



AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MAY BE HARD TO SAY, BUT IT CAN BE EASY TO DO!

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, you may be wondering - *What exactly IS experiential learning?* **Experiential learning** opportunities are **hands-on learning experiences** that help students prepare for future employment. Examples of experiential learning could include a co-op placement, an internship, an apprenticeship, an extra-curricular activity, a volunteer experience, an employer presenting to a class, a field trip, or a job shadowing experience. There are a variety of programs available that have different placement lengths and learning goals. This means that you'll be able to find a learning program that fits *your* workplace needs.

Keep reading to see how you can get involved in hosting a placement that is meaningful for you!

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you're interested in hosting a participant then the first step you'll need to take is getting in touch with a program coordinator. You can visit www.workforcewindsoressex.com to find contact information for these individuals. Once you've gotten in touch with a coordinator you'll want to consider discussing the following with them:

- ☐ Program guidelines
(timeframes, start/end dates)
- ☐ Paid and unpaid opportunities
- ☐ Financial incentives
- ☐ Liability & insurance requirements
- ☐ Workplace standards
- ☐ Necessary paperwork
- ☐ Learning expectations of students
- ☐ Interview processes
- ☐ Proper workplace training and orientation
- ☐ Health and safety procedures
- ☐ Evaluation requirements

Are you unsure of what experiential learning opportunity is best for you? Here are some ways you can engage with our future workforce:

RANGE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES



GUEST SPEAKER

CLASSROOM PROJECT

TOUR

FIELD TRIP

**TAKE YOUR KID
TO WORK DAY**

JOB SHADOW

**HIGH SCHOOL
CO-OP**

OYAP

**PSE CO-OP/
INTERNSHIP**

APPRENTICESHIP



“Students offer a fresh outlook and different energy level. Our students have been extraordinarily gifted, equipped and ready to work.”

- Employer



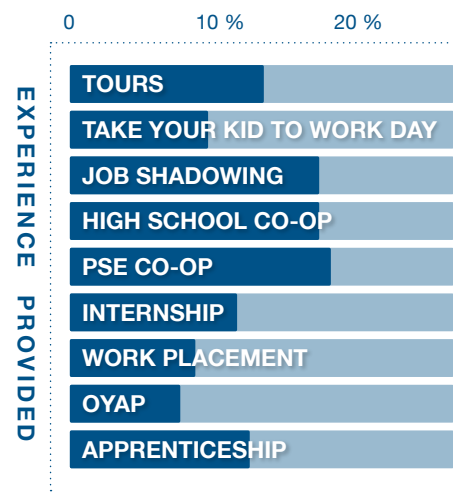
“They get our company culture and we know what to expect when we hire them.”

- Employer

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO HOSTING AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PLACEMENT?

Participants bring a fresh perspective and technological intuitiveness.	A placement can serve as a mentorship opportunity for your staff who are looking to further their professional development.
You can test out a potential future employee on the job.	Hosting placements is good exposure for your company and lets you give back to your alma mater and community.
Participants are often loyal to companies that give them a chance early on in their careers. ¹	Some programs have incentives available for participating employers.
You can excite the future workforce by showing off innovative projects, machinery and processes.	Adding a new member to your team will be beneficial for your workload in busier seasons.

EMPLOYERS THAT PARTICIPATE



Of 61 local employers consulted, **77% have participated** in an experiential learning opportunity with students.

36% had **hired a student** after their placement.

“This is great way to get a fresh perspective in your organization and “test drive” new talent.”
- Employer

“It’s an excellent way to get support at a small cost of time and effort. We have been so lucky to be matched with so many excellent students and can’t praise these programs enough. It’s important to us to provide a valuable workplace learning experience for our students, and we’ve been able to do that and get support in our goals and programs as well. It’s a win win situation!”
- Employer

¹Scott Lee, “A comparison of student perceptions of learning in their co-op and internship experiences and the classroom environment: A study of hospitality management students,” PhD diss., University of Central Florida, Orlando, 2006.

HOW TO HOST A PARTICIPANT

You may be wondering- *What can I do to successfully host a participant?* What steps should I take to prepare for a participant? Here's a few things to consider doing to make sure that the placement goes as smoothly as possible:

① SET EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANT AND INFORM THEM OF THESE EXPECTATIONS.

- Communicate with the program coordinator about your expectations and processes for any issues that arise. For example- What should the participant do if they are sick one day? Establishing solid communication lines will be beneficial for when the unexpected comes up.
- Have a detailed job description for when the employee arrives, including roles, responsibilities, tasks, etc. This will help the participant to understand what is expected of them.
- Ensure that the immediate supervisor is aware of expectations and learning outcomes.
- Facilitate informal and formal opportunities to share feedback with the participant. This could be as simple as having a conversation over a cup of coffee. Learn about the participant's ambitions and career goals and think about how this person could play a role in advancing your company.

② HAVE THE PARTICIPANT WORK ON A MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THEIR PLACEMENT.

- Do you have a special project that has been sitting off to the side for some time? You now have someone to assign it to.
- What problems has your company been facing lately? Someone who is new to the team can bring some great perspective on the issue and potential solutions.
- Keep in mind, the participant's workload should be challenging enough that they can develop and use new skills.



HOW TO HOST A PARTICIPANT

(cont'd)

“It was great to have students to do special projects like market research.”

- Employer

③ INCLUDE THE PARTICIPANT IN TEAM ACTIVITIES. FOR EXAMPLE:

- Have the participant join in and learn alongside other employees during training workshops.
- Give the participant an opportunity to explore various departments and observe different jobs throughout the organization.
- Encourage other employees to share their knowledge with the participant so that they can make further connections and learn more about potential career paths.

④ WHEN HOSTING PARTICIPANTS, MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH THE WORK THEY ARE DOING AND CLASSROOM LEARNING.

- Not sure what students are learning these days? Then ask them!
- Make sure to highlight the job skills and techniques that they need to succeed in your company and in your industry.
- Provide suggestions for future courses and training that they can take to enter the industry.

⑤ EVALUATE THE PROGRAM AND PLACEMENT AFTER COMPLETED.

- A student's grade may be hinging on the completion of required paperwork, so be sure to follow designated timelines.
- Share your honest feedback with the student throughout and following the placement.
- Think back to the person who gave you your first start in the work world. This is your chance to be that person for a member of our future workforce! Be sure to follow up with the participant to discuss possible opportunities at your company or other companies. If there are no employment opportunities available, offer to serve as a reference or to connect the participant with other employers who may be of interest.

“Placements bring new ideas and an opportunity for staff to teach other people. They are excitable and curious with a mixed bag of experience.”

- Employer





For help with hosting placements, Workforce WindsorEssex can connect you with local educators and coordinators to find an experiential learning opportunity that meets your needs. Check out our Experiential Learning Hub to submit a request for placement connections at

www.workforcewindsoressex.com/resources/experiential-learning-hub/

Visit workforcewindsoressex.com for more information on Workforce WindsorEssex projects.

info@workforcewindsoressex.com | 226-674-3220



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lee, Scott. "A comparison of student perceptions of learning in their co-op and internship experiences and the classroom environment: A study of hospitality management students." PhD diss. University of Central Florida, Orlando, 2006.