

Arts Work Experience



YEAR-END REPORT

April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

Message from the AWE Working Group

The Arts Work Experience (AWE) program has experienced a year of change. In September, students were finally able to leave the online environment behind after a long and challenging COVID-19 pandemic. This shift resulted in many second and third year Arts students stepping foot on campus for the first time, bringing an appetite for in-person learning, events and opportunities with them. In response, the AWE team was able to plan a combination of in-person and virtual events and workshops to meet the diverse needs of our students.

As one of the cornerstones of our Faculty's Experiential Learning offerings, AWE continues to provide diverse and enriching opportunities that allow students to put their skills and knowledge to work outside of the classroom. As AWE continues to grow, we continue to improve our program and service offerings for our students. If you have feedback, ideas or questions, please contact the AWE Working Group members - we would love to hear from you!

AWE Working Group Members 2022-2023: Kristy Wuetherick - Senior Office Student Programs and Services; Carrie Smith - former Vice-Dean (Faculty of Arts); Marie-Eve Morin - current Vice-Dean (Faculty of Arts); Laura Kerslake - Career Development & Work-Integrated Learning Officer; Miki Zwarich - Work Experience Coordinator; Jacklyn Rocha - AWE Communications and Program Support Intern

Background

Arts Work Experience (AWE) began as a pilot program in 2011 and has since grown significantly with more students joining the program and securing work terms every year.

AWE provides students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in workplace scenarios and to develop professional experience related to their long-term career goals. The work experience model puts the responsibility on the student to set learning objectives, to provide a valuable contribution to an employer and to reflect on how the experience will impact their long term career management.

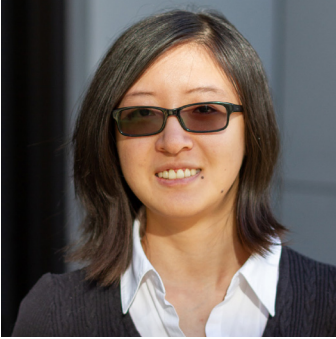
Vision

Arts Work Experience programs connect students, employers and community as a first step in achieving individual, educational and organizational success. It launches Arts students as they begin a journey of innovation, problem solving and the exploration of engaged citizenship and career opportunities.

Mission

UAlberta Arts Work Experience programs provide students with a range of meaningful career development and work term opportunities in a supportive environment that builds student confidence in their abilities to achieve academic and career success. It demonstrates the value of an Arts degree, both on and off campus.

AWE Student Stories



Victoria Lee (BA Music)

Multimedia Specialist Student - PCL Construction Management Inc.

“The most important takeaway from my work experience is to keep asking questions and to get clarity from others until you are confident to independently do the work you are assigned to do. You may end up getting involved in collaborating with people in different fields of expertise, so it’s good to make sure that everyone, including yourself, is on the same boat! After all, the people you work with are more than happy to help you out as someone who’s still learning to try new things— which is a feat you should already be proud of.”



Andrew Schultz (Honours Psychology)

Ombuds Intern, Office of the Student Ombuds, U of A

“One of the most important things I have learned from my work term was how I can blend my own interests with my work, even if they aren’t directly related. Although initially I wasn’t sure how my work at the Office of the Student Ombuds related to a future career in mental health, I quickly found that there were many opportunities to explore my interest within my work term.”



Megan Moges (BA Political Science)

Student Policy Analyst - Praries Economic Development Canada

“The most important lesson I learned from my work experience is that skills that you may be lacking can be learned on the job. It can be daunting walking into a space, where you feel inadequate, skill-wise, but it is important to know that you are not expected to have a mastery of every concept or skill. It is just essential that you have a willingness to learn and grow.”



Tahj Bouanani (BA Human Geography)

Student Planner - City of Edmonton

“Working as a Student Planner with the City of Edmonton has provided me with a valuable perspective into the development process as well as the role and duties of a city Planner. The experience also furthered my understanding of how to contribute to the establishment of vibrant, liveable communities by exposing me to sustainable urban planning strategies that can be injected into the development process for the creation of greener communities and cities.”

AWE Students in 2022 – 2023:

WORKED

approximately 60, 000+ hours

EARNED

\$1,296,600 + with an average wage of \$21.65 per hour

552

AWE jobs posted (50% increase)

94

Work terms completed (12.96% decrease)

Fine Arts - 2% , Social Sciences - 91%, Humanities - 6%, Augustana - 1%

244

New students accepted into AWE (48% increase)

Fine Arts - 5% , Social Sciences - 79%, Humanities - 15%, Augustana - 1%

520

Total students enrolled in AWE (12% increase)

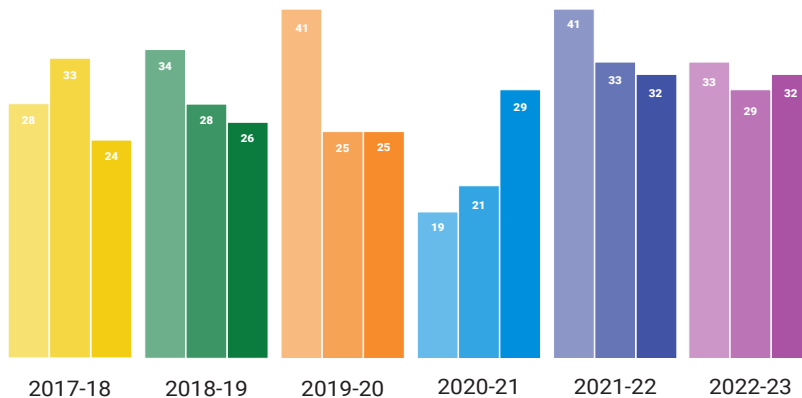
Fine Arts - 7% , Social Sciences - 80%, Humanities - 12%, Augustana- 1%

457

Students registered AWE Information Sessions (9% increase)

AWE in Numbers

★ For individual Department statistics, please contact AWE staff.



AWE Alumni Stories



Nabil Rahman ('22 BA, Economics)

Policy Analyst - Government of Alberta, Ministry of Energy and Minerals

"The support I received not only enabled me to secure my co-op positions, but also helped me shape my goals for an ideal career. The program helped me brand myself efficiently to employers and articulate my skills in an impactful way. The care and support I got from my AWE advisor helped me build confidence in my capabilities, which I further improved on in my work experiences. The skills I have gathered from my co-op experiences are helping me immensely in my career in public policy."



Rachel Smigelski ('20 BA, Human Geography)

Urban Planner - Stantec

"My co-op experience was one of the most valuable and rewarding parts of my university career. Working in land use planning in a municipal setting is what ultimately convinced me to pursue a master's degree in planning. The professional skills that I developed during my co-op term are also what led me to securing a job as an Urban Planner, and I attribute much of my success during my master's degree to my co-op experience."



Brie Longworth ('22 BA, Political Science)

Deputy City Clerk - City of Iqaluit

"It is not an exaggeration to say that participating in AWE has significantly affected the trajectory of my career. My co-op term, in addition to the coaching and resources provided through the program, facilitated an immense growth in my abilities and confidence with writing resumes and cover letters, interviewing for positions, and with working in a professional environment. In the past year since graduating, I have been able to combine the transferable skills I developed through my degree with the confidence and experience I gained through AWE, and I would not be where I am today without it."



Thomas Brown ('22 BA, History & Political Science)

Peacebuilding Researcher, Montreal, QC

"Taking part in AWE was a highlight of my university experience. It also helped connect me with a co-op position that quickly became foundational to my professional development. The AWE advisors and resources are fantastic and have a lot to offer all Arts students who are looking to refine their approach to finding work and discover new experiences."

Year in Review

As in previous years, interest and participation in AWE has continued to increase; a testament to the efforts of the AWE Communications and Program Support Intern, alumni enthusiastic about sharing their stories and students showing a desire to take advantage of opportunities that were less accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We received a record-breaking 170 applications during our winter intake period, prompting the AWE team to respond in creative and strategic ways. Rather than scheduling individual intake meetings for example, we moved to facilitating group intake meetings in order to provide the same information, while also allocating time to supporting current AWE students.

As more students were admitted to AWE, wait times for Career Centre services increased drastically, resulting in AWE staff meeting with more students for resume, cover letter and interview support. In order for staff to continue providing AWE students with exceptional programming and career education opportunities as our numbers continue to grow, a new Work Experience Coordinator position was created, and will be filled by the end of June, 2023.

The AWE Working Group continues to evaluate and refine administration, communications and employer relations strategies based on program growth, accreditation requirements and student survey recommendations. Selected highlights are included below.

Administration

- >> Implemented group intake meetings, which will become standard practice in 2023/2024
- >> Admitted Campus Saint-Jean Arts students for the first time
- >> Began reevaluating and developing the self and supervisor mid term and final evaluations

Career Education

- >> Collaborated with the U of A Career Centre to update and enhance our Memorandum of Understanding and create drop-in advising opportunities for visitors to the HUB Career Centre
- >> Offered initial resume and cover letter support conducted by the AWE Communications and Program Support Intern
- >> Continued to offer one-on-one Advising Appointments and Career Coaching sessions

Diversity and Inclusion

- >> Partnered with Indigenous Student Engagement & Recruitment Specialists to offer drop-in resume and cover letter rapid reviews
- >> Joined the Experiential Learning Best Practices Working Group to better support students at an institutional level and create a standard best practices for staff, students, and employers
- >> Collaborated with the Veteran-Friendly Campus program to continue collaborating on strategies to connect with and support veterans

AWE Student Stories



Ethan Chow (BA Planning)

Planning Work Experience Student - City of Edmonton

“One of the most important things I’ve learned during my placement with the City of Edmonton’s Planning Coordination team is not to be afraid to ask questions. There is so much to learn and it is okay not to know the answers to all the questions! The purpose of a work term is to learn and gain experience. Employers understand that you are a student, and they are always happy to provide the support and mentorship you need.”



Sky Thompson (BA Sociology)

Planning Work Experience Student - City of Edmonton

“The most important thing I’ve learned throughout my work term is the importance of open and honest communication and adaptability. My work term started off with multiple challenges and the only way I was able to successfully overcome them was through communicating with my supervisors and adapting to the rapidly changing situations. I’ve learned first-hand that not everything goes according to plan so being able to keep an open mind, problem solve and communicate will only benefit everyone.”



Jacklyn Rocha (BA English)

AWE Communications & Program Support Intern, Faculty of Arts

“As a Humanities student, I was constantly under pressure when it came to figuring out my career goals. There were many stereotypes around Arts degrees that made me question the versatility of my degree and I was led to believe that I would be stuck with limited career options. But after working behind the scenes with the Faculty of Arts, I have discovered the diverse career paths that are open to Arts students, thanks to the transferable skills we get from our degree programs!”



Amie Doucette (Bachelor of Design)

Digital Marketing Coordinator - Inline Group Inc.

“One of the most important things I’ve learned from my work experience is that if you’re always open to learning new things, you’ll never be stuck in your career and you’ll always be a valuable employee. I’m always learning on the job and as I’ve talked to my coworkers and seniors in the field it turns out that everyone else is also learning! This has helped me avoid that imposter syndrome feeling and instead, be humble and excited to learn the things that I don’t know yet.”

Communications and Marketing

- >> Featured 19 AWE student experience stories on Instagram with a unified branded template and used student Instagram takeovers to feature students on work term.
- >> Established a “follow me to work” reel template that students could follow to profile their work experiences

Employer Relations and Partnerships

- >> Collaborated and shared best practices and employer contacts with other Co-op and Internship Programs on campus by participating in regular meetings.
- >> Created an Employer Handbook that includes an overview of AWE, and suggestions on creating great experiences for Arts students in the workplace

Looking Ahead - Goals for 2023 - 2024

- >> Hire and onboard a second Work Experience Coordinator
- >> Apply for Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada accreditation
- >> Enhance the Memorandum of Understanding with the Career Centre
- >> Enroll the Faculty of Native Studies students in AWE
- >> Finalize the pre-work term e-learning module that outlines the policies and procedures of completing work experience
- >> Fully implement other functions of campusBRIDGE such as the events and appointment booking module
- >> Update the Employer and Student Evaluations in campusBRIDGE to address work term issues and processes

On the Cover

Aakanksha Jayaswal (BA Psychology & Linguistics)

Banking Advisor - Royal Bank of Canada

“The beauty of an Arts degree in the process world is the adaptability it cultivates in its students. The AWE program works in harmony with this, presenting a plethora of fields to take a chance with. It provides you the support you need to take the plunge into an arena you might have been working towards all your life, or even one that is completely out of the blue!”

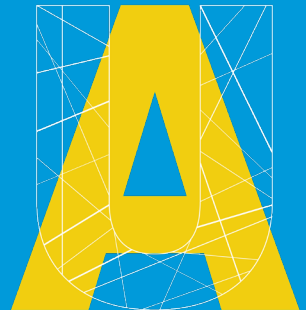


"Participating in Arts Work Experience was one of the best decisions I made while in university. Through AWE, I gained meaningful experience and exposure to different career paths. The program helped me to reflect on my personal goals, and inspired me to pursue a career that I would have never considered otherwise. I am forever grateful for what I got out of AWE and I will take the skills I learned with me into the future."

Jocelynn Proulx, Métis
(21 BA, Criminology)
Policy Analyst, Natural Resources Canada

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