

Stone –  
Olafson

# Work Integrated Learning

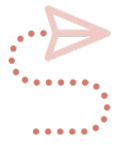
Phase 2: Qualitative Outcomes

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## Background and Objectives

The driving purpose of the work is to inform broader Work Integrated Learning (WIL) initiatives with data-driven facts. Facts about corporate and non-profit leaders, what they know, how they use WIL, their needs, etc. These facts can be distilled into a useful strategy on how CED can insert themselves into the journey to improve the experience of the program.

Specific objectives include:

- Identify attitudes and perceptions of WIL;
- Quantify the degree to which companies are engaging in WIL;
- Understand past experience using WIL; and,
- Evaluate key barriers, issues, and opportunities that impact engagement with WIL.



## Phase 1: Online Survey

Two online surveys were conducted with distinct leaders in Calgary. Outcomes from phase 1 can be found in a separate report.

- Responses were collected from n=194 business leaders and n=169 non-profit leaders
- Business leaders received the survey through the Alberta Chambers of Commerce, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, and CED via email and social channels
- Non-profit leaders received the survey through CCVO via email or social channels
- The survey was 10-12 minutes in length and responses were collected from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023.



## Phase 2: Focus Groups

This report summarizes outcomes from the qualitative phase of a two-phased approach.

- After discussions with the CED and CCVO, we recommended 4 focus groups total, 2 with non-profit leaders (NP) and 2 with business leaders (B)
- We utilized the online survey in phase 1 to ask for interest in attending a focus group and recruit participants
- Participation in WIL and interest to participate in the future was validated during the recruitment and screening
- Focus Groups were held on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> at Stone-Olafson's facility
- An incentive of \$150 was provided to each participant who attended a focus group

## Focus Group Participant Profiles

### Business Group #1

*Familiarity with WIL*

Oxford Properties	Very familiar
RedPoint Media Group	Very familiar
Driverseat Calgary West	Not very familiar
Italian Centre Shop	Very familiar
SeisWare International Inc.	Very familiar

### Business Group #2

*Familiarity with WIL*

BLG LLP	Somewhat familiar
Upwardly Career Partners	Very familiar
Westwood Strategies	Very familiar
Purys Energy	Not very familiar

### Non-profit Group #1

*Familiarity with WIL*

Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured	Very familiar
Centre for Suicide Prevention	Not at all familiar
Quickdraw Animation Society	Not very familiar
Diversecities Communities Service Association	Very familiar
Momentum	Somewhat familiar
University of Calgary	Somewhat familiar

### Non-profit Group #2

*Familiarity with WIL*

Oxford House Foundation of Canada	Not very familiar
Youth en Route	Very familiar
Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association	Somewhat familiar

Please note: Participant quotes included in this report are categorized from a business participant, identified with (B), or a non-profit participant, identified with a (NP).



# Observations and Implications



# Observations and Implications

- 1. Practical benefits drive interest in WIL.** Alleviating over capacity pressures, identifying specific project needs, or filling a skill gap are the primary reasons leaders think about hiring a student worker. This serves not only as a reminder of the current state and work environment but also provides insight into how leaders are feeling. Hiring a student worker feels like a solution to current business challenges. But there are “feel-good” benefits when hiring students - giving back, creating a larger talent pool, and developing full-time employees. While leaders agree these are the main driver, they serve as secondary benefits that keep leaders interested.

**So what?** Time continues to prove to be the greatest challenge, but the primary benefits outweigh the current frustrations of the hiring process. For leaders to continue with the WIL program, the overall hiring process needs to be easy to understand and improve in areas that are currently time-consuming. There is an opportunity to have an organization, like CED, assist in streamlining the process to remove challenges and decrease the amount of time required. Doing so would amplify the benefits of WIL and increase engagement across a wider range of leaders.

- 2. Hiring without funding is not always possible.** Securing funding is critical for many leaders to think about hiring a student - less so with large organizations that are able to include student positions within their budgets. However, the process is not always linear. On many occasions, leaders put in a lot of time to later find out funding is not available and all that time is “wasted”. Further, more time goes into finding a grant to fit a specific role or finding an applicant to fit a specific grant. While some felt confident in understanding the criteria requirements of grants and how to make it work for their organization, this remains a point of confusion for some.

**So what?** Hiring occurs all year long, but with an emphasis on summer, many start the process in the fall. Continue to investigate the timeline of financial support and identify where adjustments can be made for better alignment. Communication will be important where adjustments may not be possible to set expectations.

# Observations and Implications

- 3. A one-stop shop to reach qualified applicants is ideal.** The current process to post student jobs lacks consistency and each source (public job boards, industry boards, PSIs) results in a different set of applications. Multiple postings and an overwhelming amount of applicants mean more time is needed. Leaders understand each PSI has various programs and focuses, but they would like to better understand which program or PSI will provide them with the skill set required to fulfill the role. However, they envision a single job board for all PSIs and students to access which would eliminate many steps in the process - not having to select the right PSI for skill set needed, not having to identify who within each PSI is the correct contact, etc.

**So what?** Rather than taking the steps to identify the most beneficial job board to post a specific role, the creation of a central portal to post WIL roles in Calgary would have multiple benefits. For industry, it's one posting. For students, it's one place to search for roles. It removes steps in the process while also having the greatest reach among qualified applicants.

- 4. The ecosystem as it is today would benefit with a greater focus on partnership.** PSIs are the primary source of information, but the information is not always useful to leaders as it isn't through their perspective. Organizations need help and don't always feel supported by PSIs which may slowly create a barrier to engage with WIL. Students appear to be in limited supply - leaders don't think students are aware of PSI job boards and leaders are rushed to hire in order to get a qualified student who could find something else. Funding is critical as we know, but does not align with industry needs.

**So what?** Understanding the value proposition for everyone is key. For WIL to continue its success, students, industry, and PSIs need to see the value of the program and work together. Students are getting hands-on experience, the industry is getting help alleviating capacity constraints, and PSIs are assisting in growing the talent pool in Calgary. There is an opportunity to bridge the gap between PSIs/students and the industry by creating and connecting resources to those who need it, simplifying the process from an outside perspective, and addressing challenges to increase engagement.



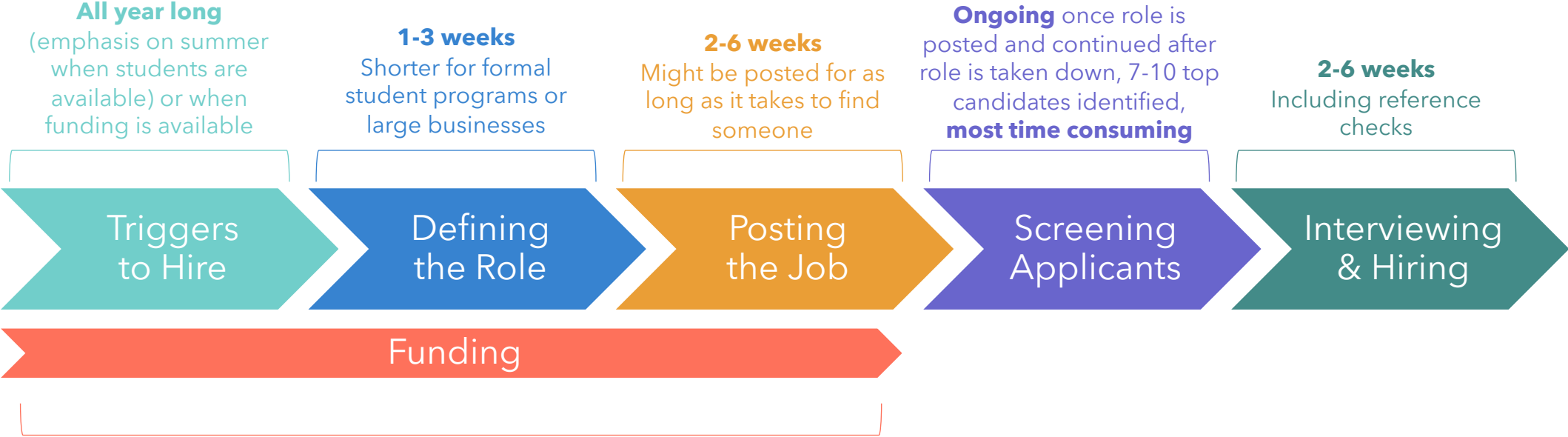
# The Journey



# Work Integrated Learning Journey

Leaders who have hired WIL students in the past consider the process all year long, although there is an emphasis leading up to the summer. The steps taken to hire students are very similar across all industries and non-profits, but the time spent at each step varies depending on a few factors. Large businesses (with a formal HR department) or businesses with a formal yearly student program (e.g. law firms) outlined a more streamlined process.

The process in its entirety can take anywhere between **2-6 months**



*My time is just so limited... I need to be applying for grants and not hiring people. (NP)*

*Every minute I spend doing this (hiring), I'm not doing something I should be doing. (NP)*

*We do an analysis on how much time each candidate would need and would choose to pay someone over and above the funding coming in if they have the experience because it takes less of my time to help them along. (NP)*

# Work Integrated Learning Journey

## WHAT KICKSTARTS THE NEED TO HIRE A STUDENT?



While some larger organizations have formal hiring processes in place for students or HR departments that check-in, many are thinking about it all year long It's never turned off for them but tends to be heavier leading up to the summer.

The **primary reasons** for organizations to hire a student:

**Capacity** - organizations are working over capacity and admit they can use "extra hands" to help get work done.

**Project specific** - shorter-term talent is required to help with certain projects.

**Skill gap** - leaders review the current skill set of full-time employees and identify skill sets that are needed to help the business thrive.

**Funding** - a main driver is having the budget to afford talent; when grants are announced and a point of conflict with timing and following details.

So *what?* This reinforces the context that businesses are working at (or over) capacity. The primary reasons that leaders identified are *practical* benefits which will resonate with leaders. To increase engagement in WIL, consider communicating and reinforcing the practical benefits.

*There would be things that are left undone without them. We're in a situation where we have to prioritize everything we do. Staff calls and says, 'is this worth my time'. Constantly making decisions...is it vital to our business or something we can wait...and if it's something that can wait you better believe it's going to be on the next student job posting (NP)*

*Review everyone's capacity to begin with, figure out where holes are, create a position, figure out what could fall off other peoples plates. Decide which things could be completed by student. (NP)*

*In early stages of business they're a cheap resource, later in stages you start to realize need to start building up my team. (B)*

*Desperately need a skill set, loves to bring them part time during the school year. (B)*



# Work Integrated Learning Journey

WHAT KICKSTARTS THE NEED FOR A STUDENT?



There are additional reasons for organizations to hire students. These **secondary reasons** include:

**Giving back** - nearly all leaders recalled their first work experience and spoke about how impactful the first step into a career can be. Having the ability to provide younger generations with a similar experience is important.

**Creating a talent pool** - leaders were in agreement that the best place to look for talent is within the group of individuals who have direct experience with the organization - past interns, co-op students, etc. Even if their organization isn't hiring, they feel confident recommending past students to others who are hiring.

**Internal development** - having students in the workplace is a two-way street when it comes to learning. Internal teams are exposed to a new skill set and "out-of-the-box thinking". Further, it provides a mentoring opportunity for full-time employees who would not have that experience otherwise.

So what? Secondary reasons include the "feel-good" benefits that are not strong enough on their own to drive engagement with WIL, but have a positive impact on leaders already involved in WIL. It is important to communicate these benefits for continued engagement but lead with practical benefits.

*We have a responsibility to the industry. We're an industry that's in transition, we need to find students who are interested in a long-term career. There are only so many people going into this industry, we need to make sure anyone who gets an internship opportunity wants to stay in the industry. (B)*

*Our mandate is to help advance animators. Come with what you've got. You're going to work, but we'll help build you up. (NP)*

*It lets us test out an employee, a lot of interns go on to freelance with our organization for decades. (B)*

*It's a way to invest in our community. (NP)*

*For the team that's taking on students, it's their own development as a leader and a mentor. It's more than just babysitting a bunch of students (NP)*

*Mentorship internally is massive, when teams get to work with students, it brings out a quality of compassion, empathy, and awareness that other projects within a business don't always inspire. (NP)*

# Work Integrated Learning Journey

## WHAT IMPACT DOES FUNDING HAVE?



Access to funding has a vast impact on WIL hiring. For many non-profits and small businesses, the deciding factor to hire a student or not is being able to secure funding - it's a simple (yet frustrating) yes or no.

On occasion, access to funding will dictate the type of role hired; if funding is denied but the industry lends itself to a practicum student or unpaid position, they will go this route to get someone in the door to help - although leaders agree all positions should be paid if possible even if it goes toward school credit.

*So what?* As a critical piece of the journey, leaders want to understand all options for financial support. However, they often do not have the time or resources to look into each and every option. It is vital to ensure resources are available, accessible, and easy to understand.

*If we don't get funding, we have to figure out which do we really need and which do we go without. (NP)*

*If you can't find the money somewhere, then it [hiring a student] can't happen. (NP)*

*Money will dictate the role, is this a summer job, is this an unpaid internship. (NP)*

# Work Integrated Learning Journey

## WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE WITH FUNDING?



Challenges leaders face with securing funds include:

### 1. Understanding specifics.

When discussing available grants, many agree figuring out the details and following the specific criteria of each can be confusing - finding a student that is in a specific program, is Indigenous, etc. Further adding to that confusion is then having to find a student to fit the exact criteria.

*Some funding you can only get if you've already hired the student, and some need to be a new hire. (B)*

### 2. Aligning timing.

Timing throughout this journey is critical. Grants are not always available when leaders are looking to hire or the review and approval time is too lengthy - it is often too late for an organization to hire. Remember, hiring is all year long and many grants are only available in the summer.

*The grant thing is a problem because for some you apply for it after you make an offer. (B)*

### 3. Simply, not knowing.

Many of the leaders we spoke with were knowledgeable about funding options, but there is a subset who are not as knowledgeable. There lacks a central source of knowledge that outlines each grant and criteria for each.

*I got a job grant but they didn't tell me until April 15th. I wanted a communications generalist and I needed them in for May and June. (B)*

*More capacity just means you can do more things, so the grant is the enabler there. (NP)*

*So what? There is an opportunity for an organization to outline grants available, clarify the specifics of each, etc. Adjusting timelines for deadlines and the wait time for approval will need to be addressed as many rely on funding before considering WIL.*



# Work Integrated Learning Journey

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EACH TYPE OF ROLE? WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?



Larger organizations that have hired WIL students regularly are able to (or have an HR team that is able to) have an easier process defining the role. They often use the same job description every time and have a similar team involved in the process each time. This is also true when leaders are hiring for practicum placements - the early stages of the journey are more straightforward and streamlined with a formal process in place.

Non-profits and smaller businesses are looking for extra hands and someone who wants to learn - title doesn't matter.

How leaders view different roles:

**Practicum:** Practicums are typically required as part of an educational program and in specific career paths, which makes hiring for this type of role feel more straightforward to leaders. Although it is an unpaid role, leaders would like the ability to pay them for their time.

**Co-op:** A longer-term placement, so the leaders are likely to invest in more training and get the most out of the experience. Also requires additional work for the leader and student to send back to their PSI.

**Summer Student:** Thought of as "full-time help". The only differences found with summer students are usually dependent on how the student found the role. A job posting on Indeed may result in a student looking to fill hours compared to a student that applied through a company's website (a sign of greater interest in the role).

In the end, all co-op students, interns, summer students, and practicum students **are all treated the same** and the experience they get is the same. And most importantly, leaders regard applicants with past WIL experience more positively than a student with a good GPA and no experience.

*There's no difference in name, they're treated like any other staff member. (NP)*

*The closer they are to career decision making, the more engaged the mentorship is. (B)*

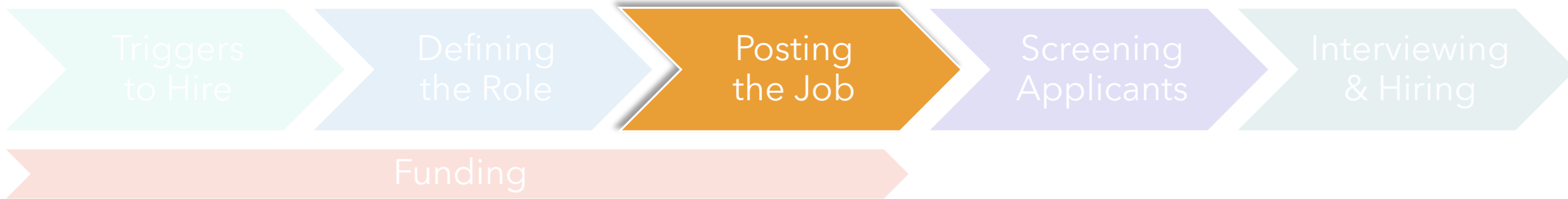
*I would love to have more access to true WIL. I would love a post-secondary to give someone credit to come work on our job. It just doesn't exist to my knowledge. (NP)*

*So what? Summer students are the gateway to formal WIL. With the exception of practicum which has more specifications, roles are viewed similar by leaders - students who are able to help lower capacity.*

# Work Integrated Learning Journey

HOW DO YOU CREATE THE JOB POSTING? WHERE DO YOU POST IT?

Timing: 2-3 weeks



For many others, crafting a description of the role takes time. Each role changes depending on the current organizational needs, desired skill set, or the criteria of the grant they're going after.

Where do leaders post the role?

**Public job boards [No posting fee]:** Sites like LinkedIn and Indeed result in an overwhelming amount of applicants. This includes applicants who lack desired qualifications and are not writing cover letters to express true interest in the role. However, these sites are free and leaders use them when budgets are tight.

**Industry sites:** Sites like Reach Hire provide candidates who have interest or passion, but can be costly and not worth it depending on the role.

**Post-secondary job boards [No posting fee]:** The most commonly used are SAIT, MRU, and U of C. There is a perception that students are not aware of these job boards because leaders do not always receive enough interest when only posting roles with post secondary.

**Internal networks [No posting fee]:** Reaching out to past students or sending the posting through their organization's newsletter usually results in quality candidates because there is already an established connection.

*Because the roles are so specific to what we need at the time, the job description is rewritten each time. The grant could also hold requirements that will be included into the posting. (NP)*

*This general assumption to put something on indeed and think the right somebody is going to see it doesn't work. (NP)*

*It's a pain in the rear end to post something on SAIT. It's a 2 or 3 day process. All postings have to be customized to each school. (B)*

**So what?** This is a step that is time-consuming and causing frustration. There is a clear benefit to an aggregated job posting site - it would involve one step from industry to post and create a single source of roles for students to search through.

# Work Integrated Learning Journey

HOW DO YOU NARROW DOWN APPLICANTS TO ACTUAL CANDIDATES?



What businesses and non-profits look for in a student varies slightly.

Both businesses and non-profits look for...

**Skill set.** The emphasis on finding the right skills is twofold. First, given the capacity at which businesses and non-profits are operating, they are looking for someone to hit the ground running. Second, the role is often based on a gap in skill set so it is critical to find a student with the required skills.

**Basic business sense.** Leaders identify students as having a lot of educational background but simple workplace knowledge and experience (e.g. phone and email etiquette, showing up on time, dressing for the workplace).

Businesses also look for **fit**. Many mentioned wanting to find a student who fits culturally and professionally. However, they admitted that fit is hard to determine during the interview process.

And **productivity**. Especially with smaller businesses, leaders look to identify students with motivation to come in with ideas and work hard.

Non-profits also look for **passion**. This is a trait leaders see across their colleagues in the industry and want to make sure the genuine interest continues with any student brought on board. Having a direct connection to the cause also serves as a differentiator during the screening process.

*Focus on personality a lot, they won't have problems working with others or create disruption (NP)*

*If they have some kind of connection. What's your personal connection to our cause? Because that might get you in the door. (NP)*

*What new skill or new knowledge or new perspective am I bringing to the team? Fit becomes overfocused because what does that really mean? (NP)*

*I look for someone with creativity, they can move ideas. They haven't been put in a lane yet, they think outside the box. (B)*

*So what? While the majority of the journey is similar, talent needs will differ by industry and sector. Having an organization, like CED, who can assist in matching talent to leaders would be a key improvement to the process*



# Work Integrated Learning Journey

## HOW DO YOU NARROW DOWN APPLICANTS TO ACTUAL CANDIDATES?



On average, if there are 100 applicants, leaders initially screen out 80-90% of students and then narrow it down farther to interview about 5% of all applicants. This is the **most time-consuming part of the process** and the **area leaders identify wanting assistance**. But they don't want help going through the overwhelming amount of applicants, they're looking for a different process.

### How do leaders minimize their time spent on screening?

When there is a strong relationship in place between the organization and the post-secondary institution, the hiring process works well. A post-secondary will provide the names of 10 students and the leader find all applicants to be qualified for the available role.

Others found a workaround by outlining specific instructions (e.g. submitting their application to a specific email address, talking about a specific topic in a cover letter) in the job description or giving applicants homework - if applicants cannot follow the simple direction or complete an assignment they are screened out.

They hire within a close network. There is higher likelihood to hire a recommended student or a past WIL student.

*If they come in through the website, they've done a little bit of homework, they have at least taken the time to learn about us. (B)*

*I make all applicants do a video. You immediately get a flavour for them especially important in a client-facing business. It's just another step, if you're willing to take the extra hour I know they're keen, it weeds out those people who just click and submit. (B)*

*The schools are already narrowing the student pool, ensuring they want to be in the sector and are interested and eligible. (NP)*

*Get specific in postings as well, if that's met in the resume then they take those more seriously. You get really good at filtering the nonsense. (B)*

So *what*? Narrowing down applicants is the most time-consuming and an area of frustration. Reaching appropriate candidates in previous steps of the journey will alleviate stressors when it's time to screen applicants. This could look like streamlining the job posting process to better reach appropriate applicants or creating connections with PSI to help match students to roles.

# Work Integrated Learning Journey

## WHAT DOES YOUR INTERVIEW AND HIRING PROCESS LOOK LIKE?



The remainder of the process is quick. Speed is important, not because leaders want to get a student onboarded as soon as possible (that plays a role, but to a lesser degree), but so the organization does not miss out on a qualified applicant. Students are competing for roles, but organizations are also in competition to get the most qualified talent.

### Interview process

- Pre-interview or phone screen if needed and if there is the capacity to do so
- In-person or Zoom interviews with 4-7 applicants
- Top candidate selected after consulting with CEO, director, colleagues, or board members

### Hiring process

- Offer the role to the top candidate, giving a short window to review the offer and accept or decline
- For interviewees that did not get selected, leaders or internal departments contact them directly to let them know as well as provide feedback

*At the end of the day the business has to run and there isn't time for onboarding (B)*

*Have to be careful to offer quickly to the first choice. It's like you have only 48 hours to give people an offer. I'd rather have an immediate yes or no from a hire. (NP)*

*The longer it takes, the more likely someone will find something else. We have to hurry the process, otherwise, we've put all this effort in to go back and find they found something else. (NP)*

*So what? The time constraints at this step are due to the amount of time required for earlier steps. Ultimately, it is about hiring the best talent, but when funding, posting, and screening are longer than expected, leaders start to feel that they will lose out on qualified talent. Identifying processes or tools to expedite earlier stages will likely have a positive impact while hiring.*

*Job boards at schools start getting populated in January. More keen students will look early and get snatched. Some [job boards] are year round. (B)*

# Considerations to assist leaders in the WIL journey



## Funding

- **One source & clear details.** To understand the vast grant and funding options available and choose the best fitting. Grant criteria impacts steps early on in the process.
- **Align timing.** Alleviate the “waiting game” and give industry greater sense of control to access funding when they need it.

## Job Posting

- **One-stop-shop.** An aggregate for industry to post roles utilized by each PSI to reach *all* students with one post.
- **Promote & engage.** To eliminate the perception that awareness is low among students. With greater engagement, industry could post less on public job boards (a current pain point).

## Screening

- **Create partnerships.** Strengthen relationships between post-secondary (specifically those who know students best) and leaders.
- **Reach the best talent.** Understanding which school or programs best fit the talent needs of the organization and create partnerships.

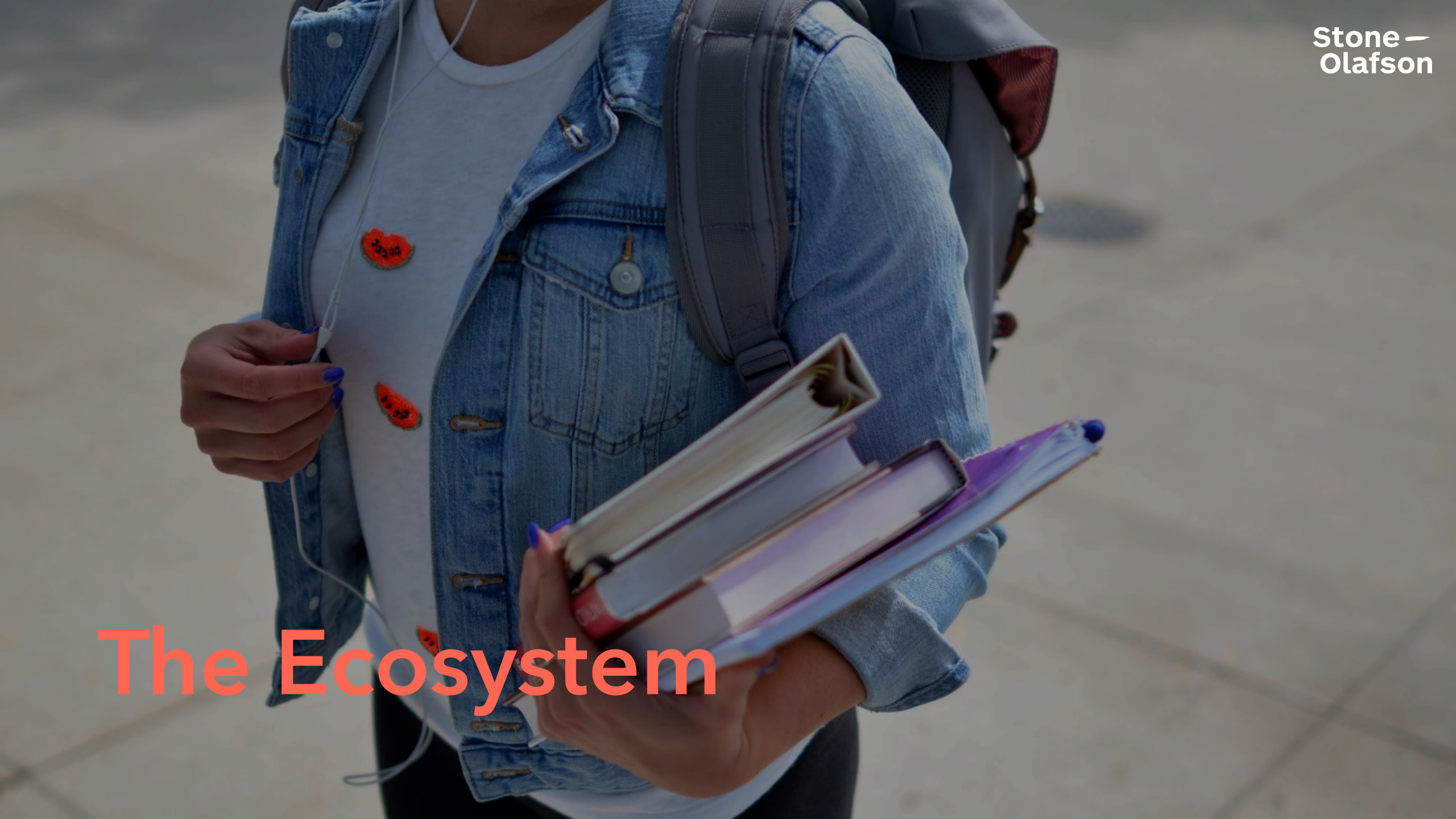
## Interview & Hiring

- **Student preparation.** The jump from classes to the workplace is significant. Industry would benefit from better preparation for students to gain interview skills and basic business sense.

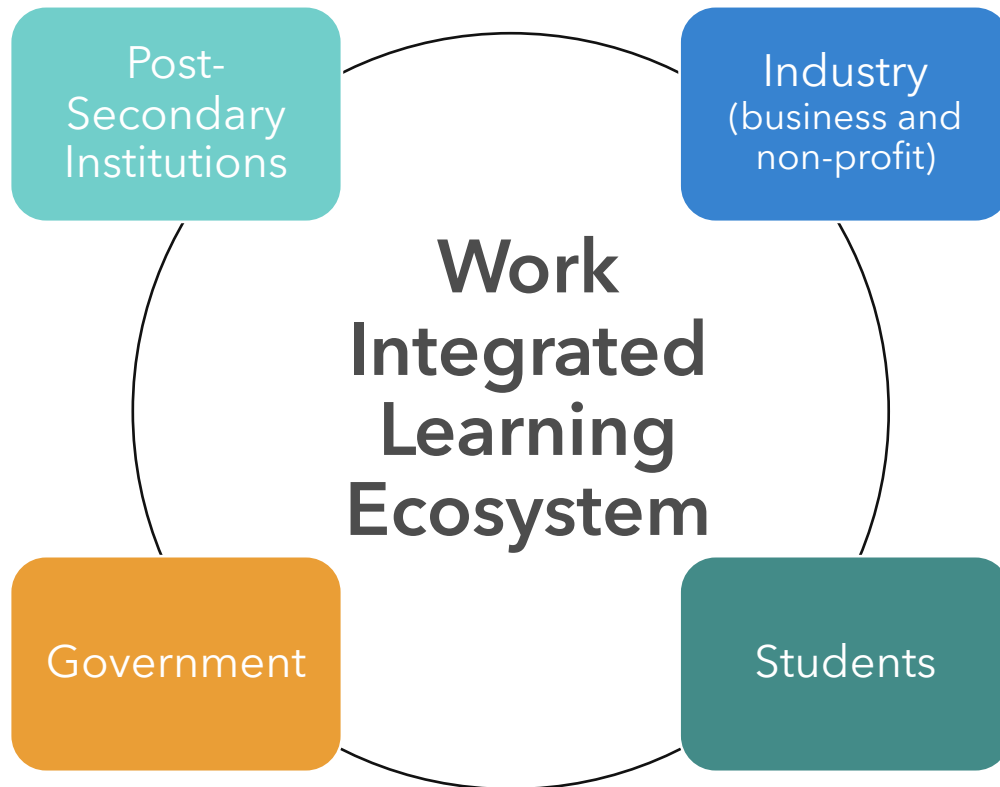
As noted in the quantitative findings, time is the biggest challenge. In fact, there is a limited amount of time able to put toward WIL before the value becomes insignificant. Each opportunity area addresses the amount of work it takes to get through the journey. There is an opportunity for organizations, like CED, to assist in streamlining and simplifying current frustrations in the journey.



# The Ecosystem



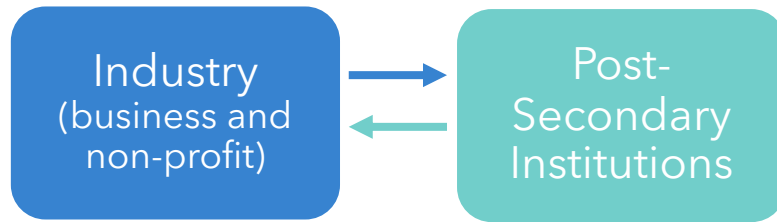
# WIL's success is impacted by four players working together.



There are four major players that need to work together for everyone to benefit from WIL. As the program stands today, industry leaders identified clear gaps working with each. To them, it feels like the ecosystem lacks partnership and there is an opportunity for an organization like CED, or another 3<sup>rd</sup> party, to insert themselves and help everyone see the value they bring, ultimately enhancing the partnerships.

*If you want this program [WIL] to be successful (successful meaning accountable to the outcomes as well), I think there has to be a third party, there has to be that third party that speaks both languages [PSI and industry]... I think there has to be accountability [for PSI programs/departments]. There's no accountability. I think that there is a real gap in speaking both sides, and understanding that this isn't a charitable thing that a company is doing... It has to have a value proposition to make sense and to continue to be successful and to have value. And then on the student side, it has to have a value proposition as well. " (B)*

# PSIs are viewed as unsupportive, but are also a go-to resource.



PSIs and industry work well together most often when there is a practicum placement. However for many leaders, PSIs are perceived as offering little to no support for industry to hire WIL placements.

PSIs are the primary source leaders go to for information, but the resources provided are geared toward the education system and are not useful to industry leaders. PSIs being one-sided is an overall sentiment as well - they focus on hitting their institution's WIL metrics rather than viewing the ecosystem as a whole.

While it is not surprising that each PSI has its own process for WIL, the lack of consistency greatly impacts the amount of time industry has to put into the process. This includes understanding programs at each PSI, identifying the type of talent each produces, and aligning with the available role - valuable time that leaders cannot afford to waste.

[Is there a source of information?] Not centrally, there is some stuff out there that is decent. Most PSIs have an employer's guide on how to hire, they could be a lot better (B)

I've posted on job boards at PS but never tried to make a connection with a prof in social work. I feel like having a relationship might be more beneficial for some positions that require more background experience. (NP)

Bow valley is running some incredible programs that do not come to mind. A lot goes unnoticed by organizations who think of the big three (B)

Who to contact and where. I don't have a clue of even all the programs that are looking to place co-op students. I'm sure I could use more, but I'm not approached by institutions. That's a mailing list, I would sign up for. Give me a mailing called 'co-op students R us'. (NP)

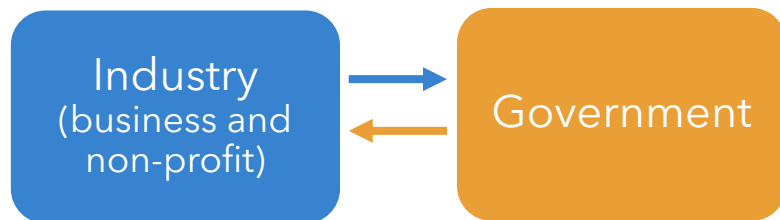
All schools have different co-op process, sometimes it's a co-op department sometimes it's a professor, takes a while. (NP)

They're [PSIs] providing us with what **they** need. It's not helpful. Your [PSIs] needs don't respond to what industry needs. (B)

The ability to vet and organization for that school... if need an admin then go to xyz school, if need social work go to xyz school. (NP)



# With funding, leaders look for information and better aligned timing



Funding is another piece of the ecosystem that doesn't align with industry needs. Government resources are a secondary source for information because funding plays a critical role when hiring for WIL (especially for non-profits and small businesses).

Ensuring non-profits and small businesses can access funding in a timeline that works for them is critical for leaders to continue to hire WIL roles. Roles often go unfilled if grants are not received in time which impacts workload and further putting a strain on capacity.

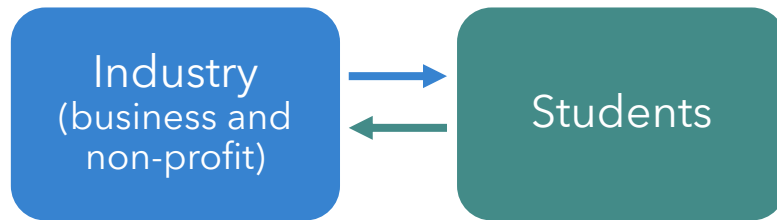
*Grants no way align with what we need. We were told last week that they weren't getting Canada Summer Student. Even if we did get it, there's no one to hire right now. (B)*

*Less time, change the calendar or something to spend less time on this stuff. At some point its [the amount of time put in] diminishing returns (B)*





# Reaching qualified candidates is a challenge leaders face



Finding a qualified applicant in a more timely manner is important and improvements can be made with PSIs to do so, but there is also a perception that students are not aware of PSI job boards. PSIs provide quality over quantity, but students have to be engaged for this to happen.

Leaders believe there is an opportunity to work with PSIs and students to help identify the skills that don't translate through a resume (e.g. personality, working style, time management) - a challenge leaders face during the screening process. Provided references are more than likely going to speak positively, so they want to find a way to get a true read on the student before offering a job.

Additionally, leaders clearly identified a gap between the classroom and the workplace. Often finding they had to spend more time with students to train and manage during onboarding. There is value in having more resources to close the gap between learning in a classroom and working in a workplace.

*There's room for improvement on prepping students for the interview process. My experience is the schools have fallen quite short getting the students ready for that interview stage. (B)*

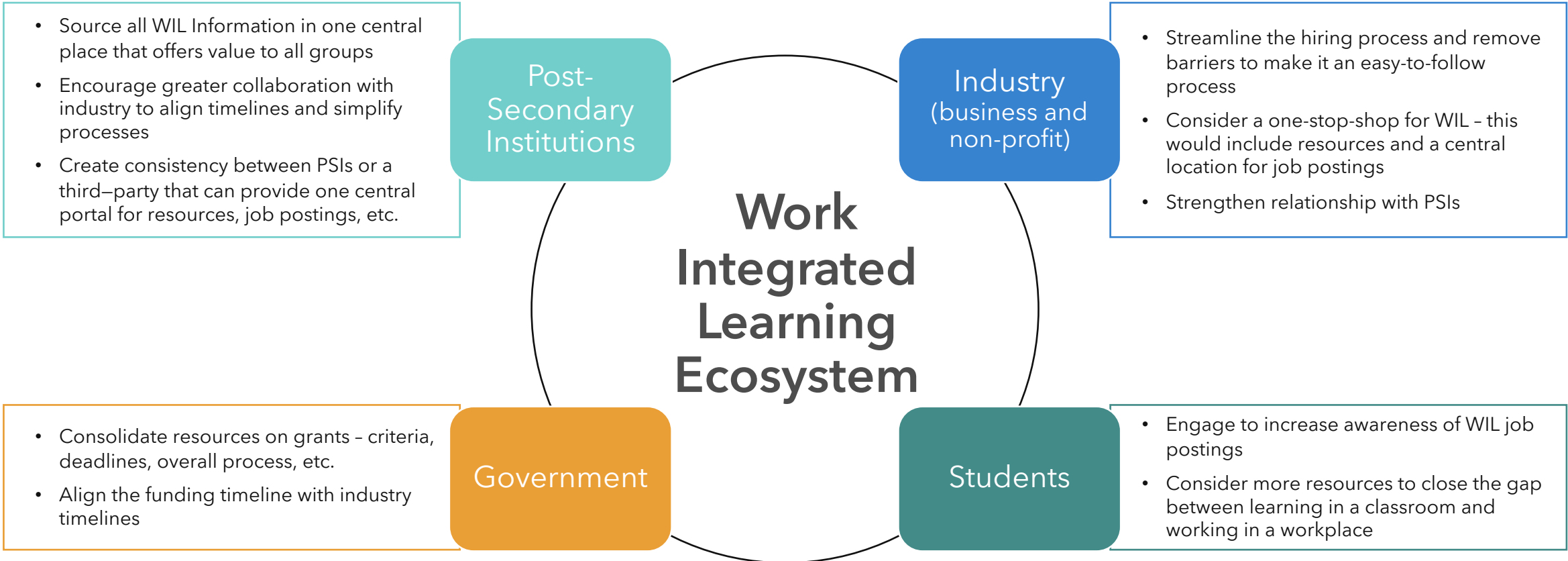
*We [a recruiting firm] help figure out the skills that no one puts down on a piece of paper that determines real impact when you get into a work environment. (B)*

*How to make that transition to office culture smooth. How to have someone who has not worked in an office setting, what's that formative experience in first time office job. (NP)*

*They [students] don't have references to speak to actual skills. What about... Here is a rap sheet from 3 professors that talk about how they were in class. Did they show up? How they managed meetings? (B)*

# Considerations to work as an ecosystem

Industry agrees there is a benefit from hiring a WIL student, but leaders are working at over capacity and are challenged by the work it takes to get WIL support. Having an organization that can provide support to alleviate time constraints and other challenges identified is a potential opportunity. Consider getting perspectives from PSIs and students to outline each group’s role in the process and identify further opportunities to streamline and form an easy-to-understand process. Currently, each group is well positioned to articulate the benefits from their perspective, but having a central voice to map out practical benefits and long-term impact on each group may be crucial to bridge the gaps and communicate a holistic value proposition.



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**Questions or Comments?**

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