

# Co-operative Education: learning and work

1:45pm – 2:45pm

Presented by:  
Richard Wikkerink, PhD,  
Director, Student and Faculty Relations, Co-operative Education,  
University of Waterloo

**Waterloo** ExL

# WIL and Co-op defined: CEWIL

- **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.
- **Co-operative Education** consists of alternating academic terms and paid work terms. Work terms provide experience in a workplace setting related to the student's field of study. The number of required work terms varies by program; however, the time spent in work terms must be at least 30% of the time spent in academic study for programs over 2 years in length and 25% of time for programs 2 years and shorter in length.

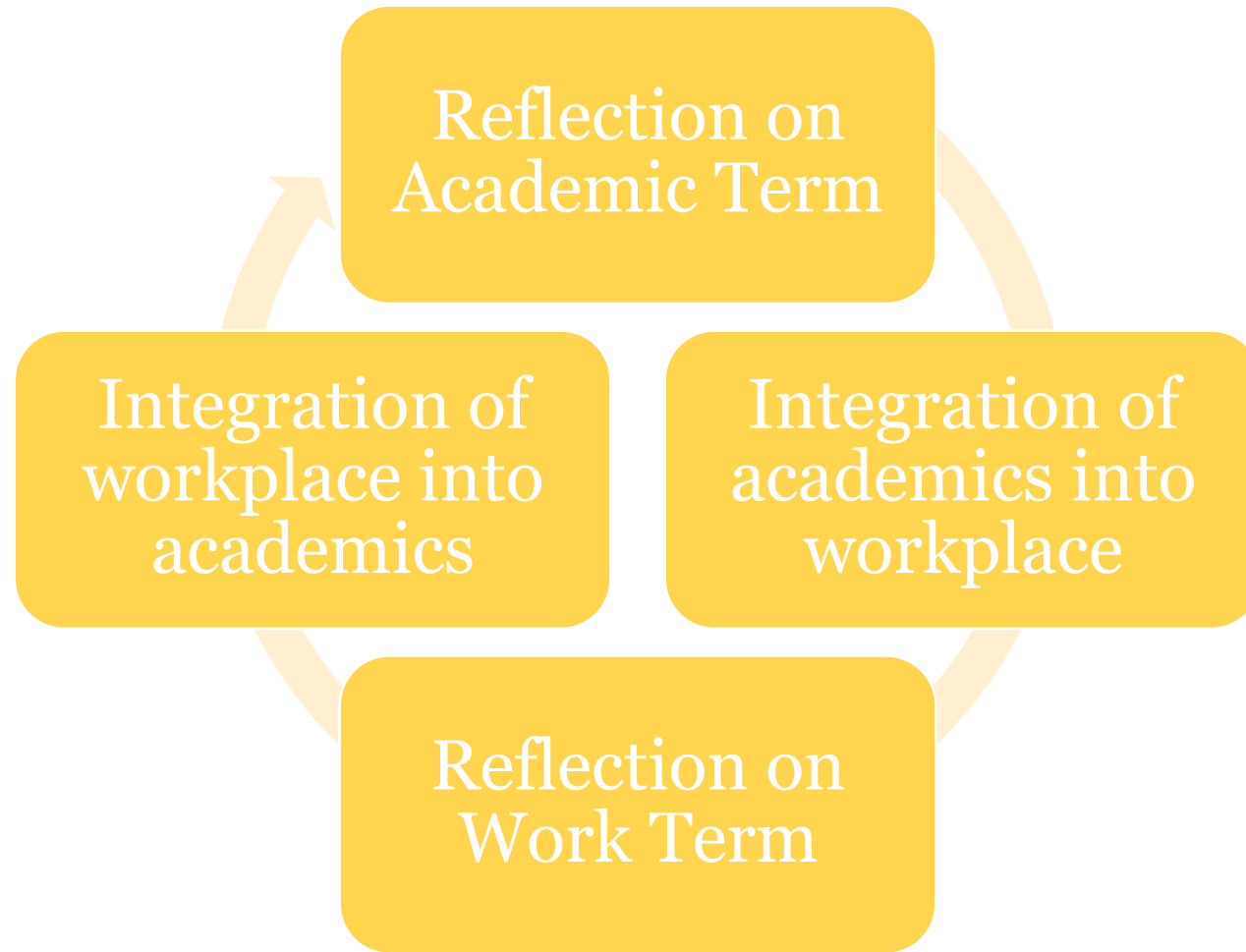
\*Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada

<https://www.cewilcanada.ca/coop-defined.html>

# Learning, the workplace, and reflection

- Intentionally
  - Integrates
  - Curriculum
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Partnership
- Workplace
  - Employability
  - Personal Agency
  - Life-long learning
  - Related to field of study

# Co-operative Education – Academic and Workplace Integration



# Every Great Co-op Student Begins with a First Work Term



# Co-op Student Experience

	YEAR 1			YEAR 2			YEAR 3			YEAR 4			YEAR 5	
	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	FALL	Winter	SPRING	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	FALL	WINTER
Example 1	1A	Work	1B	Work	2A	Work	2B	Work	3A	Work	3B	Work	4A	4B
Example 2	1A	1B	Work	2A	Work	2B	Work	3A	Work	3B	Work	4A	Work	4B
Example 3	1A	1B	OFF	2A	Work	2B	Work	3A	Work	3B	Work	Work	4A	4B
Example 4	1A	1B	OFF	2A	2B	Work	3A	Work	3B	Work	4A	Work	4B	

# Discussion

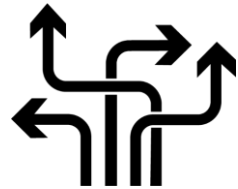
- Practices that deepen student learning in co-op programs
  - What is currently being done?
  - What might be different for first work term students? Students in their final work term?

# New Initiatives in Co-op

- Identify new ways to leverage the power of co-op in the workplace
- Support creation of a framework that supports continuous, evolutionary innovation in co-operative education



Research  
Certificate



Flexible  
Work terms



# Co-op Research Certificate (CRC) Overview

- As of the 2018/2019 Undergraduate Calendar (Fall 2018), Undergraduate students can earn a CRC.
- Students will be able to graduate with this credential if they:
  1. Receive credit for least three work-term experiences focused on research
  2. Receive credit for the PD 13: Research in the Workplace course
  3. Complete the Co-op Research Certificate Capstone
  4. Meet all other requirements of their desired co-op degree

## WHY OFFER A CO-OP RESEARCH CERTIFICATE?

---

The same “Co-op” designation is attached to every co-op student’s degree, but every co-op student’s co-op experience is different!

Co-op Certificates allow for recognition of different types of co-op experiences.

---



Image Source:

<http://fabacademy.org/archives/2013/students/gupta.sahil/index.html>

Used Under Creative Commons License:

[https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/deed.en\\_US](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/deed.en_US)



# Co-op Research Certificate Outcomes

- Acknowledges that research can expand the limits of our knowledge
- Desires to conduct research in ethical and socially responsible ways
- Describes the lifecycle of a research project from conception to dissemination/commercialization
- Recognizes that appropriate research techniques lead to strong evidence
- Open mind to applying different methodologies when conducting research
- Communicates research experience to a general audience

# PD13: Research in the Workplace

- Currently under development, available as of Winter 2019
- Instructor selected after competitive request for course proposals, with a requirement that the course contributes to the outcomes of the Co-op Research Certificate (CRC).
- Approved by the Co-operative Education Council and Senate Undergraduate Council.

**PD 13 LEC 0.50**

Course ID: 015781

## **Research in the Workplace**

This course provides students with a foundational understanding of the purpose and process of undertaking research in the workplace. Using examples from student, faculty, and employer projects, students will explore research processes while reflecting upon their own research skills and interests. Topics include ethical and responsible research, research methods, and the critical consumption of research.

*[Note: Course will be graded on a CR/NCR basis.]*

*Prereq: COOP or EDGE students only*

**Only offered Online**

# Capstone: Research Skills Poster Presentation

- The objective of this capstone project is to give students the opportunity to demonstrate how they have achieved a specified degree of researcher skill development while completing their co-operative education degree
- Through successful completion of the capstone, the Co-operative Education Department will be able to verify a consistent level of research skill development from all individuals achieving the Co-op Research Certificate

# Capstone: Research Skills Poster Presentation

- Currently under development, with the first offering in late Winter 2019.
- Students cannot sign up for the capstone until they have completed their 3 research work terms and PD13.
- Students must demonstrate their research skill development with reference to the RSD7: Researcher Skill Development Framework developed by the University of Adelaide. Specifically, students must demonstrate their level of skill development for each facet of research defined by this framework:
  - Embark & Clarify
  - Find & Generate
  - Evaluate & Reflect
  - Organize & Manage
  - Analyze & Synthesize, and
  - Communicate & Apply

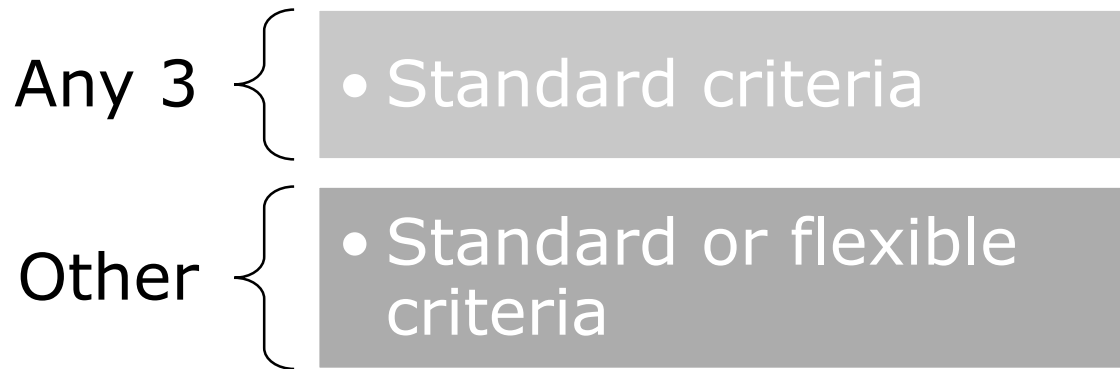
# Research Work Term Criteria

- Guiding Definition of Research
  - Research entails confirming or expanding an area of knowledge by framing well-defined questions and attempting to answer these questions by systematically acquiring, analyzing and interpreting data or information, guided in all instances by principles of integrity
- Types of Research Work Terms
  - Work terms can be approved as research work terms if, upon reviewing the job description, it is clear the student will be spending the majority of their time during the term engaged in activities that either:
    - Indirectly provide opportunities to develop researcher skills (Type 1)
    - Directly provide opportunities to develop researcher skills (Type 2)

# Flexible Work terms: Background

- Allow students more choice on some work terms and expands co-op's network of employers and relationships
- Flexible work terms launched as a pilot in spring 2017
- Students could complete one 'free' flexible work term as part of the four term pilot
- As of fall 2018 students must complete three standard work terms

## 4/5/6 Work Terms





# What is the difference between a flexible work term and a standard work term?

Standard work term criteria	Flexible work term criteria
✓ 16 weeks (12 by exception) and full time	✓ Be a minimum of 420 hours of work (within a 16- week timeframe), which allows for shorter windows but also for more intensive opportunities
✓ Includes a supervisor who evaluates student performance and submits evaluation	✓ Includes a supervisor who evaluates student performance and submits evaluation
✓ Includes compensation (or approved within Co-operative Education's alternative remuneration/unpaid guidelines)	✓ Includes compensation (or approved within Co-operative Education's alternative remuneration/ unpaid guidelines)
✓ Related to a student's field of study (defined by program) and allows them to gain relevant skills for further employment	✓ Students arrange employment and submit for approval, with rationale provided for how the work term meets their specific goals
✓ Single employer	✓ Option for multiple employers (can be one or two combined separate experiences)
✓ Does not include extended breaks or periods off	✓ Does not include extended breaks or periods off

# Flex work term highlights

- Appreciated the exposure to different (or specific) work environments
- Felt the impact of the projects they worked on had within their organizations and
- Learned and developed relevant skills
- Gained experience in their field

# Coordinated Multi-Experience Model Overview

## GreenHouse Co-op Program

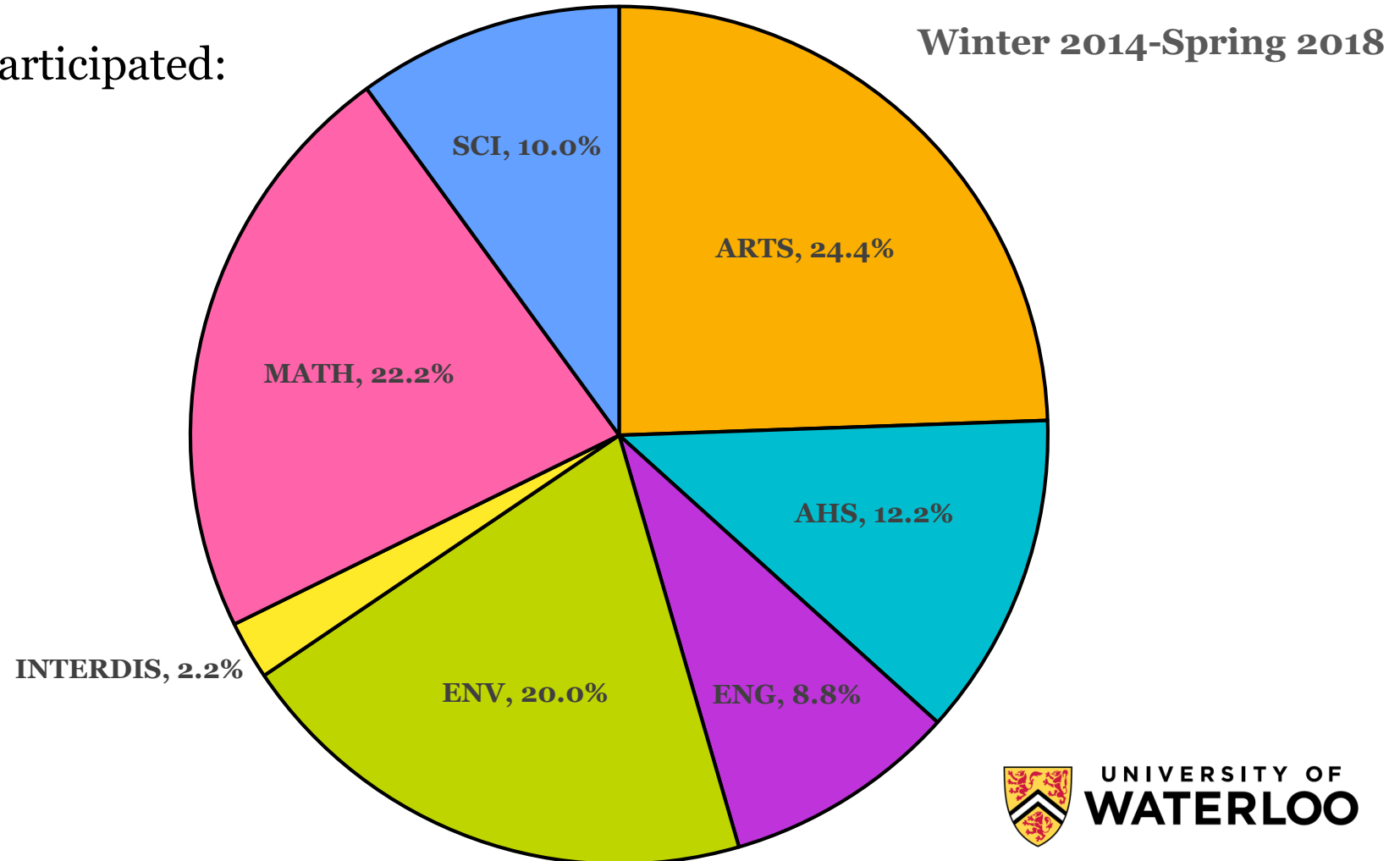
- GreenHouse co-op is one example within the Coordinated Multi-Experience Model (CMEM)
- Provides capacity and access to UWaterloo co-op for social purpose startups and not-for-profits
- Ran four terms within WatCACE and St. Paul's GreenHouse (winter 2014/2016/2017, spring 2016)
- Funded as a first work term success initiative under Co-op 2.0 project for winter and spring 2018
- Targeted to all UWaterloo co-op students who are passionate about social causes, interested in entrepreneurship or who are seeking a unique first co-op experience

# Overview cont'd

- Students are matched with three different partners and employers over the 12 week work term
- Students receive a week of comprehensive training to prepare them for their work placements
- At the end of the term, students participate in a wrap-up event designed to help students reflect on their experiences and practice articulating employability skills for future job searches
- Students are paid a stipend which is a combination of employer contributions subsidized by the program funding

# Student demographics

- 90 students participated in the program between winter 2014 and spring 2018 (46 in winter and spring 2018)
- Students from all six faculties participated:



# Employer feedback – winter & spring 2018

- Employers valued the progress that was made on projects and the ability to work with “talented, energetic, ambitious, hardworking” co-op students most
- 87.5% of survey respondents were satisfied with the quality and quantity of work students delivered and their overall contribution to the company
- 93.7% of survey respondents agreed program provided good value for the time, effort and finances invested
- 100% of survey respondents are likely to recommend the program
- 93.7% of survey respondents said the program equaled or exceeded expectations

# Student feedback – winter & spring 2018

- Students valued the exposure to different work environments, ability to develop a variety of skills and the connections made with other students and employers most
- 95% of survey respondents agreed that the program better prepared them for finding their next co-op work term
- 97.5% of survey respondents would recommend the program
- 97.5% of survey respondents were satisfied with their experience

# Co-op Education Supports and Services

- Recruiting Term Support
  - Pre-First Work term students
    - Co-op consults in the Centre for Career Action (in-person/phone/skype)
    - PD1 – online course with in-person resume critique and optional mock-interviews
    - CFE – in-class and online, with in-person resume critique
    - Centre for Career Action: drop-ins (TC and evening hours at libraries), workshops, appointments, Career Hub, Co-op 101 sessions, faculty-initiated sessions
    - Writing Centre, Living Learning Communities, Student Society events
    - Employer Information Sessions and events
    - Website and WaterlooWorks Help
  - Second term and beyond:
    - CCA drop-ins, workshops, Career Hub
    - Student Advisors (phone, WW messages)
    - Employer Information Sessions and events
    - Website and WaterlooWorks Help



# Co-op Education Supports and Services (con't)

- Work Term supports
  - Student Advisors
    - Phone/Skype
    - WW messages/e-check-ins
    - Work Term Consultations
  - Work place supervisor
  - Harassment Advisors
  - Local and community resources through campus referral

# Questions?

Richard Wikkerink  
rwikkerink@uwaterloo.ca