

CAUCE 2026

# From Uncertainty to Opportunity:

Transformative WIL Models for an Evolving Labour Market

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## Land Acknowledgement

Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples.

These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

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## Agenda

1. eCampusOntario: Bridging Education and Employment
2. Convening the WIL Ecosystem: Four Case Studies
  - CAPFO
  - WIL for Innovation
  - Closing the Employment Gap
  - SWPP Partnerships
3. Employer Engagement Diagnostic Tool
4. Additional Resources for Continuing Education Units



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**eCampusOntario:**

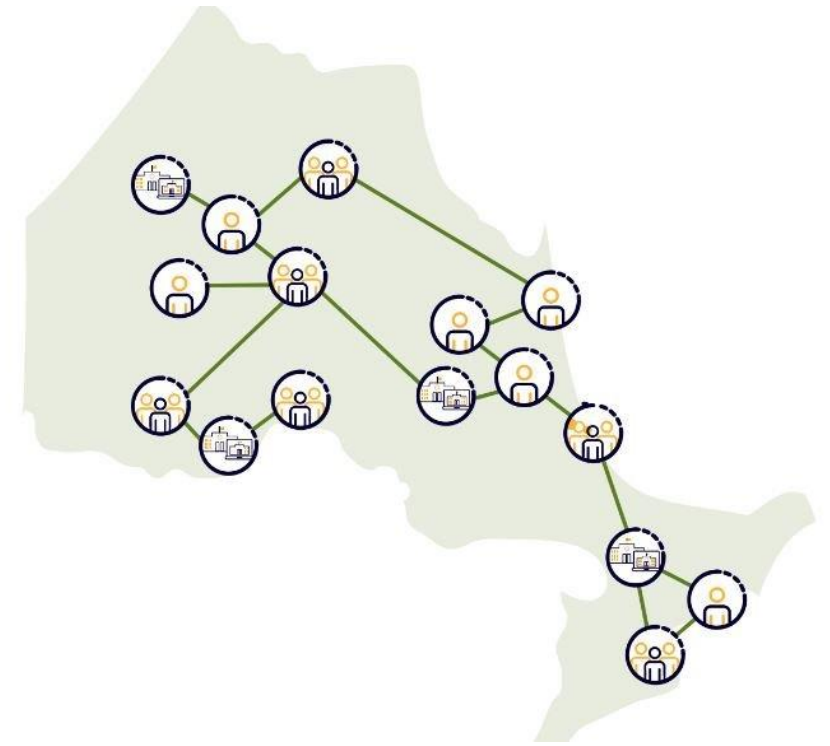
**Bridging Education and Employment**

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## eCampusOntario | Digital Campus Canada

We are a not-for-profit organization that helps post-secondary institutions build the **strategy, capability, and confidence** needed to lead in a digital-first environment.

Through our **platforms, products, and services**, we help our members and partners increase revenue, reduce costs, and drive digital transformation.



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## Bridging Education and Employment

We work to ensure all learners can access the education and training they need to advance their careers.

**Scaling work-integrated learning (WIL)** is key to this mission.

6.5%

Total unemployment rate (ages 15 and up), Canada  
January 2026

12.8%

Youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24), Canada  
January 2026

Source: Statistics Canada

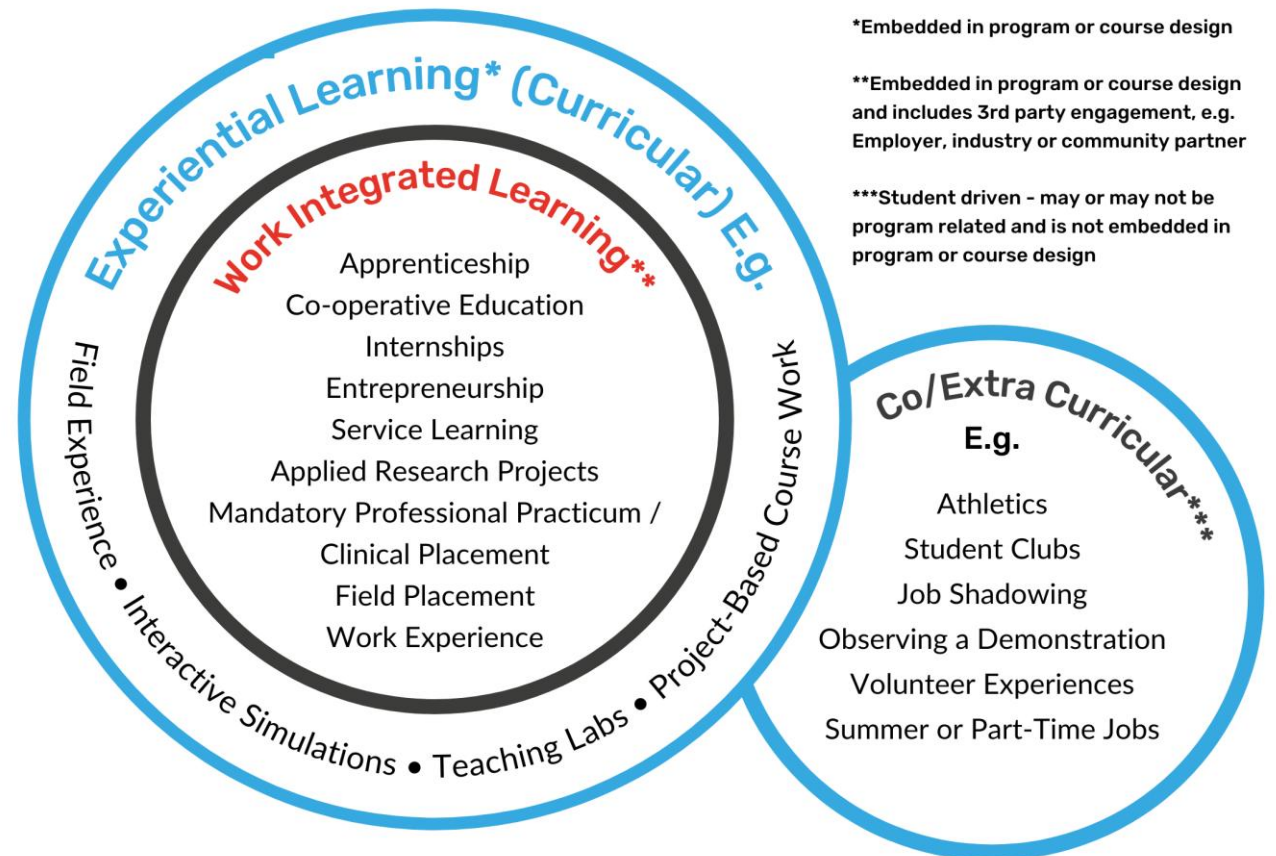
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# Work-Integrated Learning

We draw on CEWIL Canada's approach to WIL:

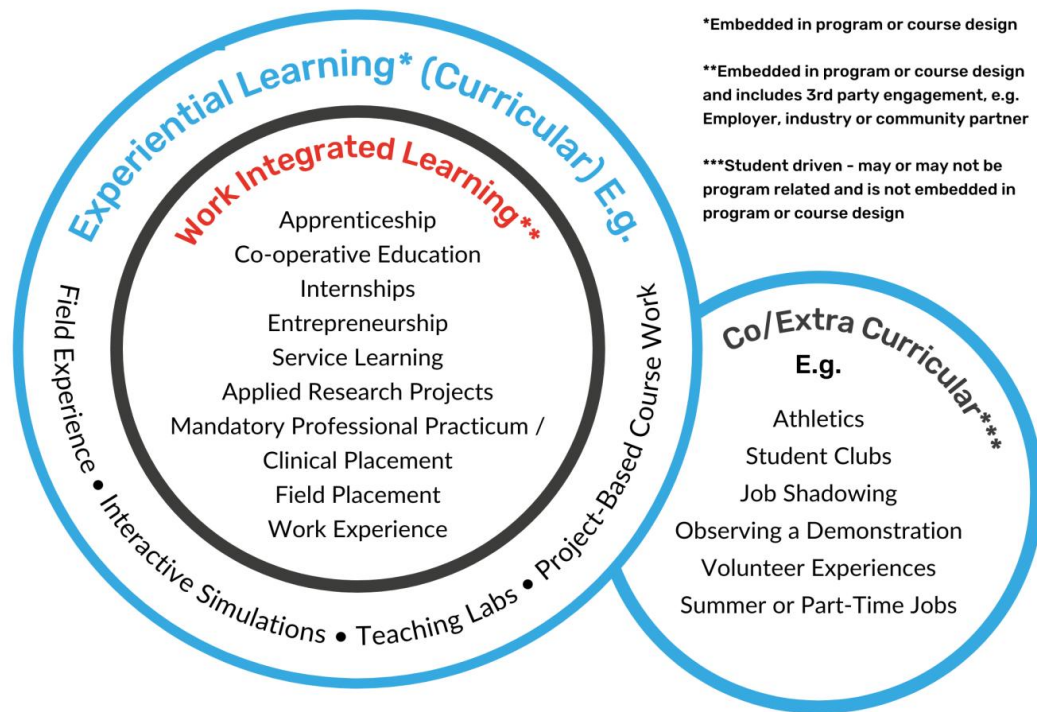
“A form of curricular experiential education that formally integrates a student's academic studies with quality experiences within a workplace or practice setting ... involving an engaged partnership between an **academic institution**, a **host organisation**, and a **student**.”



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# Discussion: Intersections with Continuing Education



What form(s) of work-integrated learning most strongly align with your Continuing Education unit's course or program portfolio, or the labour market needs of employers in your region?

**Share your thoughts in the Menti.com poll - 2636 2473.**

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# A Hierarchy of Needs: Lessons from Ontario

| Ecosystem Player | Highest Needs   | Examples of Other Needs  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Students         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convert experience into outcomes</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turn tacit skills into explicit competencies</li><li>• Build a mentor-supported network</li></ul>                        |
| Employers        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quick access to skilled talent</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simple wayfinding</li><li>• Trust in quality and alignment</li></ul>   |
| Institutions     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultivate sustainable partnerships and secure high placement rates</li></ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align postings to learning outcomes</li><li>• Facilitate matches</li><li>• Foster positive student experiences</li></ul> |
| Funders          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce unemployment and develop national innovation capacity</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align opportunities to labour market needs</li><li>• Move research toward commercialization</li></ul>                    |
| Convenors        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce duplication of efforts by scaling and sharing best practices, tools, standards, and supports</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bridge people, ideas, and resources</li><li>• Broaden opportunities by serving as a nexus</li></ul>                      |



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# Convening the WIL Ecosystem: Four Case Studies

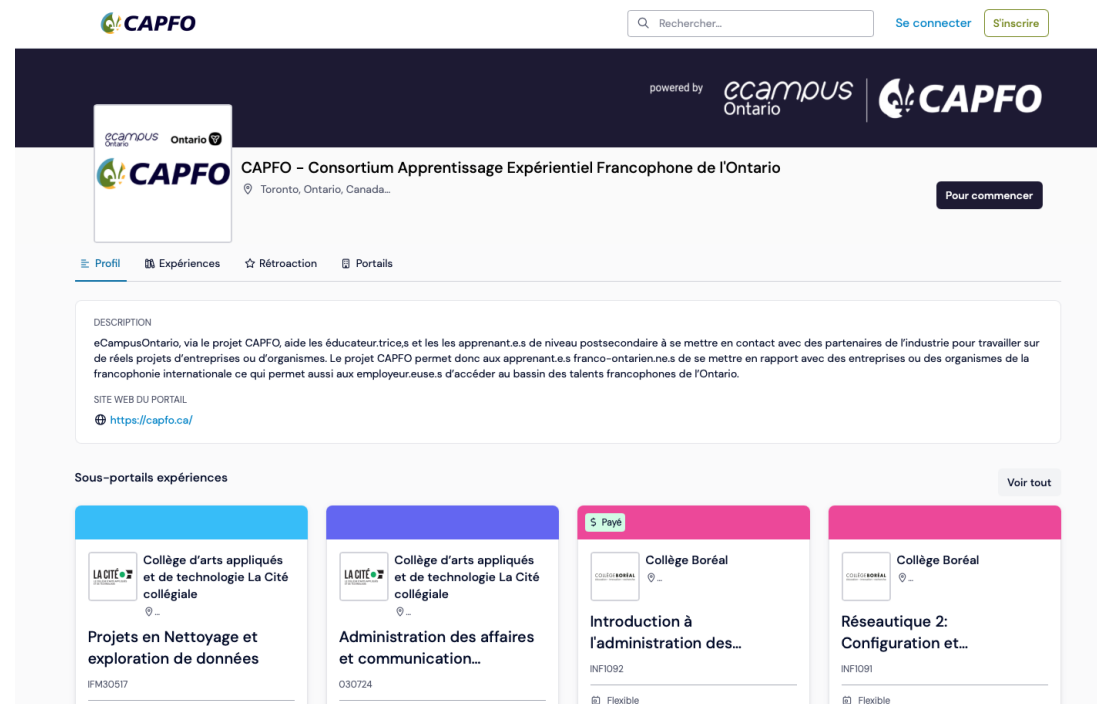
**CAPFO**

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# What is CAPFO?

**CAPFO (Consortium d'apprentissage expérientiel francophone de l'Ontario)** advances experiential and work-integrated learning for **Francophone and bilingual** post-secondary learners across Ontario.

- Short, remote, project-based WIL
- Leverages platforms such as Riipen
- Active at 8 Ontario institutions
- Since its 2019 launch, CAPFO has supported:
  - 2,500+ student experiences
  - 1,500+ employers
  - 50+ educators



The screenshot shows the CAPFO website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and buttons for 'Se connecter' and 'S'inscrire'. Below the navigation bar, the CAPFO logo and name are displayed, along with the location 'Toronto, Ontario, Canada...'. A 'Pour commencer' button is visible. The main content area features a 'DESCRIPTION' section with text about the project's goals and a 'SITE WEB DU PORTAIL' link to 'https://capfo.ca/'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Sous-portails expériences' with a 'Voir tout' button. This section displays four experience cards, each with a logo, institution name, title, and ID number. The first card is for 'Projets en Nettoyage et exploration de données' at 'Collège d'arts appliqués et de technologie La Cité collégiale' (ID: IFM30517). The second is 'Administration des affaires et communication...' at the same institution (ID: 030724). The third is 'Introduction à l'administration des...' at 'Collège Boréal' (ID: INF1092) and is marked as 'Payé'. The fourth is 'Réseautique 2: Configuration et...' at 'Collège Boréal' (ID: INF1091) and is marked as 'Flexible'.

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# CAPFO Spotlight

| Category       | Details                                   |
|----------------|---|
| Institution    | Université de Hearst                      |
| Course         | Management & Decision-Making Processes II |
| Cohort         | 24 students                               |
| Project Length | 3 weeks                                   |

**Project:** Conducting SWOT and PESTEL analyses.

**Outcome:** Students developed concrete strategic recommendations for La Calebasse, a local restaurant, enhancing their critical thinking and decision-making skills in a real-world business context.

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# Project-Based WIL in Continuing Education

## Example: McMaster University

- Riipen's first formal partnership with a Continuing Education unit
- Desired outcomes for learners:
  - Bridge theory and practice through concrete projects
  - Develop portfolios and professional networks
  - Cultivate durable skills in team settings
  - Gain experience in addition to skills

## Subject Areas

Human Resources Management  
Marketing / Digital Marketing  
Data Science  
Big Data Programming  
Full-Stack Development

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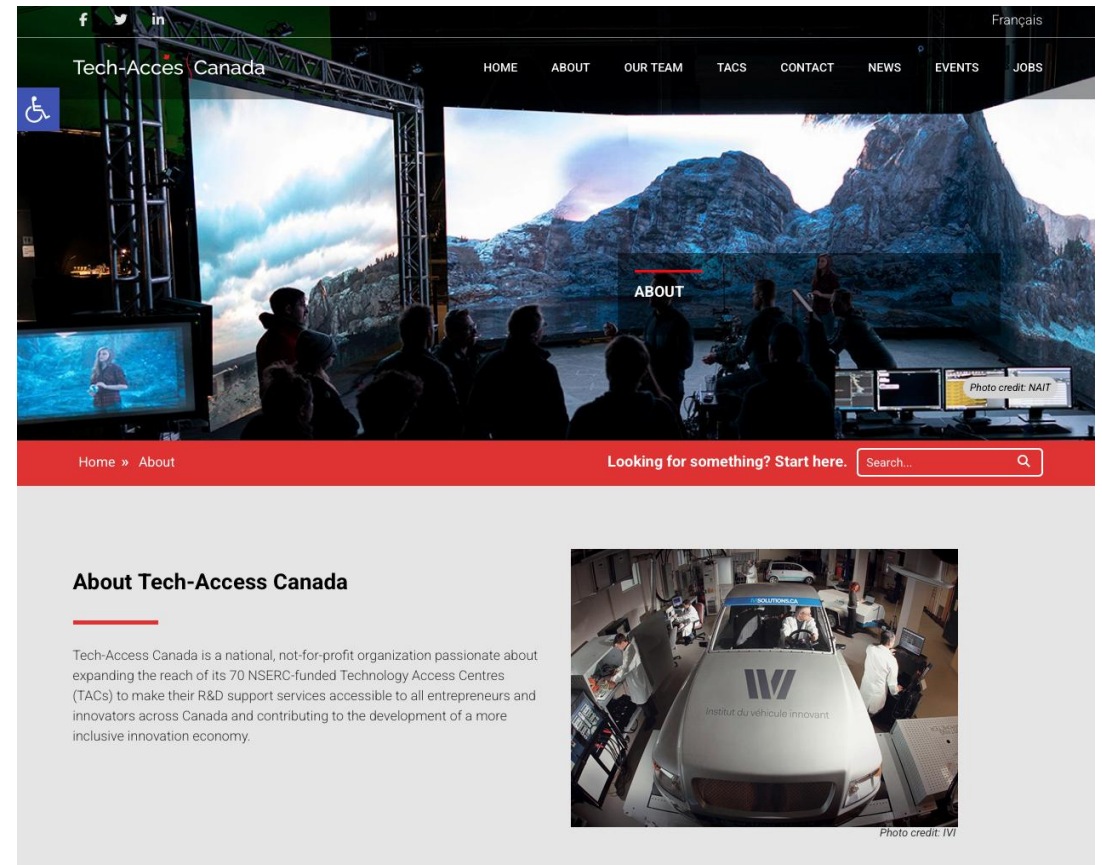
# **WIL for Innovation**

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# What is *WIL* for Innovation?

**WIL for Innovation** is a national capacity-building initiative where student teams tackle applied **research and innovation** projects.

- Curricular, innovation-focused WIL
- Leverages Technology Access Centres (TACs) as a hub for collaboration
- 275 experiences supported in FY25-26



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## WIL for Innovation Spotlight

| Category    | Details                                    |
|-------------|--|
| Institution | Collège La Cité                            |
| Sector      | Biotechnology                              |
| Program     | Honours Bachelor's Degree in Biotechnology |
| Cohort      | 7 students                                 |

**Project:** The company sought to develop foods rich in vitamin K through a fermentation process. Students developed a chemical analysis method to measure complex sugars and assess the effectiveness of the bacterial fermentation process.

**Impact:** Students benefited from problem-based learning in a real-world context, which helped them develop skills and competencies essential in the workforce, particularly the field of industrial microbiology.

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## Choose Your Own Discussion



**In groups, identify a note-taker and use the next 10-15 minutes to explore some of the following questions. Add your team's thoughts to the shared document.**

- How might your institution build or scale **project-based learning** with industry partners in its Continuing Education courses? What opportunities and challenges might you encounter in this work?
- Which of your unit's courses or programs compliment a WIL model grounded in **technological innovation** or team-based work? What types of assets or facilities already exist at your institution that could support innovation-focused WIL collaborations?

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# **Closing the Employment Gap**

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## What is *Closing the Employment Gap*?

**Closing the Employment Gap: Gauging Skills for Young Canadians with Disabilities** is an initiative undertaken by our collaborators at the Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) and supported through the federal **Skills for Success** program.

- Focuses on system readiness
- Early-stage ideation phase completed



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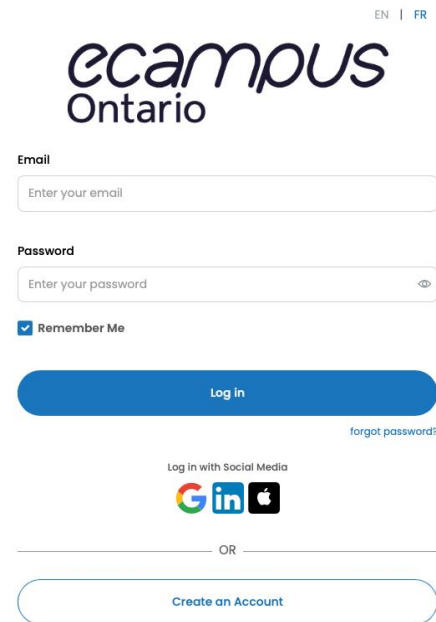
# **SWPP Partnerships**

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# What is SWPP?

SWPP is the Student Work Placement Program. In partnership with key SWPP delivery partners, **eligible employers hiring WIL students may receive a wage subsidy of 50% (up to a maximum of \$5,000) per placement**, running through the Fall, Winter, and Summer terms.

- Pre-screened employer eligibility
- Provided application guidance
- 50+ applications supported



EN | FR

**ecampus**  
Ontario

Email  
Enter your email

Password  
Enter your password

Remember Me

Log in

forgot password?

Log in with Social Media

Google LinkedIn Apple

OR

Create an Account



**Ready to bring new skills and energy to your team?**

**Hire Students. Save on Costs. Accelerate Your Business**

eCampusOntario has partnered with Magnet's Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) to support small and medium-sized businesses in Canada hiring work-integrated learning students in Ontario!

Funded by the  
Government of Canada's  
Student Work Placement Program

Canada

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## Choose Your Own Discussion



**In groups, identify a note-taker and use the next 10-15 minutes to explore some of the following questions. Add your team's thoughts to the shared document.**

- What strategies have you found to be most effective in **making skills visible or explicit** – especially those that are embedded or implied within short courses? How does your unit or institution help learners translate what they've learned into language that resonates with your regional labour market and employers?
- Which of your unit's courses or programs are most conducive to paid WIL opportunities because they address a **regional labour market need**? Who on your team or within your institution is best positioned to discuss funding or placement opportunities with local SMEs, and why?

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# Employer Engagement Diagnostic Tool

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## Canadian Employer Perspectives – Academics Group

| Top 3 Barriers                    | %   |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Staff time to recruit / supervise | 43% |
| No suitable work available        | 35% |
| Not aware of any such programs    | 25% |

| Top 3 Desired Supports                           | %   |
|--|-----|
| Financial support for employers                  | 41% |
| Access to pre-screened, qualified candidates     | 31% |
| Flexible time and length to match business needs | 31% |

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## "Are You Ready?" To "What Fits Now?"

- ✓ Structural readiness
- ✓ Business demand
- ✓ Prior experience and risk tolerance
- ✓ Desire for navigation and support

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# Employer Engagement Diagnostic Tool

| # | Yes / No Questions   | If Yes, this suggests...  | If No, this suggests...  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Do you have currently payroll setup and hired at least one employee in the past?                       | Organization is structurally ready to host paid student opportunities<br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Internships, co-ops, applied research | Organization is early stage and employment-based WIL may create friction<br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Course-based projects, micro-placements, consulting sprints |
| 2 | In the next 6-12 months, do you expect to need additional capacity or new skills beyond current staff? | There is a real business demand that students could help address<br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Skills-aligned student roles or projects   | Engagement may be exploratory rather than capacity-driven<br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Light touch engagements (events, challenges)                               |

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## Employer Engagement Diagnostic Tool

| # | Yes / No Questions  | If Yes, this suggests...  | If No, this suggests...  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 3 | Is there someone in your organization who could spend 1-2 hours per week guiding a student or project team? | They can provide the supervision needed for meaningful work<br><br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Co-ops, field placements, or defined projects | Limited supervisory capacity and high risk of overload or poorer experiences<br><br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Highly structured, short-term projects with external facilitation |
| 4 | Do you have a clearly defined challenge or opportunity that could benefit from student or research input?   | Student work is likely to generate visible value and ROI<br><br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Targeted projects, applied research, capstones   | Scope may need co-design support to avoid misalignment<br><br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Problem framing support, exploratory projects   |

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# Employer Engagement Diagnostic Tool

| # | Yes / No Questions  | If Yes, this suggests...   | If No, this suggests...  |
|---|---|--|--|
| 5 | Have you previously worked with a postsecondary institution?                    | <p>Familiarity with academic timelines and expectations – lower onboarding friction</p> <p><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Scale and deepen successful engagement types</p> | <p>First time collaborator that will need more guidance and scaffolding</p> <p><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Entry level formats with templates and active support</p>              |
| 6 | Would you be open to a short-term engagement (2-8 weeks) to test collaboration? | <p>Openness to low-risk experimentation and incremental adoption</p> <p><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Micro-placements, course projects</p>                               | <p>May be seeking immediate long-term hires and/or specific outcomes</p> <p><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Longer placements, internships, or research partnership opportunities</p> |

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## Employer Engagement Diagnostic Tool

| # | Yes / No Questions   | If Yes, this suggests...  | If No, this suggests...   |
|---|--|---|---|
| 7 | Would you like help navigating programs, platforms, or contacts that match your needs? | Ready to be matched and supported by intermediaries<br><br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Micro-placements, course projects | May prefer self-serve or direct recruitment options<br><br><b>Engagement Pathway:</b> Direct posting or informal engagement |

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# **Additional Resources**

## **For Continuing Education Units**

# Skills for Jobs Canada

- Launched in September 2025
- Provides a coordinated, central catalogue of upskilling and reskilling opportunities across Canada
- Employer and industry partnerships can be highlighted
- Integrated with the Job Bank's Training Finder for additional national visibility
- 70 institutions currently participating



SkillsForJobs.ca



Expressions of Interest



## Fast-Track Your Career

### Your Next Job Starts Here

Skills for Jobs Canada has thousands of short, affordable, and flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities to help you develop job-relevant skills.

Enter your current or past job title to find courses and programs that build on your experience.

Recommendations are sourced from high quality training providers and postsecondary institutions across the country.

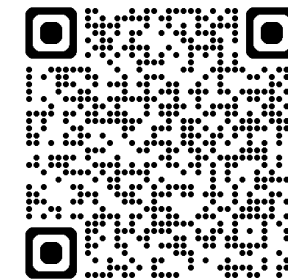
🔍 Enter a job title, like Database Analyst

📍 Preferred Region ▾

START

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# Professional Learning Programs



| Professional Learning Program                             | Description   | Length                   |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Leadership for Digital Transformation (Dx)</b>         | Gain skills to facilitate Dx transformation in your organization.                     | 5 modules<br>30 hours    |
| <b>Strategic Foresight: Identifying Signals of Change</b> | Learn how to frame a horizon scan project and identify and analyze signals of change. | 7 modules<br>25 hours    |
| <b>Mastering Open Ed</b>                                  | Create and adapt Open Educational Resources using tools like Pressbooks and H5P.      | 6 modules<br>17-23 hours |
| <b>Teaching With AI</b>                                   | Develop key skills to explore, evaluate and experiment AI in PSE.                     | 3 modules<br>15 hours    |
| <b>Empowered Educator</b>                                 | Explore technology and pedagogy for tech-enabled teaching.                            | 6 modules<br>35 hours    |

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**Contact our team:**

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