



# COLLEGE of ENGINEERING AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

## PhD Seminar 2

Wednesday May 27, 2020 at 10:30AM on Zoom (Please email Dr. Luiza Antonie at [lantonie@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lantonie@uoguelph.ca) to view)

### **Barriers to Work-Integrated Learning for Students with Disabilities** **Laura Gatto**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

The Government of Canada is adopting the pedagogical practice of work integrated learning (WIL) to help youth develop the career ready skills needed to transition from school to work. As a result, colleges and universities are receiving funding to grow academic programs that link theoretical learning with practical work experience. From an environmental scan of 55 Canadian post-secondary institutions' websites and survey results from work integrated learning professionals and students with disabilities we ask: Do post-secondary institutions in Canada help students with disabilities become career ready? The data reveals that 40% of schools had no reference to disability related services for any career related activities. WIL Practitioners report they are not being trained nor have access to resources to support students with disabilities. Furthermore, Students with mental health disabilities are significantly less likely to participate in WIL as are those with negative perceptions that they have equal access to WIL and who disagree that employers are sensitive to their disability-related needs in WIL. Students with disabilities do not request accommodations in WIL, especially those who are registered in a Co-op program. We therefore recommend policy that mandates colleges and universities to train staff about career related disability management, that disability supports for all structured work programs be available, and that reduced and flexible hours be offered for those WIL programs that require full-time employment.