



GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program

Human Resource Management
Occupational Health & Safety
Industrial Engineering Technology
and advanced manufacturing supporting programs

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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Introduction

On behalf of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), thank you for participating in the GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program! GradWorks is designed to match small-to-medium-sized businesses (SMEs) across Nova Scotia with skilled and talented graduates from our Human Resource Management; Occupational Health and Safety; Industrial Engineering; and advanced manufacturing supporting programs.

This initiative will assist SMEs build capacity within their companies to support productivity and profitability, while providing graduates with an opportunity to launch their careers and gain valuable experience and on-the-job training. This program is funded by ACOA's Business Development Program (BDP) and managed by NSCC.

Employers participating in the GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program are partners in the education process providing recent college graduates with a "real world opportunity" to enhance their skills and apply the knowledge they acquired in the classroom.

This Participant Guide is designed to guide employers and graduates through the processes involved in the GradWorks: Employer Incentive program. the GradWorks program. If you have any questions about please contact workexperience@nsc.ca.

Program Outcomes

The Gradworks: Employer Incentive Program was designed with specific short and long-term expectations and intended results in mind.

Desired Short-Term Outcomes

- Supports the career development of recent graduates with formal training in the areas of human resource, occupational health and safety, industrial engineering, and advanced manufacturing
- Establishes a forum for closer collaboration between NSCC and the business community

Desired Long-term Outcomes

- Increased capacity for small and medium sized enterprises
- Larger pool of local skilled and experienced graduates
- Increased retention rates of qualified graduates within the region
- Expansion of curriculum for participating programs
- Increased opportunities for graduates from local SMEs
- Increased private/public sector collaboration

Benefits for the Employer

- An opportunity to introduce the recent graduates to the work site
- An opportunity to assess recent graduates as potential long-term employees
- An opportunity to support business strategy by applying subject matter expertise in the qualified areas
- An opportunity for the employer to provide feedback regarding relevancy of the training programs to the needs of business and industry

Benefits for the Graduate

- An opportunity to develop and demonstrate the application and integration of theory learned in the classroom, lab, and shop
- An opportunity to develop and demonstrate competence in employability skills and program/occupational skills
- An opportunity to better understand his/her chosen career field and what is expected of employees within that field
- An opportunity to experience working with a Nova Scotian SME

Eligibility and Requirements

Employers

Employers must demonstrate a strategic approach to building organizational capacity in the relevant field and must support innovation, productivity, competitiveness and export.

Most business sectors are eligible to participate with a preference given to business-to-business organizations focused on export and innovation.

Businesses that are NOT eligible include:

- retail/wholesale
- real estate
- government services
- services of a personal or social nature

Businesses that have received funding through a similar ACOA-supported program in the past may not be eligible.

It is understood that employers will:

- be committed to making human resource, occupational health and safety, industrial engineering or advanced manufacturing considerations part of their business strategy;
- be equipped with the necessary resources; and
- demonstrate they have the commitment, desire and means to implement a new or expanded human resource, occupational health and safety, industrial engineering, or advanced manufacturing strategy, particularly with respect to retention and attraction of skilled labour.

Graduates

Eligible candidates for employment include graduates who have successfully completed an eligible program within the last three years (June 2020 – present).

It is understood that selected Graduates will demonstrate that they have:

- an interest in pursuing a career in this field; and
- a desire to remain in Atlantic Canada.

Programs

GradWorks is available to graduates from the following programs:

- Human Resource Management (Graduate Certificate)
- Occupational Health & Safety (Diploma)
- Industrial Engineering Technology (Diploma)
- Programs that support advanced manufacturing initiatives (**see note below*)

Advanced Manufacturing Explained

Advanced manufacturing is the development and adoption of innovative technologies to create new products, enhance processes, and establish more efficient and cost-effective ways of working. All parts of the value chain are considered – from research and design, to production and distribution – enabling new value-added models and optimizing production ([Government of Canada, 2022](#)).

**Applications for advanced manufacturing initiatives require special permission from ACOA and NSCC.*

Roles & Responsibilities

Employers

The employer will:

- Commit to making human resources, occupational health and safety, industrial engineering or advanced manufacturing part of their business strategy
- Engage a graduate for a period of one year, providing them with meaningful work experience in their area of study
- Assign tasks within the range of the graduates' capabilities
- Allow graduates to apply their learning in a proper and appropriate business environment
- Assign the graduate to a member of staff who is willing to serve as supervisor and advise the supervisor of the goals of employment
- Inform the graduate of company policy, rules, and regulations including employee code of conduct polices and occupational health and safety procedures
- Within 30 days of the graduate's start date with the organization, submit a completed work plan to NSCC
 - The work plan will be assessed for its viability by NSCC and once approved will form the basis of the GradWorks assignment for the year
- Equip the graduate with the necessary resources needed to fulfill their workplan
- Support the graduate in the delivery of the work plan
- Contribute a minimum of 34% towards the graduate's salary and benefits
 - ACOA's contribution will not exceed 66% of salary and benefits up to a maximum of \$30,360 and \$2,530 per month, thus the firm will be responsible for amounts beyond this contribution
- Place the graduate on the company's payroll for the duration of the project
- Submit monthly invoices to NSCC for payment of ACOA's contribution with supporting payroll records for verification of payments.
 - The employer will be responsible for amounts beyond this contribution
- Maintain records of all GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program for a minimum of 60 months
 - Upon notice, these records will be made available to ACOA's authorized representatives for inspection, audit, assessment, and review
- Track, monitor and provide quarterly updates on the work plan to the Project Coordinator and the graduate.
- Notify the Project Coordinator if there are any changes in the GradWorks contract within **ten (10)** days of that change
- Provide a testimonial for public use regarding the capacity building benefits received as a result of this project
- Submit a final report, acceptable to NSCC that illustrates the employer's/graduate's delivery of the work plan (template to be provided)
 - Submission of this report is required for final payment at the conclusion of the contractual agreement

Graduates

The graduate will:

- Approach the employment opportunity with the attitude of one who is eager to learn, willing to cooperate and ready to work
- Maintain regular attendance and be punctual
- Be aware of and comply with the profession's code of professional and ethical conduct
- Familiarize ones' self with and comply with company policy, rules, and regulations including occupational health and safety
- Develop and/or implement processes and practices by linking their program to business strategy and action plans with the organization
- Undertake market and/or sector research related to field practices and benchmarks
- Identify and follow-up on potential and qualified leads to identify potential for new policies and practices; or suggest changes to the current approach in keeping with best practices, etc.
- Identify personal learning outcomes for the employment, as well as identifying methods of assessing acquisition of the stated learning outcomes
- Maintain a journal during the employment and reflect on the experience
- Submit quarterly progress reports to the Project Coordinator (templates provided)

Nova Scotia Community College

NSCC will:

- Administer the GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program
- Work within the parameters of, and in keeping with, the objectives of the GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program
- Assist in the recruitment of qualified graduates to participate in the program
- Ensure the process used to hire graduates is fair and transparent and to the satisfaction of ACOA
- Notify ACOA of any changes in employment contracts within five (5) days of receiving notice from a participating employer
- Guide, mentor and monitor the graduates throughout their employment
- Formally communicate quarterly updates to ACOA, the employer and the graduate
- Pay all invoice submissions within 30 days from receipt (provided all supporting documentation is included)
- Track contracts and budget to report to ACOA within 30 days after each fiscal quarter
- Fully assert its right to make appropriate business decisions pertaining to the administration and management of the GradWorks: Employer Incentive Program.
 - All business decisions will be made fairly, based on merit, and free from real or perceived conflict of interest or unlawful bias

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

ACOA will:

- Review each application to confirm the applicant is an eligible employer and is in good standing with ACOA
- Through NSCC, contribute the lesser of 66% of the salary and benefits agreed to be paid to the student or \$30,360
- Provide guidance and advice to the NSCC, the graduate and the employer through the Project Coordinator

GradWorks Procedures

Employer Recruitment

NSCC and ACOA will work together to recruit approximately 14 employers. Ideally, there will be an equal number of positions for each NSCC program, however this is flexible.

NSCC will share information on the GradWorks program with employer partners. ACOA will also reach out to their clients to share information on the program.

Employer Applications

The employer application form can be found on the [GradWorks website](#). Employers will complete the application and submit it to workexperience@nsc.ca. Applications must demonstrate a strategic approach to building organizational capacity in the relevant field, and that it supports innovation, productivity, competitiveness, and exports.

The Project Coordinator will share all applications with ACOA and the appropriate School Manager at NSCC for review and evaluation.

- ACOA will review the application to confirm the applicant is an eligible employer and in good standing with ACOA, and that the project aligns with the program requirements.
- The School Manager will review the application to ensure the positions aligns with the program outcomes.

If ACOA and NSCC's School Manager are in agreement, or require further detail, the Project Coordinator will contact the Employer to further discuss their application and the job description.

At this point, the Project Coordinator will begin preliminary discussion with the Employer on the development of a work plan that demonstrates relevant and meaningful work experience for the graduate that will be followed throughout the year of employment. This work plan must be submitted within 30 days of the graduate's start date.

The Project Coordinator will be reviewing workplan when submitted with the quarterly reports.

Employment Postings

Once Employers are approved, they will be contacted, and positions will be published on [NSCC's Student and Graduate Job Board](#). Postings must include Employer Information, Job Description, (including Job Location, Wage, Hours per Week, and any other required documents for application).

Graduate Recruitment

NSCC will share information on the GradWorks program with recent graduates through emails, faculty connections, and reach out from our Alumni team.

Employment Applications

Graduates will apply for GradWorks employment opportunities by emailing their applications to WorkExperience@nsc.ca. The Project Coordinator will collect all applications, ensure that the applicants meet the eligibility requirements before sending an application package to the employers.

Hiring Graduates

NSCC will provide the employer with eligible candidates based on the position requirements and the experience and competencies of the graduate. Employers may screen and shortlist applications. All graduates may not be selected for an interview. The Employer will then contact the students directly to arrange interviews.

Offers

Once the employer selects their successful candidate, they extend the offer to the graduate and inform the Project Coordinator of their selection. The graduate is required to respond to the employers offer within 5 business days.

Upon acceptance of the position, the employer and the graduate must review the GradWorks Participant Guide; discuss the roles and responsibilities outlined, sign off on the GradWorks: Employer Incentive Contract, and finalize the work plan. The Contract must be submitted to the Project Coordinator prior to the graduates start date. The finalized work plan must be submitted no later than 30 days from the start date of the contract.

Billing Procedures

As part of the process of integrating of the graduates into the organization, it is expected that the graduate will be placed on the employer’s payroll for the duration of the project.

The employer will invoice NSCC on a monthly basis for the incentive. Invoices must include the company’s full name address, business number, and an invoice number. The graduates name and the billing period are also required.

Each invoice should reflect the total amount of salary/wages and benefits paid during the billing period and the 66% claim amount to a maximum of \$2,530 per month. **The host company is responsible for amounts exceeding the monthly and annual (\$30,360) maximums.** Examples are shown in the Tables below.

October Billing Period		
Pay Date	Description	Total
13-Oct	Payroll Sept 25 to Oct 8 – Grad’s Name	\$2,000.00
27-Oct	Payroll Oct 9 to Oct 22 – Grad’s Name	\$2,000.00
	Total Wages & Benefits	\$4,000.00
	66% of Wages & Benefits	\$2,640.00
	Maximum Allowable	\$2,530.00
	Maximum exceeded	
	Invoice amount	\$2,530.00

October Billing Period		
Pay Date	Description	Total
13-Oct	Payroll Sept 25 to Oct 8 – Grad’s Name	\$1,800.00
27-Oct	Payroll Oct 9 to Oct 22 – Grad’s Name	\$1,800.00
	Total Wages & Benefits	\$3,600.00
	66% of Wages & Benefits	\$2,376.00
	Maximum Allowable	\$2,530.00
	Below maximum allowable	
	Invoice amount	\$2,376.00

Invoicing Address

Invoices should be sent via email to: workexperience@nsc.ca

Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback

The Project Coordinator is available at any point for guidance, mentoring and to offer support to both the employer and the graduate. The project coordinator will conduct regular check-in's with the employers and graduates throughout the duration of the contact to ensure the tasks outlined in the work plan are on track.

Quarterly reports are required from both the employer and graduates (a template will be provided). Reports and the updated work plan must be submitted to the Project Coordinator at WorkExperience@nsc.ca.

Employers must notify the Project Coordinator if there are any changes pertaining to the employment of the graduate within ten (10) days of that change. Employers must also submit a final report, acceptable to NSCC, which illustrates the employer's/graduate's delivery of the work plan. Submission of this report is required for final payment at the conclusion of the contractual agreement.

Graduates are encouraged to maintain a journal during employment, reflect on those experiences, and communicate progress with the Faculty Lead and Project Coordinator.

Redress Provision

As part of their responsibilities, employers inform graduates of their company policies, rules and regulations, including their code of conduct. Graduates must be aware of and comply with the code of professional and ethical conduct required by the workforce or profession.

Employers and students should work collaborative to resolve any issues. Should any issues be raised that can't be resolved informally, employers and students should reach out the Faculty and/or Project Coordinator who will work with the Manager of Work-Integrated Learning, the Director of Academic Operations and Systems, and NSCC's Conflict Resolution Consultant to resolve the issues.