

CareerLAB



EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

Hosting a VCC work
placement

VANCOUVER
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE



Considering hosting a VCC student work placement in your organization?

At VCC, we are committed to ensuring that you have the information you need for a successful work placement.

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CREATING A WORK PLACEMENT

■ Plan for Your Placement

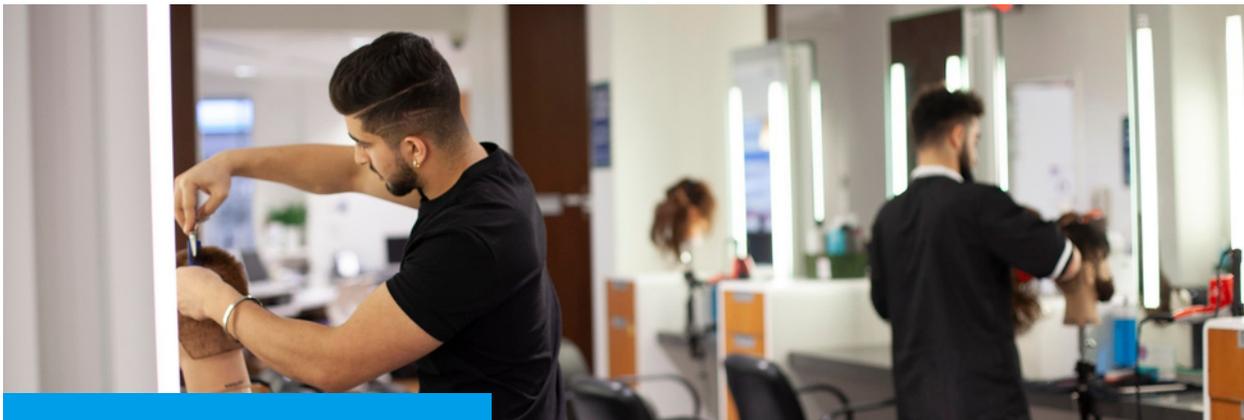
- Think about your business objectives.
- When would your organization have the capacity to take on a student?
- What are your hiring goals in the next year?
- Can you align your goals with those of the student?
- Determine the benefits a VCC student can bring to your organization.
- Identify what you can offer the student, and how you will create a learning environment.
- Articulate measurable outcomes for your organization and for the student.

■ Assess Your Organizational Needs

Student Availability. Students are available at specific times in the year, depending on their program. Most VCC WIL placements are unpaid and are 2-4 weeks long.

- List the skills you would like your VCC student to possess. Consider both hard and soft skills. Be sure to communicate your requirements to VCC.
- Examine your to-do list, as well as your wish list. Where can the student fill project gaps? Develop a draft task list for the student.
- Reflect on your workplace resources and culture to identify the best onboarding and training strategy for the student
- Determine your organizational capacity to host the student in terms of the space, budget, and staffing.
- Identify what resources and support you will need to put in place to support the student.

Next Step. Your first step is to identify which VCC program you are interested in working with. Take a look through VCC's programs at vcc.ca/programs. If you're unclear on which program might be a good fit, reach out to VCC's CareerLAB at careerLAB@vcc.ca.

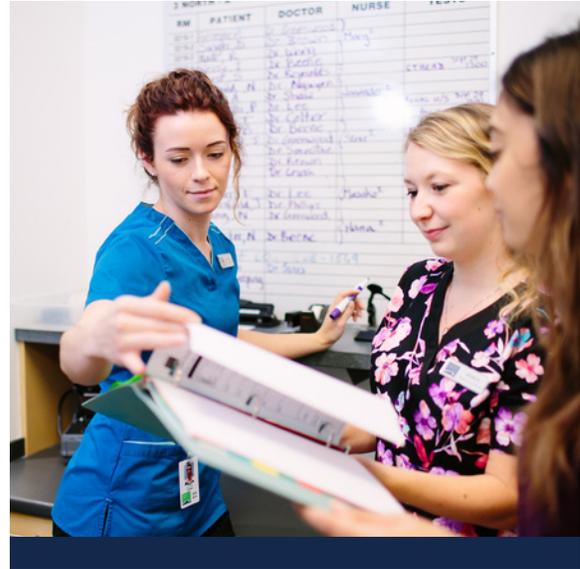


ONBOARDING YOUR STUDENT

Congratulations! You will soon have a VCC student joining your workplace. Here are a few tips to help you successfully prepare for, welcome, and transition your student to join your organization.

Finalize the Placement Details

- Sign the VCC contract provided to you by the program.
- Assign a supervisor or peer to support the student if you are not available.
- Review any learning outcomes that the student has identified through their program.
- Plan for any VCC check-ins throughout the placement like site visits, or phone calls.
- Notify your team of the student's upcoming arrival. Many supervisors send out a short introduction email before the student's arrival.



Create an Onboarding Plan

- Gather required training materials that will help the student integrate into your workplace such as safety training, procedure checklists, training manuals, employee handbook, etc.
- Think about unique learning opportunities might be available during the time frame of student's placement in your workplace. (e.g. special events, interesting clients/projects, etc)
- Create a primary tasks list to identify the critical tasks that the student should focus on during their placement.
- Identify job shadow options within the placement where the student can observe more complex tasks being performed.
- Assign a buddy or mentor that is not their supervisor so the student can ask questions about workplace norms and feel connected within the organization.

FIRST DAY CHECKLIST

On your student's first day, you will want to make sure that you review the following information. Remember, the student will be new to your workplace, but they also may not have much previous work experience so a thorough onboarding process will support a more successful placement for everyone.

Communicate for Success

- Outline what tasks the student will be responsible for and which ones they will just be observing.
- Discuss performance expectations and how you will give feedback.
- Arrange a tour of the facility and be sure to let them know where they can take their breaks/meals.
- Discuss the student's learning expectations. Many students set learning objectives for their work as part of their curriculum.
- Schedule check-ins with your student briefly at the start or end of each day for the first few days. After this, you can evaluate the frequency of the check-ins.
- Connect your student with other team members who can help them if you aren't available.
- Remind your student to ask questions of yourself or the team if they need additional support.

Feedback welcome

Ongoing feedback is welcome. Students often want regular feedback on their work as they are motivated to learn and improve their skills.

Set Expectations

Students need clear expectations related to professional conduct and behavior in the workplace. Plan to cover this information with any VCC student coming into your organization.

- Attendance, hours of work/tracking hours, and breaks
- Emergency procedures and safety training
- Professional conduct in your industry and organization
- Required meetings and how they are expected to contribute
- Dress code
- Organizational policies and procedures

Communication is key

Clarify how you want the student to communicate with you and other team members, especially about updates, questions, or meetings. Specify what communication channel they should use (e.g., phone, text, email, in-person)

SUPERVISING YOUR STUDENT

Now that your student has started their work placement, there are several key steps that you can take, as a supervisor, to support them in being successful in your workplace.

- **Create workplace culture that welcomes questions.**

Perhaps your student does not ask a lot of questions – there can be many reasons for this including cultural impacts or societal pressures to behave a certain way in the workplace. You may need to remind the student multiple times that questions are welcome and expected from a student learner.

Share your experience

VCC values feedback and input on your student's skills and ability to integrate into the workplace. This insight helps to shape future curriculum and programs.

- **Set expectations and offer feedback.** Ensure your student knows what you are expecting and schedule time to give them feedback on their performance.

- **Schedule regular check-in points.** Consider scheduling daily check-ins for the first few days and perhaps set up some additional meetings over the rest of their WIL placement for on-going feedback and questions.

- **Connect with the student as a person.** Demonstrate that you are open to getting to know the student more if they are comfortable sharing more about their life, interests, or career goals. You could ask the student for their opinions and input on their experience in your organization.

- **Explain the work culture.** Every organization has its own unique work culture and norms. Think about what the student might need to know to integrate quickly into your team.

- **Think about their learning from the ground up.** The student could have gaps between their education and performance in the workplace. Give some thought to what they might need to know to fill in those gaps. What resources or training can support their learning?

- **Reach out to VCC staff.** If the student is struggling in their placement, connect with your VCC contact sooner rather than later. VCC staff are there to support you and the student.

- **Be upfront about career possibilities.** Many employers hire students into roles after graduation. If your organization is not looking to add additional staffing, be upfront with the student from the start.

- **Hire your student.** If you want to continue working with your student after their placement, make them an offer!



MENTORING YOUR STUDENT

Having a student in your workplace is a great opportunity to give back to your industry through mentoring and training upcoming talent. By intentionally mentoring your student, you can be instrumental in helping your student get started in their career.

– **Ask for permission.** Mentorship can be beneficial to students looking to launch their careers. However, mentorship can go beyond the bounds of supervision, so it is recommended that you discuss mentorship with the student to see if this is the type of support that they are open to.

– **Share your experience.** You can provide key insights to students by sharing your own experience. Think about these questions:

- What was challenging for you, coming into the industry?
- What helped you grow in your career the most?
- What skills and experience have served you well in your career?
- What do you wish someone told you when you came into the industry?



– **Explain career paths.** Each industry has different routes for how someone can “break into the industry” or progress in their career. Give the student some tips and insider information on how they can manage their career in the industry.

– **Point out the industry experts.** Coming into a new industry, students don’t always know who the thought leaders and experts are. Share this information and encourage the student to follow their work (e.g., on social media, through publications, networking events, etc.)

– **Make introductions and connections.** Many people find work through their network. If you can, help your student make connections with people in the industry who can provide them with information, opportunities and job leads.

– **Offer support in their job search.** Once your student is coming to the end of their placement, you can help them in their job search by providing a reference letter, reviewing their updated resume, or suggesting that you connect on LinkedIn to stay in touch.

– **Provide “stretch” opportunities for learning.** If your student is open to it, provide ways that they can learn and develop skills beyond their regular work experience placement. This could be learning your electronic health records system or sharing at a staff meeting.

– **Recommend professional development.** Help your student identify areas of professional development that can help them get ahead in the industry. For example, this could be workshops, training, conferences, membership in a professional association, technology, or short-term courses (like LinkedIn Learning.)



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HIRE VCC

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