

# Work Integrated Learning Summary

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## Work-Integrated Learning Summary Purpose

Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP) has identified Work Integrated Learning (WIL) as a priority. The Master Academic Plan Priorities highlight how we will strive for all graduating students to have the opportunity to complete at least one WIL experience. All new programs will incorporate at least one form of WIL into the curricula. We will leverage our program advisory committees and other advisory councils to engage industry stakeholders and our communities in the WIL network.

This document serves to provide an overview for what WIL means at NWP as well as act as a resource document in planning, implementing, and evaluating WIL at NWP.

## Definitions of Work Integrated Learning

### Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada definition

Work-Integrated learning is a model and process of curricular experiential education which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of at least: an academic institution, a host organization and a student. WIL can occur at the course or program level and includes the development of learning outcomes related to employability, personal agency and life-long learning (CEWIL, 2018).

### Alberta Advanced Education definition

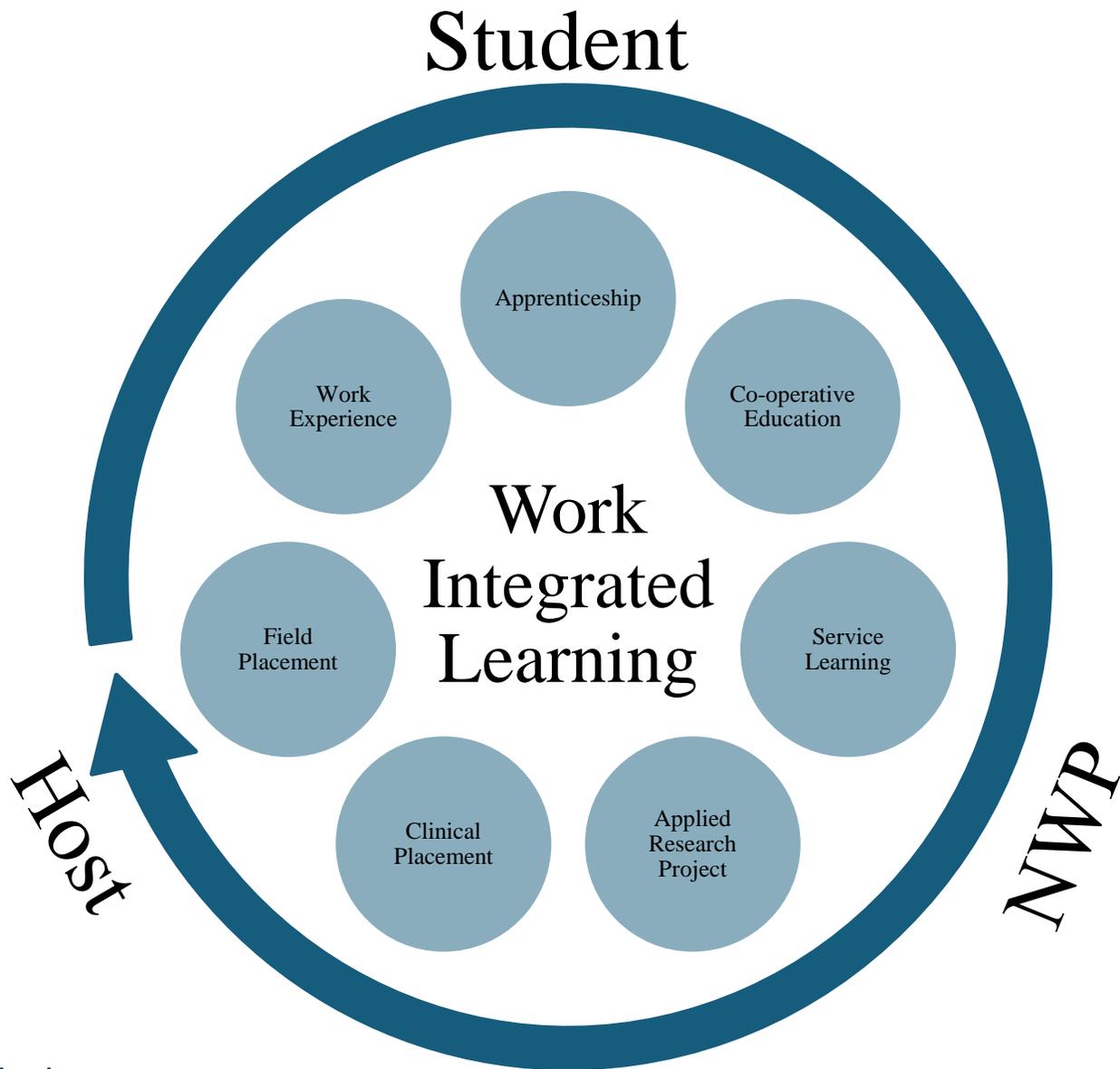
Work-Integrated learning means experiential learning in the workplace setting, including cooperative education, internship, service learning, field placement, mandatory clinical placement, or directed field study that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- is undertaken in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a program of study approved under the Programs of Study Regulation of the *Post-secondary Learning Act*;
- is supervised by a publicly funded post-secondary institution, or by an employer (in some cases the post-secondary institution may be the employer); and
- the institution, the employer and the student have a common understanding of the work, the learning outcomes, and the extent of supervision before WIL begins (PSP, 2020).

### Northwestern Polytechnic definition

Work Integrated learning (WIL) is experiential learning that either occurs in a workplace setting, integrates meaningful community service, or works to solve a problem/challenge identified by industry or the community. WIL components involve NWP, the student, and a host organization. WIL experiences can vary as defined by CEWIL Canada's types (CEWIL, 2018) and can be at the course or program-level (see Figure 1). Program learning outcomes will include WIL concepts related to employability, personal agency and life-long learning.

Figure 1. Work-Integrated Learning at NWP



## Criteria

What makes an experience at NWP WIL?

- undertaken for partial fulfilment of program requirements;
- for credit;
- part of the approved program curriculum with explicit course outcomes and assessment;
- inclusive of substantive involvement of a host organization;
- inclusive of feedback of learner performance;
- an authentic experience related to program of study;
- number of hours/weeks in a WIL experience vary depending on the type, the NWP Credit Allocation Policy, and program requirements; and
- defined within one of the following types.

## Types of WIL at NWP

**Apprenticeship:** is an agreement between a student (an apprentice) who wants to learn a skill and an employer who is willing to sponsor the apprentice and provide paid related practical experience in a work environment. Criteria for an apprenticeship experience includes:

- Apprenticeship experiences require more than 50% of the learning experience to occur at-the-workplace with less than 50% classroom training at NWP. Time is calculated in number of hours.
- The student receives remuneration from the employer during the practical at-the-workplace experience.
- The employer verifies number of hours completed for related practical experiences.
- NWP informs the employer of academic experience completion and success of the student with a final percentage of achievement in the classroom training.
- Both the workplace and classroom training are essential components of an apprenticeship WIL experience.

**Co-operative Education:** is a program where students alternate academic terms with paid work terms. Paid work terms are in appropriate fields of business, industry, social services, and the professions in accordance with program learning outcomes. Criteria for a Co-operative Education experience includes:

- Each work term is developed in partnership with the employer, the student, and NWP.
- The learner is engaged in productive work and receives remuneration.
- The co-op experience supports student learning goals, personal evaluation, and reflections.
- The student's performance in the workplace is supervised and evaluated by the employer.
- The student's progress during the work term is monitored by the program instructor.
- If the program of study is over 2-years in length, the time spent in work terms must be at least 30% of the time spent in academic study. If the program of study is 2-years or shorter in length, the time spent in work terms must be at least 25% of the time spent in academic study. Time is calculated in number of weeks.
- Students completing multiple work terms are normally exposed to the work environment during more than one term of the year.

**Service Learning:** is a course where students integrate meaningful community service with the classroom instruction and critical reflection. Students work in partnership with a community-based organization and their instructor to apply their disciplinary knowledge to a challenge identified by the organization. Criteria for a service learning experience includes:

- The Service Learning experience is part of a course within a program.
- Students normally work in small groups with the instructor facilitating the connection between the students and the organization.
- The organization provides an overview/scope of the challenge they have identified and deliverables they are seeking at the start of the service learning experience.
- The instructor monitors the students' progress.
- The students provide a presentation and other applicable deliverables to the organization upon completion of the experience.
- The organization provides feedback on the deliverables to the student(s) and instructor based on the agreed upon scope of the project.

- The community service and time spent working through the identified challenge should comprise more than 60% of the total course hours. Time is calculated in the number of hours.

**Applied Research Projects:** is a course where students are engaged in applied research or capstone projects that occur primarily in workplaces and host organizations including NWP. This can include consulting projects, design projects, and community-based research projects. Criteria for an applied research project includes:

- Students take on real-world projects with a host organization as a client.
- Students normally work in small groups.
- Students are providing a service to the host organization.
- and provides guidance and direction to the students for their learning.
- The organization provides an overview/scope of the project at the beginning of the course.
- Students provide regular progress updates to the organization and a final presentation or other applicable deliverables to the organization upon completion of the experience.
- The organization provides feedback on the deliverables to the student(s) and instructor based on the agreed upon scope of the project.
- The applied research project should comprise more than 80% of the total course hours. Time is calculated in the number of hours.

**Clinical Placement/Professional Practicum:** is a health or professional program requirement where the students are learning in the work-setting. Students are directly supervised by college faculty, organization staff, or a preceptor. Clinical placement/professional practicum learning outcomes and number of hours are directly related to professional regulatory or accreditation requirements that encompass the nature of activities, the risk and liabilities, and the level of the students. Clinical placements/professional practicums are generally unpaid.

**Field Placement:** is a course component where students are engaged in short-term, intensive hands-on experience in a setting relevant to their subject of study. Criteria for a field placement experience includes:

- Field placements are generally toward the end of the course for students to apply classroom learning in a practical experience within the same course.
- The instructor monitors the students' progress.
- The host organization supervises the student and provides feedback to the student and the instructor.
- The student engages in critical reflection of their classroom and field placement learning.
- Field placement is less than 30% of the course time. Time is calculated in the number of weeks.
- Generally unpaid.

**Work Experience:** is a program component where students are learning in a work-setting for one full course. Criteria for a work experience includes:

- Work experiences are normally the last course of the program.
- The work experience setting is directly related to the program of study.
- Direct supervision is provided by the host organization.
- The instructor monitors the students' progress.
- The student engages in critical reflection on the work experience.

- Work experience is more than 90% of the course time. Time is calculated in number of hours.
- Work experience may be paid or unpaid.

**Table 1. WIL Types Summary Chart**

Type	Supervision	Assessment	Paid	Unpaid	Notes
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	✓		More than 50% of the learning experience to occur at-the-workplace (hours).
<b>Co-op</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	✓		At least 30% of program length (weeks) if the program is over 2-years in length. At least 25% of program length (weeks) if the program is 2-years or less in length.
<b>Service Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>		✓	More than 60% of course time (hours)
<b>Applied Research Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>		✓	More than 80% of course time (hours)
<b>Clinical Placement/Professional Practicum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Preceptor</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Preceptor</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	✓	✓	Health- or professional- programs. Professional requirements
<b>Field Placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>		✓	Less than 30% of course time (weeks)
<b>Work Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NWP Faculty</li> <li>✓ Host</li> </ul>	✓	✓	More than 90% of course time (hours)

## Program Outcomes for WIL

Every program at NWP that has a WIL experience shall have program learning outcomes related to competencies for employability, personal agency, and life-long learning. WIL courses will be mapped to the program learning outcomes. Skills related to WIL competencies of professionalism and citizenship, professional judgement, communications and interactions, information literacy, and professional competence and work readiness are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2. HEDCO (2016) WIL Competencies and Skills**

<b>WIL Competency</b>	<b>Skills associated</b>
Professionalism and citizenship	accountability; trustworthiness; social inclusion; commitment to quality; global perspective of practice; financial responsibility; social and environmental sustainability; being a reflective practitioner and lifelong learner
Professional judgement	critical reflection; flexibility; adaptability; problem-solving; creativity; ethical decision making; lawful practice
Communication and interactions	professional communication; supportive communication; cultural competence; confidentiality; teamwork; collegiality; collaboration
Information literacy	accessing new information; judging information; synthesizing information from multiple sources; producing reports and multimedia presentations
Professional competence and work readiness	professional knowledge; professional skills; integration of theory and practice; knowledge of workplace/profession; competence in safe work practice; competence in professional knowledge and skills; initiative; independence

## Resources to Prepare Students, Hosts, and Evaluate a WIL Experience

### Preparing and Supporting Students

#### Before WIL experience:

- ✓ Preparatory learning (i.e. resumes, networking, effective engagement, communication, specific skills)
- ✓ Provide orientation to course and to host organization
- ✓ Provide student with host organization contact information as well as directions and expectations for contacting host
- ✓ Clearly outline the purpose of the experience and the responsibilities of the students, host, and instructor
- ✓ Prepare students for potential conflict in the workplace
- ✓ Address potential health and safety issues

#### During WIL experience:

- Ensure students work effectively with and are guided by appropriate hosts/mentors
- Encourage students to link hands-on learning to classroom learning
- Facilitate opportunities for feedback and reflection
- Facilitate problem solving
- Guide and support students through critical reflection

#### After WIL experience:

- Provide students the opportunity to share their learning with others
- Promote identification of connections between workplace and classroom learning
- Begin development of ongoing learning and continuing competence

- Provide opportunity for student to evaluate the experience to the learning outcomes

## Preparing and Supporting Host Organizations

### Before WIL Experience:

- Provide relevant information about course and college policies (i.e. course outline)
- Provide orientation to program/course and learning outcomes
- Prepare organization for students
- Identify the role of the host, student, and instructor
- Provide overview of skills and knowledge the students will bring to the experience
- Ensure contractual agreement
- Exchange contact information with host

### During WIL Experience:

- Be available through regular and as needed contact with host
- Problem solve issues
- Support host in evaluating student throughout the WIL experience
- Facilitate learning activities

### After WIL Experience:

- Debrief with host organization
- Make adjustments for future WIL experiences
- Prepare for next WIL experience
- Extend thank you note to the host organization from NWP
- Provide opportunity for host organization to evaluate the WIL experience

## Evaluating a WIL Experience

After each WIL experience the host, student, and instructor will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate the experience and the roles of the partners in meeting the learning outcomes. This information will be collected centrally and shared with the Dean and Chair for program quality assurance and future WIL experiences.

The following items will be evaluated for Service Learning and Applied Research Projects:

- The service learning or applied research project was structured with clear learning outcomes, authentic assessment, and meaningful activities.
- The service learning or applied research project was based on real-world problems identified by the host organization, was related to the program of study, and improved students' transition to the workplace.
- The service learning or applied research project included self-reflection and self-assessment.
- There was significant oversight and supervision where the instructor guided the students to project completion.

## References

- Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada [CEWIL]. (2018). *WIL definitions*.  
<https://www.cewilcanada.ca/CEWIL/About%20Us/Work-Integrated-Learning/CEWIL/About-Us/Work-Integrated-Learning.aspx?hkey=ed772be2-00d0-46cd-a5b8-873000a18b41>
- Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario [HEQCO]. (2016). *A practical guide for work-integrated learning: effective practices to enhance the educational quality of structured work experiences offered through colleges and universities*. [https://heqco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HEQCO\\_WIL\\_Guide\\_ENG\\_ACC.pdf](https://heqco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HEQCO_WIL_Guide_ENG_ACC.pdf)
- Post-secondary Programs (PSP) Branch. (2020). *Guidelines: work integrated learning*. Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education.