

AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

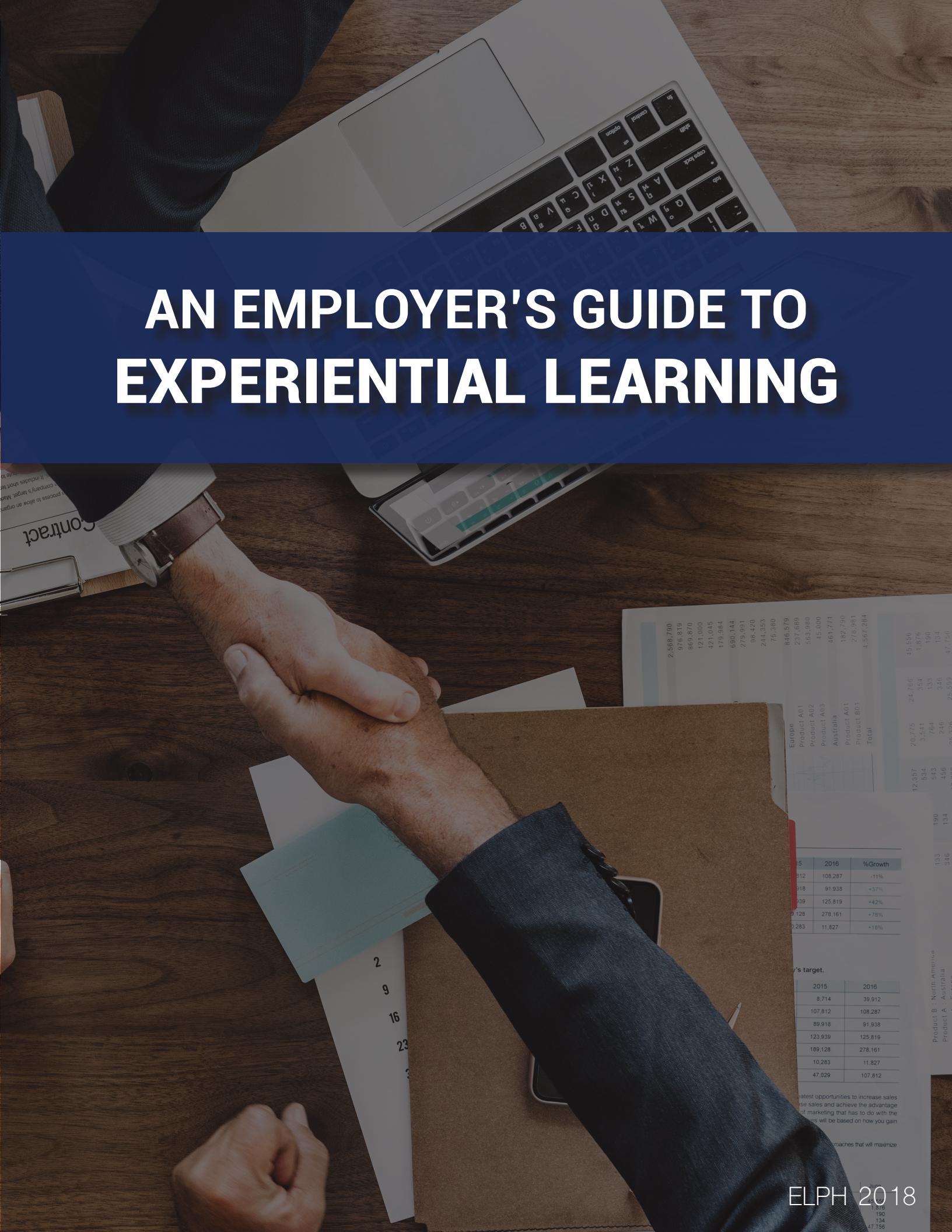




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INTRODUCTION TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Employers dream to hire young, motivated, and fresh new talent for their organization, but often are unable to find and connect with those talent groups, allocate funding, or understand the process and logistics behind doing so. **Experiential Learning is able to accomplish all this and more.** The following guide is the first of two that will walk you through the benefits, funding, and your role in the process, to give you a clear understanding of what experiential learning is, and why you should participate with your organization.

So, what exactly is experiential learning?

Experiential learning opportunities provides **students and other underrepresented talent groups** with work-integrated learning experience, to help them gain the right set of skills, knowledge, and experiences to **prepare for the future workforce**. Many employers believe that they can get young and experienced workers, but that experience has to begin somewhere, and providing that **first experience is always beneficial to the employer**, which each organization should take advantage of. There are a wide range of experiential learning opportunities that you can provide, including co-ops, internships, volunteering, guest lectures, and more, and you can carefully **choose which opportunity will best fit your workplace needs.**



80%

Of employers surveyed by *Universities Canada* say that **internship and co-op students are a source of new talent and future employees.**¹



**OVER
66%**

Of hiring managers surveyed by *Universities Canada* say that **they would be more inclined to hire EL students with better funding opportunities.**¹ (Hint: [Check this out](#))



55%

Of undergraduate students surveyed by *Universities Canada* are already benefiting from experiential learning opportunities ¹- **help grow this number through becoming a participant.**

¹ Universities Canada (2014). "Leger Marketing Employer Survey." <https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/co-op-and-internship-students-a-valuable-source-of-new-talent-survey/>

BENEFITS & INCENTIVES

There are an immeasurable amount of benefits when it comes to hosting an experiential learning placement- but here are just a few.

The most significant benefit would be the numerous programs in Ontario that provide **funding, grants, and awards for employers** who participate in hiring and providing experiential learning opportunities to **students and other untapped talent groups**, which include people with disabilities, newcomers, aboriginal and indigenous people, seniors, and those with criminal backgrounds. **Experiential Learning aims to provide equal opportunity for all**, and provides you all the benefits and resources to encourage you to participate.

- Ability to **identify and develop future talent for your organization**,² as you are actively testing out potential candidates.
- Allows you to **stay current on industry demands**.
- Opens the **recruitment pool for a massive group of talent**.
- Students are always **highly motivated**, bringing in **fresh ideas, technological intuitiveness, and new ways of thinking**.
- Provides additional help and resources on **special projects** which may not be able to happen otherwise.
- Allows organizations to **develop positive relationships** with local colleges, universities, and other education institutions, with **increased visibility**.
- Placement could be a **mentoring opportunity** for your staff, who are looking to further their own professional development.
- Provides **positive exposure** for your organization, as you are taking an active role.
- Participants are often **loyal to companies** that give them their first work experience
- Flexible and **cost effective**, as it doesn't require long term employment commitment- quality candidates can be hired for temporary or seasonal positions, projects, or during busier seasons.
- Excite and **train the future workforce**, by teaching and demonstrating your organizations' projects and process.

FUNDING & AWARDS

It is in the government's agenda to increase and encourage experiential learning opportunities² among students and people starting their careers, which then becomes the employer's responsibility. To do so, the Ontario Government provides many funding opportunities, grants, as well as awards for employers who provide different experiential learning opportunities, including internship opportunities, co-ops, apprenticeships, summer jobs, etc.

Funding is not only available for students, but **many other untapped talent groups**, including those with disabilities, immigrants and newcomers, people with indigenous people, those with criminal history, etc. Experiential Learning aims to provide equal opportunities to all people no matter what background, and so it is important for employers to reach into these different talent pools. **Diversity in the workforce and inclusion of talented people from different backgrounds fuels innovation and growth.**



Some funding opportunities include:

- **Ontario Grants:** Ontario provides a list of the many grant opportunities they offer to employers who hire from untapped talent groups.
- **Co-operative Education Tax Credit:** A refundable tax credit for employers who hire students enrolled in co-operative education programs at a university or college. Small businesses can claim 30 percent of eligible expenditures
- **Youth job connection:** financial incentive for hiring a young person from 15-29 years old, or high school students from 15-18 years old through the Youth Job Connection Summer program

For a full list of funding and grants, [check out this resource](#). To connect with [students](#), [institutions](#), or [underrpresented groups](#), explore [our website](#) and to see what resources we have available for you.

There are also many awards for employers if they promote diversity and support experiential learning in their organization. This would be a great opportunity for employers to have their organization reflect positively on the community, and making greater connections with education institutions and other organizations.

² Cathy Keates and Felicity Morgan (2017). "Growing Experiential Learning Opportunities for Students. CACEE. https://www.cacee.com/cgi/page.cgi/_article.html?aid=510&zine=show



AN EMPLOYERS' ROLE & THINGS TO CONSIDER

When facilitating an experiential learning opportunity, employers play a crucial role in order to create the best experience for themselves as well as the student.

As an employer, you should:

- Create experiences for the student carefully- design the program with a set outcome in mind³, considering the education and career goals of that student, and what your organization will benefit from.
- Pose challenges, provide mentoring, supporting learners, provide suitable resources, and facilitate the learning process.
- Recognize and encourage different opportunities for learning, engagement, by supervising, evaluating, and supporting student growth.

In order to develop and provide a successful experiential learning opportunity, there are various factors that need to be considered, including:

- Understanding the type of opportunity that is best for your organization
- Writing a program plan
- Writing a detailed job description
- What to discuss with program coordinator
- Recruitment and interview process
- How to facilitate quality experiential learning opportunities in the office
- Management, and what to expect from your candidate
- Have the participant work on a meaningful activity throughout their placement
- Program and placement evaluation after completion

All this might seem difficult, but the process is one that is extremely easy to follow. To keep it easier, we have provided a step by step guide considering these factors and more, which can be found in further detail on the [**Employers' Walk-through Guide**](#).

³ Business Academia Group (2015). "Taking the Pulse of Work Integrated Learning in Canada." Prepared by Academia Group. <http://bher.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/BHER-Academica-report-full.pdf>



For more information and resources, visit the [**ELPH**](#) site.
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