations](#)
- [Tufts International Center](#) – International students should consult with the International Center about their plans or any visa-related questions prior to submitting a proposal.

Still have questions?

Contact your Academic Advisor or submit your question to [***nutritionEL@tufts.edu***](mailto:nutritionEL@tufts.edu).

