

# The Student Summer Skills Incentive (SKILL) Program



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## **Program Introduction**

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The Student Summer Skills Incentive (SKILL) program provides a wage subsidy to not-for-profit, charitable and social enterprise organizations that hire university and college students for high-quality summer jobs.

SKILL helps full-time post-secondary students find quality summer work experiences where they can develop and hone transferrable work skills.

SKILL-WIL is a stream of the SKILL program that provides a higher subsidy to employers who hire students for jobs that make a meaningful contribution to their studies.

SKILL is administered by the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI).

## How does it work?

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- Skill positions must run for at least 8 weeks and no more than 14 weeks over the summer. The student must work a minimum of 240 hours and SKILL will subsidize up to 525 hours.
- The work experience must take place between April 15 and August 31.
- The student must work full-time.
- Employers must pay at least minimum wage (plus vacation pay and other mandatory employment costs). Preference will be given to positions which offer higher wages.
- If approved, employers **must pay at least** the hourly wage specified in the application. Employers who pay less may be required to make up the difference at the end of the term.
- The program will reimburse \$10.50 for each hour worked by the student.
- Employers are eligible for a \$1 per hour diversity bonus if the student they hire self- identifies as Mi'kmaq or Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, a visible minority, a person with a disability, member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, a woman in an occupation where they are under-represented or an international student.
- Students must live and work in Nova Scotia.
- You may not receive other wage-subsidy funding for a SKILL-funded position, except in SKILL-WIL (see below.)

## **Work-Integrated Learning (SKILL-WIL)**

The program encourages employers to hire students from a co-op, internship or other Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) program. For co-op or other WIL positions:

- You must pay at least \$1 more than minimum wage. The program will reimburse an additional \$1 above the regular SKILL rate. The diversity bonus will be added to this higher reimbursement.
- In addition to Co-op placements or internships, the student may be involved in service learning, an applied research project, etc. Please contact us if you have questions.
- If you know you will be looking for a co-op, intern or other WIL student when you're preparing your application, select SKILL-WIL as the position type on the SKILL application. You can also make use of the WIL option at the time of hiring. Please advise your Agreement Manager if you will make this change.
- SKILL-WIL positions can run for 16 weeks. The program will reimburse SKILL-WIL positions to a maximum of 640 hours.
- Once you've hired your student, you must provide written confirmation (a letter or email) from a representative of the student's educational institution that shows the position will count in their academic program.
- If the work experience is the last requirement of the student's work-integrated-learning program, they do not need to be returning to school in the fall (as would otherwise be required).
- You can combine (stack) SKILL-WIL funding with other non-provincial government employment funding for up to 90% of the total wages, up to a maximum of \$9,600. If the position runs for more weeks than the program can fund, you may use other funding for the additional time.

## **Employers**

SKILL is available to:

- not-for-profit organizations
- social enterprises
- registered charities.

You must provide an active Societies Act number or Canadian Charity Registration number. If you do not have either, please contact us to discuss alternative documents.

## Student-Employees

Employers may hire any person who is either:

- entering full time post-secondary studies in the fall semester immediately following the work term.
- continuing full-time post-secondary studies following the work term.

SKILL recognizes post-secondary programs designated by Employment and Social Development Canada. You can find a list of these on their [website](#).

The student must be a permanent resident of the province or live in Nova Scotia for at least six months prior to the work term. This requirement can be waived for international students who plan to stay in Nova Scotia after the work term.

LSI will provide incentives to support the hiring of family members of the organization's board or staff only where it supports the employment of individuals from certain groups that are underrepresented in the labour market, and where the employer has followed a fair hiring process.

Individuals who self-identify as one or more of the following may be eligible:

- Mi'kmaq or Indigenous
- African Nova Scotians
- Visible minorities (including persons of African descent)
- Persons with disabilities (consisting of a physical, cognitive or mental impairment that presents a persistent barrier to work)

A fair hiring process includes:

- advertising the position, (which can include language that indicates a preference for candidates from one of the populations above);
- interviews; and
- a rationale for selection.



## Applying for the Student Summer Skills Incentive

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Ready to go?

The program accepts applications from December 15<sup>th</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

You will apply using the Labour Market Program Support System (LaMPSS).

If you are registered, apply for SKILL by clicking Start Now on the program website (<https://novascotia.ca/programs/student-summer-skills-incentive/>). Use the same application to apply to SKILL and SKILL-WIL.

If you need to register, clicking the application links will take you to an access request form. You will proceed to the application form once you've provided your organization details.

It is the organization's responsibility to keep LaMPSS up to date. You can do this once you have logged in.

To apply, you need:

- Your Societies Act number or Canadian Charity Registration number
- A contact person at your organization who will be responsible for the agreement
- A list of signing authorities
- A job description for each new position, as well as its location
- A breakdown of the time employees will spend on different tasks (see below)

**Important:** If your organization uses a wage range depending on the student's level of experience, please put the **lowest** wage you will pay in the application. If you offer the student less than you have indicated in the application, you may be required to pay the difference.

**Remember:**

- Positions must run at least 8 weeks and no more than 14 weeks
- Students must work full-time (the program defines full time as at least 30 hours per week)
- You may not receive funding from any other government employment program for the position(s), unless you are approved for SKILL-WIL

## Multiple positions

You may apply for more than one position. This may require more than one application.

Please make **one application** if all positions will be at the same location or in the same county.

Please make **multiple applications** if you are applying for positions in more than one county (Submit one application per county).

If the position(s), such as event-related jobs, may require irregular working hours, please provide details in the job description.

The position you hire for must pay at least minimum wage. If the minimum wage changes between the application deadline and the start of the work term, we will update the wage in your agreement.

### Position Breakdown

To help us assess requested positions, we ask you to estimate the amount of time the student will spend performing the activities in their role.

The table below contains a list of activities and tasks the student will perform. This list also appears in the online application.

Please select activities that best reflect the student's job description and calculate what percentage of a typical workweek they will spend doing each.

Remember that the SKILL Program goal is to support positions that provide students with transferrable skills that have some connection to their education.

We will return applications that do not meet program requirements for you to amend.



## Position Breakdown – Task Table

- Accounts Receivable / Payable
- Bookkeeping / Payroll
- Build or install specialized technology or equipment
- Cash Transactions / Sales
- Child Care / Working with Seniors
- Cleaning
- Coaching / Training
- Coordinating / Organizing
- Customer Service
- Data Collection and Management
- Equipment Maintenance and Operation
- Fundraising / Event Planning
- Horticulture / Silviculture
- IT Support
- Maintenance / Repairs
- Marketing / Public Relations
- Meal preparation / Cook
- Nutrition / Menu design
- Office Assistance
- Present / Perform / Technical Theatre Roles
- Program Admin
- Recreation Support
- Report Writing / Recommendations
- Research
- Restoring Artifacts
- Serving / Waiting Tables / Canteen
- Summarizing
- Survey / Testing
- Video Production / Graphic Design
- Web Design or Update / Social Media
- Analyzing / Interpreting / Advising
- Budgeting
- Collaborating / Partnering
- Communication
- Database Use
- Drafting / GIS Use
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives
- Evaluating / Assessing
- Healthcare / Veterinary Technician tasks
- Horticulture / Silviculture
- Human Resources
- IT Programming / Development
- IT Support
- Lab Work
- Lifeguarding
- Marketing / Public Relations
- Office Assistance
- Present / Perform / Technical Theatre Roles
- Program Management
- Program Planning and Development
- Statistical Analysis
- Supervising staff / Coordinating Volunteers
- Therapy - Occupational / Speech / Physical
- Visitor services / Tourism Information
- Working with Seniors in Care / Persons with Disabilities / Youth at Risk

## Assessment and Approval

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Once the program has received all applications for a term, our Agreement Managers and Youth Initiatives Director will assess your application. The program normally communicates decisions in March.

The program staff consider:

- the type and quality of the work (in terms of challenge, responsibility and the sorts of skills the required by the job)
- the proposed wage
- the employer's track record with SKILL and other programs
- the impact of the organization on the community
- the organization's commitment to diversity and employment equity
- an equitable distribution of opportunity through the province
- available program funding

**If approved**, you will receive an email confirming funding. Funding is contingent upon hiring an eligible student or students.

Please review the approval email carefully. The program may have approved only some of the requested positions. LaMPSS assigns each position a unique number, and if you have applied for multiple positions with the same title, you will be approved only for the number that appears in the approval email.

For example, you requested two Office Assistants, and your letter shows Office Assistant (12345).

This means only one of the positions was approved.

If both were approved, the letter would show Office Assistant (12345) and Office Assistant (23456).

The email will introduce you to your agreement manager and include your agreement number, which you should include in all correspondence with the program.

**If the program has not approved any of your positions**, you will receive an email to let you know.

## Appeals

If some or all of your positions have been denied, you can appeal the decision. The deadline for appeals is generally one week after the notification emails are sent.

When submitting an appeal, please provide additional information about the position and the tasks the student will be completing, clearly explaining what makes the experience valuable to the student's career development and transferable to other career-related positions.

## Selecting your student

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Your organization is responsible for recruiting, selecting, and hiring a student. To help you, the SKILL program posts a list of approved positions on its website. This list will include your company name, the title of the position and contact information.

Once you have hired your student, send your agreement manager:

- A completed [Student Information Form](#), which you can download from our website. Please ensure the employee completes and signs both sides of the form. This is where the student may self-identify for the 10% diversity bonus (if applicable).
- If you have applied for SKILL-WIL, please provide a copy of the student's transcript, or a letter that shows the student is enrolled in a Co-op work-term for the period of the agreement

Please send your Student Information Form within 10 days of the employee's start date. **Your funding is not confirmed until we receive this information. The program may cancel your funding if you do not provide these documents by the deadline provided.**

If you will be hiring the student for different hours, weeks, or a different hourly wage than what was in your application, please let your agreement manager know as soon as possible. Remember that you must pay at least the wage stated in the application, and that students must work the minimum number of hours required by the program.

## The Agreement Period

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Once we have verified that the student you have selected is eligible for the program, we will generate your contract (Agreement).

LaMPSS will send an email to all signing officers identified on the application form asking for you to sign your contract.

You may sign by logging in to LaMPSS and:

- Providing electronic acknowledgement within the database
- Downloading the agreement, signing it digitally, and uploading it again -or-
- Printing the agreement, signing it in ink, scanning and uploading

Signing authorities who are not LaMPSS users can use electronic acknowledgement to sign the contract by using the Nova Scotia Login System. We will provide instructions with your approval email. Only the email address that received the invitation can be used to sign in.

The funding amount stated in the contract is based on the student-employee working the full number of weeks and hours requested, at the hourly rate provided in the application. If the student works fewer hours, we will reduce your payment.

Employers must pay at least the hourly wage specified in the application or the minimum wage in effect, whichever is **higher**. If your application form included a minimum wage below the minimum wage that will apply during the work term, the contract will show the minimum wage you must pay.

Once you sign this contract, your agreement will be active.

### Proof of Enrollment

Each year, the program will randomly select positions to confirm that the student-employee is going to post-secondary in the fall. If we select one of the positions you have filled, your Agreement Manager will contact you to request your employee's proof of enrollment in university or college for the upcoming term.

### Advance Payments

The SKILL program uses a reimbursement model: we pay you at the end of the summer based on what you have paid your student-employee(s).

If you require an advance on your funds to pay student-employees, please complete the Advance Request Form available on the [SKILL website](#) and send it in with your Student Information Form(s). The program will advance up to 60% of the funding approved.

## Financial Reporting

To make your reimbursement payment, we require proof of wages you have paid to the student.

Please download and complete the Pay Declaration from the [SKILL Website](#). We reimburse for actual hours worked. The total hours worked by the student should match the hours approved in your contract. **Please clearly explain any discrepancies.**

**Have your employee sign the Pay Declaration** and upload it into LaMPSS using the instructions provided by your Agreement Manager. We advise you to complete this Declaration on the employee's last day of work. Signatures must be in ink and scanned/photographs, or via Adobe Digital ID. This signature is our only confirmation that you paid the student what you agreed to pay. Typed signatures will not be accepted.

If you were not able to get your employee to sign the Pay Declaration, please also send the employee's Record of Employment (ROE). The amounts on the documents must substantially match for us to issue payment.

Amounts reported on the pay declaration or ROE may be subject to audit by the program.

## Evaluation and Feedback

To make sure we are meeting program standards and to gather feedback about the program, we ask that both employers and students complete a survey near the end of the agreement period.

We will send links to the surveys by email to the agreement contact and student(s). **Make sure your student(s) complete and submit the survey while they are still working for you, ideally during their last day or two on the job.**

All information we gather is confidential. We report on program trends but will not share identifiable information without permission.

Your Agreement Manager may also contact you from time to time during the agreement to request feedback or collect other information.

## SKILL Program Summary

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1. Develop a position for a summer student. If applying for a Work-integrated Learning position (SKILL-WIL), have a post-secondary program endorse the position as suitable for its students.
2. [Apply online](#). (Apply for LaMPSS access if necessary.)
3. If approved, hire your student(s).
4. Send your agreement manager a completed [Student Information Form](#) and, if it's a SKILL-WIL position, proof your student's work term will count in their program.
5. Your Agreement Manager will send you a link to sign your funding agreement in LaMPSS.
6. Have a great summer with your student(s) – and give them lots of helpful feedback.
7. At the end of the work term, download and complete the Pay Declaration. Both employer and student must sign.
8. Log in to LaMPSS and upload your Pay Declaration (and ROE if required).
9. Complete the employer survey, and have the student complete the employee survey. Your Agreement Manager will send you the survey links.
10. You will receive reimbursement by direct deposit.

## **Contact Us**

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If you require any additional information, please contact us:

[yepinfo@novascotia.ca](mailto:yepinfo@novascotia.ca)

(Toll Free) 1-800-424-5418

(Local) 902-424-6000



