

FIELD EXPERIENCE

STUDENT GUIDE

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Introduction

Most NSCC programs have a work-integrated learning component that provides students with an opportunity to combine their classroom learning with learning on the job, which benefits everyone. As a student, you get the chance to start building your professional network and gain hands on experience, while employers get fresh ideas, new perspectives, and an opportunity to identify potential future employees. These field experiences also help to raise the number of students who stay in Nova Scotia by increasing your chances of securing employment after graduation.

At NSCC we offer four broad categories of work experiences: field experience; co-operative education; internships; and professional practice. This guide has been written specifically for students completing Field experiences. Types of field experiences include work experience, work term, job shadow, field camp, field work, sea time/sea term, etc.

Field experiences and their outcomes are defined at the course level and are a requirement of graduation. The traditional field experience is a 5-week placement and typically occurs in the third term (April-May); however, many programs have multiple field experiences that vary in length and take place throughout the program.

As a learning-centered institution, the strategies used for developing, delivering and assessing field experiences, first and foremost, take into consideration the learning needs of you, the student. The College will provide support for you to gain industry experience; however, in some circumstances a shortage of industry partners may necessitate providing you with an equivalent learning experience.

NSCC will track all work field experiences through NSCC's Work Experience Portal. This portal allows us to record and track all work experiences in a single searchable catalogue. The Work Experience Portal includes student's personal information (Name, Email, Phone, Emergency Contact, Gender, Language, Citizenship), industry partner information, and field experience details (Start Date, End Date, Hours, Wage if applicable, etc.).

NSCC is committed to controlling the collection, use, and disclosure of the information provided by students and industry partners. NSCC is also committed to the principal of informed consent and supports the right for the industry partner to know what information is on file. If there are any questions on privacy or data use please contact us at WorkExperience@nsc.ca.

If you have any questions related to field experiences or Work-Integrated Learning please email us at WorkExperience@nsc.ca.

Responsibilities

Students are responsible for participating in the field experience process, maintaining professionalism and submitting appropriate agreements and reports. As such, it is important that you have a clear understanding of the policies, procedures and standards that are expected of you. Should you have any questions pertaining to your responsibilities as a student you are encouraged to follow-up with your faculty.

Industry Partner responsibilities can be found in the Industry Partner Field Experience Guide on the College's website.

Student Responsibilities



Students

- Have a current Nova Scotia Health Card (also known as a MSI card) and SIP Accident Insurance
 - International students must ensure that they are enrolled in the International Student Emergency Health Insurance (EHI)
- International students must ensure they have obtained their co-op work permit
- Attend field experience orientation/information sessions
- Prepare your cover letter and resume
- Approach field experience with the attitude of one who is eager to learn, willing to co-operate and ready to work
- Obtain faculty approval prior to committing to a field experience
- Complete Field Experience Agreement and Risk Assessment & Compliance Agreement jointly with the industry partner and faculty
- Be aware of and comply with the code of professional and ethical conduct required for the field
- Serve as a good ambassador for the College
- Be familiar with, and comply with, the industry partner's policies, rules and regulations
- Maintain regular attendance and be punctual
- Complete the full duration of the field experience agreement (i.e., # of weeks and # of hours)
- Work in a safe and healthy manner
- Complete the Orientation and Job Safety Review Form (with industry partner), Release of Information Form and Confidentiality Agreement and return to faculty
- Undertake a self-assessment of your performance and engage in a reflective learning activity
- Remind employer to submit Industry Partner Feedback on Student Form
- Submit completed Student Evaluation of Industry Partner Form and Reflective Learning Assignment and debrief with faculty

Field Experience Procedures

In many cases, students take responsibility for finding their own field experience and faculty assist you with the field experience process. However, in some programs, a field experience may be assigned to you.

It is important to note that faculty must approve all field experiences.

Preparing for a Field Experience

Your Campus and/or faculty will hold field experience orientation/information sessions for students to help you prepare for your field experience searches. Information sessions should occur during the start of the semester preceding your work term. Students are expected to attend the session(s).

Students are also responsible for having an updated resume and cover letter ready for potential industry partners. Your faculty or Student Services team can assist when necessary.

Some field experience partners may require students to provide Criminal Record Checks (CRC), Vulnerable Sector Searches (VSS), Immunization Records, and/or Child Abuse Register Checks prior to securing a field experience. Any flags on these checks may result in a student being unable to complete a field experience, and thus, unable to complete all requirements of their program.

For information on International Field Experiences (field experiences outside of Canada), or International Students (Field Experiences inside of Canada) please see the respective section in this Guide.

Searching for a Field Experience

Students may source their own field experience or, depending on their program, one may be assigned to them. It is important that field experiences provide a valuable learning experience and a safe environment for our students, as such all field experiences must be approved by your faculty or Academic Chair.

When sourcing your own field experience the following criteria should be considered:

- An optimal degree of relevancy exists between the field experience and your program of study
- The industry partner will fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in the *Industry Partner Guide*
- An acceptable standard of safety is maintained at the work site

To assist you with your field experience searches, faculty may ask you to complete *an Industry Partner Brainstorming Worksheet*. Once complete, you and your faculty can discuss the organizations you wish to approach, how they could meet your personal goals and how it could align with your program.

Interviewing for a Field Experience

Students are required to participate in the field experience process this includes, but is not limited to, attending interviews, providing resumes and cover letters and providing any other documentation required by the Industry Partner (i.e. transcripts, criminal record checks, vulnerable sector searches, etc.).

Field experience partners may screen and shortlist applications. They are not required to interview all applicants. The industry partner may contact you directly to arrange an interview or they may request that NSCC schedule the interview on their behalf.

Interview Preparation

- Students will receive interview preparation either from their faculty and/or through their communications courses. Interview preparation services are also available through Student Services at each campus

- Students should research the company prior to their interview
- As a NSCC student, your portfolio should be current and ready to be presented during the interview.

Actual Interview

- Interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of the Industry Partner
- Rooms can be made available for on-site interviews
- Interviews can be conducted either by phone or through an appropriate form of technology
- Should you miss a scheduled interview you may be required to write a letter of apology to the Industry Partner

Failure to participate in the field experience process may result in a student being unable to complete a field experience, and thus, unable to complete all requirements of their program.

Accepting a Field Experience Offer

Students are required to respond to field experience offers within three (3) business days and must obtain faculty approval prior to accepting a field experience.

Students must not tentatively accept an offer while waiting to find out about another position. This could cause industry partners to question the responsibility and maturity of NSCC students and possibly result in an industry partner withdrawing from the field experience program.

During Your Field Experience

Communications is key for a successful field experience. Situations may occur at the workplace that may cause some stress for students. If a student requires help in these situations, it is advised that he/she contact his/her faculty advisor.

As the College considers field experiences to be an extension of campus studies, students are encouraged to connect with their faculty regularly. If there are changes in your work assignment, or if any other unforeseen changes develop, you should notify faculty **as soon as possible**.

Various forms must be submitted to your faculty during your field experience, please refer to the *Field Experience Forms Guide* for a complete list of forms.

Faculty will conduct at least one site visit or check-in with the industry partner during your field experience. This will be done either in person or through technology, depending on the situation and location of the field experience.

During the field experience, and in preparation for your reflective learning assignment, students may wish to complete a field experience diary/log to track your experiences which will later be helpful when completing your reflective learning assignment.

Evaluation of Field Experience

Field experience is an evaluated component of your program and is most often a requirement for graduation. Faculty will grade you based on your performance during your field experience, the industry partner feedback and your reflective learning assignment.

Evaluation of field experiences will appear on your transcript as either a "P" (pass), "F" (fail), or "I" (incomplete).

Pass – successful field experience

- Minimum of a “satisfactory” rating on the *Industry Partner Feedback on Student Form*
- Completed all reflective learning requirements
- Debriefing session to review the field experience

Fail – unsuccessful field experience

- Student was terminated with just cause from the work place
- Student has “below average” or “unsatisfactory” performance on the *Industry Partner Feedback on Student Form*
- Evaluation pieces were graded as below average

I/C – incomplete field experience

- Missing a component(s) and has been given an extension.
 - If the components are submitted within the timeframe given and are successfully completed, the student will earn a “P”
 - If the components are not successfully completed or not submitted within the timeframe given, the student will earn an “F”

The industry partner must complete the *Industry Partner Feedback on Student form* at the end of the field experience. The student must receive a minimum of a “Satisfactory” rating on their overall performance in order to achieve a successful field experience.

The student is required to complete the *Student Feedback on Industry Partner form* and the *Reflective Learning Assignment* at the end of the field experience which must be submitted to your faculty for review. A debriefing session should also be scheduled with your faculty once these components have been submitted and evaluated.

Exceptional Circumstances

With the approval of their faculty and Academic Chair, a student may be eligible to receive special credit in recognition of the exceptional circumstances outlined below.

Academic Review

Successful completion of all pre-requisite courses is normally required in order to qualify for a work placement. However, for some programs, at the discretion of the Academic Chair (with notification to the Principal, Academic Dean and Director, Enrolment and Registrar) a student who does not meet this standard may be permitted to participate in their work placement provided the safety of the student and other parties is not at risk.

In these exceptional circumstances, faculty and the Academic Chair will review the student's records and discuss academic plans to determine if the student is eligible for a work placement.

Incomplete Field Experience

In some cases, due to circumstances beyond their control, students may not be able to complete the entire duration of the field experience with a placement partner. In these cases, students may or may not be given credit for the field experience and are required to meet with their Academic Chair.

Appeals

A failing grade is eligible for appeal. Work placements are typically completed off campus and due to the applied nature of the learning it may not be eligible for reassessment. However, in some circumstances, it may be possible to repeat the work placement.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be granted for work-integrated learning courses, per the requirements of the RPL Policy.

Health & Safety

Student health and safety is a priority. Safety is a shared responsibility amongst NSCC, the industry partner and the student. Insurance and risk management practices are of the utmost importance in ensuring the health and safety of our students.

To demonstrate NSCC's due diligence, it is important that a risk assessment is completed, required forms are reviewed and signed, and safety plans are in place. NSCC maintains a number of insurance policies to protect employees, students and the organization. These include: errors and omissions, general liability, and student accident insurance should any accidents or incidents occur.

Insurance Coverage

Most students are automatically enrolled in or covered by existing NSCC insurance plans while engaged in work placement activities. The Student Insurance Program (SIP) Accident insurance protects students in the event of a workplace accident for some expenses not covered by NS Medical Services Insurance Program (MSI).

NSCC's General Liability insurance protects students and the College in the event that a student causes bodily injury or property damage to a third party while on a work placement. Students in Health & Human Services programs are also covered also medical malpractice coverage.

** For information on insurance for international field experiences and/or international students, please refer to the International sections of this guide.*

In most cases, NSCC requires that placement partners carry a general liability insurance policy of at least \$2 million. This not only protects our students, but also demonstrates that placement partners promote safe workplace and risk management practices.

Some placement partners may not carry the minimum general liability insurance to guard against risk within their organizations. In these cases, NSCC may allow work placements with these partners if the following process is completed.

1. Student and supervising faculty, in conjunction with the placement partner, complete the Risk Assessment and Compliance Form from the applied learning guides.
2. The assessment is reviewed by the Academic Chair, who assesses the level of risk.
3. If comfortable with the level of risk, the Academic Chair consults with OHSE to confirm his/her assessment of the risk.
4. If all parties are comfortable with the level of risk, the Academic Chair and supervising faculty sign-off on the Risk Assessment and Compliance Form

Exceptions are NOT possible if the work placement takes place in an industrial, construction, healthcare, or aviation setting, or any other setting that would be considered as potentially hazardous or high risk,

For more information, please see the *Work-Integrated Learning Insurance Guidelines* under *Work Experience on the College's website*.

Risk Management

Effective risk management is an integral part of work placements. It is important for faculty and Academic Chairs to ensure students are placed in safe work environments, and to ensure students are aware of the industry partner's safety program and policies.

Prior to the start of a work placement, faculty and students are responsible for completing the *Risk Assessment and Compliance Agreement* jointly with the industry partner (located in the forms guide). This agreement will help to identify any job hazards and control measures, determine any personal protective equipment that is required, and ensure the industry partner has the appropriate liability insurance. The original copy of this completed form must be kept with the Academic Chair while the student is on their work placement.

Student orientation is another important component of a work placement and provides an opportunity to revisit the importance of workplace safety. On the first day of the work placement, students and their placement supervisor must complete the *Orientation and Job Safety Review Form* in the Forms Guide. This will assist with establishing clear objectives, duties, safe work practices and learning opportunities. The completed form must also be kept with the Academic Chair while the student is on their work placement.

Safe & Respectful Environment

NSCC is committed to ensuring that all students and employees learn and work in a safe environment, free from discrimination and harassment, and conducive to learning and teaching.

NSCC is also committed to ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all members of its community, while maintaining the academic integrity of programs and curriculum, and an academic climate conducive to learning, free from disruptive or inappropriate behaviour.

To learn more about NSCC's commitment to providing safe and respectful work environments, visit http://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/policies_procedures/index.asp

Accident/Incident Reporting Process

Prior to students starting their work placement, it is important to ensure that they know what to do and who to contact if they find themselves in an unsafe or disrespectful working environment.

In case of a **serious accident or incident** requiring ambulance transport, hospitalization, or emergency care, contact the office of NSCC Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services IMMEDIATELY at 902-491-7233.

If the accident/incident is not serious in nature:

1. The student must complete the *Accident/Incident Report* in the Forms Guide and connect with their faculty/academic chair.
 - Completed forms must be submitted to Work-Integrated Learning by email (WorkExperience@nsc.ca)
 - Work-Integrated Learning will forward the completed form to the Faculty, Academic Chair, Principal and Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services.
 - Upon receipt of the completed *Accident/Incident Report*, if Faculty/AC and students have yet to connect, faculty will make every effort to contact the injured student.
2. The Faculty or Academic Chair must submit the online *Incident Reporting Form* located under *Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services on OurNSCC* (<https://ournsc.nsc.ca/Departments/OHSE/Pages/AccidentIncidentReporting.aspx>)

International Field Experiences (with Field Experiences outside of Canada)

Students considering completing a work placement outside of Canada must complete the *Intent to Complete International Form* (Forms Guide) and an orientation offered by NSCC International. This form must be submitted before the last day of classes in the Fall semester to WorkExperience@nsc.ca. Students are asked to copy faculty on this email. Work-Integrated Learning will share the details on the form with the NSCC International Office. NSCC International will then connect with the student to discuss next steps.

Health & Safety

The health and safety of students travelling internationally for study is paramount, there are risks associated with travel to certain regions and countries due to social and local factors. These conditions are dynamic and must be evaluated prior to any international trip. As such, NSCC has the right to deny requests for international field experiences.

Travel advice and advisories issued by the Government of Canada will be applied. The College may also deem other locations to be of very high or extreme risk and prohibit travel to those locations.

Insurance

When completing a work placement outside of Canada additional Student Guard insurance for students is mandatory and must be paid for by the student. The purchase of insurance can be coordinated through NSCC International. Please contact international@nsc.ca to arrange insurance coverage.

International Students (with Field Experiences in Canada)

Completing a work placement in Nova Scotia is a proven factor to help international students find employment in Nova Scotia after they graduate. If international students intend to stay and work in Nova Scotia after graduation they should be advised that it is advantageous for them to complete their work placement in Nova Scotia rather than in their home country.

Insurance

International students attending NSCC must purchase, and will be automatically enrolled in, the mandatory International Student Emergency Health Insurance (EHI). To confirm coverage for international students, please contact nscplan@mystudentplan.ca.

Work Permits

International students are required to obtain a “Co-op Work Permit” in order to participate in any type of work placement. A “Co-op Work Permit” is different from a “Study Permit”. Without a Co-op Work Permit you will be removed from your work placement.

Co-op Work Permit applications can be completed online and there is no fee for this permit. You should apply for your co-op work permit at least 4 months before you are scheduled to begin your work placement. The *Co-op Work Permit Application* can be found on NSCC International’s website. (<http://international.nsc.ca>)

* *Students enrolled in health care programs are also required to have a co-op work permit for their clinical experiences.*

Quick Checks

This quick check list is to help support and organize you through the field experience program.

Preparing for Field experience

- Attend field experience information session
- Prepare your cover letter and resume
- Ensure your portfolio is up to date in preparation for interviews
- Obtain faculty approval before accepting and committing to your field experience
- Ensure following forms are completed and provided to faculty prior to starting your field experience (available in the *Field Experience Forms Guide*):
 - Field Experience Agreement
 - Risk Assessment & Compliance Agreement
 - Intent to Complete International Field Experience (if applicable)

During Field Experience

- Ensure the following forms are completed and provided to faculty (available in the *Field Experience Forms Guide*):
 - Orientation and Job Safety Review Form
 - Release of Information Form
 - Confidentiality Agreement
 - Accident/Incident Report (if necessary)
- Consider the requirements of your Reflective Learning Assignment
- Remind Industry Partner to submit Industry Partner Feedback on Student Form

Following Field Experience

- Submit the following to faculty:
 - Student Feedback on Industry Partner Form
 - Reflective Learning Assignment
 - Field experience debriefing

Resources

Guides

Student, Industry Partner and Faculty Guides have been developed to ensure there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

- Student Guide
https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/resources-for-students.asp
- Industry Partner Guide
https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/hire-a-student.asp

A Forms Guide has been created to keep all required documents in a central location. Some forms are mandatory and must be completed by all stakeholders (Students, Industry Partners and NSCC). Stakeholders and timing for each form is indicated in the table at the front Field Experience Forms Guide and on each form.

- Forms Guide
https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/resources-for-students.asp

NSCC International has created an International Student Guidebook which can be found: Forms Guide

- <http://international.nsc.ca/guidebook/>

Policies and Procedures

The Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) policy and other relevant NSCC policies and procedures that apply to students during a work experience can be found on the College website under Policies and Procedures:

https://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/policies_procedures/index.asp.