

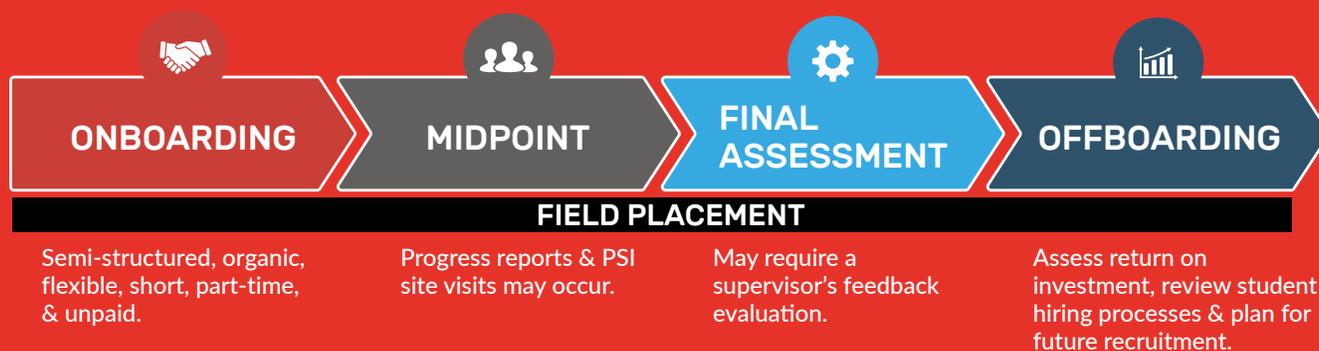
FIELD PLACEMENT

For WIL partners

Field Placements offer private sector businesses, not-for-profits, service sector, and public sector organizations the opportunity to engage students for part-time/short-term intensive hands-on practical experience in a setting relevant to their choice of study.

A Field Placement workplace experience is typically unpaid and is characterized by short work place stints. Field placements take a variety of forms, often dependent on the program of study. Field Placements may not require the supervision of a registered or licensed professional, and the completed work experience hours are not required for professional certification. Field placements account for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences not encompassed by other forms, such as Co-operative Education, mandatory Professional Practicums, and Internships.

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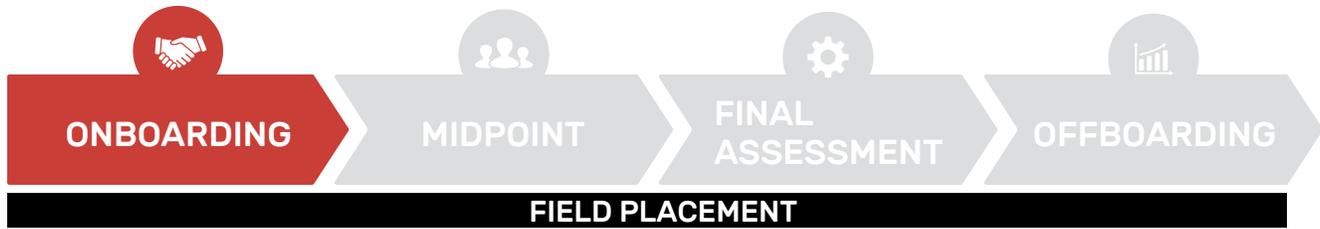


SUPPORTING BUSINESS OBJECTIVES WITH FIELD PLACEMENTS

Top 5 ways Field Placements can support your business objectives

1. Provide a source for innovative ideas and boost competitiveness
2. Fill staffing gaps and strengthen your talent pipeline
3. Complete short-term projects and undertake research
4. Access resource support for new or existing projects
5. Provide leadership development opportunities for your staff team

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ONBOARDING & PRE-ENGAGEMENT

The majority of field placements are unpaid, and since there is not an employer-employee relationship established between a business and a student, Post-Secondary Institutions (PSIs) will require some form of agreement that outlines the responsibilities of the PSI and the host organization, as well as, insurance and safety requirements. The type of agreement will differ depending on the PSI. There may be different requirements for paid field placements.

Getting started with a Field Placement student:

1. Determine your business goal, specific skills required and hiring timelines
2. Appraise your capacity for involvement with PSI
3. Assess your ability to offer supervision and mentorship

BUSINESS GOAL & NEEDS

Review your business goal

Engage your organization and consider what staffing or skills gaps you have. What projects or work do you want to complete? Similar to Co-op and Internship roles, you will want to create a position that fits both your employment needs and the student's professional development goals.

Does your organization have a specific project that multiple students across different disciplines could accomplish together? Consider engaging students in community-based Field Placements

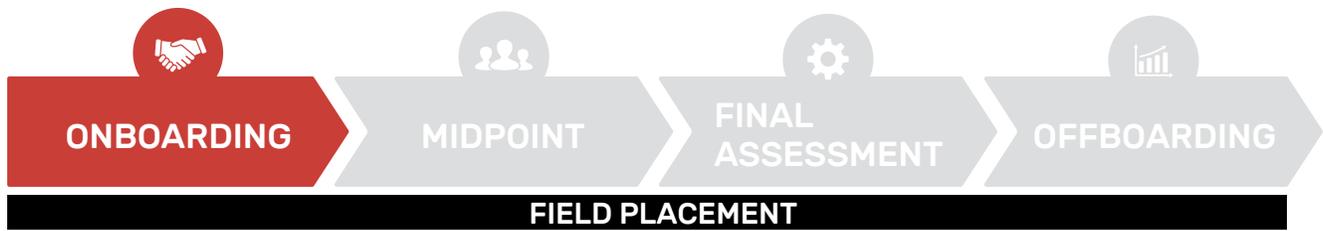
to affect social change and improve the lives of others. Field Placements allow you the flexibility to engage students for short-term, project-based work.

Field Placements are usually linked to specific programs so WIL Partners need to think about the kind of help they need. Is it bookkeeping? Is it human resources support? Is it technology? Is it marketing and communications? Is it event planning? Is it trades? Is it culinary?

Consider how student demographics differ. Students will vary in their amount of experience, maturity level and technical ability. You may want to hire international or domestic students, or students from underrepresented groups such as those with accessibility needs.

In the Centennial College PR Program, placements are for eight weeks, full-time, and students must report to a seasoned communications professional. It is the intention that students put into practice what they have learned in the program: media relations, social media, communications planning, event management, writing, graphic design, and visual communications. It's experiential learning at its finest.

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Plan for recruitment timelines

Recruitment processes will vary based on the program or course. Most placements are offered at specific times in the school year, so the timing of student availability will depend on the program. Some programs might have students ready to go on field placement every semester, but others may only be available at one time during the year, so it is best to plan ahead.

At Conestoga College, students in Advertising and Marketing Communication have a 5-week, full time placement at the end of the winter semester, just before they graduate.

The number of hours a student is available depends on the program. It is important to understand student availability when planning a field placement. Each institution will have different timing and opportunities.

How to engage Field Placement students

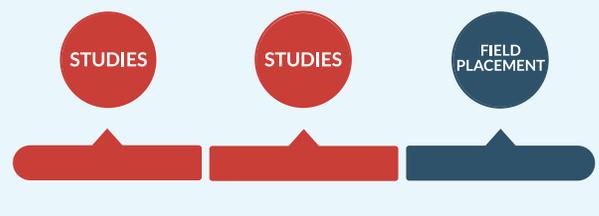
- **Formal process** – A host organization may create a posting and students apply using a cover letter and resume. The host organization conducts student interviews and chooses the student(s) they want to work with.
- **Matching** – The PSI determines which student will be placed with which host organization. Or in some cases, students are provided with a list of potential host organizations and indicate which ones they are interested in, and sometimes, may rank their preferences. The PSI then matches the students using this information.

- **Hybrid** – PSIs may use a combination of a formal process and matching depending on the host organization’s preference.

At Langara College, Social Service Worker Program students complete practicum placements in community agencies. The weekly placement (4 to 5 hours per week) lasts throughout the school year. After final exams in the Spring term, students begin their five-week full-time block placement in a different agency.

FIELD PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Unpaid
- Part-time
- For credit
- Can be mandatory or not mandatory
- No competitive recruitment process



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CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

Many PSIs have centralized services that support work-integrated learning. You can contact these services and they will help to match your business needs with a field placement opportunity in a program of interest. For PSIs that do not have a centralized service, the placements may be run by faculty. In those cases, you can contact the faculty associated with the program directly.

Most PSIs will work to ensure there is an alignment between the field placement opportunity and the learning objectives of the program. Host organizations need to know what these are to support students' learning.

Pre-placement requirements will vary based on the industry, the host organization's and PSI's program requirements. Check with the PSI that you are working with to determine prerequisites that students must complete before starting a field placement.

Once you connect, you can start to build a relationship with your local PSI(s) and learn about multiple forms of work-integrated learning that can support your business.

SUPERVISION & MENTORSHIP

Consider your capacity to offer a learning environment that includes supervision and mentorship

You will want to assign a mentor, supervisor or manager who can provide guidance on the related

job tasks or projects and facilitate professional development. One of the primary benefits of bringing a student into your organization is the idea of recruit once, hire twice. Participating in WIL allows you to screen potential candidates for full-time future roles in your organization.

In five-week placements with a human services agency in a voluntary capacity, students in the Community Leadership Development Program at College of the North Atlantic are responsible for obtaining their own placements in collaboration with their field placement instructor. Students are encouraged to seek field placements which allow them to meet personal interests and goals.

5 ONBOARDING STEPS

1. Determine your business goal and skills needed.
2. Determine when and how long you need to hire students to meet your business goal.
3. Research Field Placement programs.
4. Reach out to PSIs with your employment needs.
5. Apply for WIL funding.

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MIDPOINT CONSIDERATIONS

As a student progresses through their field placement, what should I expect?

Many PSIs require a mid-term evaluation of students. Evaluations are used to determine student progress toward achieving learning objectives and gaining competencies. Again, evaluation requirements will vary by PSI and by program.

- A mid-point evaluation is usually intended to give the student and the placement officer or faculty member some formative feedback and examples to help with goal setting for the balance of the placement.
- Mid-point evaluations can take many forms. It may be a telephone interview with the placement officer or faculty member, it may require a form to be completed, or it may be a meeting or interview with the student. Some PSIs have evaluations that are completed online. It may be just a check in, or it may be included in the calculation of a final grade.

A Field Placement Officer or faculty member may visit their students in their field placement setting. This typically happens only once during the semester. It is common to visit several students at the same site on the same day. Whether a site visit will occur, or not, can depend on whether a particular student or host organization may need a visit.

Conestoga College has a unique field placement where all of the students in their Millwright and Electro-Mechanical Maintenance programs complete their field placement with Linamar at their various plants. Their field placement experience includes an online course that prepares students to enter the workforce. Part of the student evaluation includes a mock-interview conducted by Linamar's Human Resources department.

As a Field Placement WIL Partner it's your responsibility to orient students to the work placement, allowing them to feel comfortable with and integrate into the life of the placement environment.

- Touch base with each student regularly to give support, positive feedback, and suggestions for improvement.
- Monitor the student's progress and complete an evaluation form.
- Keep everyone (Field Placement Officer/ Faculty and Student) up to date and informed.
- Monitor the hours of work and attendance of the student. Some PSIs may require you to review and sign off on a student's self-evaluation.

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FINAL ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Field Placement work terms usually conclude with a performance evaluation

At the conclusion of a field placement there are usually two things required from the placement host organization specifically related to the student's performance:

1. Evidence of the number of hours the student worked in placement. This can take various forms, either digital or hard copy.
2. Feedback/evaluation from the Placement Supervisor. As with mid-point evaluation, this can take many forms.

A final evaluation may or may not look the same as the mid-point evaluation. It is important to refer back to the main points from the mid-point evaluation. Has there been growth and/or improvement? The final evaluation should be completed on, or close to, the student's last day with you. It is important to note that the host's evaluation does not determine a pass or fail for the student. It is to provide feedback for both the student and the field placement officer or faculty. Faculty are responsible for the final grading of the field placement.

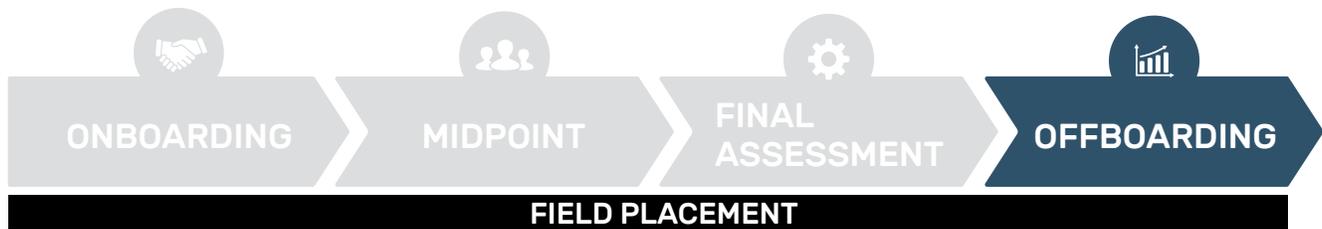
The end of a field placement is also time when a field placement host organization can determine whether they would like to continue their relationship with a student. A host organization

may want to hire the student for full-time or part-time work, now or in the future. Students may seek references or letters of recommendation.

If field placements have been successful, PSIs will reach out to host organizations extending an invitation to host a field placement student again in the future. The placement officer or faculty member may seek feedback on the field placement experience to determine what worked well and what could be improved for next time. PSIs might also seek feedback from host organizations and community partners about their programs. For example, are there strengths or gaps in the training students have? Are there new or additional skill sets required in your industry?

At the conclusion of the field placement the Department of Communication, Popular Culture, and Film at Brock University, asks host organizations to complete a survey. The survey not only seeks feedback to evaluate student performance, but also to evaluate the host's experience and determine opportunities for future field placements.

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**OFFBOARDING CONSIDERATIONS****After the Field Placement ends, what should I consider?**

Reflect on the placement. If you are considering hosting field placement students again, how might the experience be improved? Could you take on additional students in the future? Think about the goals/strategic plan of your organization. What skills do you need? What roles do you need to fill now and in the future? Field placements can be part of your candidate sourcing strategy.

[Simon Fraser University offers a field placement opportunity to students in their criminology program that can be completed on a full-time or part-time basis over an entire semester. Since the field placement was introduced into the program, anecdotal reports indicate that approximately 75% of the students who participated in the field placement have been offered full-time employment upon graduation.](#)

Perhaps students with different skill sets, from different programs, could help out in different areas of your business. For example, an early childhood education host might need marketing support or office administration support. A retail business might need help with IT, business planning, visual merchandising or human resources.

Maintain a relationship with the PSI you work with. There may be opportunities to participate, such as attending events like job fairs or corporate training, or joining a committee. The PSI will also be able to connect you with additional opportunities to engage students. There is usually cross-over of field placement host organizations between Program areas within a PSI.

PSIs may wish to strengthen their relationship with community partners by asking them to contribute to the PSI in other ways, such as joining a program advisory committee. There may even be a possibility to join the PSI in a faculty position. Maintain contact with your field placement students. When paid positions become available in your organization, you can bypass the search process by hiring a student that you have already had a positive experience with.

["Victim Services Wellington \(VSW\) had a very limited social media footprint. The field placement student was able to create interesting messaging and increase our social media following. After his placement, VSW got a grant to hire a part-time person to do social media and he was the successful candidate."](#)
~ Elizabeth Kent, Executive Director

For more information about Field Placements for WIL partners visit the [CEWIL Resource Hub](#).