Tips for Implementing the Framework: Suggested Project Plan and Timeline Module

In this Module:

While there is a lot of flexibility for PSIs implementing the WIL Impacts Framework, this Module includes suggestions for the project plan, a sample timeline, and subsequent surveys. As well, there are tips for focus groups and identifying WIL hosts and internal staff to survey.

Suggested project plan and timeline

This module includes a sample timeline with estimated times for key milestones in the process of implementing a complete data collection and analysis cycle – i.e., collecting and analyzing data for all domains.

This timeline makes the assumption that it is the first time that your PSI would be running this process. With repeated implementations, times could potentially be reduced given that some processes would already be in place.

Finally, these times can vary depending on the resources available at your institution.

For implementation, it is recommended to work in partnership with your Institutional Research (IR) office to collect and analyze the data.

Another alternative that could help with the implementation, especially at smaller PSIs, would be to distribute the different implementations pieces (e.g., identification of partners, preparation of surveys, survey launch, survey invitations and reminders, additional data collection, and data analysis and reporting) among various people with different skillsets. For instance, a survey analyst could launch and run the surveys, a research analyst could provide support with the data analysis and reporting, and a WIL program specialist could focus on the coordination and engagement of the different employers/community partners.

A project committee made up of people from different departments and areas could help provide guidance in the development of the process.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Identify internal and external partners to participate	Amount of time will vary depending on how much preliminary consultation is required
Prepare survey questionnaire(s) to be launched externally (host organizations) and/or internally (WIL offices)	Weeks 1 and 2
Launch survey and send first email invitation to host organizations and/or internal WIL offices	Beginning of week 3
A week after first invite, send a first reminder to participate in survey	Beginning of week 4
A few days before closing the survey, send a second and last reminder	End of week 4 / Beginning of week 5

Close survey (after 2-3 weeks of it being open) and begin preliminary data cleaning and analysis	
If interviews and/or focus groups will be implemented, the interviews guides could incorporate questions to clarify or expand survey responses. Invitations to interviews and focus groups should be prepared and sent.	Weeks 5 and 6
Run interviews and/or focus groups	Weeks 7 and 8
Analyze qualitative data from interviews/focus groups and incorporate with survey findings	Weeks 9 and 10
Prepare report and share findings	Weeks 10 and 11

Holding focus groups after surveying

If you think that you might be interested in collecting qualitative data via interviews or focus groups and are running a survey first, you could include a last question asking your partners to volunteer for a second round of data collection in the form of interviews/focus groups so that you can easily reach out to a subset who are willing to participate in focus groups/interviews.

A closing question like the one detailed below could be used:

> If you are willing to participate in a follow up interview/focus group to better understand your needs and priorities and how we can help you in meeting these needs through WIL hiring/engaging, please click here*. You will be directed to a separate website for your contact information so that your contact information is not linked in any way to your answers on this survey. Thank you!

*Link takes participant to a separate survey/question:

> Thank you for agreeing to participate in a follow-up interview or focus group.

> If you agree to share your email address, we will use it only to contact you for an upcoming interview/focus group.

> The information you share here is collected by the Survey Administrator [WIL program/office conducting the study] and is in no way linked with your previous survey responses. If you have any further questions, please contact [email address].

Please provide your name and an email address where we can contact you to schedule an interview or focus group:

Name: _____   Email: _____

Holding focus groups before surveying

In some cases, an exploratory approach might be taken in which interviews/focus groups are implemented first. This can happen, for instance, when there is an interest in exploring the potential impacts of your WIL programs without having structured categories of impacts (as provided in the framework and implemented in the survey questions).

After first implementing the interviews/focus groups, these qualitative findings could be used to design questions (and/or add to the ones provided in this tool) for a follow up survey.

Tips for identifying WIL hosts to survey

Ideally, you will be collecting data from all your WIL host organizations but if this is not possible, you might want to identify a subset, such as those that provide the most experiences for your students or those industries/sectors where you are hoping to expand your WIL programs.

Additionally, and depending on the size and decentralization of WIL programs at your PSI, you might want to assign one representative per WIL office/program to collect data for their WIL host organizations.

Tips for identifying internal WIL staff to survey:

For PSI metrics, it would be ideal to have the leaders of each WIL program respond and share these questionnaires with other colleagues within your PSI.

Besides WIL offices, these respondents could include: faculty closely connected to the WIL programs, heads of departments that have a significant offering of WIL programs, and overall staff that are responsible for or have access to the assessment and other reports resulting from your WIL programming.

As with the host organization metrics, it is recommended that you share the questions and collect data from as many colleagues within your PSI as possible.

Subsequent surveys

Although these modules work as stand-alone, one-time surveys, these tools are intended for repeated use and could be run every year or after each WIL experience (perhaps as part of the reporting phase of each of the WIL experiences offered by your programs). This periodicity can be used to track changes with time.