

WILWORKS SWPP EMPLOYER FAQs

WHAT IS EMC'S WILWORKS SWPP?

EMC (Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium), a preferred partner with the Government of Canada, delivers the Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) wage subsidy to the Canadian Manufacturing industry. EMC is working in partnership with the SWPP team to achieve Canada's Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Strategy, which is meant to drive systemic change in the skills development system by EMC working with post-secondary institution partners to effectively align 'work-ready' skills of students with the skills required by Canada's manufacturers. WILWorks provides value to manufacturing employers by providing wage subsidies to employers that offer quality student work placements.

The WILWorks program supports manufacturers with hiring student talent through internships, co-op placements, practicums, or applied research projects. Through the WILWorks program, EMC creates partnerships with colleges, universities, polytechnics, and CEGEPs, to help develop a pipeline of future employment-ready graduates. The WILWorks Student Work Placement Program is designed to incentivize employers to offer more student positions than they did before leveraging funding.

Eligible work placements must be a requirement as part of the student's study plan. The placement opportunity must align with the student's post secondary school program. This can include co-operative education, internships, field placements and applied research projects.

WHY SHOULD A COMPANY HIRE A STUDENT?

The purpose of the SWPP funding is to motivate employers to increase their number of student work placements, or to create student work placements. Students can support a company's current business needs, work projects and initiatives. The program helps to attract young talent, to gain exposure to students in the work environment, and to create a talent pipeline of future employees. For employers who have not had student placements in the past, WILWorks provides the opportunity and flexibility to complement a company's current workforce with subsidized student resources.

WHAT FUNDING DOES EMC'S WILWORKS PROVIDE?

The WILWorks program offers a wage subsidy of up to \$5,000 per student placement. The subsidy funds provided must be used exclusively for the WILWorks placement salary support of the named student. The subsidy is calculated as follows:

- 50% of the student's wages incurred during the relevant application work placement term, provided the total amount of wages reimbursed does not exceed \$5,000.

WHAT IS NET NEW AND CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY?

The SWPP Program is designed to encourage employers to increase the number of work integrated learning positions they offer. WILWorks SWPP applications must be "net new" to be eligible – this means eligible positions are over and above what the company has hired in the past (before first participating in the SWP Program with ANY delivery partner).

For the 2026-2027 fiscal year (Summer 2026, Fall 2026 and Winter 2027), net new requirements will pertain only to medium (100-499 employees) and large (500+ employees) businesses and will be required to demonstrate incremental opportunities; in previous fiscal years, the net-new rule applied to ALL size enterprises. The Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) is designed to fund incremental work integrated learning opportunities.

Medium and Large Employers who wish to participate in the SWP Program must demonstrate a projected increase in the number of students hired in their "baseline year" versus the number of students they plan to hire in the current fiscal year. The "baseline year" is the fiscal year BEFORE first participating in the SWPP through ANY delivery partner.

Employers must login to the application platform to determine their net new eligibility: The responses to the net new questions in the application platform will calculate the number of eligible placements you can apply for funding for. If your “net new” field is a positive number, that is the number of SWPP applications your company is eligible for in all terms in the 2026-27 program year, through ANY delivery partner. If your net new field is a negative number, the company is not eligible for SWPP funding under the current eligibility criteria of the program. If negative, please do not proceed with the application.

Important:

1. If you have submitted baseline hiring numbers previously, in any year, please ensure the information submitted on the application is consistent with information previously submitted.
2. As the Net New information you are reporting on your application(s) is for placement terms covering the entire fiscal year (April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027), please ensure the Net New information is consistent on each of your application submissions for the Summer 2026, Fall 2026 and Winter 2027 terms

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN THE WILWORKS PROGRAM?

Students must be:

- Registered, full-time or part-time, in a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution in any program, e.g., Arts, Business, Humanities, Social Sciences, STEM (Science, Technology Engineering, Math)
- Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or persons to whom refugee protection has been conferred under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (International students are not eligible)
- Legally entitled to work in Canada in accordance with relevant provincial or territorial legislation and regulations
- There are no age limits for students
- Students hired on WIL placements must be registered at a recognized Canadian college or university, be enrolled in a program or course where a work placement is part of their study plan

WHAT ARE ELIGIBLE WIL TYPES UNDER EMC'S WILWORKS SWPP?

Eligible work placements must be paid and must be part of the student's study plan. This can include cooperative education, internships, field placements and applied research projects.

WHAT HAPPENS IF AN EMPLOYER DOES NOT EXCEED THEIR BASELINE NUMBER AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION, WITH THE NET NEW REQUIREMENT?

If an employer filled out an application under the assumption they would exceed their baseline number and be eligible for funding, but were unable to fill these positions, the application(s) would be cancelled in the platform and they would not be eligible for the subsidy. With the net new requirement, there must be an increase in the number of students hired from their baseline year to today. Employers are required to attest to their net new placements. Should changes arise after the application has been submitted, it is the employer's responsibility to inform EMC that they did not meet the net new eligibility requirements.

DOES A MULTIPLE TERM STUDENT COUNT AS A NEW HIRE EACH TERM WHEN CALCULATING NET NEW?

Employers can hire students on back-to-back work terms, providing they complete a separate application for that student, each term. Although it is the same student, this would count as separate placements when calculating net new as they are separate terms and separate applications. For example, if you hired a student for the Summer, Fall and Winter terms (all within the same fiscal year) that would count as three hires when calculating your baseline and prospective hiring numbers.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR A MANUFACTURER TO ACCESS THE WILWORKS WAGE SUBSIDY?

Employers interested in applying for a WILWorks wage subsidy placement can apply online through the WILWorks Platform. If an employer requires further assistance, please contact: Kristy McKee, Project Coordinator - kmckee@emccanada.org or Carol Choquette, Bilingual Employer Engagement Specialist - cchoquette@emccanada.org

WHAT ARE THE WILWORKS PROGRAM DETAILS?

- EMC will support full-time or part-time paid placements as short as six (6) weeks, up to a maximum of 16 weeks. It is up to the employer and student to determine the duration. The subsidy will be pro-rated accordingly
- Work placements must be relevant to the students program of study
- WILWorks students must be part of the firm's payroll system so they can receive their payments (i.e. as it is a wage subsidy program)
- Employers can apply for back-to-back placements for the same student
- Employers agree to participate in meetings with EMC at its request, for monitoring the progress of the placement
- The final subsidy amount as calculated by EMC, will be determined at the end of the placement, pending receipt of the employer's and student's Exit Surveys, and the student's first and final paystubs

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EMPLOYER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WILWORKS PROGRAM?

To be eligible for WILWorks SWPP funding, the employer must be:

- A registered Canadian business or organization
- A Canadian manufacturer
- Not a federal or provincial government organization
- Able to hire a student for a part or full-time work term, and be able to pay the student consistently
- Adhere to the net new regulations as outlined
- Able to provide a meaningful work experience for the student

ARE EMPLOYERS ELIGIBLE FOR WILWORKS SWPP FUNDING IF THEY ARE ALSO PARTICIPATING IN ANOTHER FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAM?

WILWorks subsidies cannot be combined with any other federal government funding to support the same student work placement.

CAN EMPLOYERS STACK DIFFERENT FUNDING AND STILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE WILWORKS SWPP FUNDING?

Yes, partial government funds from provincial, territorial, or municipal sources may be permitted. Placements can be partially government funded, but only funds from non-governmental sources can be subsidized under this program (i.e., a position paid with 60% provincial grant funding is only eligible for a 40% subsidy of the non-governmental funds from the employer). An employer must disclose if, and by how much, government sources are partially funding the placement. In addition, any tax credits received for the co-op student must also be deducted in calculating the eligible subsidy. Any credit or provincial grant granted should be deducted from the gross earnings of the student for the term. This will result in the net wages applicable for the SWPP program payout applied. Employers should consult with the provincial, territorial or municipal program to confirm stacking eligibility.

WHO SELECTS THE STUDENT FOR A WORK PLACEMENT?

The recruitment, interview, and selection of a student to fill an eligible WILWorks position are done by the employer. The student must meet the WIL (Work Integrated Learning) requirements.

HOW DOES AN EMPLOYER FIND QUALIFIED STUDENTS?

Employers are encouraged to use their usual recruitment channels to hire students. Employers may also contact the Co-op/ Career Services department in nearby post-secondary institutions. Many academic institutions have dedicated job board portals and career events to facilitate the recruitment process.

WHO DO EMPLOYERS CONTACT AT A POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION FOR HELP WITH RECRUITING?

EMC can connect employers to post-secondary institutions in their region, or with programs aligned with the employer's hiring needs.

DOES THE STUDENT HAVE TO BE IN A MANUFACTURING ROLE TO BE ELIGIBLE?

Students may be hired into direct or indirect roles (i.e. human resources, finance, graphic design, I.T., etc.). Students hired on WIL placements must be registered at a recognized Canadian college or university and enrolled in a program or course where a work placement is part of their study plan.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED PLACEMENT TERMS?

Placement and employment agreements are between the student and the employer. EMC is not a party to these agreements and assumes no financial or legal responsibility with regards to events, or actions by either party that affect the employment situation for any placement (e.g. layoffs, intellectual property issues, confidentiality agreements, strikes, etc.). The employer is legally required to provide Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) or alternate workplace insurance coverage for the student employee.

HOW MUCH SHOULD A STUDENT BE PAID?

While an employer determines a student's salary, EMC asks that it is fair and reasonable, based on industry standards. The salary offered may not be less than the minimum wage.

CAN AN EMPLOYER APPLY BEFORE HIRING A STUDENT?

Yes, employers can apply for the WILWorks program before or after a student has been hired. Final approval is granted upon confirmation of student eligibility.

CAN AN EMPLOYER APPLY FOR THE WILWORKS WAGE SUBSIDY FOR A STUDENT WHO HAS ALREADY STARTED THE POSITION?

Yes, employers can apply for the WILWorks wage subsidy for any active student placements that are not yet supported by another federal program. Approval is granted upon confirmation of student eligibility.

CAN EMPLOYERS RECEIVE FUNDING FOR MORE THAN ONE STUDENT PER TERM?

Yes, employers can receive funding for more than one student per term so long as they meet the net new criteria. However, employers must submit one application per student placement. EMC retains the right to limit the number of subsidies provided to an employer.

CAN AN EMPLOYER HIRE A STUDENT FOR A PERIOD THAT IS LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS?

Yes, an employer can hire a student for a period that is less than four months; in that case, the subsidy will be pro-rated. EMC will support full-time or part-time paid placements as short as six (6) weeks, up to a maximum of 16 weeks.

CAN AN EMPLOYER RECEIVE MULTIPLE SUBSIDIES FOR THE SAME STUDENT IF THE STUDENT IS WORKING CONSECUTIVE TERMS?

Yes, an employer can apply for, and be approved for, consecutive terms for the same student through the WILWorks program. All aspects of the application process must be completed for an additional subsidy to be approved. In this case, employers would need to submit one application per work term and ensure the net new criteria is met. If you have questions, please contact EMC to discuss the process.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION DOES AN EMPLOYER NEED TO PROVIDE AT THE END OF A STUDENT'S WORK PLACEMENT?

The final subsidy amount will be determined at the end of the placement, pending receipt of:

- Exit Surveys from both the employer and student
- An invoice and attestation from the employer to EMC
- The student's first and final pay stubs

HOW OFTEN CAN EMPLOYERS APPLY FOR THE FUNDING IN A YEAR?

Employers may apply for funding several times in a year. Employers subject to net new rules can also, as long as they demonstrate a net new increase in the number of work placements offered when compared to the baseline (see net new details above).

- Employers must submit a new application for each student and each term (i.e., new Employer and Students forms must be submitted online every term).

WHEN WILL THE EMPLOYER RECEIVE THE WAGE SUBSIDY?

The employer must submit an invoice to EMC at the end of a student's placement. The subsidy will be forwarded to the employer within 60 business days of receipt of the invoice and all required supporting documentation. All such invoices must be submitted with a copy of the first and final pay stubs for the student. These must show the total salary payments made to the student during the placement. All subsidy payments are subject to EMC's receipt of the above documentation, including the employer's and student's Exit Surveys. Payments are also subject to the continuation of funding from The Government of Canada.

CAN A COMPANY THAT IS NOT A MANUFACTURER IN CANADA APPLY FOR WILWORKS?

No, EMC is the SWPP Partner for the Canadian manufacturing industry. If your organization is not a manufacturer, we encourage you to reach out to other SWPP partners to enquire about funding and eligibility. The list of partners can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/student-work-placements-wage-subsidies.html>

If you have questions about the eligibility criteria, please contact: Kristy McKee, Project Coordinator - kmckee@emccanada.org or, Carol Choquette, Bilingual Employer Engagement Specialist - cchoquette@emccanada.org

CAN AN EMPLOYER HIRE A STUDENT WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH THE FIRM?

Yes, a student who has previously worked with the firm can be hired, as long as all the eligibility requirements are met.

CAN AN EMPLOYER RECEIVE A SUBSIDY IF THE EMPLOYER HIRES AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER?

No, an employer cannot receive a wage subsidy for an immediate family member of any current employee. "Immediate family" for the WILWorks program includes; father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, brother, sister, spouse (including common law partner), child (including child of common law partner), step-child, ward, father-in-law, mother-in-law or relative permanently residing in the household of the employer.

CAN AN EMPLOYER RECEIVE A WAGE SUBSIDY FOR A RECENT GRADUATE?

No, the WILWorks program only supports students that are currently registered, full-time or part-time, in a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution.

CAN AN EMPLOYER RECEIVE A WAGE SUBSIDY IF THE EMPLOYER HIRES A TRADITIONAL APPRENTICE?

No, traditional apprentice positions are not supported by the WILWorks program.

CAN AN EMPLOYER RECEIVE A SUBSIDY IF THE EMPLOYER HIRES AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

No, international students are not eligible for the program. Further to this, international students are not to be counted towards your baseline number when calculating net new, as they are not eligible for the program.

CAN AN EMPLOYER RECEIVE A SUBSIDY IF THE EMPLOYER HIRES A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT?

No, this wage subsidy is only for post-secondary students.

IF AN EMPLOYER HIRES A STUDENT AS AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR, WILL THE EMPLOYER BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY TO THE WILWORKS PROGRAM?

No, the student must be hired as an employee of the firm and have equal rights and obligations as other employees.

Please contact EMC if you have questions. We are happy to help determine potential eligibility before submitting your application. Please contact Kristy McKee (519-377-0235) or Carol Choquette (514-709-5389).