

CREATE OPPORTUNITY

A Guide to OCAD University's Experiential Learning Placements Program

Through **OCAD U's Experiential Learning Placement Program**, upper-year undergraduate and graduate students are actively immersed in professional environments and applying their skills in a real world context.

Our Partners create unique opportunities for students to contribute to and reflect on art, design, and cultural production.

Play a key role by partnering with OCAD University to host a student's Experiential Learning Placement.

Here's how we make it work.

GUIDELINES



PRIORITIES

Learning placements prioritize service, experimentation, and reflection



COST

Students earn academic credit (payment not required)



DURATION

80-120 hours, over a 4-month or 8-month academic term, throughout the year

WHO'S INVOLVED?

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PLACEMENT PROGRAM

We support OCAD U students and alumni with their professional development, through the Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers, by:

- Building sustained, reciprocal relationships with industry and community partners
- Developing professional opportunities that complement academic and studio-based learning
- Providing resources and support for Faculty to integrate Experiential Learning and university curriculum

PLACEMENT PARTNER

In working with OCAD U student talent, Placement Partners prioritize their professional and creative development, by making space for mentorship, service-learning, and experimentation in the workplace.

When hosting a student, Partners provide:

- A safe and healthy work environment
- Structured supervision and mentorship
- Projects and tasks that prioritize learning over work
- Critical feedback that contributes to self-reflection and evaluation

OCAD U FACULTY

Faculty Supervisors work alongside Placement Partners to provide academic support towards critical reflection and feedback by establishing learning goals, evaluating outcomes and facilitating:

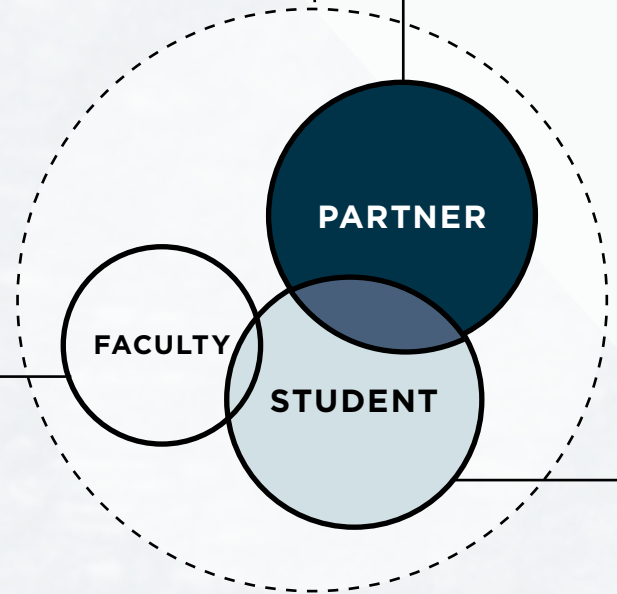
- In-class discussion
- Academic assignments
- Activities for students

OCAD U STUDENT

Our students are immersed in an interdisciplinary university that prioritizes diversity, equity, inclusivity, and sustainability.

What makes an OCAD U Student unique?

- Diversity of creative skills
- Studio-driven & project-oriented education
- A learning process which is rooted in innovative thinking
- Range of cross-disciplinary approaches
- The leading edge of art, design and cultural production



HOW IT WORKS

EXPECTATIONS

Partners are asked to provide:

- A safe and healthy work environment
- Projects that emphasize learning and exploratory skills development
- Supervision, Mentorship and Professional connections
- Constructive Feedback that informs academic evaluation

Students are asked to reflect upon:

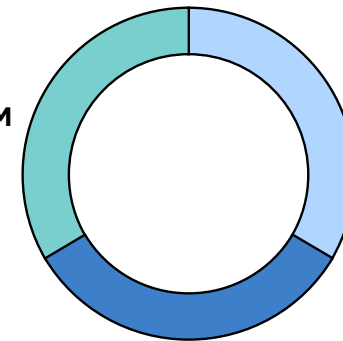
- Knowledge of Professional Field, Work Site, and Culture
- Research, Communication and Collaboration
- Skills Development: Critical-thinking, Problem-solving, Technical and Transferable Skills
- Active Experimentation

TIMELINE

It's possible to host a Student Placement during any of the 12-week academic terms:

FALL TERM
Sep. to Dec.

WINTER TERM
Jan. to Apr.



SUMMER TERM
May to Aug.

PARAMETERS

Undergraduate: 80 - 120 hours; no salary (honorarium and/or material expenses negotiable) work schedule is part-time - typically 1 or 2 days per week, alongside OCAD U courses and studio work

Graduate: 100 hours minimum; salary negotiable and commensurate with experience

PAID WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Placement Employers and Students can continue working together by transitioning the role to a paid internship or job, once the required placement hours are completed for academic credit.




STEP-BY-STEP

Start of Term	Start of Placement	Placement Duration: 80 - 120 hours	End of Term
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INTRODUCTION

An initial conversation with OCAD U's Experiential Learning Coordinator to discuss parameters, expectations, responsibilities, and the projects or role for a student and required skills.



CONNECTION


OCAD U's Experiential Learning Team connects Placement Partners with Student candidates based on skills and interests.

Portfolio and résumé:
Students prepare and share their professional materials

Placement Partners and Students conduct an **interview** to determine suitability.

ORIENTATION

Workplace onboarding with Occupational Health and Safety tour of site, discussion of HR and anti-harassment policy, introduction to Placement Supervisor and colleagues.



Partner Agreement: institutional agreement between Placement Partner and OCAD University outlining Health and Safety and Intellectual Property arrangements (consistent with Student Agreement).



Student Agreement: institutional agreement between Placement Partner and Student outlining Health and Safety and Intellectual Property arrangements (consistent with Partner Agreement).

EXPERIENCE

Placement Supervision: project-based, service-learning in the field alongside academic coursework and reflection-based assignments.

REFLECTION


At placement: Ongoing dialogue and critical feedback throughout experience.

On campus: Students report on and relate to their experiences, and describe how they will integrate and build upon their learning.

EVALUATION

At placement: Final feedback session with Student and Placement Employer

On campus: Students discuss their learning outcomes and placement experience through presentation and critiques.



Feedback Guide: A prompt for discussing: Learning Goals, Work Site & Culture, Placement Activities, Professional Development, Personal and Practical Development.

SHAPING THE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE



A Photography student at a commercial art gallery, organizing their physical and digital archive:

- Expanding résumé with transferable skills such as art handling and administration
- Networking with key members of the art community
- Transitioning into a paid role at a commercial art gallery upon graduating



An Animation student applying digital illustration and embroidery techniques in an artist's studio:

- Learning about the administrative side to running a professional studio practice
- Making connections between digital rendering and hands-on craft techniques
- Observing how an artist develops numerous projects with varying time-frames



An Environmental Design student at an interior design firm leading a community stakeholder research project:

- Conducting community research by engaging directly with local inhabitants
- Contributing graphic design skills to client and stakeholder presentations
- Learning that attitude - being open-minded, willing, and making connections - determines your experience



An Industrial Design student applies fabrication and research skills to product development for a toy company:

- Communicating with an interdisciplinary team of non-designers
- Learning how a start-up balances both business and product design
- Working within budget and material constraints of prototyping for manufacturing

WHAT DO OCAD U STUDENTS OFFER?

- Creative production
- Sculpture, craft, and material experimentation
- Fabrication, prototyping, manufacturing
- Architecture, interior, landscape, and urban design
- Print and digital media
- Interactive media and emerging technologies
- Digital entertainment and gaming
- Film, television, broadcast media
- Photography and videography
- Animation and motion graphics

- Collaboration and community service
- Community arts and public engagement
- Creative and social enterprise
- Curation and exhibition design
- Organizational work within arts and culture sector
- Education

- Design strategy and research
- Critical and creative writing
- Branding, marketing and visual communications
- User experience design
- Graphic design and product design

FUTURE CONNECTIONS

OCAD U'S RBC CENTRE FOR EMERGING ARTISTS & DESIGNERS

Our Experiential Learning Program is part of the RBC Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers (CEAD), alongside the Career Development program. At the CEAD, we are committed to supporting the early-career advancement of all students and recent alumni at OCAD U. Our team delivers specialized programs and services that connect individuals to meaningful opportunities, communities of practitioners, skill-building resources and facilitated learning experiences.

Placement Partners are welcome to get in touch with the CEAD for talent recruitment, paid opportunities, and other forms of mentorship.

www.ocadu.ca/cead

CONTACT

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OCAD UNIVERSITY

OCAD University has a proud history dating back to our founding in 1876. Central to our constant evolution is the belief that educational and cultural institutions must look outward, not inward, nurturing ideas that will take root in the world. We support our students in becoming **catalysts** for the next advances in **culture, technology and quality of life** for all Canadians.

Our mandate is not simply to imagine the future, but to help create it.

