Peer Education Attribute

The University of Cincinnati’s General Education Program requires all baccalaureate students to engage in at least one type of experiential learning experience during their program of study. The University currently recognizes a specified range of experiences to fulfill this requirement. The General Education Coordinating Committee approved a proposal presented by the Peer Education Network (PEN) to add Peer Education to the suite of categories qualifying to meet the experiential learning requirement. PEN estimates that upwards of 750 students per year provide Peer Education instruction through currently existing curricular and co-curricular structures. Creating the Peer Education Attribute:

- Recognizes the educational value that select peer educator experiences provide to students during their undergraduate career
- Provides a way to incorporate peer educator experiences into the academic transcript
- Provides the ability to measure and track peer educator activity to assess the scope and impact of Peer Education at the University
- Establishes a consistent criteria set for university-recognized Peer Education experiences

Summary

The Peer Education Network proposed that:

- Academic programs may choose to utilize courses with the Peer Education attribute to fulfill the experiential learning graduation requirement, most likely as a mid-collegiate General Education experience
- Peer Education shall become a course attribute for the academic transcript
- The Peer Education course attribute may be applied at the section level when ordering classes

Attribute Definition

Courses for which the following definition applies can attach the Peer Education attribute:

A specially designed learning experience in which students actively engaged in peer educator* roles learn, apply, and reflect on skills, knowledge, and theory related to the practice of instructing and/or mentoring other students.

*Peer educators at the University of Cincinnati are student leaders who are specially selected and trained to hold positions with specific responsibility to facilitate meaningful learning through discussion, instruction, and/or mentorship to their peers, individually or as part of a group. Peer educators instruct students in their own academic level. For instance, undergraduate students might teach other undergraduate students. However, graduate students who teach undergraduate students are not peer educators.

Implementation

In order for the Peer Education attribute to be assigned to a course, the following criteria must be met:

- The course with the Peer Education attribute must be approved through eCurriculum workflow and unit governance process like all courses. A Peer Education Network representative will receive notification of all courses using the Peer Education attribute each semester and will have the ability to reach out to departments incorrectly applying the attribute.
- The instructor certifies that the Peer Education attribute is applicable to their course using the definition above (similar to current practice for assigning the Service Learning attribute). The instructor of the Peer Education course must be able to assess and evaluate the completion of the experience and the quality of the peer educator’s performance.
Applicable Experiences
Examples of courses that could carry the Peer Education attribute include, but are not limited to, those designed to enhance the understanding of the skills, knowledge, and theory related to the practice of peer education for students serving in the following roles:

- Peer Leader/Peer Leader Coordinator
- Peer Tutor
- Supplemental Instruction Leader
- Academic Coach
- Resident Advisor
- Student Orientation Leader/Student Orientation Coordinator
- PACE Leader
- Wellness Peer Educator
- Undergraduate Teaching Assistant

Essential Elements
Learning experiences that qualify to hold the Peer Education attribute incorporate the following:

- Defined learning outcomes for peer educators
- Defined learning outcomes for the peer educators’ work with students
- Oversight from professional staff or faculty
- In-depth experience defined by a suggested minimum contribution of approximately 120 hours per semester (average of 8 hours per week)
- Selection of peer educators based on articulated minimum qualifications related to content and context of the experience
- Appropriate preparation and training prior to and/or concurrently with the experience
- Assessment of peer educator capabilities and growth including performance evaluation and feedback
- Assessment of outcomes for the peer educators’ work with students
- Peer educator self-reflection

What does not qualify?
Examples of courses that would not qualify for the Peer Education attribute are those in which:

- Enrolled students are not engaged in a peer educator role where they instruct and/or mentor their peers
- Graduate students are engaged in educator roles where they teach undergraduate students
- Enrolled students are engaged in educator roles where they teach elementary or secondary students, e.g. student teachers

Class Order Recommendations
The Peer Education Network recommends the following be considered when offering Peer Education courses:

- Whether or not the course can be repeated for additional credit (without grade replacement) to capture Peer Education experiences lasting more than one semester
- Whether or not a sequence of courses should be offered to capture Peer Education experiences lasting more than one semester or to incorporate role changes such as increased levels of responsibility
- Whether or not instructor permission should be required to enroll due to the selective nature of peer educator roles
- How variable credit options may be applied, including zero credits to meet experience or student-based needs
- How flex term options may be employed to recognize preparatory training or work completed in advance of Peer Education employment
- Whether or not the Peer Education attribute can be included with other course attributes