FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES:
RESEARCH-BASED TIPS FOR SUPERVISING EMERGING TALENT

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that the University of Waterloo, where this work was created, is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee people. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.
65 years of innovation & growth in co-operative education and work-integrated learning programs

25,000+ co-op students enrolled in 120+ programs

7,500+ employers in 60+ countries

home of the Work-Learn Institute (WxL)
ABOUT WxL & THE FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES

WxL is the only research unit in the world dedicated to the study and advancement of work-integrated learning (WIL). Through engagement with the entire WIL community, WxL provides research-informed training, consulting and thought leadership for the enhancement of WIL globally.

Our future-ready workforce series is designed to share insights about the future workforce that can influence how organizations build their talent pipeline through five key themes: recruiting, engaging, converting, retaining, upskilling and reskilling.
MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Anne-Marie Fannon, Director, Work-Learn Institute

Dave Drewery, Associate Director, Work-Learn Institute

Simone Holligan, Research Associate, Work-Learn Institute

Ashley Stegelmeier, Director of Product Development, Ceragen
OVERVIEW

• Quality work experiences
• The 4C model for WIL supervisor support
• Employer spotlight: Ceragen
• Tips and best practices for effectively supervising students in WIL experiences
• Q&A
QUALITY WIL EXPERIENCES

LEARNING  IMPACT  RELEVANCE  NETWORKING
OUTCOMES AND THE ROLE OF SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

Quality of work experience influences performance and retention

Supervisor support critical to quality of work experience
We wanted to know:

WHAT DOES A SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISOR ‘DO’?
## WHAT WE DID

### Study 1
- Interviews with co-op students (n=50)
- What made their work term experience relevant?
- Focused on descriptions of supportive supervisors

### Study 2
- Written responses to open-ended question in survey (n=116)
- What did you want more of from your supervisor?
- Coded responses
THE 4C MODEL OF WIL SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

CREATE

COMMUNICATE

CARE

CONNECT
1. CREATE MEANINGFUL WORK

Key actions:

A. Outline the “big picture”
B. Provide variety and autonomy
C. Invite ideas
D. Acknowledge contributions
E. Highlight skill development
“Just to let me know for future reference what the big idea is on a project beforehand so that I can give them the best work depending on the situation and expectations.”
There was already a project for me in mind. But my supervisor was quite open with how I wanted to go about it, which was really nice.
“My supervisor was like [...] if you have any ideas or side projects you want to do, come talk to me. And we can [...] support you on that.”
"I really appreciate it, just all the small little comments in the recognition that meant a lot for me... it influenced how I use the position because I was just more inspired and encouraged to keep working harder."
“I really liked how they got us to reflect on what we were learning throughout the term, and how it might have been beneficial in our discipline.”
2. COMMUNICATE REGULARLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Key actions:

A. Set clear expectations
B. Provide structure and guidance
C. Be available (1:1s and troubleshooting)
D. Provide regular feedback
E. Welcome student communication
“They were very clear in what they had wanted for their tasks and they were really supportive of the process of being a [co-op student].”
"I wish my supervisor could provide me with more detailed guidance on how to complete certain tasks. Without previous experience, I don't have a clear understanding of what an excellent work result looks like."
“We had only maybe like, 30 minutes or an hour to meet each month. And I had so much done that I always felt like I ran out of time to really mention that to him.”
"I had to reach out to my supervisor to receive formal feedback. I wish they would’ve scheduled some feedback or check in sessions on their own."
“She was very approachable. I could message her, I could send her an email [...] it was very clear to me that I was able to contact her and that I would get a response.”
3. CONNECT THEM TO THE ORGANIZATION

Key actions:

A. Share information about the organization
B. Bring people “together” (even online)
C. Offer mentorship
“Hold information sessions weekly with the team to increase everyone's knowledge base.”

“Weekly sync up meeting to [be] aware of what the co-ops have done in the week and bond stronger relationships.”
“Create more **opportunity for staff bonding** (regular dinners, staff outings, team bonding activities) and regular check-ins. When you develop relationships with the people you work with, you work more effectively.”
“Provide a robust mentorship program; so far, the mentorship I have received was more informal (e.g., help from teammates). Having a designated mentor that would check in with me would be nice.”
4. CARE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

Key actions

A. Foster belonging
B. Provide time for development
C. Match challenge and skill
D. Learn about interests and career plans
“They were intentional in making us feel like part of the team, especially with remote work... They included us.”
“I picked areas that I was really interested in that I wanted to improve, and she not only gave me the go ahead but gave me a ton of valuable resources to pursue that training and that knowledge.”
“The supervisor really pushed me to do more or pushed me to think differently in terms of what that job could entail.”
“She was just an absolutely fantastic support and kind of supported me in all of the goals that I had, whether they were job related, academic related, future career related. That was just really wonderful, and I couldn't have asked for a better supervisor.”
THE FIFTH C:
THE 4C MODEL OF WIL SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

CREATE

COMMUNICATE

CARE

CONNECT

RESEARCH-BASED TIPS FOR SUPERVISING EMERGING TALENT
# RECOMMENDATIONS

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<th>Timing</th>
<th>CREATE</th>
<th>COMMUNICATE</th>
<th>CONNECT</th>
<th>CARE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>• During onboarding, share why the student’s work is important to the organization</td>
<td>• Invite questions</td>
<td>• Officially welcome the student to the organization (email, meeting, meet and greet)</td>
<td>• Discuss career paths in and beyond your organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Through the work term</td>
<td>• Seek opportunities to acknowledge the student’s work</td>
<td>• Set up weekly 1:1s</td>
<td>• Create social opportunities to connect co-op students (with each other and full-time staff)</td>
<td>• Show how the student's work adds value to your organization</td>
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