



WORK LEARN and WORK LEARN INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS | W21



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I started applying for Work Learn jobs at the end of my first year. At the time, I was really interested in the medical field and I wanted something that was hands on. I applied to all the medical-related jobs but this one kind of stood out to me because it's all about intercultural analysis. Our project, Intersectional Assistive Technology study, aims to understand the social and cultural differences in access and use of assistive technology (e.g. wheelchairs, canes and hearing aids etc.) among people with disabilities. It resonated with my passion in public health and gives me a great platform to showcase my language skills (being multilingual).

In terms of balancing this position with my academics, I think Work Learn is quite flexible: some weeks you can work fewer and my supervisors were very accommodating. I managed my time by

knowing my priorities, knowing what task comes first, and then I try to focus on one thing at a time. I also tried to plan ahead and would talk to my supervisor about things that were coming up that might be challenging.

As a result of my WL IURA and Work Learn roles, I think the number one thing I have gained is patient experience. Part of my job is interviewing patients for data collection and analysis. I also learned how to speak to a vulnerable population and being professional in a medical setting. Work Learn gives you the platform to try different things and find out what works for you. Over the years, I have become more aware of my career preferences. I also learned a lot about professional networking. I really wanted a job in the medical field and this job bridged many connections for me.

I learned to ask for help and clarifications – the first two years of my job took place virtually during the pandemic so I did not really meet anyone on the team and I had a hard time figuring things out. At the time, I did not want to bother anyone but later I learned how to seek out for help and to ask about expectations first before going straight into a task.

If you are thinking about applying to Work Learn, I would say that you never really know what's out there unless you try! I did a Work Learn and then a WL IURA position, which was my first full-time job where I gained an exposure working with many health personnel, like OT, PT and researchers. Right now, I am working on a literature review for the government, and it never ceases to amaze me how many doors one work learn opportunity opens.