

Reflective Essay Instructions

Write an essay (**1250-1500 words**) reflecting on your completed experience. Essays must be submitted to the Experiential Learning Community Dropbox folder. This essay should be completed and submitted as soon as possible after you complete your approved experiential learning activity, and in any case no later than 5pm on the **Monday of the 15th week** of the semester. For summer experiences, the final deadline is August 1st.

The essay should include the following elements:

- (1) Begin with an introduction that features **a thesis statement** that articulates concisely what you learned from the experience. Your thesis should answer the following question, clearly and specifically: how did the experience broaden, deepen, or otherwise enrich your understanding of your discipline, your self, and/or the wider world?
- (2) Support your thesis statement in the body of the essay by relaying **a first-person narrative** of your experience, highlighting key moments in the learning process. Tell the story of *what* you did and *how*, providing specific examples to illustrate how your perspective/understanding evolved over the course of the experience.
- (3) Finally, **reflect** on the significance of the experience with respect to your professional and/or personal goals. How can you apply what you learned in the future? You might also comment on ways your contribution could have been strengthened, or provide ideas about how others may benefit from what you learned through your experience. What recommendations would you make to a fellow Honors student undertaking the same experience?

Notes:

- If this is a repeated experience (e.g. second semester in the OSU Marching band, or second semester of lab work), you are expected to write a substantially different essay to reflect continued growth in learning. For instance, you could focus on new challenges and goals that drive you to stay invested in the activity or enable you to find continued fulfillment and/or make new contributions through the activity. How did this semester's activity enable you to build upon the learning you achieved in previous semesters?
- Outside research is not required for this assignment, but if you do draw upon any outside sources, make sure to cite them, both parenthetically in the body of your essay and on a separate bibliography page (APA or MLA style).
- Essays should be authored individually; all ideas and words should be the author's own.
- Successful completion of this essay is essential to your receipt of honors credit for the activity you have completed. To ensure that your essay fully and

persuasively demonstrates meaningful Honors learning, plan to engage substantially with the writing process: brainstorm, make notes, make an outline, write a draft, seek feedback, revise, and proofread. Attend to your essay's fulfillment of purpose, organization, integration of evidence, and stylistic effectiveness. You are strongly encouraged to visit the writing center at least once during this process. You may also make an appointment with Dr. Miller (stephanie.j.miller@okstate.edu) or Dr. Frohock (richard.frohock@okstate.edu) to discuss the essay at any point during the semester.