Appendix A: Definitions

Work Experience. In this document, “Work Experience” is a generic term that encompasses all discipline related labels, including but not limited to: Internship, Work Placement, Clinic, Practicum, Student Teaching, Field Placement, Field Experience and Apprenticeship.

Agency. An “agency” is any organization offering the student work experience; the organization may be nonprofit, government or for-profit. The nature and formation of the Agency-University relationship will vary; some agencies regularly accept NMU students while others may do so on an infrequent and ad-hoc basis.

Affiliation Agreement. A formal written contract between the Agency and the University identifying roles and responsibilities. There are different agreement templates depending upon the type of agency relationship and work experience (see Section II).

Agency Site Supervisor. The Agency employee who will directly supervise the work of the student.

Agency Supervisor. This may be the same person as Agency Site Supervisor, but in some organizations there is an administrative overseer responsible for coordination who is not an immediate supervisor.

Director. The NMU Director of a work experience program is the individual within an academic department who is responsible for administration: defining the relationship that will exist between the University and the agency accepting a student, overseeing students, verifying learning outcomes and evaluating the placement. The person may be a faculty member, department head or dedicated staff member. The actual title within the department may vary, e.g. Internship Coordinator, Field Placement Administrator; the term “Director” is used generically within this document. Type 1 work experiences may use other terms as required by accreditation agencies.

Instructing Faculty. The instructing faculty member is the faculty on record responsible for grading the student’s experience. In some programs, the Director does not hold academic status and cannot be the academic overseer.

Learning Outcomes. There are clearly defined and expected learning objectives or a plan of study related to a student’s academic coursework. These outcomes may be common for all students within a discipline, may be uniquely developed for each student-agency placement or fall somewhere in between. Learning outcomes are important for granting credit and for compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA Fact Sheet #7, http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa) and Higher Learning Commission accreditation.

Learning Agreement. An academic plan of study that describes the expected learning outcomes for a student’s work experience.

Paid v. Unpaid Experiences. When a student receives a salary, the student is considered an employee. However, it is unnecessary for the Agency to pay the student to establish an employment relationship. Agencies may provide a living allowance or tuition, which may have the appearance of a salary.

Practicum. In most situations, all students enrolled in a given course are placed by the instructor or director in groups or individually. These courses are part of the curriculum and students are supervised by the NMU instructor.