

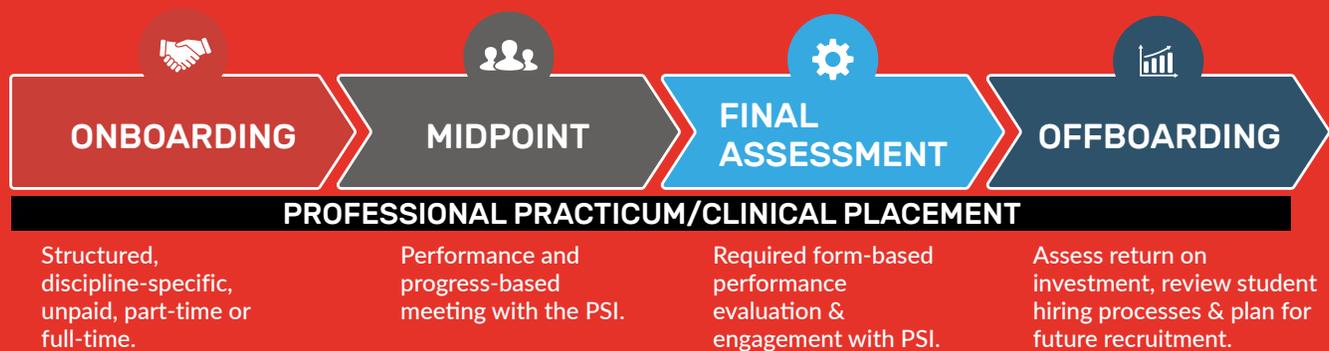
# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICUM

CLINICAL PLACEMENT  
For WIL partners

Clinical and Professional Practicum involve work experience under the supervision of an experienced registered or licensed professional (e.g. preceptor) in any discipline that requires practice-based work experience for professional licensure or certification. Practica are generally unpaid and, as the work is done in a supervised setting, typically students do not have their own workload/caseload.

Sometimes called clinical placements, this type of WIL typically happens in teaching, early childhood education, psychology, social work, criminal justice, nursing or physiotherapy.

## WIL PHASES



## SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES WITH PROFESSIONAL PRACTICA

### Top 5 ways Professional Practica can support your organization's objectives

1. Connect with students in programs directly tied to professional certification or licensure
2. Act as a mentor for the next generation of professionals in your field
3. Provide leadership development opportunities for your team
4. Fill staffing gaps and strengthen your talent pipeline
5. Provide a source for innovative ideas and boost competitiveness

## WIL PHASES



## ONBOARDING & PRE-ENGAGEMENT

The majority of clinical and professional practicum are unpaid and can involve students at various points of their degrees, however the most common practica occur with students in their final year of study or enrolled in graduate programs. This is typically due to the requirements of the programs to have students trained before sending them out into the labour market to work with partners.

Lead time is one of the most critical items to remember when in the pre-engagement phase of partnership. The earlier you begin discussions with a PSI, the better as many work months in advance to secure spots for students. Again, if this is the first time you're partnering with a PSI in this nature, a staff or faculty member associated with the program will be there to guide you through their specific process.

### Steps to get started with Professional Practicums

1. Appraise capacity for involvement with PSI
2. Connect with a PSI and desired program to understand requirements/regulations
3. Assess your ability and credentials required to supervise a student

## ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL & NEEDS

### Review your organizational goal.

It's best to engage your organization or team in a discussion about why it might be a benefit to bring on and help train students enrolled in professional

programs or those that offer clinical placements. Similar to a co-op or internship, you will want to identify where the role fits your employment needs and the student's professional development goals.

Professional and clinical practica are always tied to a very specific program, so WIL partners will need to identify if their organization and the role are a match with the requirements of the program. Common programs that utilize these types of placements include nursing, kinesiology, therapeutic recreation, therapist assistance, early childhood education, and social work.

---

Across Canada, the Health Sciences Placement Network (HSPnet) is a web based system that manages practice education in the health sciences. It acts as a database and toolkit to support increased availability of quality practice education opportunities for students, streamlined processes and improved communications among those involved, and enhances access to a greater range of placement opportunities. HSPnet is commonly used within nursing programs across the country – meaning as a partner, you typically post opportunities online and PSIs work to disperse their students accordingly.

---

## WIL PHASES



## CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

Many post-secondary institutions (PSIs) will have a robust process or system in place with respect to how industry can connect with students in professional programs. This means the first time you partner with an institution to bring on a student in one of these programs will likely be the most complicated. Depending on the nature of the program, there may be regulatory factors or accreditation bodies that oversee and outline what students are allowed to do during their practica. They may also stipulate if a supervisor is required to hold specific credentials or licensure. There will typically be paperwork involved whether in the form of a scope of services/role document or more formal agreement between a partner and the PSI (typically reserved for larger public/private sector partnerships).

Some programs may require an assessment of the work site prior to matching students, others may require proof of credentialing prior to assigning a supervisor to a student. In some cases, there may be a central body that handles all requests for student placement. In this scenario, you may not know the exact institution a student is coming from, but rather you recruit from the programs in a certain geographical area – this is common in the nursing and health fields.

---

At Okanagan College, students in the Therapist Assistant Diploma (TAD) program complete 4 professional practica in clinical sites under the supervision of therapists (Occupational, Physical and/or Recreational). In order to supervise a TAD student, you must meet regulatory requirements set forth by your respective regulatory body. The TAD program also has strict requirements to maintain national accreditation by the Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant Education Accreditation Program. Other requirements and agreements are reviewed with the college prior to students working at any new clinical site.

---

### PROFESSIONAL PRACTICUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Unpaid
- Part-time or Full-time
- For credit
- Mandatory

## WIL PHASES



## MIDPOINT CONSIDERATIONS

**Midpoint milestones will look different depending on the program and institution you are partnered with**

In the majority of cases this will involve some type of meeting between yourself, the student and an institution representative or program advisor. The general goal of these meetings is to ensure that everything is on the right track, the student is performing well in their role and to reassess the original agreement to see if any changes need to be made. This is a key reflection milestone for the student as they can assess their performance and engage in meaningful dialogue with their supervisor or program advisor. This midpoint typically occurs after about 4-5 weeks of on site work.

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

### Midpoint reflections

- 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.

## WIL PHASES



## FINAL ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

**Due to the professional nature of these practica, the WIL partner will typically be involved in the final assessment process in one way or another.**

Often this will be part of a formal evaluation of the student, along with either a faculty member or program advisor from the partnering institution. Other responsibilities of the partner include providing formative and critical feedback to the student to help with their professional growth in the field as well as verification of completed hours and/or tasks.

Depending on the original agreement between the partner and the PSI, these responsibilities should not come as a surprise at the end of the placement. If you have questions about your expectations and responsibilities, it's best to clarify those at the beginning of working relationship with a PSI.

---

The Masters of Professional Kinesiology (MPK) program at Brock University offers students 450 hours of practice in Kinesiology working with diverse populations across the lifespan. Students are required to complete three practicum courses, each 150 hours in length. WIL partners post their positions to an internal site, only viewable by MPK students. Working with the program coordinator, partners will post, interview and select the applicant that best fits their needs – very similar to the traditional co-op process. All supervisors must be registered kinesiologists in order to be approved to take on a student and site assessments must be completed prior to matching students to a supervisor.

---

## WIL PHASES



## OFFBOARDING CONSIDERATIONS

**Assess your return on investment, review student hiring processes and plan for future recruitment.**

Often a partnership with a professional or clinical practicum program is one that last for more than just one experience – it can be a relationship with a PSI that sees students engage with your organization year after year. Having already gone through the initial learning process and paperwork, taking future students becomes that much easier and familiar. These relationships might also open possibilities to work with students in other programs if it suits your needs.

When your organization participates as a WIL partner with a PSI to offer a high-quality mandatory Professional Practicum or Clinical Placement experience you are preparing students to transition to the workforce and contribute to a resilient skills-based Canadian economy.

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