# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Introduction**  
  Page 2

- **Learning and reflection for workplace success**  
  Page 5

- **Helping students appreciate professional development**  
  Page 7

- **Compelling curriculum for work-integrated learning**  
  Page 8

- **Supporting student success**  
  Page 10

- **2018-19 initiatives**  
  Page 11
  - PD course projects  
    Page 11
  - EDGE  
    Page 11
  - Experiential learning projects  
    Page 12
Introduction

The Waterloo Professional Development Program (WatPD) helps University of Waterloo undergraduates enhance their professional skills and improve their employability. Students who complete WatPD’s curriculum are introduced to workplace best practices and reflect on their experiences and performance. When combined with students’ academic study and experiential learning, WatPD ensures that Waterloo graduates are ready to make a difference, no matter their professional path.

This model is adapted from The Career Architect Development Planner (1st ed.) by Michael M. Lombardo and Robert Eichinger:

- WatPD provides theory and experience to succeed (10%)
- Mentors and supervisors offer guidance and feedback on their progress (20%)
- Students apply their knowledge and continue to grow (70%)

COMPULSORY COURSES (CO-OP)

Applied Health Sciences, Arts, Environment
- PD1: Career Fundamentals
- PD12: Reflection and Learning in the Workplace

Math, Science
- PD1: Career Fundamentals

Engineering
- PD20: Engineering Workplace Skills I: Developing Reasoned Conclusions
- PD21: Engineering Workplace Skills II: Developing Effective Plans

ELECTIVE COURSES
- PD3: Communication
- PD4: Teamwork
- PD5: Project Management
- PD6: Problem Solving
- PD7: Conflict Resolution
- PD8: Intercultural Skills
- PD9: Ethical Decision Making
- PD10: Professional Responsibility in Computing
- PD12: Reflection and Learning in the Workplace
- PD22: Professionalism and Ethics in Engineering Practice

EDGE PROGRAMMING
- PD1 EDGE: Career Fundamentals
- Skills identification and articulation workshop
- Capstone workshop
Co-op students across all six faculties work through WatPD by completing a series of online professional development (PD) courses as part of their degree requirements. The department managed 19,705 total course enrolments during the 2017-18 academic year, a new record for WatPD. Students enrolled in PD courses were supported by 16 full-time staff members, 14 instructors, 64 co-op students, and 120 part-time markers.

Non-co-op students can opt into EDGE, WatPD’s experiential education certificate program. EDGE is a voluntary, no-fee program that combines workshops, academic courses, and meaningful experiences in the workplace and community. EDGE’s first full year on offer was the 2017-18 academic year, and 402 students registered for the certificate. 101 EDGE students enrolled in PD courses, and we even watched our first four students convocate with their EDGE certificates.

**Student enrolment by faculty (co-op only)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Health Sciences</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student enrolment by course (co-op and EDGE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Total Enrolments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD1</td>
<td>3217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD1 EDGE</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD3</td>
<td>1077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD4</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD5</td>
<td>1779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD6</td>
<td>1589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD7</td>
<td>1068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD8</td>
<td>2372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD9</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD10</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD11</td>
<td>1746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD12</td>
<td>1414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD20</td>
<td>1624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD21</td>
<td>1598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD22</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WatPD’s approach to operations and improvement is guided by the following four principles:

**Learning and reflection for workplace success**
When students actively engage in learning through WatPD, they discover best practices and develop their skills. These skills and practices complement work-integrated learning opportunities and align with the demands of the workplace.

**Helping students appreciate professional development**
WatPD’s courses and workshops differ from typical academic courses. It’s important for the department to highlight the differences between PD courses and other academic courses so students can understand and take advantage of the unique opportunity WatPD represents.

**Compelling curriculum for work-integrated learning**
WatPD’s courses and workshops are authored by University of Waterloo faculty and staff who are considered experts in their fields. The department is committed to continuous refinement so students enjoy the best possible learning experience.

**Supporting student success**
A peer support model is a foundational part of the assistance students receive in WatPD’s courses. Students are uniquely positioned to understand the success and challenges other students face in the workplace. WatPD aims to provide clear, thorough feedback and quick, comprehensive solutions to student concerns.

The remainder of this report focuses on WatPD’s projects and accomplishments throughout the 2017-18 academic year.
Learning and reflection for workplace success

Reflection within and outside of PD courses is a core component of the EDGE certificate program. Many students begin their EDGE journey by reflecting on their skills and experiences as part of the skills identification and articulation workshop, which is conducted in collaboration with the Centre for Career Action. Students participating in the workshop identify skills they already possess and practice expressing them to employers. 81 students completed a skills workshop during the 2017-18 academic year.

**Skills workshop student feedback**

"I learned how to effectively answer behavioural-based interview questions."

"The main idea that I took away from this [workshop] was to emphasize my strengths and be more aware of my vocabulary."

"I found value in reflecting on previous experiences, especially courses, volunteer, and work opportunities. Thank you!"

"I learned about what employers are actually looking for which will help me focus future answers."

EDGE students also reflect on their experiential learning opportunities by competing reflection assignments as part of earning their work and community milestones. Finally, the capstone workshop (conducted in collaboration with the Centre for Career Action) at the end of the certificate provides a final opportunity for students to reflect on their journey through EDGE and their plans for post-undergraduate life. 9 students completed the capstone workshop during the 2017-18 academic year.

**Capstone workshop student feedback**

"I really believe I took so much from [the workshop]. I learned how to set goals and navigate the after-undergrad life! So applicable and necessary!"

"I found the workshop to be an engaging experience full of valuable resources."

"The activities made you think further about your options after graduation. It also shows you some tips/gives advice on how to be resilient, which was something I struggled with for a long time."
Students who take PD courses are invited to reflect on the development of key competencies as part of their experience in the course. Students reflect and assess their skills and abilities at the end of the courses. After completing their PD courses:

- 95.0% of PD5 students said they can develop a timeline for a project using a work breakdown structure
- 95.7% of PD6 students said they can describe their strengths related to problem solving
- 94.5% of PD8 students consider differences in approach to power and authority before forming opinions about people from different cultures
- 85.8% of PD10 students said they can identify how to use work under Creative Commons licenses for derivative work
- 93.2% of PD20 students said they can describe the difference between public and personal morality

While the journey through each course is more important than the final grade, obtaining course credit is a requirement when completing PD courses. 95.7% of students earned their course credits during the 2017-18 academic year, completing their courses with an average grade of 73.4%.

Finally, WatPD experimented with new modes of reflection and collaboration with the faculties this year by piloting embedded reflective work reports within PD courses. Some students in three faculties (AHS, Arts, and Environment) taking PD6: Problem Solving and PD8: Intercultural Skills were given the opportunity to write a reflective report as their summative assessment, replacing a report they would have been asked to submit outside of their PD course. Embedding these work reports within PD courses makes the connections between reflection, report writing, and professional development more explicit, and it also helps support faculty objectives and learning outcomes. It also has the potential to facilitate student mental health by situating a major task within a more supportive context.

1Some students in the department of Chemical Engineering taking PD8 were also given the opportunity to write a reflective report.
Helping students appreciate professional development

WatPD’s co-op student curriculum and EDGE certificate are different from the traditional courses students are accustomed to taking as part of their academic study. While all courses have a professional skill component, that component is often secondary to the course content; professional skill development is the primary purpose of all PD courses, and the EDGE certificate is focused on skill development and career readiness. PD courses and EDGE programming also require less of a time commitment than traditional academic courses and co-op work terms, and most PD course content is entirely situated within online learning environments. This necessitates a different approach to teaching and learning, and that’s why WatPD spends time and resources highlighting why the department exists and how its courses help students enhance their professional skills.

WatPD placed a major emphasis on building relationships with student societies during the 2017-18 academic year. The department’s student engagements team connected with representatives from all six faculty student societies to share updates about WatPD, solicit feedback, and explore collaboration on events and messaging. A department representative attended Engineering Society (EngSoc) general meetings and Arts Students Union (ASU) and Applied Health Sciences Undergraduate Members (AHSUM) executive meetings. WatPD collaborated with the Science Society (SciSoc) on an information session for potential EDGE students. WatPD also continued to attend major recruitment events like Fall Open House, March Break Open House, and You @ Waterloo Day.

WatPD’s student engagement team also worked on creating short trailer videos for each PD course. These course trailers introduce students to course instructors, highlight key concepts from each course, and encourage students to see the immediate value of professional skills. The trailers will be embedded within courses and on the WatPD website upon completion. Filming has been completed for 10 courses, and instructors are collaborating with WatPD on writing and editing scripts.

PD5 STUDENT FEEDBACK

“The interactive stakeholder simulation was a great way to learn how to budget money in different phases of the project according to who the stakeholders were.”

PD6 STUDENT FEEDBACK

“The course material was very relevant to what I was doing at work and I feel that it will greatly help me going forward.”
Compelling curriculum for work-integrated learning

WatPD is committed to delivering high-quality courses and workshops that align with the needs of the workplace. The workplace is constantly evolving, so WatPD focuses on equipping students with transferable skills that allow them to adapt amidst this constant evolution.

WatPD maintains and updates PD courses on a regular basis, whether through small changes to content and assessments or routine, full-scale course redevelopment. WatPD embarked on six major program improvement projects during the 2017-18 academic year:

1. The Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) content within PD5: Project Management was renewed to reflect changes to the PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge), which contains best practices for agile project management. The CAPM content is now presented in a scrolling online textbook style, and includes images to enhance students’ experiences. Multiple choice practice questions were updated, and Quizlet flashcards were added for students to test their knowledge. (Students can use the flashcards or choose other Quizlet study modes according to their preference, and Quizlet study sets remain available after the course is over.) All of the new content is responsive and functional on mobile devices.

2. PD6: Problem Solving was redeveloped to meet contemporary e-learning standards and address student feedback. The course’s look and feel was adjusted through the creation of a new infographic spanning the course, new banners, and unit pages redesigned around scrolling rather than clicking. The number of assignments was reduced, and lectures were revised throughout the course to make the connection between problem solving and employability more explicit. Lectures, additional content, practice problems, and assignments were all refined, and a new simulation about overcoming barriers was added to Unit 8. The new version of PD6 was offered to all faculties for the first time during the Fall 2018 term.

PD7 STUDENT FEEDBACK

“Overall, a great course! Conflict is inevitable at times and knowing how to successfully resolve conflicts is vital to workplace success. I will be sure to always carry with me the knowledge that I have gained from this course, especially the techniques to understand and handle conflict.”
3. Several assessments in PD8: Intercultural Skills were added, edited, and revised. A new simulation was added to the Unit 8 assessment, increasing interactivity; a new Unit 9 assessment revisiting learning from an earlier unit was created; the Unit 10 assessment was revised to include more guided reflection; a new bonus assessment focused on microaggressions was created. These assessments were made available to students for the first time during the Winter 2018 term.

4. PD13: Research in the Workplace was developed in close consultation with faculty members across campus and the Associate Deans, Co-op and Associate Deans, Research of each faculty. The course includes many research-centric stories from co-op students and employers. PD13 is part of co-op’s new research certificate and will be offered to all faculties for the first time during the Winter 2019 term.

5. Many students have expressed their interest in reading through course material, and that WatPD’s existing AODA-compliant course transcripts were not providing a rich learning experience. WatPD’s new course textbooks combine the text-based approach of transcripts with editing for readability, articles, visuals, and additional learning materials, all in service of a more engaging reading experience. Course textbooks are also available as PDFs so students can download and save them for future reference.

6. The EDGE capstone workshop was developed and finalized in collaboration with the Centre for Career Action. The workshop was first offered to students during the Winter 2018 term.

PD10 STUDENT FEEDBACK

“I really appreciated the course touching upon all the concepts taught in the course. They were immensely relevant to me, not only as someone whom will work in the IT industry, but as a consumer of their widespread influence on our daily lives. I really enjoyed seeing facts from recent news stories being tied to the concepts as well.”

PD11 STUDENT FEEDBACK

“I really like how [the course] allow the students to practice writing an work term report before actually submitting one to their faculty. It allowed us to see and understand the importance of a work term report and how to write one correctly.”
Student support is a major point of emphasis within WatPD’s operation, and students themselves are integral parts of the support teams that help students achieve success in their PD courses and EDGE. Dedicated teaching assistants provide PD1: Career Fundamentals students with personalized, proactive one-on-one support as they search for their first work experience, offering face-to-face résumé critiques and mock interviews. Teaching assistants also handle administrative and marking duties across WatPD’s elective courses, and the new EDGE ambassador program gives non-co-op students a part-time opportunity to promote EDGE to their peers.

WatPD also introduced some operational changes to support student success during the academic year:

- The EDGE team began offering drop-in advising to students once weekly, an approach which resulted in over 100 in-person advising appointments during the 2017-18 academic year.
- Course teams began publishing term-by-term changes to each course in announcements and on the WatPD website, helping students understand how their feedback has shaped our courses.
- The assignment deadlines in every course were pushed back by three hours in response to student feedback, giving students more time to complete their assessments.

**PD1 STUDENT FEEDBACK**

“I really liked and appreciated how the TAs were always very quick with feedback, emails, and results. It showed us that they are here to help us and dedicated in ensuring we reach our maximum potential.”

**PD7 STUDENT FEEDBACK**

“The TAs did a great job with the feedback, correctly stating which topics need to be revised. I enjoyed the course!”

**PD11 STUDENT FEEDBACK**

“The TAs did a good job of responding to questions and inquiries in both a timely and helpful manner.”
2018-2019 initiatives

PD course projects

WatPD is running a series of pilot projects in its courses during the 2018-19 academic year:

- An “independent study” option in PD5: Project Management, allowing students to intertwine their activity during a work term with a customized assessment and evaluation plan;
- A flexible deadline system in PD9: Ethical Decision Making, allowing students to choose from two deadline patterns depending on their needs.

WatPD is also moving forward with a series of major course improvement projects:

- Adapting PD1: Career Fundamentals for completion by graduate students, with a particular focus on accessibility for students with undergraduate degrees from international institutions
- Adding more content and interactivity to PD12: Reflection and Learning in the Workplace
- Developing a new compulsory course for Engineering students
- Reviewing and redeveloping PD22: Professionalism and Ethics in Engineering Practice

EDGE

EDGE’s second-year enrolment goal is 800 student registrants, double the goal set during the certificate’s first year of operations. The EDGE team is using the following strategies to achieve its new goal:

- Expanding the certificate’s social media presence
- Working with departments and faculties to situate EDGE content in meaningful, useful spaces (e.g. adding skills workshop content to compulsory communications courses)
- Reaching out to new on- and off-campus partners
Experiential learning projects

In addition to improving its programming for co-op and EDGE students, WatPD is supporting the expansion of experiential learning (EL) throughout the University community. Students participate in EL activities when they complete authentic, meaningful tasks in workplaces or simulated workplaces, reflect on their experiences, and are evaluated on their performance. Co-op work terms and EDGE experiences are both robust examples of EL, and PD courses support EL by facilitating reflection and the development of employability skills.

The province’s Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has set a target of 100% student engagement with EL prior to graduation, and WatPD’s projects are helping the University advance toward that goal:

- Developing better mechanisms for tracking student engagement with EL
- Collaborating with colleagues across the province to define EL opportunities in accordance with MTCU’s guiding principles for EL
- Reviewing and cataloguing all EL opportunities available on campus
- Developing an EL community of practice in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching Excellence
- Exploring a centralized support model for non-co-op EL in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts
- Designing an instructor toolkit for developing EL opportunities abroad in collaboration with Waterloo International