



**Merritt & District
Chamber of Commerce**

The collective voice of businesses in the Nicola Valley

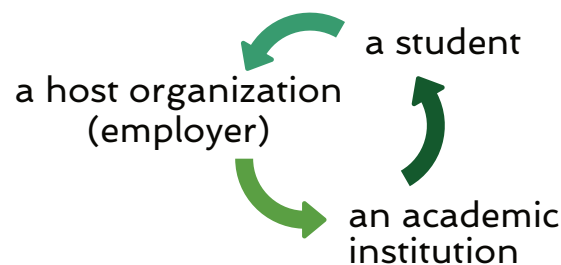
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A GUIDE TO WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

WHAT IS WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING?

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is a model of learning that bridges the classroom and the workplace, allowing students to put their skills and education to practical use!

WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of:



WIL IS FLEXIBLE

There are **9** different forms of WIL to fit your organization's specific goals and objectives.

1. Apprenticeships
2. Mandatory Professional Practices
3. Co-operative Education Programs
4. Internships
5. Work Experience
6. Applied Research Projects
7. Service Learning
8. Field Placements
9. Entrepreneurship

This guide provides a quick breakdown of each.



As you read through this guide, consider the following:

- How do you want the WIL student to help?
- What are the goals you are hoping to achieve?
- What type of supervision and mentorship are you committed to provide?
- What is the timing/duration of your placement?

In addition to offering this guide, the Chamber is happy to meet with you to discuss the benefits of WIL and determine which form is right for your organization. To book a **FREE** appointment, please contact us at info@merrittchamber.com

APPRENTICESHIPS

An apprenticeship is a formal agreement between a student (apprentice) and an employer, especially in the skilled trades. The apprentice works under the direction of a certified journeyperson and is registered provincially. Typically, apprenticeships are 80% in the workplace with the rest done in class and take anywhere from 2-5 years to finish.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Tried and true method of recruiting and maintaining talent
- Apprentices that graduate into journeypersons have better health and safety performance, and greater overall productivity

MANDATORY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Sometimes called clinical placements, this type of WIL usually happens in a discipline that requires work experience for a professional license or certification, such as teaching, early childhood education, social work, or nursing. These positions are typically team-based and unpaid and follow strict regulations.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Ensure that students have the ethical and technical aptitudes for the job
- Provide day-to-day support



CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

Typically, Co-operative Education (co-op) involves several different stints in the workplace throughout their academic program. A student might spend their first 4 months in the classroom, then 4 months at a paid workplace, and then 4 months in the classroom, etc. Some programs just embrace one long (12-18 months) work placement. In either case, students ultimately spend between 25 and 30% of their program embedded in a workplace where they directly apply the material and reflect on what they learned in school.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Like co-op, a Work Experience is one or more terms of full-time paid work during an academic program, where students get experience relevant to their program and career goals. The main difference between a Work Experience and co-op is the amount of time during an academic program spent on work terms. Work Experiences can be much shorter in duration.

INTERNSHIPS

Internships are usually supervised and embedded in a workplace. Internships can be paid or unpaid, for credit or not for credit, and can happen in the middle of an academic program or after all academic coursework has been completed and right before graduation. Internships are usually 12-16 months long.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Fill short term staffing needs
- Help shape the industry's incoming workforce
- Significant funding available to reduce labour costs of students
- Strengthen brand reputation among students
- Constant employee pipeline
- Provides mentorship and supervisory responsibilities to junior staff



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

An Applied Research Project is a project connecting what a student learns in class to an employers' problem. Applied research can also be called a capstone, consulting, or design project. Students will spend anywhere from 2-8 months working with the host organization to solve their problem.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Can target larger, long terms problems that are important but not urgent
- Get detailed, well-thought-out solutions to a problem
- Low cost and low time required for supervision
- Typically conducted remotely

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

Community Service Learning is a type of WIL that connects classroom instruction with meaningful community service, focused on engaging students directly in practical projects that strengthen their communities. Service learning differs from volunteering because it typically features a minimum hour requirement and a mandatory reflection piece.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Students provide skills and knowledge base
- Fosters collaboration between schools and communities



FIELD PLACEMENT

A field placement is an intensive, part-time, or short-term project. Field placements don't require the supervision of a registered professional and aren't a part of professional certification. They are typically unpaid and account for work-integrated educational experiences not encompassed by other forms, such as co-op, clinic, practicum, and internship.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Increase productivity and additional service provisions
- Improve staff knowledge and skills, as well as collaborative teamwork within and across professions
- Develop and update resources, complete short-term projects and undertake research.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Compared to other forms of WIL, entrepreneurship doesn't as closely involve external employers, unless you are looking at providing mentorship to students. An entrepreneurship experience is a chance for students to take a crack at running their own businesses. Often run through school-supported incubators or accelerators, entrepreneurship connects students with resources, space, mentorship and/or funding to launch their own startups or tackle real-world problems for academic credit.

