

How to Find Your Own Work Placements

A guide to discover your own co-op, internship, practicum, and more

The logo for ACE WIL, consisting of the text "ACE" stacked above "WIL" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, enclosed within a black circle.

ACE
WIL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Where to Find Work Placements.....	4
How to Contact Potential Employers.....	6
International Placements.....	7
Funding For Students.....	7
Final Considerations.....	10



*This resource can support any post-secondary student seeking a work placement, and includes additional resources and support for students working in the **non-profit sector** and **MATCH (Museums, Arts, Tourism, Culture, and Hospitality) sectors**.*



INTRODUCTION

If you are a student wanting to work in the MATCH (Museums, Arts, Tourism, Culture, and Hospitality) and non-profit sectors, building hands-on experience through work-integrated learning (WIL) is a fantastic way to test out different types of opportunities, build your network, and ultimately accelerate your career. Participating in WIL often begins with directly accessing and applying for job postings found through your school. Many students, however, discover that expanding their search beyond their programs can increase their employment prospects and be a great path towards finding a rewarding work placement.



There are many ways that you as a student can proactively look for opportunities. Consider the following steps prior to your search and before you begin reaching out to potential employers.

Confirm Program Requirements: Any program requirements for your WIL placement can be quickly verified with your program's WIL/co-op coordinators and/or instructors.

- Is there a requirement for the position to be paid, or to receive a stipend?
- Is there a minimum number of hours required?
- Are there specific skills you need to develop during the position?
- Are there specific times in the school year during which the placement needs to be completed?

Establish Placement Goals: Salary, title, and location are all important to consider, but ideally, your WIL placement will help you advance to the next stage of your career and provide ample learning opportunities.

- What skills do you wish to improve?
- Are there opportunities for growth and advancement?
- Are there opportunities for mentorship?

Survey Your Attributes: In finding your own placement, it is vital to have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and skills that you bring to the table and how these will meet the needs of potential employers.

Know Your Message: You must be able to clearly articulate why an employer should hire you. For example: In hiring me, you get a short-term team member with current academic training, enthusiasm, new ideas, background skills/experience, and the desire to perform well!

WHERE TO FIND WORK PLACEMENTS

There are a wide range of opportunities available for students, but once you've reviewed opportunities from your school, it can be hard to know where to look. Below is a breakdown of some key platforms and resources to help you find a work placement.

POSTING PLATFORMS

External Job Postings

Job posting platforms can cover a specific industry while others cover all sectors. Most platforms will have advanced search filters that allow you to narrow down jobs most relevant to your area of study and set up regular email alerts.

MATCH (Museums, Arts, Tourism, Culture, and Hospitality)

- **BC Alliance for Arts + Culture:** Arts organization jobs (BC-wide)
- **BC Museums Association:** Museums and art galleries (BC-wide)
- **Work in Culture:** Jobs for artists, creatives, and cultural workers (Canada-wide)
- **go2HR:** Tourism and hospitality jobs (BC & Yukon)

Non-Profits

- **CharityVillage:** Jobs in non-profits and charities (Canada-wide)
- **GoodWork:** Environmental and green jobs (Canada-wide)
- **ECO Canada:** Environmental and green jobs (Canada-wide)
- **WorkInNonProfits:** Jobs in non-profits and charities (Canada-wide)

Job Platform Lists by Industry

- WorkBC has a list of **job posting platforms** by industry.
- The University of Victoria has a comprehensive list of **job posting platforms by industry**.

General Platforms: You can also find job postings through

- **Indeed**
 - **LinkedIn**
 - **ZipRecruiter**
- and more.



NETWORK AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building connections in your field of study is a great way to find a work term, as well as to prepare yourself for graduation. There are many different approaches you can take, so consider which of the following will work best for you:

Mentorship: Take the opportunity to receive advice and support from a seasoned professional. Your school may have mentoring programs, which can be a great place to start. Set-up a regular meeting time with your mentor, perhaps monthly or at a frequency that works for both of your schedules.

Work proposal: Create an opportunity by proposing a project to an organization. This promotes your skills beyond your resumé, shows your interest, and provides the employer with an opportunity to see your value before considering you for a permanent position. Schedule a mutually agreed-upon meeting to pitch your idea.

Job Shadow: Spend a work day with a professional in your career of interest. This will expose you to elements of the job that you cannot read about online and to meet people in the field. Ask someone in your network, reach out to an organization, or cold-call someone of interest.

Informational Interviews: If you are interested in a particular industry, informational interviews are a great way to learn more about the field and network. An informational interview is a short meeting (online or in person) with an individual to ask questions about their career and industry.

Networking: Networking is the act of communicating with people in order to exchange information and can be done in a variety of in-person and online spaces. It's one of the most effective job search strategies, although it's usually more of a long-term strategy that helps you build professional connections. The advantage is that you will likely locate opportunities that would never have been advertised through other methods.

LinkedIn and *Facebook* groups are easy ways to connect with people and engage in discussions. You may also consider joining a professional association. Many of them offer student memberships, which include access to online networking sessions and in-person conferences. Industry publications and newsletters are also a great source of relevant information about hiring trends and professional events.

Volunteering: Providing your time to causes you care about can be a fantastic way to grow your professional network and add to your resume. A few volunteer posting platforms include:

- [Volunteer Connector](#)
- [the Volunteer BC Volunteer Now Portal](#)
- [Canada Service Corps](#)
- [CharityVillage's Volunteer Page](#)

HOW TO CONTACT POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Once you have identified potential employers, reaching out will require contacting people you may not know. Building an introductory script will ensure that you can quickly and clearly articulate who you are and why you are connecting. It helps you to remember what to say and to communicate clearly and confidently over the phone or by email.

The following example is adapted from a script prepared by the SFU Office of Co-operative Education:

“

Dear [Insert Name],

I'm currently a [#]-year student at [Name of School], attaining a Bachelor's Degree in [discipline]. I'm searching for my next co-op work term, seeking full-time employment from [dates of co-op term]. [Sentence about why you are interested in the company.] I'm interested to know if you would consider hiring for a student summer work position.

After graduation, I plan to seek a job relating to [career target.] Any experience relating to this field of work would help me advance in my career. My last co-op position was with [company] doing [tasks].

Co-op student positions are beneficial for employers looking to complete special projects, identify and test out future employees, and backfill positions. Student employment costs less than regular contracted employees and you may be eligible to subsidize some of your costs, check out the [Talent MATCH Funding Options for MATCH Organizations](#) for more details.

I'm very eager to take on new challenges and look forward to hearing from you! Let me know if there are any positions I can apply for, or if you would like to set up an interview to discuss possibilities further.

”

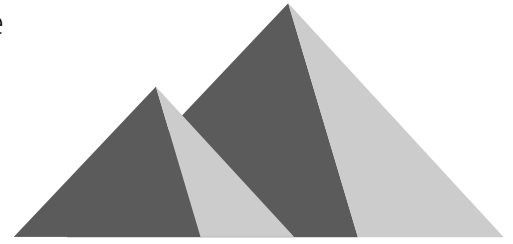
Key Tips:

- **Have patience.** It is important to be mindful that many employers in the MATCH and non-profit sectors are busy people who have a lot on their plates! If you don't immediately receive a response, wait 3-5 days before sending a gentle follow-up.
- **Brevity is best!** Keep an eye on the length of your call and the word count of your email.

INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENTS

International opportunities are a fantastic way to build your experience.

The first step will be to check with your school and see what the requirements are to get credit for a placement abroad. Check with your Career or Co-op Office. Some schools will have requirements around the types of programs that are eligible. International work terms are often unpaid but are required to have some form of compensation such as an honorarium or free housing.



Talk to your Career Educator or Co-op Coordinator to see how they can help you seek international placements—they may have additional resources available to you.

FUNDING & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

Did you know there are nation-wide programs dedicated to student work placements?

Here are three types of programs to explore:

- **Student Employment Funding:** There are funders that accept applications from students like yourself to fund a portion of your next work placement. This is a fantastic way to give yourself an edge when finding a position.
- **Student Employment Programs:** There are also employment funding programs you can apply to within specific sectors.
- **Employer Funding to Hire Students:** Employers often apply for funding to be able to hire students each year. If there is an organization you want to work for that doesn't have a budget to hire you, you can encourage them to apply for available funding.



STUDENT EMPLOYMENT FUNDING

Student Work Placement Program (SWPP)

SWPP provides funding for post-secondary students across Canada to receive paid work experience related to their field of study including mentorship programs, co-op placements, practicums, internships, and more. There are 18 delivery partners that distribute this funding. Employers have to apply for the funding and when a student is hired, their eligibility has to be verified (see more on employer funding below). However, three of these funders have ways for students to either apply for funding or access resources. These three funders include:

ECO Canada

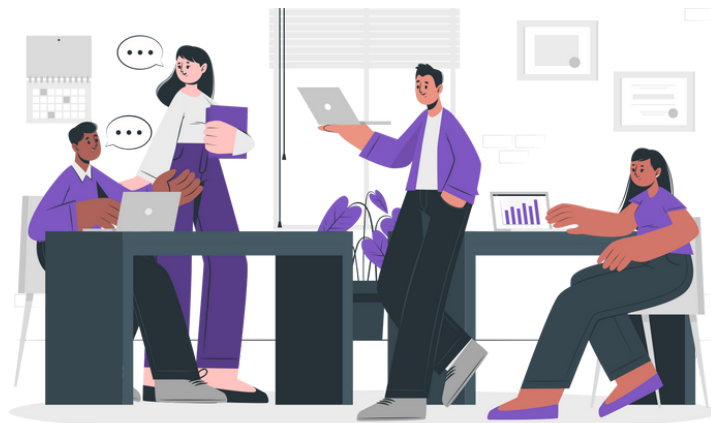
ECO Canada (Environmental Careers Organization Canada) is a steward for the Canadian environmental workforce across all industries. From job creation and wage funding to training and labour market research, they champion the end-to-end career of all environmental professionals.

Electricity HR Canada

Electricity HR Canada is a non-profit organization that provides human resources services to employers in the electricity and renewable energy sectors. Electricity HR's Student Work Placement Program provides work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities to eligible students. Determine whether you are eligible by filling out the [**Participant Information form**](#).

Tourism HR Canada: Propel

Propel aims to recruit students to the tourism and hospitality sector and help students gain sought-after skills through WIL opportunities. Students cannot apply for funding, but can [**register an account with Propel**](#) to gain access to the posted opportunities on their job portal.



Apprenticeship Grants, Government of Canada

Apprenticeship grants are available for individuals pursuing a Red Seal trade (eg. Cook, Landscape Horticulturist, Plumber, etc.)

Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women

A taxable cash grant of \$3,000 per year/level (or equivalent) up to a maximum amount of \$6,000 per person.

Apprenticeship Incentive Grant (AIG)

A taxable cash grant of \$1,000 per year or level for a lifetime maximum amount of \$2,000 per person.

Apprenticeship Completion Grant (ACG)

A one-time taxable cash grant lifetime amount of \$2,000 per person for registered apprentices who complete their apprenticeship training and obtain their journey person certification.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Young Canada Works, Government of Canada

For students and recent graduates to gain paid work experience in heritage organizations and bilingual (English & French speaking) roles. Note: under Young Canada Works, the term “job program” is for students and the term “internship” is for recent graduates.

Young Canada Works at Building Careers in Heritage

Young Canada Works (YCW) in Heritage Organizations (YCWHO) is an employment program for students. It offers them the opportunity to improve their skills while acquiring practical knowledge in the heritage field. Full-time positions last from six to 16 weeks. Students may work full-time or part-time.

Young Canada Works at Building Careers in English and French

A short-term job program for students. It offers them the opportunity to gain work experience in which they use their first or second official language in an official language minority community and to explore career opportunities. It also offers students the chance to experience a geographic exchange and develop a network in official language minority communities. Positions last from six to 16 weeks. Students with a disability are eligible for part-time positions.

UNA-CANADA (United Nations Association in Canada)

Green Spaces

The UNA-Canada Green Spaces program is designed to provide Canadian youth with 4-month experiential learning opportunities in the green economy.

Federal Student Work Experience Program, Government of Canada

Explore hundreds of career paths and thousands of jobs that the Government of Canada has to offer across the country.

EMPLOYER FUNDING

Help an Organization Find Funding to Hire You

There are also many grants available for employers to hire a student. If you find an organization that you want to work with, you can share funding opportunities that they are eligible for, or even offer to support them with the grant writing process.

Visit ACE-WIL BC's employer funding resource page.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Finding your own placement might take a bit of extra work, and an increased time investment, but the payoff can be significant. Students who take this route often find access to a wider pool of jobs, reduced direct competition with their peers, and positions that align with their areas of interest.

Furthermore, finding your own placement is a great chance to practice self-advocacy skills, such as networking, accessing the hidden job market, marketing yourself, and cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset. These skills will be foundational for you in the future when you begin your career search after graduation.

