

# Arts Work Experience



## YEAR-END REPORT

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

## Message from the AWE Working Group

Arts Work Experience (AWE) continues to evolve to better serve and support students. In June, 2023, a new Work Experience Coordinator joined the team, allowing for an increase in career education offerings and a renewed focus on employer relations. We also started using WaitWell, an appointment booking system that drastically reduced inefficiencies and provided students with full control over their own appointment bookings. In a post-COVID landscape, students continue to seek both in-person and online opportunities and in response, the AWE team created more opportunities for students to access services and attend events and workshops in a variety of formats.

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 to serve 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 2023-2024:** Kristy Wuetherick - Senior Office Student Programs and Services; Marie-Eve Morin - Vice-Dean (Faculty of Arts); Laura Kerslake - Career Development & Work-Integrated Learning Officer; Miki Zwarich - Work Experience Coordinator; Lindsay Hennessey - Work Experience Coordinator; Hannah Wiley - 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



### **Efe Oroh (BA, Economics)**

**Student Policy Analyst - Government of Canada, PrairiesCan**

“Reflecting on my internship at PrairiesCan, the most important lesson I learned was the value of adaptable communication- being able to explain complex economic concepts at various levels of detail is essential in a technical field like economics. For incoming AWE students, my advice is to try and perform/impress beyond the ‘intern’ level; aim higher to naturally achieve more.”



### **Moira Percival (BA, Psychology)**

**Psychology Intern - Alberta Health Services (AHS) - Step Up Step Down**

“I can’t begin to describe what an amazing experience I have had during my Arts Work Experience term at Step Up Step Down. As a Psychology Intern I have had the opportunity to develop and facilitate psychoeducational groups and teach adolescents ages 13-17 a variety of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and emotional regulation skills. Arts Work Experience has provided me with the opportunity to gain invaluable practical experience that will aid me in my goal of becoming a registered psychologist.”



### **Hammad Khan (BA, Media Studies)**

**Analyst - Government of Alberta, Alternative Capital Financing Coordination**

“Working as an Analyst for the Alternative Capital Financing Partnerships Office at Alberta Infrastructure has equipped me with useful skills, including research, policy analysis and portfolio management. This was my first time working in public service and the experience revealed to me the unique challenges of decision-making in the government and the added responsibilities surrounding it”



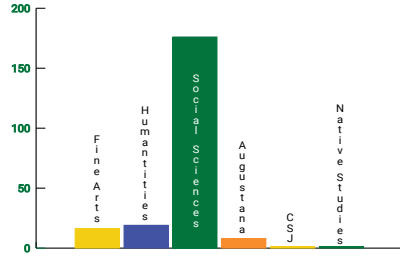
### **Rebeca Ávila (BA, Political Science and Philosophy)**

**Student Ombuds - Office of the Student Ombuds, University of Alberta**

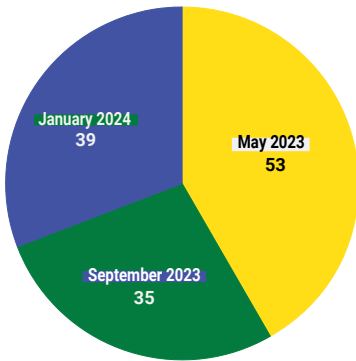
“Participating in Arts Work Experience gave me the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills I have gained while in university to a professional work setting. The AWE program provided guidance and support during my whole internship process: from finding a job, preparing to start my placement, to transitioning out of my role. As an international student, AWE introduced me to the Canadian work environment and expectations and helped me feel confident in pursuing further professional placements.”

# AWE Students in 2023 – 2024:

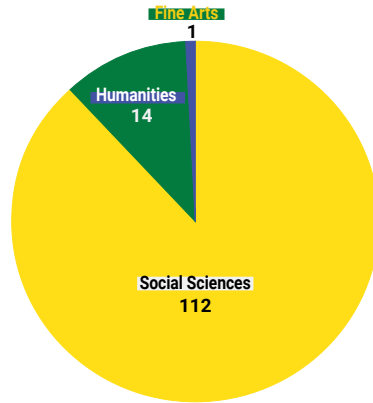
- 221** Students accepted into AWE
- 127** Work terms completed
- \$22.45** Average wage



**Work Terms Secured: 2023 - 2024**

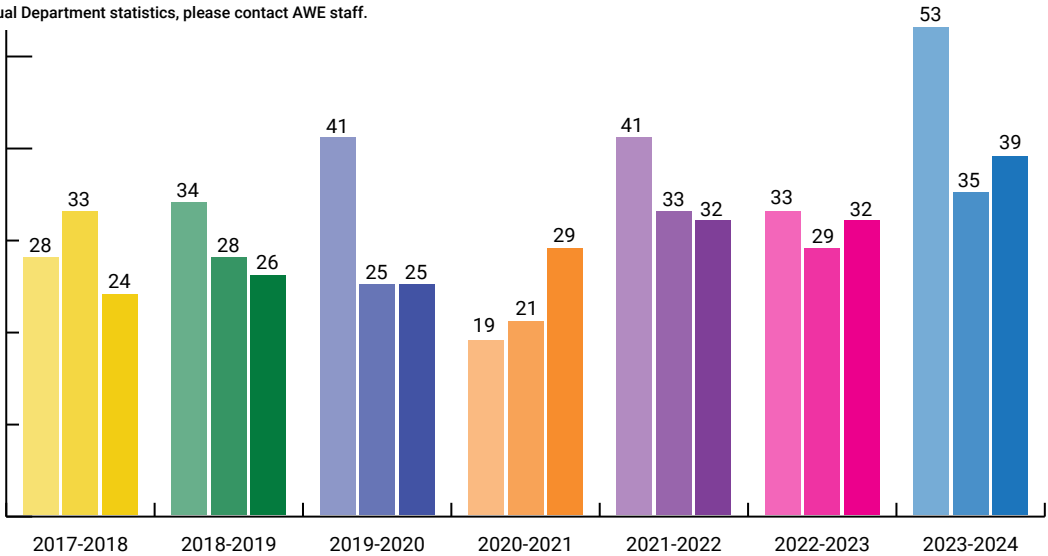


**Work Terms Secured: By Department**



## AWE Work Term Growth

★ 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."



### **Fea Jerulen Gelvezon ('22 BA, Political Science)**

**Investigator - Alberta Ombudsman**

"Participating in AWE was the pivotal experience of my undergraduate degree, allowing me to gain mentorship and learn invaluable skills. The mentorship I received from the AWE staff fostered my confidence and resilience in job search, enabling me to try applying for positions outside of my comfort zone. Now, as an Investigator for the Alberta Ombudsman, I continue to use the skills I learned from my AWE internship daily, underscoring its lasting impact."



### **Evan Wong ('21 BA, Economics)**

**Associate - Goldman Sachs**

"The assistance I received not only facilitated my success in securing valuable positions in finance, but it also played a crucial role in refining my career aspirations. I learned to effectively market my personal brand to potential employers and communicate my financial expertise with clarity and impact. The guidance and encouragement from my AWE advisor bolstered my confidence in my abilities, which I continued to develop through hands-on experience. The skills I acquired during my internships are proving invaluable as I navigate my career in finance."



### **Radha Saikia ('18 BA, Honors Psychology)**

**Head of Customer Success - AuditSoft**

"As Arts students, it's easy to assume our career options are limited by our majors. Arts Work Experience is excellent at opening doors to paths that students may never have considered. Through my AWE work term at the Government of Alberta, I had the opportunity to practice the data analysis skills I learnt in my degree which then landed me a role in the tech startup world. I've been working in tech startups since and haven't looked back."

## Year in Review

This year, we welcomed Lindsay Hennessey, adding another Work Experience Coordinator to the team. With her support, we were able to address outstanding program goals that would not have been possible otherwise. We were able to divide up student assignments more evenly, resulting in an increased capacity to provide individualized support to each AWE student. Additionally, we were able to take a more active role in employer relations, developing best practices with the Career Centre to provide more employment opportunities to students and connect with prospective employers.

We also continued offering group intake orientation sessions. We were able to offer more online and in-person sessions, eliminating the need for individual orientation sessions. These group sessions provided more time to plan and facilitate more workshops, such as Career Vision Board Planning, Avoiding Job Scams and a Workplace Etiquette.

The Communications and Program Support Intern encouraged more students to submit “Follow Me to Work” reels for our Instagram account than ever before, resulting in more followers and a higher level of social media engagement from prospective and current AWE students. They also enhanced the AWE Student Stories website with updated branding and reorganized the content in a more user friendly way. Here are the highlights from this year:

### Administration

- > Implemented WaitWell to manage student appointments more efficiently
- > Began revising and updating the AWE Student Handbook to better communicate policies and procedures
- > Developed an online midterm and final evaluation process for students on work terms and their supervisors
- > Established job posting best practices with the U of A Career Centre and took the lead on approving and adding positions to the AWE Job Board

### Career Education

- > Implemented a Pre-employment eClass for newly admitted students to ensure that students were well-equipped to make the most of our programs and services
- > Created branded career resources to supplement advising services
- > Initiated the development of an international student orientation presentation
- > Continued to offer individualized Advising Appointments and Career Coaching sessions to students and initial resume reviews by the AWE Communications and Program Support Intern

### Diversity and Inclusion

- > Continued to partner with the Indigenous Student Engagement & Recruitment Specialist to offer drop-in resume and cover letter support
- > Collaborated with the Work-Integrated Learning Working Group to streamline international student advising, especially around work experience tuition as it applies to tuition guarantees

## Communications and Marketing

- > Featured 16 student stories and 6 Reels on Instagram with a unified branded template and a focus on a day-in-the-life of students on work terms.
- > Reformatted and reorganized the AWE Student Stories website and added a Tip of The Week Archive page to enhance the user experience and increase student engagement
- > Updated the branding and templates for both AWE Weekly Updates and AWE News e-newsletters

## Employer Relations and Partnerships

- > Updated the Memorandum of Understanding with the U of A Career Centre to take a more active role in employer relations and posting positions relevant to Arts students
- > Hosted an employment information session with the Government of Alberta and Correction Services Canada with a focus on Indigenous recruitment

## Looking Ahead - Goals for 2024 - 2025

- > Create an online community for students on work term to connect with each other and share experiences and advice
- > Migrate current eClass materials to Canvas and leverage new technology to increase and enhance student offerings
- > Cultivate relationships with new employers to create more employment opportunities for AWE students
- > Increase student enrolment and work term numbers for international students
- > Provide information about AWE for department websites
- > Lead the facilitation of the Master of Arts Policy Studies - Practicum program

## On the Cover

### Aakanksha Jayaswal (BA Psychology & Linguistics)

Banking Advisor - Royal Bank of Canada

*"The beauty of an Arts degree 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!"*



*"AWE has given me the opportunity to take my first step into my career. It has allowed me to not only understand the field of psychology from a new lens, but also interact with both mental health professionals and clients in ways the classroom would never be able to replicate. With my current knowledge and abilities, I eagerly anticipate my future career path!"*

**Well Limsombutanan**

**(BA, Psychology)**

**Client Care Coordinator - Nova Psychology**

## **ARTS CAREER CENTRE**

**1-17 Humanities Centre**

**Laura Kerslake**

Career Development & Work-Integrated Learning Officer

[laura.kerslake@ualberta.ca](mailto:laura.kerslake@ualberta.ca)

780-492-1781



**[uab.ca/awe](http://uab.ca/awe)**



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**