**Preparing for a Successful Experiential Learning Opportunity with a Host Organization

While studying at Queen’s you may have the opportunity to engage in an Experiential Learning (EL) opportunity with a host organization (e.g. non-profit, for-profit company, government organization, community-based organization, department at Queen’s). The following checklist is designed to help you prepare for a successful transition into your host organization’s work enviornment:

**Before your First Day:**

* Confirm location for where you will meet on the first day
  + pre-plan and time your route (bus, walk, bike, drive)
  + ask about parking if needed
  + ask where to check in when you arrive
  + ask who you’ll be meeting with
  + plan to arrive 5-10 minutes early
* Ask about dress code (see [Dress Code Guidelines](https://careers.queensu.ca/sites/cars3www/files/uploaded_files/TipSheets/Dress%20Code%20Guidelines%20Tipsheet%20Visual%20Updated_0.pdf) tipsheet)
* Research the organization online (website, LinkedIn); learn about their mission, goals, values and current services, products, projects, programs, initiatives and/or community and clients they serve
* Make sure any required documents from Queen’s and/or the host organization are complete

**During Onboarding to the Organization:**

Clarify general workplace expectations regarding:

* + Workspace (remote, in-person, hybrid)
  + Technology and IT security (i.e. access to computers, how to share files, accessing content and knowledge management systems such as Sharepoint and MS Teams)
  + Who to notify if absent and how to contact them (phone, email)
  + Departmental policies for phones, social media, personal computing
  + How to communicate with your supervisor and team members (text, email, phone)

Attend to site-specific training (provided by host organization):

* Complete required health and safety training
* If working with specific populations, complete any required training to ensure you feel prepared and comfortable working with this population (contact your course instructor if you have any questions or concerns)
* Familiarize yourself with host organization policies or procedures about Harassment and Discrimination, inlcuding Sexual Harassment, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Accommodation policies (Queen’s instructor can also support you in this process)

* Review host organization accommodation policies; discuss any required accommodations with your supervisor or human resources (see [Disclsoure & Accomodation](https://careers.queensu.ca/sites/cars3www/files/uploaded_files/TipSheets/Disclosure%20and%20Accommodation%202024.pdf) tipsheet)

**During the First Few Weeks of your Experience:**

* Clarfiy expectations and goals related to your role and/or project
* Identify skills or knowledge required for success in the opportunity; reflect on strategies you can use to develop those skills or knowledge
* Get to know team members and other individuals in the host organization; be proactive in introducing yourself when opportunities arise (see [Networking](https://careers.queensu.ca/sites/cars3www/files/uploaded_files/TipSheets/Networking%20Tipsheet%202024.pdf) tipsheet)
* Familiarize yourself with the organization’s culture and any protocols or norms (i.e. dress code, email etiquette, calendar management, absences, social events, organizational structures, meeting norms, access to office equipment)
* Create a plan with your supervisor for how often you’ll check in with each other to review your work, ask questions, and receive feedback
* If you’re balancing the EL opportunity with other responsibilities, such as coursework, a job, family, athletics, clubs etc. create a schedule to manage your time effectively (see [Time Management](https://sass.queensu.ca/resources/online/time-management) online guide)
* Develop a system to keep track of your tasks, deadlines, and any required reports or documentation; ask your supervisor or team members for organizational tips and strategies
* If possible, find a mentor within the organization who can offer guidance, support, and insights into the placement.

***\*If you have any questions or concerns during the EL opportunity, remember that your course instructor can help support your communications with the host organization.***