

A photograph of three people in a museum gallery. On the left, a man in a red shirt and glasses is seen from the side. In the center, an older woman with short grey hair and glasses is looking towards the right. On the right, a younger man in a dark t-shirt is gesturing with his hands while speaking. In the background, there are large, vertical wooden carvings of Indigenous figures.

INWIL
Interior & Northern Work Integrated Learning

HIRING & ONBOARDING STUDENT TALENT TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION TO HIRING

The Interior & Northern Work Integrated Learning Initiative, a partnership between Thompson Rivers University (TRU), the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), and University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), engages emerging student talent with employment opportunities that support the changing needs and development of small and medium sized organizations. Below are some of the many benefits of hiring a work-integrated learning (WIL) student to support your organization:



Mentorship Opportunities to Help Develop Future Industry Ready Talent

Today’s students are keen to learn from industry professionals and develop new relationships in their network. Work-integrated learning opportunities allow for mentorship opportunities for your staff, and a further opportunity to help shape the next industry professionals of the future.



Cost-Effective Through Hiring Incentives

Grants can subsidize the cost of training and integrating students into positions. There are many types available. You can access more information on hiring incentives such as grants and funding through our funding information guide.



Support Short-Term Staffing Needs & Fill Your Long Term Talent Pipeline

Engaging a student through work-integrated learning means you can add short-term support to your team to work on a project or day-to-day activities that both assist in the growth and development of your organization. This unique networking opportunity allows the employer or host organization to fill their long term talent pipeline with educated, trained, and familiar faces.



Access to Supports in Coordinating & Engaging Students

When you decide to utilize work-integrated learning as a form of recruitment, you also gain access to a network of professionals that will support you through the journey of recruitment, onboarding, and work-term support. Through accessing WIL through the INWIL initiative, you gain access to student talent and industry professionals across three post-secondary institutions.

There are nine different types of work-integrated learning, and each institution approaches these opportunities with a unique talent skill set. Through INWIL your organization gains access to talent across three institutions to ensure you identify the candidate that is the most qualified for the role and a fit within your team.



PROCESS OF ENGAGING STUDENT TALENT

Bringing a student into your organization can seem like a daunting process, but we’re here to help. Follow our simple three-step process to engaging student talent in your organization to get started, and let us assist you in finding the most qualified candidate for the role and your organization.

INWIL 3 Step Process to Engaging Student Talent in Your Organization

1. Reach out to the INWIL team by [filling out our contact form](#)
2. Discuss needs in your organization and chat with a WIL expert
3. Post your opportunity and connect with student talent

Key Dates:

Work-integrated learning programs are available year-round, with opportunities available from 2 weeks to 12 months at a time. Please consult with the INWIL team to learn about programming best suited to your organization and their respective key dates and timelines for posting, applications, and hiring.

WRITING AN INCLUSIVE JOB DESCRIPTION

There are several factors to consider when drafting a job description. Crafting a job description is an art, and we’re here to help! Most importantly, incorporating diversity and inclusion into the job description will ensure that you are speaking to a broad audience of potential applicants, and will open the conversation and door to new perspectives, energy, and ideas within your organization. Below you will find our top 5 considerations when crafting an inclusive, barrier-free job description to keep in mind:



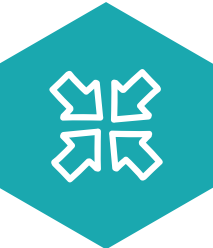
Highlight your Organization’s Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Often times, the job posting can be the student’s first introduction to your company. Dedicating a portion of the job description to highlight your organization’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in your own words is essential. Include your organization’s commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and which [Indigenous territory your organization operates on.](#)



Use Impartial, Inclusive, and Gender-Neutral Language

Mindfulness of your use of unconscious bias and language throughout the job description can make a big impact in the number and quality of applications. For example, start by removing gendered words like ‘he/she’, ‘guru’ or ‘ninja’, or characteristics that may be associated with a specific gender. Also, be mindful of using language that is not ableist or exclusive to those with a disability, such as ‘fresh set of eyes’, or ‘put your best foot forward’. Keeping the language simple and straightforward can help to portray a positive and inclusive working environment, and also ensure no candidate feels excluded from the role or organization.



Focus on Essential Skills and ‘Must-Haves’

In highlighting your organization’s commitment to inclusion, it’s important to pare down that ‘nice-to-haves’ list and focus instead on requirements of the job. The longer the requirements list, the more talent will self-select out of applying for that role; this includes highly qualified talent of all genders, races, and backgrounds. Wish to keep some of those ‘nice-to-haves’ on the list? Try messaging these pieces with ‘bonus points for’, ‘familiarity with X is a bonus’.



Avoid the Use of Unnecessary Industry-Specific Jargon

According to a [study](#) by Business in the Community (BITC), jargon is one of the most significant barriers that keeps talented young people from applying to entry-level positions. Jargon not familiar to the student applying may leave them feeling intimidated, confused, and less confident to fulfill the job requirements, thus resulting in qualified applicants choosing to opt out or take their resume elsewhere. Keep it simple, and try to describe a role’s responsibilities without utilizing jargon, where possible.



Consider Emphasizing Job-Specific Achievements

Students take part in work-integrated learning to develop new skills through learning from industry professionals. If you can clearly set out job-specific achievements and key learnings that a student will attain when they work with you in this role, you are creating an open-door opportunity to applicants and an inclusive space where learning and achieving are celebrated.

JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Organization Name	
Organization Website	
Position Title	
Type of Work-Integrated Learning	
Location (City, Province)	
Is this position remote?	<input type="checkbox"/> Full remote <input type="checkbox"/> Partial remote <input type="checkbox"/> In person <input type="checkbox"/> TBD
Wage (hourly or yearly)	If known
Number of hours per week	
Start Date	Month, year
End Date	Month, year
Duration	Please specify duration of the term (if Co-op, please specify 4, 8, or 12 months, and if extension is available)
Organization’s COVID state-ment	Please add any official statement related to the current COVID situation, restrictions or H&S plans in place at your organization, if applicable.
Organization’s Workplace Culture / Equality statement	
Organization Overview	
Job Overview	
Job Responsibilities	
Job Achievements	
Qualifications / Skills	Must have: Bonus:
Preferred Degree / Disci-plines	Completion of X year in X discipline(s), if there is preference
Requested Documents	Please specify if Cover Letter, Resume, Unofficial Transcript are required
Posting Date	Date
Closing Date / Application Deadline	Date
Application Receipt	Name and Email Address to send applications



POSTING YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Once a meeting is set with the INWIL team, be prepared to discuss the nature of the position you are looking to post. Some items to have prepared include items listed in the job description, including: job title, term/timing, supervision provided to the student, preferred academic programs, if the opportunity is paid or unpaid, number of positions available, location, and deadline of the posting.

Some of the items the INWIL team will wish to discuss with you include:

- ▶ Understanding the responsibilities of a Co-op/WIL employer or host organization.
- ▶ Ensuring you as the host organization integrate equitable hiring practices, and is committed to providing a safe working environment for the student(s).
- ▶ Providing insight into midterm / end of term check-ins and evaluations, and time commitment required.
- ▶ Ensuring you as the host organization gain a better understanding of the hiring and onboarding process, including:
 - ▶ Communicating who is hired
 - ▶ What to cover during orientation and student learning outcomes

Once you are ready to proceed with posting your opportunity, fill out our [online form](#) with organizational specific information and the role you are wishing to hire for.

Once we've had the chance to connect, the INWIL team will follow up to confirm if the position is suitable for any of the available forms of work-integrated learning and will proceed to post the opportunity at that point. The INWIL team will review the process with you to post the job, and hire students once you receive submissions.

INTERVIEWING, SCREENING & SELECTING CANDIDATES

If you are hiring for a Co-op position, once you have reviewed all applications you may contact the institutions of your choice to move forward with any selected Co-op candidates for interview. Each school can assist with scheduling shortlisted students for interviews and confirm by email. You may also connect with your chosen candidates directly, should you prefer.

No matter the form of WIL that you are seeking to engage, finding the suitable talent for your organization is key when screening and selecting a candidate. Here are a few key considerations to support an inclusive screening and selection process:

01 Identify & Remove Barriers During the Interview Process

Being conscious of barriers for students, and addressing them upfront brings a sense of comfort and safety to the student when they do not have to request an accommodation for their interview. For example, for virtual interviews, consider that not all students have access to reliable internet - allowing candidates the choice of a phone interview if a virtual interview is not accessible can reduce barriers. Similarly, in-person interviews may pose a challenge if students live in another city, who may appreciate the choice to interview remotely. A student may have a disability and require an accommodation for an in-person interview, or may be an international student who may have different cultural norms that you need to consider. Offering accommodations upfront is a supportive measure to open up this conversation to ensure that your candidates are given the opportunity to interview in a setting where they can excel.

02 Reduce Bias During the Screening & Interview Process

During the recruitment process it can be easy to settle on the candidate that you feel the most comfortable with based on your own personal unconscious bias. Creating an interview process that is structured to remove these biases, and that is accessible to all, is key to ensuring you get the best candidate for the job. Focus on questions related to job duties, utilize situational interview questions, and ask for examples and details to understand the student's skillset. This might also be an opportunity to include some training for your hiring committees.





INTERVIEWING, SCREENING & SELECTING CANDIDATES

03 Be Mindful of Cross-Cultural Communication Styles

It's important to remember that appropriate body language differs across a variety of factors: culture, ethnicity, gender, race, age, class, and social status. Just because the interviewee doesn't exhibit traditional "Canadian" mannerisms or body language such as personal space or eye contact doesn't mean they aren't being respectful or that these actions should be taken in a negative light. Recognizing these differences can assist in creating a more inclusive work-place culture overall within your organization. In addition, ensuring communication is clear, simple, and concise, and being willing to explain or clarify any technical terminology will serve as a benefit to all interviewees.

04 Be Conscious that Students Come with Diverse Backgrounds and Experiences

Throughout the student hiring experience you will be met with a diverse group of candidates that can bring a wide variety of experiences to your organization, and it's important to utilize those experiences and capitalize on the student's strengths to work towards the shared learning goals during your time together. An international student may be bilingual, a skill that you can utilize to promote cross-cultural communication within your organization. A student may have a background in a different industry, but with skillsets that are unique in a way that gives your organization an edge. Think about different ways to showcase a student's unique talents, transferrable skills and abilities in a way that enables growth and learning on both sides.

WRITING A JOB OFFER LETTER

Below you will find a sample job offer letter for reference. Please feel free to utilize this resource, or utilize your own.

{Date}
Private & Confidential

{Successful Hire Name and Address}

Dear {Name of Student},

The team here at {Name of Organization} is pleased to offer you a temporary opportunity to join us as a {work placement / co-op / intern} student in the role of {job title here}. The term of the role being offered is from {start date} to {end date}. Please find attached the final documentation we require to finalize the details of your {employment / participation} in this role with our organization.

During your time as {job title here}, you will report to {supervisor's name here} in the {department or team name here} department, located {at/in location name here}. This is a {full time / part time / temporary, remote / in person / hybrid} position, during which time your rate of pay will be {\$XX.XX / hr or annual salary + any additional benefits your organization provides that you would like to highlight here}. General hours of work for our team are {dates / time for their schedule can be included here, or you may note that general hours may vary}.

Our organization and your supervisor will work closely with your university to ensure your experience is a positive and fulfilling one. We look forward to reviewing your key learning objectives with you, and collaborating on achieving them together during your time with us. A copy of this letter has been sent to {university name here} for their records.

Please accept this offer by signing below, filling out the attached documentation, and returning them to {contact information for HR / hiring manager} no later than {time} on {date}.

Our team looks forward to going on this journey together! If you have any additional questions prior to completing the attached documents, please do not hesitate to contact me at {preferred method of communication}.

Sincerely,

{Name of HR or Hiring Manager}
{Title}
{Contact Information}

Agreed and accepted position on {Date}

Signatory Line
{Student First and Last Name}

Signatory Line
{Hiring Manager First and Last Name}

ONBOARDING GUIDE



Discuss Expectations & Goals

In hiring a student, you are bringing fresh perspective into your organization. This also means that the student is looking to you for guidance, mentorship, and skill-development. Collaborate with the student to better understand what they want to learn during your time together, and how they feel they can contribute to your organization’s goals and objectives. This helps to set expectations of the role and the student up front. In addition, it’s key to address their responsibilities within their role such as: expected team collaboration, schedule expectations, and any workplace etiquette that is important to share.



Anticipate & Address Barriers to Success

Don’t be afraid to ask the student what they need to succeed, and work with your team to put strategies in place before the student starts. This will ensure the student is provided any mentorship, accommodation or structure that they need to put their best foot forward, and they’ll be thankful that you asked!



Introduce the Team & Workplace Culture

Building a solid foundation for your organization’s relationship with your student hire starts with introducing the team and familiarizing the student with your workplace culture. Why do people love working there? Your team will be helping to support the student throughout their journey, so encouraging team members to welcome, support, and provide mentorship to the student can both help to develop the student’s skills as well as the confidence of your staff.



Collaborate on a Training Plan

Set an example by working with the student from the beginning on a training plan that fulfills their learning goals that they would like to work towards during the term. Educate the new hire on how these learning goals fit into the objectives and growth plans of the organization; this assists with the student feeling a sense of purpose and direction in their role.



Provide Opportunities to Follow Up & Feedback

Set consistent meetings and check ins to ensure the student feels supported, and allow space for any questions to be answered as they come up. If a student is comfortable asking questions and being inquisitive during their time with you, they are far more likely to stay the course towards their learning goals and the organizational objectives.



3 TIPS FOR SUCCESS

01 Communication & Transparency is Key

Keeping a consistent line of communication and transparency for your student hire is key to relationship building, skill development, and their confidence in their role within your organization. Students are inquisitive, and having an open-door policy will not only ensure new team members stay on track towards both their learning goals and their roles and responsibilities, but also assists in developing relationships that can continue into the long-term.

02 Be Intentional with Constructive Feedback

When a new hire veers off course, or is in need of support, approach the conversation with intention and in a constructive manner. Student hires are keen and eager to learn, and providing additional context, examples, and reasoning when providing feedback can assist in creating rapport and exceptional results in the future.

03 Monitoring & Documenting Progress Throughout the Term

There will be times during the student’s work-integrated learning experience where you as a supervisor will be asked to provide feedback on their journey, including their skills and capabilities, and growth throughout the term. We recommend keeping notes of the progress throughout to ensure feedback and examples are easy to reference.

GETTING STARTED WITH WIL

If you're interested in engaging a student in your organization, but aren't quite sure where to start, connect with our team to learn more about how a student can support your organization through work-integrated learning. Engaging students through the Interior & Northern Work Integrated Learning initiative will allow you the opportunity to connect with a student talent pool that spans the University of British Columbia Okanagan, University of Northern British Columbia, and Thompson Rivers University. Our team will work with you through the process to ensure you explore WIL pathways that are suitable to your needs and goals, curate job postings that entice candidates to apply, and get your opportunity in front of thousands of students across our three campuses throughout interior and northern BC.

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CONNECT WITH US



Project Website:
www.inwil.ca



Connect with Our Team:
connect@inwil.ca



Meet the Team:
[Book a meeting with us](#)



Social Media:
[LinkedIn](#)

Facebook: [@INWILBC](#)

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