



STUDENT TALENT CONNECT

Legacy Resource for Employers

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Overview

This document is designed to provide employers with a comprehensive resource outlining work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities in the Hamilton region. All resources and programming outlined in this document are available directly through McMaster University, Mohawk College or Redeemer University. We encourage employers to pull information from this resource as needed, to connect with your post-secondary institution (PSI) of choice to jumpstart your WIL journey!



What was Student Talent Connect?

Through the creation of a consortium between the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, McMaster University, Mohawk College, Redeemer University, Workforce Planning Hamilton and the Business + Higher Education Roundtable, Student Talent Connect empowered businesses to leverage WIL opportunities to expand their current and future capacity. This project ran from February 2024 to March 2025, with a goal to create 210 net-new WIL placements in Hamilton, Ontario.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce has an extensive network of members, many of which identify as small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). SMEs often face barriers to capacity building opportunities due to factors such as time constraints, budget and knowledge gaps. Student Talent Connect aimed to provide an innovative solution to reduce the barriers faced by Hamilton employers, specifically SMEs through leveraging Work-Integrated Learning (WIL).

This partnership used a three step model (see below) to expand the capacity of our business community, fill knowledge gaps, and establish a strong connection between workforce intermediaries and post-secondary institutions to strengthen Hamilton's talent pipeline. Pulling from these key learnings, this document was created to help businesses learn more about WIL and access opportunities beyond the project term.



Work-integrated learning is a form of experiential learning, where students take on part time or full time employment with a business, to gain real world experience in their field of study. WIL provides students the opportunity to gain employability skills, apply their knowledge and skills, and support their workplace through an innovative and fresh perspective.

WIL can take many forms, from paid structured work placements as part of a diploma or degree program to more flexible unpaid co-curricular experiences. Student Talent Connect promoted and offered a range of WIL opportunities including internships, co-ops, and field placements.

By leveraging WIL, businesses are able to expand their capacity, respond to challenges, and foster a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy.

HIRE A STUDENT GUIDELINES: What WIL type is best for your business?



HIRE A CAREER TREK STUDENT	HIRE A CO-OP STUDENT	HIRE AN INTERN	HIRE UNPAID FIELD PLACEMENTS	MANDATORY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE CLINICAL OR PRACTICUM
<p>Career Trek placements are unpaid.</p> <p>Career Trek placements offer assistance on short-term projects for a maximum of 5 hours per week for up to 4 months.</p> <p>Students must be engaged in work that provides them authentic professional experience.</p>	<p>Co-op jobs must be a paid opportunity.</p> <p>Focused on productive work which comprises a minimum of 420 hours of full-time work, over a 4-month term/semester.</p> <p>Students must be engaged in work that is aligned to their area of study with the supervisor evaluating their work performance, while being monitored by the school's program.</p>	<p>Interns may be paid or unpaid.</p> <p>Each opportunity will be different according to the individual institution's programming, but might be thought of as a course equivalent, or approximately 120 hours over a 4-month term/semester.</p> <p>Students must be engaged in work that is aligned to their area of study with the supervisor evaluating their work performance, while being monitored by the school's program.</p>	<p>Field placements are unpaid.</p> <p>Students participate in workplaces for a specified number of hours (depending on program).</p> <p>Students must be exposed to authentic professional demands and expectations related to their field of study.</p>	<p>Clinical and Practicum placements are unpaid.</p> <p>Students complete mandatory hours that are required for a professional license, certification, or registration.</p> <p>Students must complete placement hours in work setting under the supervision of a registered or licensed professional.</p>

HIRING TIMELINE While Career Trek timelines and start dates are more flexible, typically all students search for their roles in the term prior to their placement/work term.

Winter Term: January-April **Spring/Summer Term:** May-August **Fall Term:** Sept - Dec

→ Employers

Employers are able to access innovative and fresh perspectives from local students, at an affordable rate, and low risk. WIL students are actively pursuing a degree in their field, learning the most current and effective practices within their program. These learnings translate into the workplace, where they apply their skills and knowledge to bridge gaps faced by their employer. Through Student Talent Connect, 86% of employers gained new skills and knowledge from students.

Employers that hire through WIL are able to establish a strong connection with their local post-secondary institutions and develop a strong talent pipeline right here in Hamilton. Employers gain access to a talent pool of top students across three local institutions, leading to a strong talent pipeline, and reduced recruitment costs. Through Student Talent Connect 100% of employers felt their partnerships with local PSIs are stronger, and 78% believe that programs of this nature are the best way to access WIL.

→ Students

Student Talent Connect directly supported students pursuing a program through McMaster University, Mohawk College or Redeemer University. Students were able to access a pool of employment opportunities within the Hamilton region, to apply their knowledge and gain skills. Work-integrated learning is especially important for students, as it increases employability, workforce readiness, and practical application of their skills.

Students gain hands-on experience, to apply their concepts, theories and learnings in real-world work environments, while providing a fresh perspective to their employer. Not only did they apply their skills, but they developed new skills that increased workforce readiness, and interpersonal skills needed to transition into the workforce.

Through Student Talent Connect, 100% of the students felt more optimistic and better prepared to enter the workforce. This statistic shows that WIL can be a confidence building opportunity for students feeling nervous about their transition from a PSI to the workforce.

Additionally, 100% of the students gained resiliency along with technical, interpersonal, and problem solving skills throughout their placement. These skills are crucial for new workforce entrants to develop, to set them up for success.

Success Stories

Olivia, Tourism Student

Mohawk College

Olivia, a Tourism student from Mohawk College, completed a part-time field placement with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce to support the successful delivery of Hamilton Day – a citywide celebration of Hamilton and its business community. Equipped with a bubbly personality and desire to learn as much as she could, Olivia lent her research and event management skills to a range of tasks throughout her 3-month placement. Notable support included compiling data for ongoing marketing efforts, coordinating promotional material delivery, and connecting with festival go-ers on the weekend itself. Olivia provided the team with the much needed capacity required to implement Hamilton Day, and left with hands-on practical tourism experience.

Maheen, Gender & Social Justice Studies

McMaster University

Maheen is a Gender and Social Justice student from McMaster University who completed a co-op placement with Hamilton Economic Development. Both Economic Development and Maheen benefited from this partnership, as Economic Development gained a unique and fresh perspective in the workplace, with direct contributions to their grant and loan applications and practices. Maheen on the other hand felt that through school she gained the theoretical knowledge necessary to transition into her field and was looking to apply her knowledge. Through her work integrated learning experience, she was able to apply and expand her knowledge in the workforce and kickstart her policy career.

Justin, Business Administration

Redeemer University

Justin, a Bachelor of Business Administration from Redeemer University completed a co-op placement with Indwell. Through this placement, Justin worked on their finance team to help manage client investments, while also implementing a new loan management system. Justin's placement provided him the confidence and experience to transition into the workforce, and excel in his career.



Jumpstart Your WIL Journey

Thinking of hiring a student? Great! Here is a step-by-step guide to accessing student talent in Hamilton.

1. Identify Your Needs

The first step to pursuing a WIL placement is understanding your business needs and capacity. In this stage, you should look to understand the tasks, roles and responsibilities you are looking to fill in your workplace. Once you have identified these tasks, you can begin to think about which program offerings may be of interest to you.

Additionally, you will need to assess your budget and capacity. Do you have the budget for a full-time paid co-op? Or are you seeking something part-time, or maybe something unpaid? By identifying your budget, you are able to narrow down your options, and find the best WIL placement for your business.

Lastly, you should begin thinking about your capacity to onboard, mentor and manage your student(s). This includes identifying who will be managing the student, and how much time your business will be able to allocate towards this responsibility throughout the term.



Jumpstart Your WIL Journey

2. Prepare

Once you have identified your needs, we encourage you to go through the program offering list (pages 11-14). At this stage, you should have an understanding of your budget, capacity, and program of interest. With these factors in mind, you can narrow down your program options and select which institution is the best fit for your needs. After selecting your institution, you can contact the PSI representative through email with the following information:

- **Business name**
- **Business size**
- **Program/faculty of interest**
- **Semester of interest**
- **Capacity**

Once you have connected with the representative through email, you will schedule a meeting for them to learn more about your business needs, and go over the requirements of hiring a student. These requirements include mentorship requirements, workplace safety and liability insurance. These factors vary by institution, and will be gone over in your meeting with your PSI partner.

3. Interview & Hire

Once you have met with your PSI staff support, they will prepare you to begin the hiring process. At this stage, your PSI partner will educate you on their internal hiring process, which includes creating an account on their hiring platform, creating a job description for the program/role you are seeking, and have you complete any required paperwork.

Through the institution's platform, you will have access to the job posting, and will be able to monitor your applications. From here you will select which students to move forward with to the interview process. Through the interview process you can identify which student has the soft and hard skills that you are looking for based on the job requirements. Once a student has been selected, you may grant them their formal offer and move on to the onboarding process.

Jumpstart Your WIL Journey

4. Onboard & Manage Student

Onboarding an intern is similar to onboarding a new employee. The process begins with creating a schedule and structure that works well with their school schedule. From here you can identify the student's start date, and begin the onboarding process. You will need to set up the students workspace, or online access information if they will be remote. Additionally, we encourage employers to provide a package containing all necessary documents such as the company policies, or company handbook. Before the student starts their placement, they should also be given clarification on who their assigned manager is.

On the student's first day, a great way to onboard them is to have a brief welcome meeting, and introduce them to the rest of the team! From here the student can take a tour of the workplace and learn more about the company's vision, culture and people. Training for any necessary tasks may also take place on the first day, if applicable.

After the student is onboarded, management of time, tasks and responsibilities is up to the management team. Student roles and responsibilities must be aligned with their field of study and provide them real work experience that aligns with their program learning goals. Management will also provide ongoing feedback on project contributions, support and check-ins for the student to have a fulfilling experience.



Co-op jobs are PAID opportunities. Focussed on productive work, these FULL TIME positions require a minimum of 420 hours of work over a 4 month term/semester.

All programs listed below are as of Spring 2024 and subject to change. Please contact the institution directly to confirm availability and details.



McMaster University (Year Round Recruitment, 4 Month Term):

- Engineering
- Economics
- Political Science
- Work & Labour Studies
- MBA
- Commerce (12-Month Term)



Mohawk College (Recruitment Terms Vary, 4- Month Term):

- Architectural Technology- Construction (Year Round Recruitment)
- Architectural Technology- Design (Year Round Recruitment)
- Biotechnology- Advanced (Year Round Recruitment)
- Biotechnology (Winter)
- Business Accounting (Fall, Winter)
- Business Administration - Marketing (Fall, Winter)
- Chemical Engineering Technology (Fall, Winter)
- Civil Engineering Technology (Fall, Winter)
- Civil Engineering Technology- Transportation (Winter)
- Community & Justice Services (Winter)
- Computer Engineering Technology- Mechatronic Systems (Spring)
- Computer Systems Technician - Network Systems (Winter, Spring)
- Computer Systems Technician - Software Support (Winter, Spring)
- Computer Systems Technology - Network Engineering and Security Analyst (Spring, Fall)
- Computer Systems Technology - Software Development (Spring, Fall)
- Electrical Engineering Technician - Power (Year Round Recruitment)
- Electrical Engineering - Technology (Year Round Recruitment)
- Energy Systems Engineering -Technology (Year Round Recruitment)

Opportunities continue on the next page.

Mohawk College Co-op Programs continued...

- Environmental Technician (Fall, Winter)
- Insurance (Fall, Winter)
- Manufacturing Engineering Technician - Automation (Industrial Mechanic Millwright) (Year Round Recruitment)
- Mechanical Engineering Technology (Year Round Recruitment)
- Police Foundations (Year Round Recruitment)
- Protection, Security and Investigation (Year Round Recruitment)
- Urban and Regional Planning Technician - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (Year Round Recruitment)



Redeemer University (Year Round Recruitment, 4-Month Term):

- Business Accounting
- Business Management
- Business Marketing
- Business Not-for-Profit Management
- Kinesiology
- Mission & Ministry



Interns may be PAID or UNPAID. Each opportunity will be different according to the individual institution's programming.

All programs listed below are as of Spring 2024 and subject to change. Please contact the institution directly to confirm availability and details.



McMaster University, Year Round Recruitment, 4-16 Month Terms, Paid, Part Time or Full Time:

- Social Sciences
- Humanities
- Career Trek Program (Unpaid, Flexible Recruitment Window, Volunteer Program)



Redeemer University Year Round Recruitment, 120 Hours, Part Time, Paid or Unpaid:

- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry/Biochemistry
- English Writing
- History
- Kinesiology
- Media Production
- Mission & Ministry
- Politics & International Studies
- Psychology
- Social Work



Field placement students are UNPAID. Students participate in workplaces for a specified number of hours, depending on the program.

All programs listed below are as of Spring 2024 and subject to change. Please contact the institution directly to confirm availability and details.



Mohawk College:

- Bachelor of Analytics and Data Management (Summer, FT Paid)
- BBA Trades Management (Spring or Fall, FT Paid)
- Business Analysis Graduate Certificate (Spring or Fall, FT Unpaid)
- Human Resources Management (Spring or Fall, FT Unpaid)
- Tourism (Winter - April, FT Unpaid)
- Advertising and Marketing Communications Management (Winter - March & April FT Unpaid)
- Office Administration - Health Services (Winter - 2 weeks in April, FT Unpaid)
- Office Administration - Executive (Winter - 2 weeks in April, FT Unpaid)
- Office Administration - Legal (Winter - 2 weeks in April, FT Unpaid)
- Broadcasting - Television and Communications Media (Winter, Spring, FT Unpaid)
- Graphic Design (Winter, FT Unpaid)
- Public Relations (Winter - March & April, FT Unpaid)
- Journalism (Winter - March & April, FT Unpaid)
- Digital Health Bachelors Degree (Summer, FT Paid)
- Power Engineering 4th Class (Summer, FT Paid)
- Power Engineering 3rd Class (Summer, PT Paid)

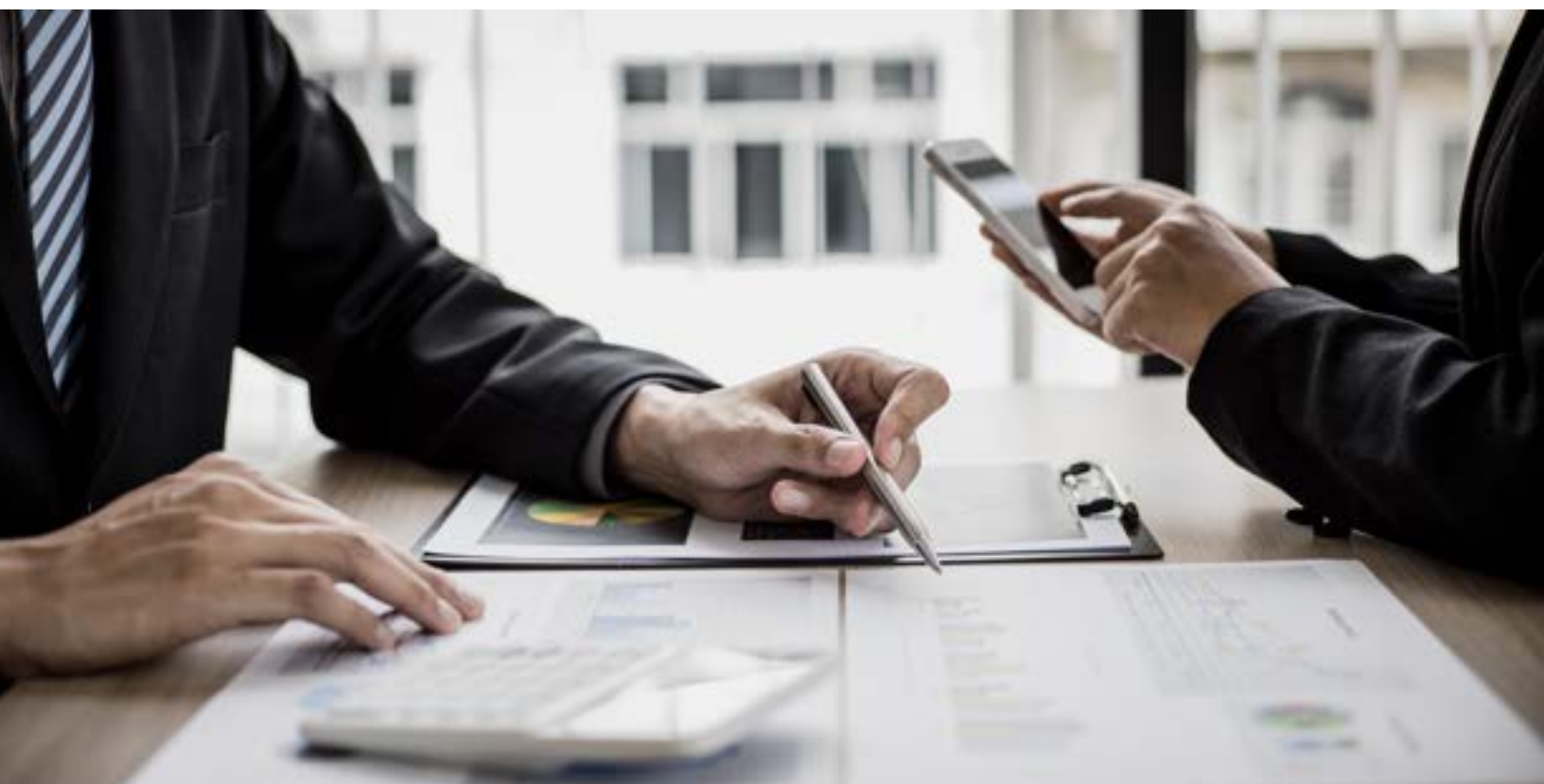


Many employers express that the largest barrier to access with WIL is the lack of funding or budget capacity. Listed below are a number of funding resources that your business may qualify for.

While there are several unpaid WIL opportunities to explore, funding support exists for employers who are seeking to hire paid positions.

Please note these resources were last updated in Spring 2025, and some funding opportunities may no longer be available.

- [Student Work Placement Program](#)
- [Canada Summer Jobs](#)
- [Co-operative Education Tax Credit](#)
- [Ontario Innovation Tax Credit](#)



If you are interested in pursuing a WIL opportunity, we recommend you connect with your institution of choice a semester AHEAD of your desired student start date.

Please find the post-secondary institution contact information below to connect with the experiential office and learn more about how to qualify:



EXPERIENTIAL@MCMASTER.CA

- Co-op Placements
- Internship Program
- Career Trek Program



EXPERIENTIAL@MOHAWKCOLLEGE.CA

- Co-op Placements
- Field Placements



CAREERS@REDEEMER.CA

- Co-op Placements
- Internship Program