

A Guide for **Employers** About

Career Education in B.C.



Help shape
your future
workforce



StrongerBC
for everyone

**career
education
society of BC**



Employers Guide
Career Education in B.C.

Acknowledgement

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SECTION 1:

Employers play an essential role in Career Education

Employers are crucial to the development of our future workforce and play a key role in Career Education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12).

As an employer or business owner, you have the ability to:

- ✓ Inspire students
- ✓ Prepare them for success
- ✓ Guide them as they learn about the ever-changing world of work
- ✓ Help them make decisions about their futures

You can also be a mentor, role model and powerful ally to students, career educators, schools and school districts by helping students explore and experience career and work opportunities.

Education is a team effort.

Career exploration programs are much more meaningful with employer participation. Schools and school districts across British Columbia (B.C.) have established mutually beneficial relationships with employers that leverage their insight, guidance, mentorship and work experience opportunities to build a future-ready workforce. There are many ways you can participate, as you'll discover in this guide.

Getting involved in K–12 Career Education programs is good for businesses, enabling you to:

- ✓ Help educate students about the job opportunities you offer
- ✓ Encourage an understanding of, and interest in, your sector
- ✓ Support competency, skill-building and safe practices for specific occupations in your industry
- ✓ Leave a lasting impression as a great employer
- ✓ Develop connections to future employees

When students engage with employers through work experience opportunities, in-class visits and career fairs, it increases their motivation at school because it links their learning to the real world. It also broadens their career aspirations and can help to dispel stereotypes in the workplace.



DID YOU KNOW?

While Career Education is a required component of the curriculum in B.C., many schools have distinct approaches to career-focused programs and opportunities for employers to get involved in students' learning. Check with your local school's Career Education department for details about what's available in your region.

Build awareness, experience and loyalty

Career Development is one of the three aspects of the Educated Citizen mandate for B.C.'s education system. It sits alongside Intellectual Development and Human and Social Development.

In Kindergarten to Grade 5, students learn about people who do different jobs in their community. In Grades 6–8, they start to consider how their values align with the kinds of problems they might like to solve in the future. In Grades 9–12, students link their interests with potential career paths, and look for opportunities to explore and participate in the world of work.

When community partners offer career fairs and career exploration opportunities, students get exposure to a wide variety of occupations. Employer involvement in school events and programs can open doors to sectors they might not have known about. When students see opportunities to be successful in their local community, they're more likely to stay there after graduation.

Whether you share your experience at an event, host a career exploration field trip or take on Work Experience (WEX) students, there's likely a place for you and your business in your local school's Career Education programming.



Defining jobs, occupations and careers

Career Development is the lifelong process of learning, work and job transitions. It encompasses “jobs,” “occupations” and a “career,” all of which refer to different components of the journey. Let’s take a closer look:

- ✓ A job is a specific position you hold within an organization or as someone self-employed.
- ✓ An occupation is a type of work that includes tasks, education and training, typical wages, work settings and other factors. It often comes with opportunities for additional training, progress, advancement or promotion.
- ✓ A career encompasses a lifelong journey that includes a job (or several) and an occupation (or several).

Understanding Career Education in B.C. and where YOU fit in

A career is so much more than a job. It's an individual's unique journey through life. It impacts not only how they work and earn an income, but also how they bring their skills and interests to life day-to-day, who they interact with and the opportunities they pursue in an ever-changing world.

Successful Career Education involves people like

YOU



K-GR 3

- Goal-setting
- Self-exploration
- Roles and responsibilities
- Exposure to jobs in the community
- Exploration of skills and interests
- Importance of learning
- Teamwork and work habits



Parents and Caregivers

The most important career influencers for kids in K-12.

- Genuine conversations about interests and passions
- Encouragement to explore and try new things
- Participation in school and community programs and events
- Post-secondary planning and support



GR 4-5

- Personal and public identities
- Respect for differences
- Innovative and entrepreneurial thinking
- Leadership and project management
- Safe behaviours
- Role of technology
- Volunteering



Educators

Interpret the curriculum, bring it to life and offer guidance.

- Exploration and awareness of career options
- Skill building and personal development
- Individual career pathway planning
- Activities, events and connections within the community



GR 6-7

- Preferences and abilities
- Community contributions
- Respect and inclusivity
- Attitudes and influences
- Value of new experiences
- Short and long-term goals



Employers

Community partners providing real-world exposure to industries and workplaces.

- Guest speaking in schools
- Work experience placements
- Youth mentorship
- Career fair participation



GR 8-9

- Self-assessment
- Purpose and passions
- Learning goals
- Curriculum choices
- Networks and mentors
- Career research
- Family expectations
- Community responsibility
- Workplace safety
- Decision-making

GR 10-12

- Research, challenges, opportunities and risks
- School/work/life balance
- Career-life journey mapping
- Mentorship
- Networking
- Work experience and experiential learning

DID YOU KNOW?

Career Development is one of the three aspects of the *Educated Citizen* mandate for B.C.'s education system.

- ✓ Intellectual Development
- ✓ Human and Social Development
- ✓ Career Development



Much like people, careers are constantly changing. That's why our approach to Career Education in B.C. is not a one-size-fits-all model. It's customized to match each student's and every community's unique needs.

K-12 Career Education goals

In B.C., Career Education is integrated at every level of elementary and secondary education. This is important because career and life skills will guide students for their entire working lives.¹



Build adaptability, resilience and flexibility



Understand the importance of ongoing career-life development



Learn and grow skills and competencies



Develop self-knowledge to inform career-life choices



Explore and interact with a variety of people and perspectives



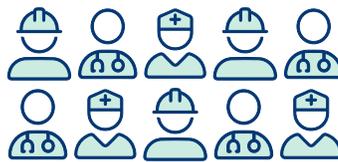
Investigate a range of roles and opportunities

[SOURCE: [B.C. CURRICULUM](#)]

76%



In the next 10 years, 76% of job openings will require some form of post-secondary education or training.²



1.1 million

In the next decade, B.C. will have over 1.1 million new job openings in health care, technology, education, social services and skilled trades.³

¹ BC Curriculum

² WorkBC British Columbia Labour Market Outlook

³ WorkBC British Columbia Labour Market Outlook



StrongerBC

SECTION 2:

A brief look at Career Education in B.C.

The Career Education curriculum is a foundation for lifelong learning that supports students' transition to post-secondary education, training and employment.

Today's students face the reality that 76 per cent of job openings in B.C. between now and 2034 will require at least some post-secondary education or training. Therefore, what students learn and experience through Career Education in their K–12 years will support their future success.

Students may begin to make assumptions about jobs they're suitable for as young as age 7, and these assumptions may not reflect the broad range of opportunities available to them. Employers can expose students to a wide range of industries and employment opportunities and open up a world of possibilities for them to consider.

Helping B.C. students prepare for a bright future

Technology and other factors are changing the workforce and reshaping careers as we have known them in B.C. and around the world. When today's students enter the workforce, they'll be faced with new and emerging needs and demands.

More than ever, today's students need opportunities to explore emerging career paths and develop the skills required to adapt and succeed in a rapidly changing world. To address this, in 2023,

the Government of B.C. launched the K–12 Career Connections initiative as part of the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.

The Plan is based on labour market data, which identifies high-priority sectors and in-demand occupations where meaningful careers will exist well into the future, such as:

- Digital marketing
- Engineering
- Health care and social assistance
- Skilled trades
- Professional, scientific and technical services (including B.C.'s tech sector)
- Education (including Early Childhood Education, Education Assistants and K–12 educators)

By enhancing Career Education activities in B.C. schools, often with the participation of employers, the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan enables young people to explore potential occupations and develop the skills needed to match high-opportunity occupations in growing sectors. It also enhances opportunities for those who have historically faced barriers to education, such as Indigenous students, students with disabilities or diverse abilities, children and youth in care and students living in rural or remote areas of the province.

All together, these initiatives help more students graduate from secondary school ready to transition to post-secondary study and training, and develop the skills they'll need to work in in-demand sectors.

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan works with B.C.'s Career Education curriculum

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan has been designed to work alongside and enhance B.C.'s existing Career Education curriculum. This means that some current programs will offer new resources and additional opportunities. It will also create entirely new programs and resources to provide more students with the chance to build critical skills.

The K–12 Career Connections initiative increases support for career exploration and foundational skill development for students in Grades K–8. For students in Grades 9–12, it will also expand:

- ✓ Career sampler programs
- ✓ Work Experience (WEX) placements
- ✓ Access to micro-credentials

These are just a few components of the K–12 Career Connections initiative. This initiative is continuously evolving, so please check [Career Programs \(Province of British Columbia\)](#) for the latest details on funding opportunities and ways to get involved in Career Education.

To learn about the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan programming available in your area, connect with your local school district. You can also access the complete [StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan](#).



DID YOU KNOW?

The Government of B.C. has invested \$480 million over 3 years to support the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, so more young people can get the training needed for in-demand careers.

SECTION 3:

How to get involved in K–12 Career Education

The easiest way to get started is to contact your local school or school district and ask to speak to the career department; they'll connect you with the right person. Your local Chamber of Commerce may also be able to facilitate connections and opportunities with your school district or nearby schools.

In Grades K–8, employer involvement is more high-level and focused on building career awareness. Once students reach Grades 9–12 and start getting closer to graduation, there are more opportunities for employers to participate and contribute to student training and skills development.

It's important for you to know that career educators aim to build meaningful relationships with employers in all sectors and industries. They want to make it as easy as possible for you to get involved with their school. Protocols and practices are in place to ensure safety and legal requirements are covered when employers engage with schools and students.

Career educators also work hard to prepare students to interact with employers and ensure you have a great experience. Rest assured that no matter how you choose to participate, you will be supported by career educators and recognized for your valuable contributions every step of the way.

Here are a few of the most common ways employers can get involved:

- Participating in class presentations to talk about work opportunities in your industry and your personal career journey
- Hosting field trips and site tours at your workplace
- Attending career fairs at a local school
- Teaching a workshop or a specific skill at your workplace or at a local school
- Taking on a WEX student or hiring a Youth Work in Trades (YWIT) student
- Being a mentor for student Career-Life Connections Capstone projects, which are for students to showcase a career area they are passionate about and hope to pursue after graduation

Depending on the school district or school, there may also be opportunities to explore other distinct ways to get involved, such as:

- Offering scholarships or bursaries for post-secondary training programs
- Participating in virtual events outside of your community
- Donating materials or work gear to support Career Education activities

Career Education courses and training initiatives

In addition to the required Career Education courses at the secondary level, such as Career-Life Education 10 and Career-Life Connections 12, school districts across B.C. offer a wide variety of elective courses and programming that allow secondary school students to explore specific careers and prepare for work immediately upon graduation.

Influenced by the local labour market and industry connections, each school or school district personalizes their offerings. Oftentimes, they do this in partnership with local employers:

➤ Work Experience (WEX) 12A and 12B

This program provides secondary students with guidance and support as they participate in hands-on work experiences with businesses in their region. Students gain secondary course credits for paid or unpaid work they do in the community.

➤ Workforce Training Certificates 12 (WTC)

This elective course provides students with credits for completing industry-focused certifications.

➤ Youth Explore the Trades (includes Youth Explore Trades Skills and Youth Explore Trades Sampler)

The Youth Explore the Trades Program gives students in Grades 10–12 the opportunity to build skills, explore skilled trades careers and get hands-on experience.

➤ Youth Work In Trades (YWIT)

This program, jointly supported by the Ministry of Education and Child Care and SkilledTradesBC, allows students to begin apprenticeship training as part of their secondary school education. It combines paid, work-based training and a provincial curriculum that focuses on

connecting, applying, reflecting on and refining workplace skills and safety, work ethic and job readiness. Students earn up to 16 credits toward graduation, and they register as an apprentice with SkilledTradesBC (employer sponsored) and accumulate 480 work-based training hours required for provincially and nationally recognized skilled trades credentials.

➤ Youth Train in Trades

This dual credit program allows students to earn up to 48 credits toward their secondary school diploma and at least 1 level of technical training by attending skilled trades training classes at a partner post-secondary school or a certified training facility. SkilledTradesBC and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care offer funding to school districts to support this program.

Hosting WEX or skilled trades/apprenticeship students

Career Education initiatives such as WEX and YWIT can have a powerful impact on students' lives and futures, and on your business's ability to attract and retain young workers. Here's how to get started and what you'll need to know:

1. **First, ensure you have WorkSafe coverage.**
This is a requirement for hosting placements.
2. **Then, reach out to your local school or school district's Careers or Career Education department.** If you haven't already been in contact with someone specific, you can reach out to your local school or school district to discuss program options. Keep in mind that placements are set up months in advance, so get in touch well before you'd like to have the placement begin.

3. Meet with the school's career coordinator.

Once you've been connected with your local school, you'll have the opportunity to meet with the career department to find out more and determine if your business would be a good fit for the available programs and students.

4. Determine your available time and resources, and what kind of impact you'd like to make.

Could you take on one student, or more? The most important consideration is ensuring that you and your team have the capacity to provide students with guidance, support and meaningful engagement throughout their training. Also note that an employer that takes on a YWIT student must offer supervision and mentorship by a Red Seal-endorsed tradesperson in the trade they're learning.

5. Establish the role or roles you'd like to fill.

Whether they'll be working in an office or on a shop floor, keep in mind that WEX and skilled trades students are there to build meaningful experiences and acquire skills that will help them further their career plans. While they may be able to help with some of the lower-level jobs, they aim to make a meaningful contribution to your business.

6. Complete the required paperwork. The school's career department can walk you through this, including ensuring that insurance and other legal requirements are met.

7. Invite school staff and students to come for a tour. This will allow everyone involved to see where the WEX placement will take place, ensure safety and other criteria are met and give students the ability to confirm the fit and their interest. It's also a good time to set up a training plan for the student.



8. Provide a safety orientation. Before the student begins, or on their first day, you must complete an orientation that includes introducing them to key staff, equipment, procedures and reiterating clear expectations for their role.

9. Communicate regularly throughout the placement. Regular communication with your student and with the school's careers contact will ensure that issues can be addressed if they arise.

Setting students up for success

Successfully hosting WEX or skilled trades students often comes down to the details: is the student set up to succeed in the workplace? Is all the right paperwork in place? Are communication lines open between the supervisor, student and school career educator?

Of course, it's important to keep in mind that these programs are designed as learning experiences, and all parties are part of this process. While not every learning experience turns out the same way, there are steps you can take to help set yours up for the best possible outcome. These guidelines and

recommendations might feel overwhelming at first, but rest assured that they're in place to make the experience a good one:

- **Understand what success means to you.** Are you looking to train a student you can eventually hire when they graduate, or are you looking to expose students to your industry? Determining your definition of success will help you put the right building blocks in place.
- **Clarify your expectations and your students' expectations.** You've set your goals for success, but have you communicated them to your students and their career coordinator? Keep in mind that this may be your students' first work experience, and they'll likely require guidance and instruction until they're comfortable in your workplace.
- **Train for the journey, not just the race.** To be successful in their work placements, students may need your help to develop specific skills. Career Education in B.C. also encourages students to achieve broader holistic goals such as cultivating an understanding of who they are and who they want to be in the world. To support this, your work placement opportunity can also feature mentorship, self-awareness and exploration, all while developing skills needed for employment.
- **Support students to be successful.** Students in B.C. schools come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs. Consider what may be needed to create a positive experience for participating students (e.g., cultural safety supports, resources and accommodations as outlined in a student's Individual Education Plan) and plan accordingly.
- **Establish clear lines of supervision.** Be sure your student is assigned to a supervisor who is aware of the needs and requirements for the placement. Let the student know who they can go to with questions or concerns.

- **Ensure barriers are removed.** Students may face a variety of barriers to a successful placement. These could include challenges with transportation or equipment requirements, or they might face issues around accessibility and inclusivity. Work with the school to identify and address any potential issues and ensure your workplace is respectful, inclusive and culturally sensitive. There are numerous community and school-based resources available to help.
- **Have a realistic timeline in mind.** It can take some time to get up and running with a student placement. From ensuring requirements are met, to selecting the right student, to aligning with their school schedule, you may be looking at several months before getting a student on-site. Consult with the school's career department to get an idea of the timeline you should expect.



DID YOU KNOW?

If your students or apprentices need help with equipment, transportation or other job requirements, there are programs that can help. Have your student reach out to their school's career coordinator for assistance.



Reach out to get started

The easiest way to get started is to contact your local school or school district and ask to speak to the career department; they'll connect you with the right person.

SECTION 4:

For more information

Looking for more information about Career Education programming and opportunities to get involved? Here are a few good places to start.

➤ [The Apprenticeship Service](#)

This program supports employers in hiring new first-year apprentices in 39 Red Seal skilled trades.

➤ [Career Education Society of BC \(CES\)](#)

The Career Education Society of BC represents all regions of British Columbia, influencing the direction of career education and development through national and provincial representation on boards and advisory committees. CES works together with leaders in education, business, industry and government to champion career education as an essential life skill.

➤ [Grants and funding for skilled trades and apprenticeships](#)

Employers, unions and other organizations can access grants and other funding available to help hire apprentices and skilled tradespeople.

➤ [SkilledTradesBC, Connect with a School](#)

For employers who are looking to hire youth, apprentices or participate in YWIT, find guidance on connecting with your school district, and learn more about their various programs.



➤ [WorkBC, Employer resources](#)

Learn more about the benefits of hiring apprentices and WEX students. You may also want to check out the eligibility criteria for [WorkBC's Employer Training Grant Program](#).

➤ [WorkSafeBC, Young & New Workers page](#)

Here you can find multiple resources to support employers of young and new workers. You can download [Support for employers: Training and orientation for young and new workers](#) and a [Young and New Worker Orientation Checklist](#). You can also access [My health & safety resources](#), a simple online tool to help workers and employers manage risk. You'll find more [employer or supervisor resources](#) that could be useful to you, as well.



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