

BC WIL Employer/Community Partner Survey – Key Findings

December, 2020

The BC Work Integrated Learning Council (formerly the Accountability Council for Co-operative Education and WIL BC) provides and encourages the adoption of consistent program guidelines and standards for quality Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning in BC's PSE system, and serves as a venue to discuss and promote institutional issues. It is an independent council of the Association for Co-operative Education WIL (BC/Yukon) and is comprised of one member from each public, post-secondary co-operative education and work integrated learning institution in BC as appointed by the President of the institution.

In June 2020, the Council identified a need for a greater understanding of the labour market's ability to engage WIL students in next 12-18 months to help members plan their WIL programming in the coming 1-2 years and a greater understanding of student experiences, interests and needs.

Steering Committee Oversight Project:

- Ron Bowles, Interim Dean, Office of Applied Research & Graduate Studies at Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Andrea Giles, Acting Executive Director, Co-operative Education Program and Career Services, UVIC, BC WIL Council Secretary
- Muriel Klemetski, Director, Work-Integrated Learning, SFU
- Stephanie McKeown, Chief Institutional Research Officer, UBC
- Andrea Sator, Curriculum Project Manager, Work-Integrated Learning Program, SFU
- Julie Walchli, Executive Director, Work-Integrated Education and Career Initiatives, UBC Arts, BC WIL Council Chair

Survey administrator – The Planning and Institutional Research Office at The University of British Columbia

UBC's Planning and Institutional Research Office acted as the survey administrator. Under the direction of the Steering Committee, it provided logistical and technical support for the deployment of the survey. It is also acting as the data steward for the data collected from the survey and from the upcoming second and third stages of data collection.

Contact Information

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Survey deployment

- The survey was designed by the survey administrator and the steering committee
- BC WIL Council members (representing a BC Post-secondary institution) that volunteered to participate received an anonymous survey link and a series of suggested invitation and reminder email templates
- The survey was distributed by each of the participating BC WIL Council members, who decided the best way to distribute to their WIL partners

18 Participating post-secondary institutions

British Columbia Institute of Technology

Camosun College

College of the Rockies

Emily Carr University of Art + Design

Justice Institute of British Columbia

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Langara College

North Island College

Royal Roads University

Selkirk College

Simon Fraser University

Thompson Rivers University

University of British Columbia

University of Northern British Columbia

University of the Fraser Valley

University of Victoria

Vancouver Community College

Vancouver Island University

Project Overview

The goal of the first BC WIL Employer/Community Partner Survey was to have **data to better understand evolving stakeholder needs to assist BC WIL Council members with planning through the coming year.**

1. **First stage: Survey, September-October 2020**
2. **Second stage: Focus Groups & Interviews, February 2021 (*Tentative*)**
3. **Third stage: Survey, April 2021 (*Tentative*)**

CEWIL Canada WIL Definitions used in the survey

This definitions were included alongside each of the WIL types listed in the survey; a hyperlink to the original CEWIL definitions website was also included in the survey

- **Apprenticeship:** Apprenticeship is an agreement between a person (an apprentice) who wants to learn a skill and an employer who needs a skilled worker and who is willing to sponsor the apprentice and provide paid related practical experience under the direction of a certified journey person in a work environment conducive to learning the tasks, activities and functions of a skilled worker. Apprenticeship combines about 80% at-the-workplace experience with 20% technical classroom training, and depending on the trade, takes about 2-5 years to complete. Both the workplace experience and the technical training are essential components of the learning experience.
- **Co-operative Education (co-op alternating and co-op internship models):** Co-op alternating consists of alternating academic terms and paid work terms. Co-op internship consists of several co-op work terms back-to-back. In both models, work terms provide experience in a workplace setting related to the student's field of study. The number of required work terms varies by program; however, the time spent in work terms must be at least 30% of the time spent in academic study for programs over 2 years in length and 25% of time for programs 2 years and shorter in length.
- **Internships:** Offers usually one discipline specific (typically full-time), supervised, structured, paid or unpaid, for academic credit or practice placement. Internships may occur in the middle of an academic program or after all academic coursework has been completed and prior to graduation. Internships can be of any length but are typically 12 to 16 months long.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Allows a student to leverage resources, space, mentorship and/or funding to engage in the early stage development of business start-ups and/or to advance external ideas that address real-world needs for academic credit.

CEWIL Canada WIL Definitions (cont.)

- **Service Learning:** Community Service Learning (CSL) integrates meaningful community service with classroom instruction and critical reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities. In practice, students work in partnership with a community based organization to apply their disciplinary knowledge to a challenge identified by the community.
- **Applied Research Projects:** Students are engaged in research that occurs primarily in workplaces, includes: consulting projects, design projects, community-based research projects.
- **Mandatory Professional Practicum/Clinical Placement:** Involves work experience under the supervision of an experienced registered or licensed professional (e.g. preceptor) in any discipline that requires practice-based work experience for professional licensure or certification. Practica are generally unpaid and, as the work is done in a supervised setting, typically students do not have their own workload/caseload.
- **Field Placement:** Provides students with an intensive part-time/short term intensive hands-on practical experience in a setting relevant to their subject of study. Field placements may not require supervision of a registered or licensed professional and the completed work experience hours are not required for professional certification. Field placements account for work-integrated educational experiences not encompassed by other forms, such as co-op, clinic, practicum, and internship.
- **Work Experience:** Intersperses one or two work terms (typically full-time) into an academic program, where work terms provide experience in a workplace setting related to the student's field of study and/or career goals.

Part I

Quantitative Analysis

Summary of main overall findings

- 1,494 total responses
- 74% of usual WIL hiring since onset of pandemic; 87% of usual WIL hiring expected for next 6-12 months
 - WIL hiring freeze, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, reported by 4% of participants
- 81% of usual new-grad hiring expected for next 6-12 months
- Top three areas of WIL engagement for next 6-12 months:
 - Administration/Business (20% of respondents reported they planned to hire/engage WIL placements in the next 6-12 months)
 - Engineering (14%)
 - Computer Science (14%)
- Top 3 most impacted industries (future WIL and new-grad hiring):
 - Accommodation and food services
 - Arts, entertainment and recreation
 - Transportation and warehousing
- Top factors affecting WIL hiring/engaging for next 6-12 months:
 - Economic and financial issues (60% of respondents reported this will somewhat or significantly impact their WIL hiring)
 - Difficulty supervising students remotely (COVID-19 disruption) (52%)
 - Difficulty recruiting and onboarding students remotely (COVID-19 disruption) (48%)
 - Lack of staffing resources to supervise and mentor students (46%)
- Most useful resources in enabling more WIL student hiring during next 6-12 months:
 - Access to wage subsidies to hire/engage students (61% thought it would be extremely or very useful)
 - Help navigating various wage subsidies and submitting requests for funding (57%)
 - Help navigating types of WIL programs (39%)
 - Help navigating the process for engaging WIL students (35%)

Participants by sector and location

Sector		
	Number	%
Health care and social assistance	278	19
Professional, scientific and technical services	232	16
Educational services	198	13
Public administration	115	8
Manufacturing	95	6
Arts, entertainment and recreation	91	6
Construction	53	4
Finance and insurance	43	3
Retail trade	38	3
Information and cultural industries	31	2
Accommodation and food services	30	2
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	29	2
Transportation and warehousing	26	2
Other services (except public administration)	23	2
Wholesale trade	14	1
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	8	1
Real estate and rental and leasing	8	1
Management of companies and enterprises	3	0
Utilities	2	0
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	2	0

Almost 50% of responses came from 3 sectors: Health care and social assistance; Professional, scientific and technical services; and Educational services. British Columbia was the location where most participants engaged WIL placements.

Locations* Where Engaging WIL Students

	Number	%
British Columbia	771	58
Ontario	117	9
Alberta	109	8
Outside of Canada: (please specify country)	49	4
Quebec	47	4
Manitoba	45	3
Saskatchewan	41	3
Nova Scotia	36	3
Yukon	28	2
New Brunswick	25	2
Newfoundland and Labrador	21	2
Prince Edward Island	18	1
Northwest Territories	16	1
Nunavut	16	1

BC Locations* Where Engaging WIL Students

	Number	%
British Columbia: Mainland / Southwest	672	42
British Columbia: Vancouver Island / Coast	471	29
British Columbia: Thompson-Okanagan	154	10
British Columbia: Kootenay	98	6
British Columbia: North Coast & Nechako	75	5
British Columbia: Cariboo	72	4
British Columbia: Northeast	70	4

*Participants could choose multiple locations.

Participants by type of organization, organization size, and respondent's role in the organization

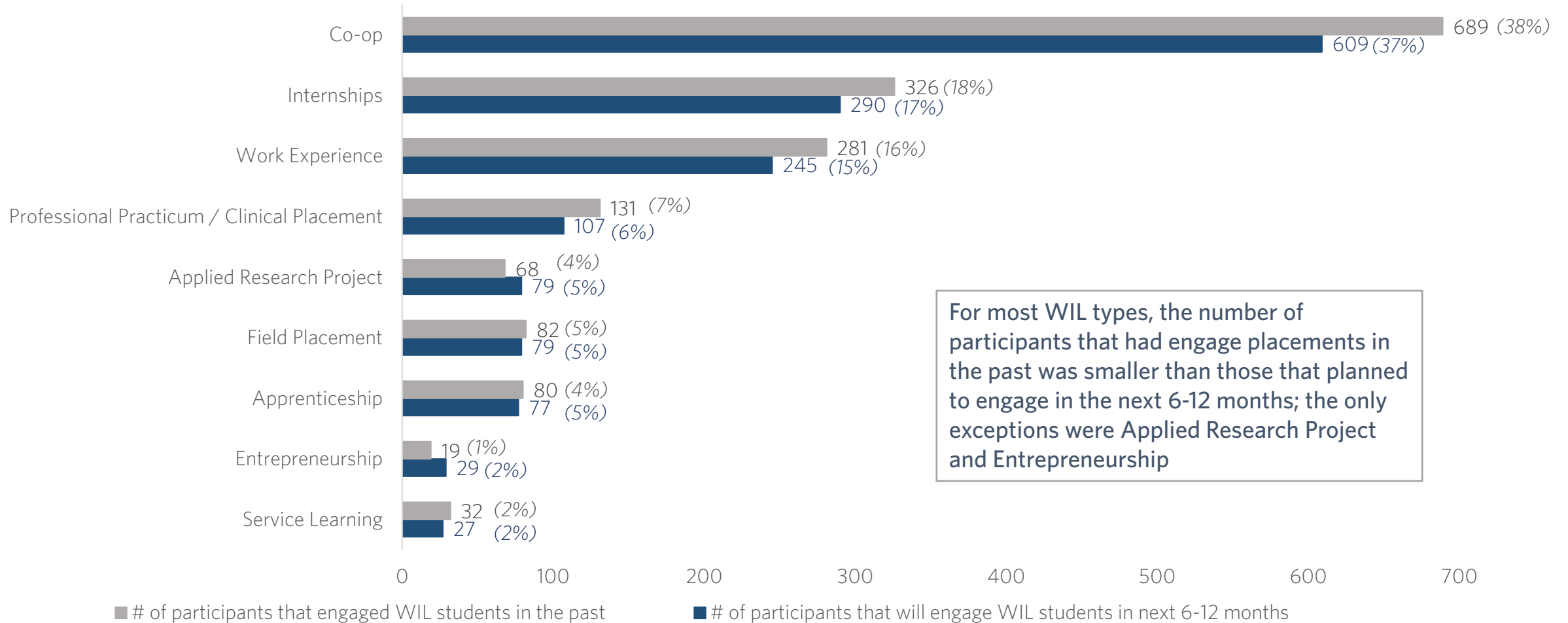
Type of Organization		
	Number	%
Private Business	723	50
Non-profit Organization	306	21
Provincial Government	131	9
Federal Government	75	5
Provincial Agency	58	4
Municipal Government	30	2
Federal Agency	8	1

Organization Size		
	Number	%
Small (1-99 employees)	764	54
Medium (100-499 employees)	226	16
Large (500+ employees)	372	26

Respondent's Role		
	Number	%
Manager, Supervisor, or equivalent	551	40
President, CEO, Owner, or Executive Director	243	17
Coordinator, Supervisor, or equivalent	199	14
Coordinator, Assistant, or equivalent	113	8
Partner, Advisor, or Associate	65	5
Vice President or equivalent	49	4
C-Suite Executive (CFO, CMO, CTO, CXO)	39	3
Self-employed or contractor	27	2

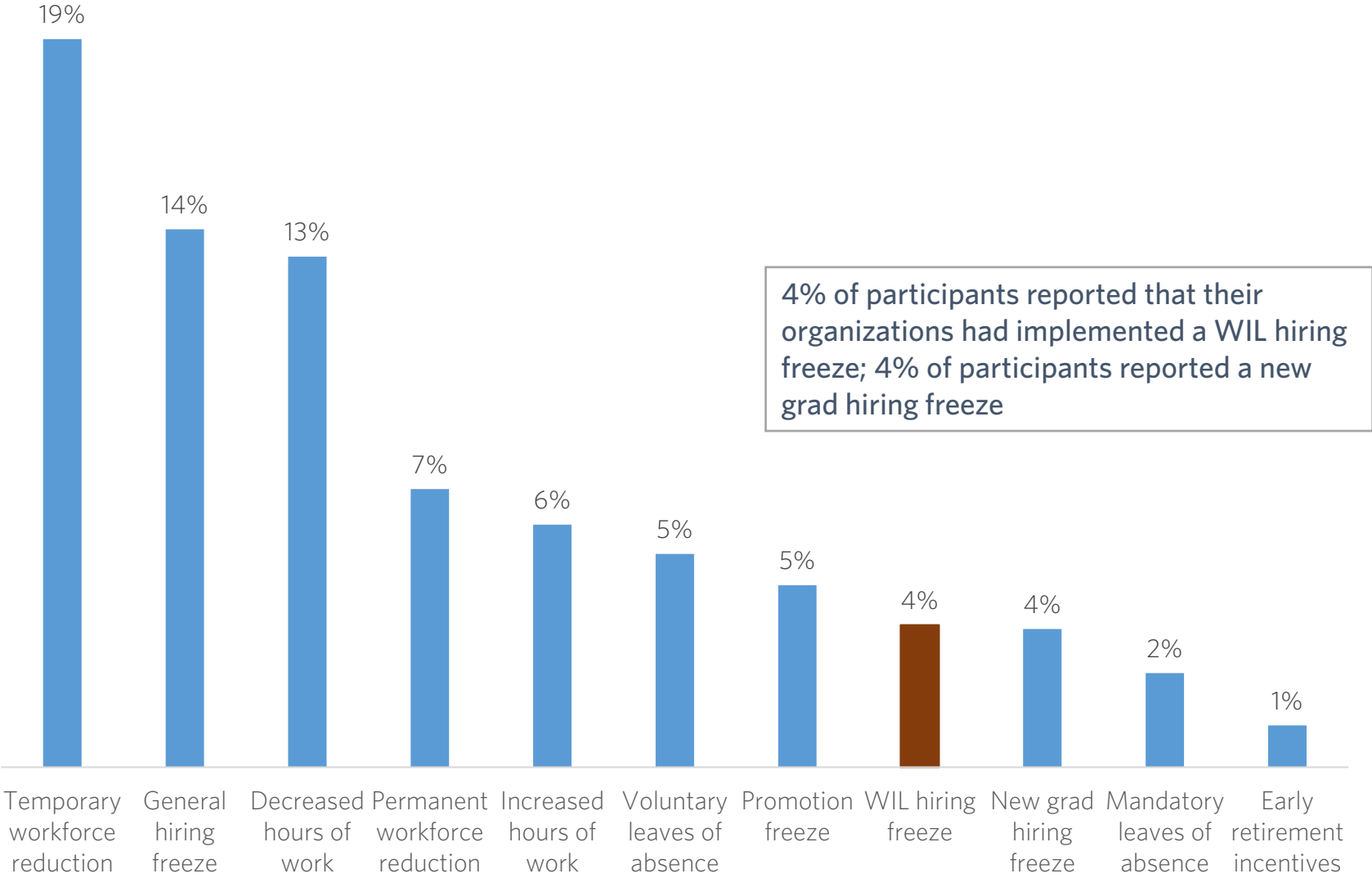
Half of the participants work for a private business; over half of participants are part of a small organization.

Participating partners per WIL type (past & next 6-12 months)



For most WIL types, the number of participants that had engage placements in the past was smaller than those that planned to engage in the next 6-12 months; the only exceptions were Applied Research Project and Entrepreneurship

Percentage of participants reporting a given approach taken by their organization due to COVID-19



Estimated reduction in WIL placements reported by employers

- Participants were asked to estimate and compare their WIL placements in January-August 2019 vs January-August 2020:

On average, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, WIL student placements have been reduced by 26%*

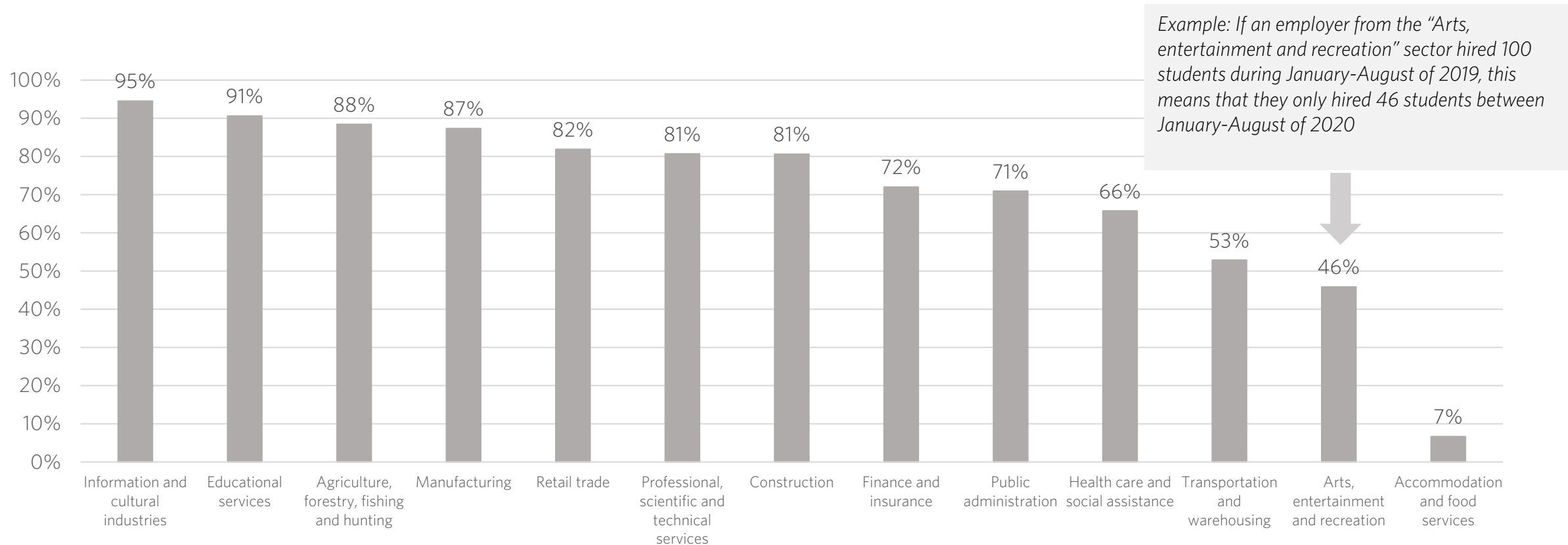
- Participants were also asked to estimate their WIL placements for the next 6-12 months:

On average, for the next 6-12 months, WIL student placements will be reduced by 13%, compared to pre-pandemic levels**

**Only from participants reporting WIL hiring in the past*

*** Only from participants reporting WIL hiring for the next 6-12 months*

Percentage* of usual WIL hiring since onset of the pandemic by sector**

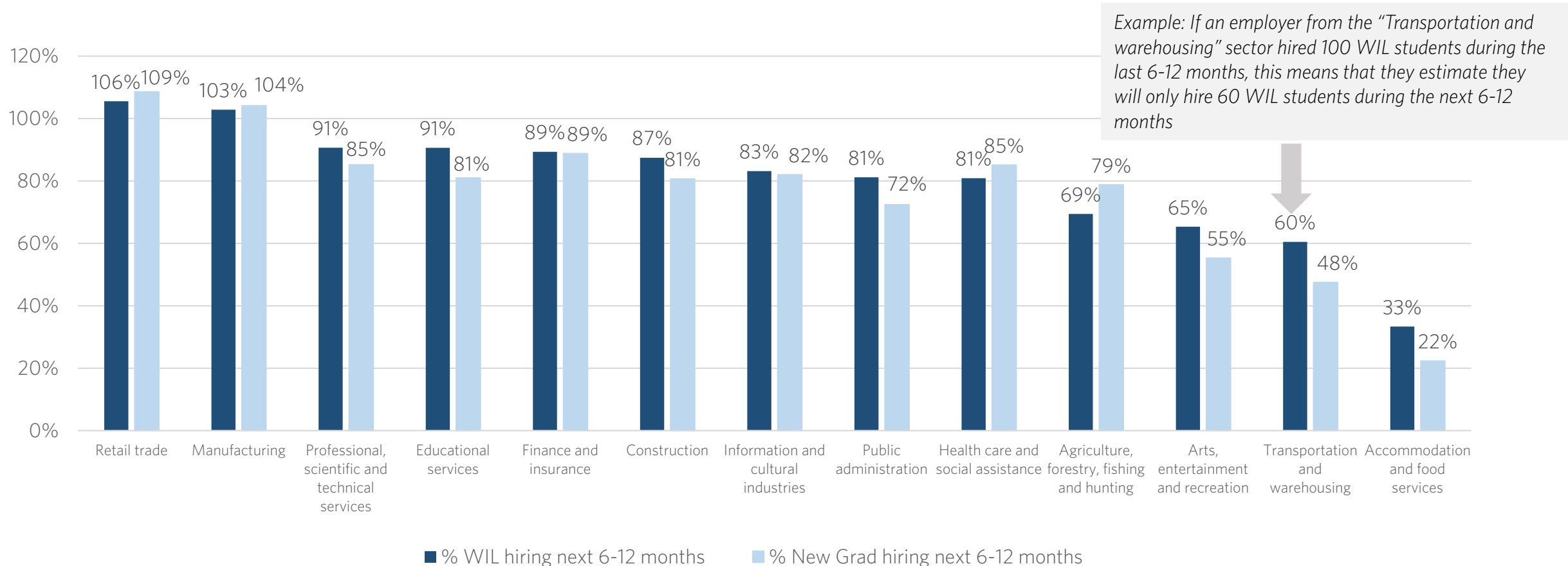


Accommodation and food services report the lowest hiring rate, at 7% of their usual rate.

*100% = No change

** Only sectors representing over 1% of respondents

Forecasted percentage* of usual WIL and new-grad hiring for the next 6-12 months by sector**

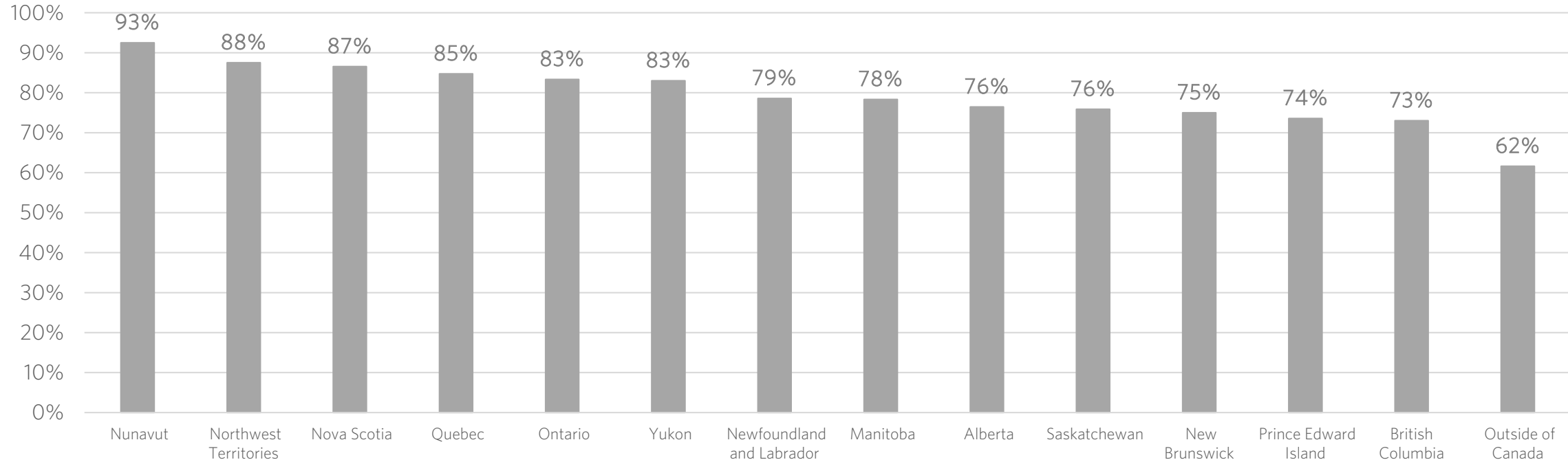


Accommodation and food services report the lowest WIL and new-grad hiring rate, at 33% and 22% of their usual rate, respectively. Both Manufacturing and Retail estimate hiring above their usual rate.

*100% = No change

** Only sectors representing over 1% of respondents

Percentage* of usual WIL hiring since onset of the pandemic by location**

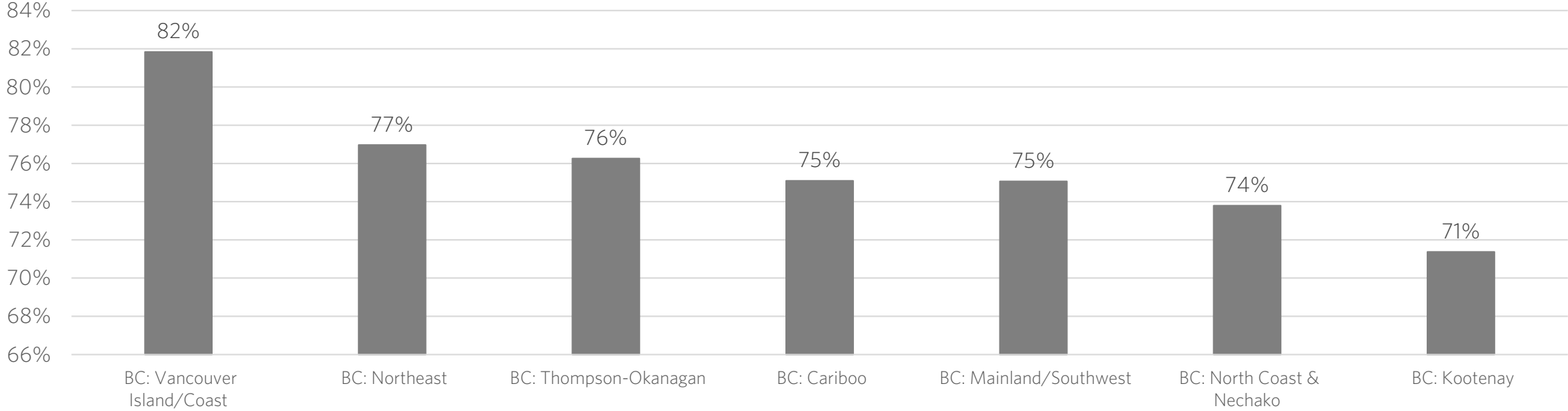


At 62% of the usual hiring rate, partners hiring for placements outside of Canada report the lowest rate.

*100% = No change

** Participants could have chosen multiple locations but could only report one hiring change. Assumption: that hiring change applies to all locations

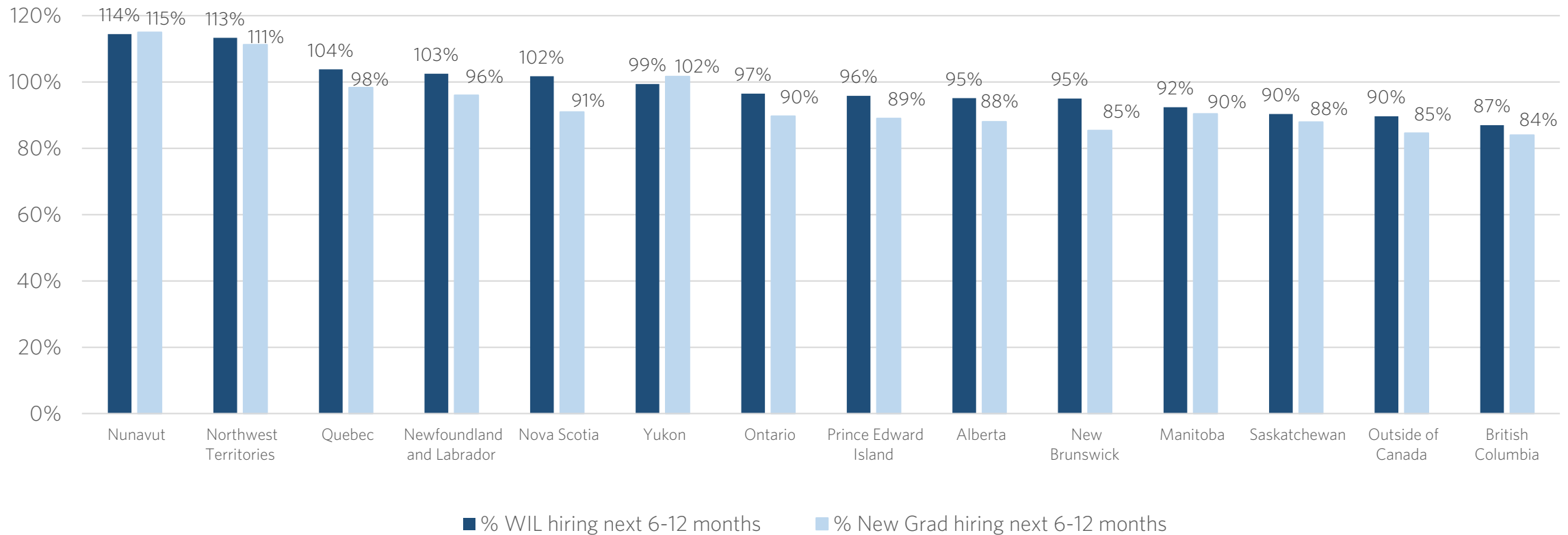
Percentage* of usual WIL hiring since onset of the pandemic by location: BC**



*100% = No change

** Participants could have chosen multiple locations but could only report one hiring change. Assumption: that hiring change applies to all locations

Forecasted percentage* of usual WIL and new-grad hiring for the next 6-12 months by location**

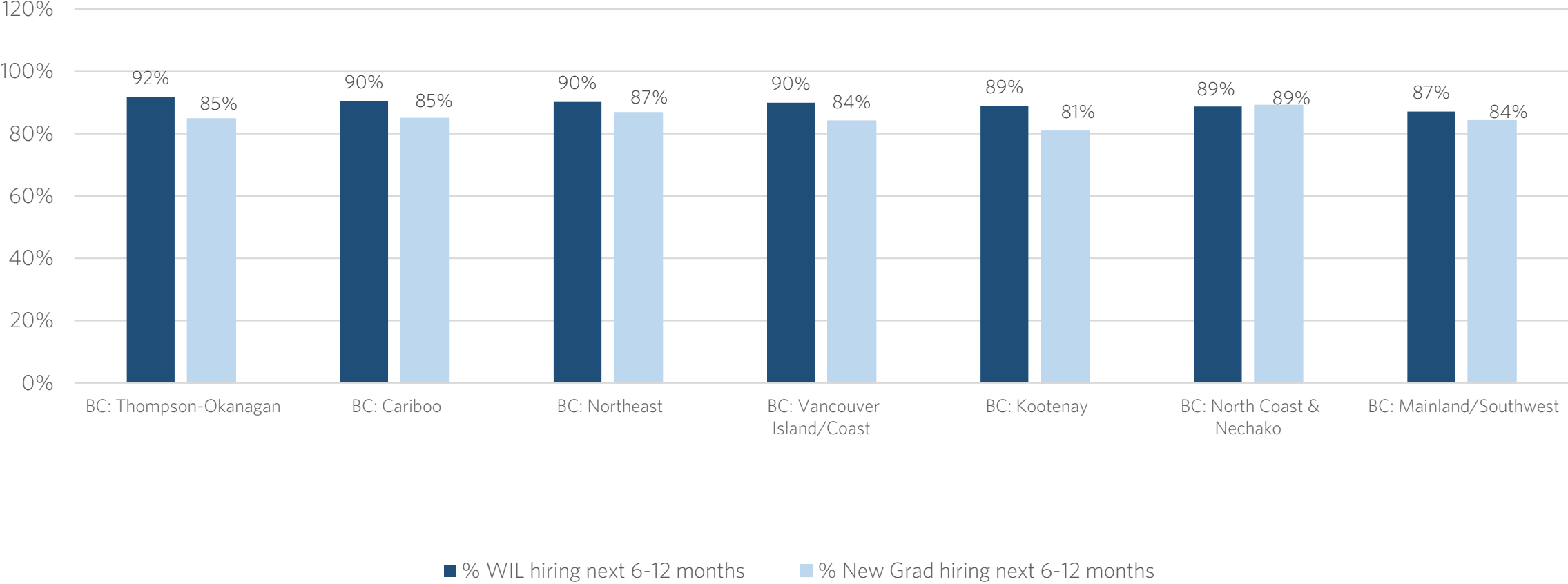


On average, partners from five provinces estimate a WIL hiring rate above the usual (NU, NT, QC, NL, NS)

*100% = No change

** Participants could have chosen multiple locations but could only report one hiring change. Assumption: that hiring change applies to all locations

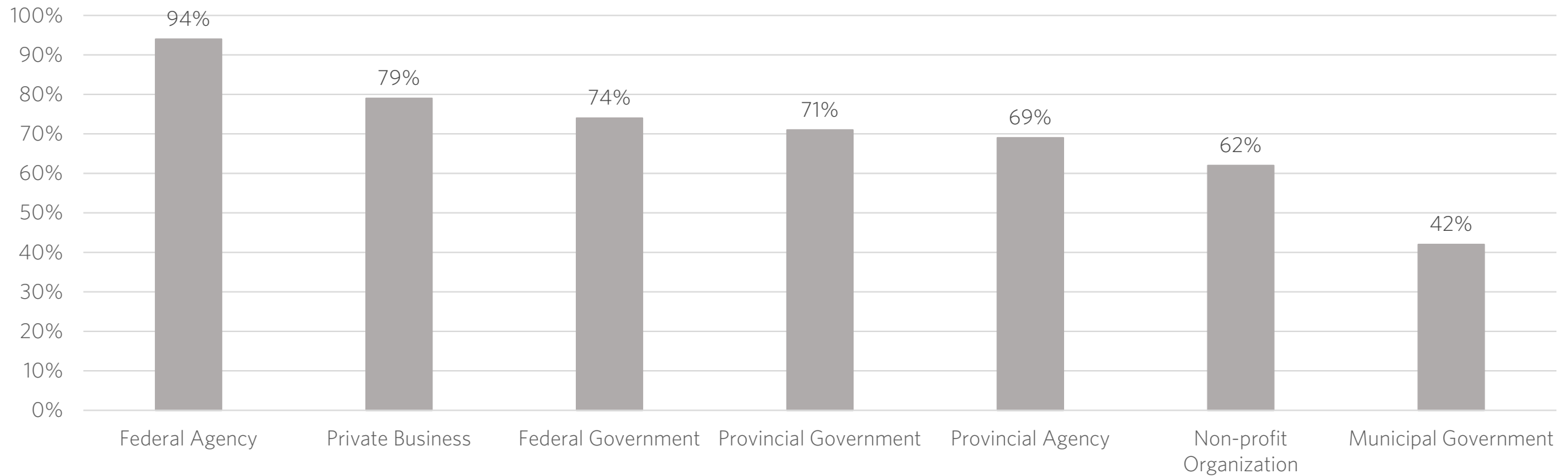
Forecasted percentage* of usual WIL and new-grad hiring for the next 6-12 months by location: BC**



*100% = No change

** Participants could have chosen multiple locations but could only report one hiring change. Assumption: that hiring change applies to all locations

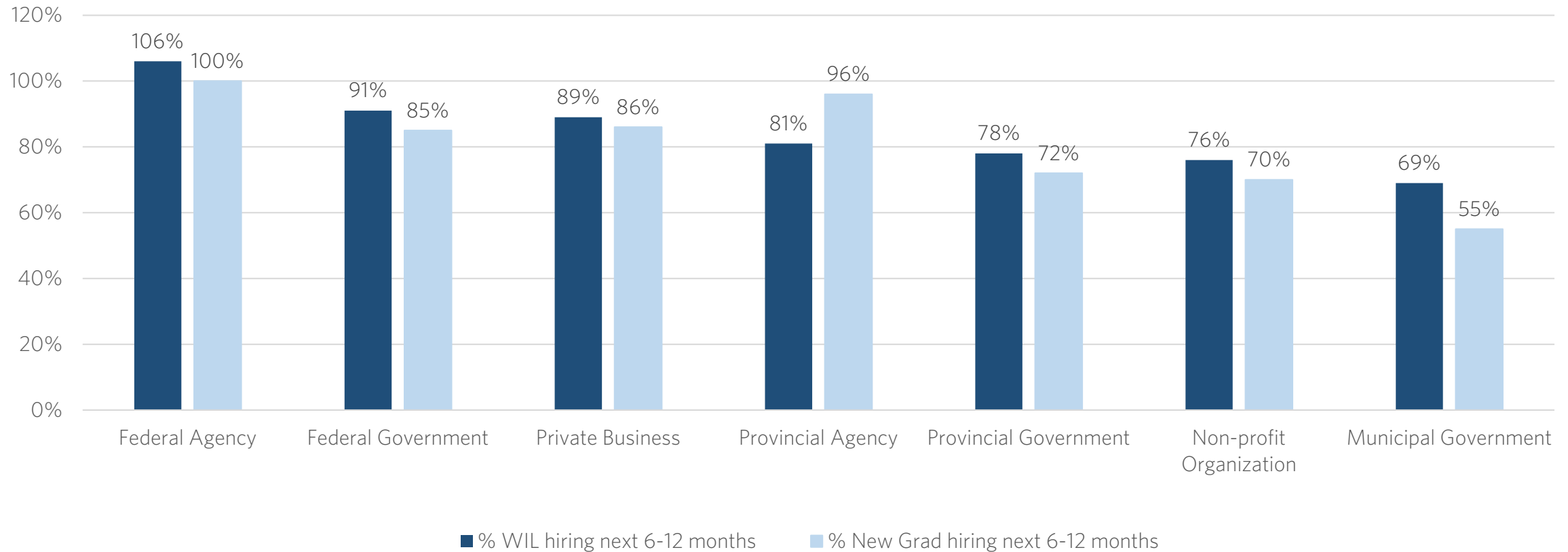
Percentage* of usual WIL hiring since onset of the pandemic by type of organization



Municipal Government organizations report the lowest hiring rate, at 42% of their usual rate.

*100% = No change

Forecasted percentage* of usual WIL and new-grad hiring for the next 6-12 months by type of organization



Municipal Government organizations also report the lowest WIL and new-grad hiring rates, at 69% and 55% of their usual, respectively / Federal Agencies expect a future WIL hiring rate of 106% their usual and an unchanged new-grad hiring rate.

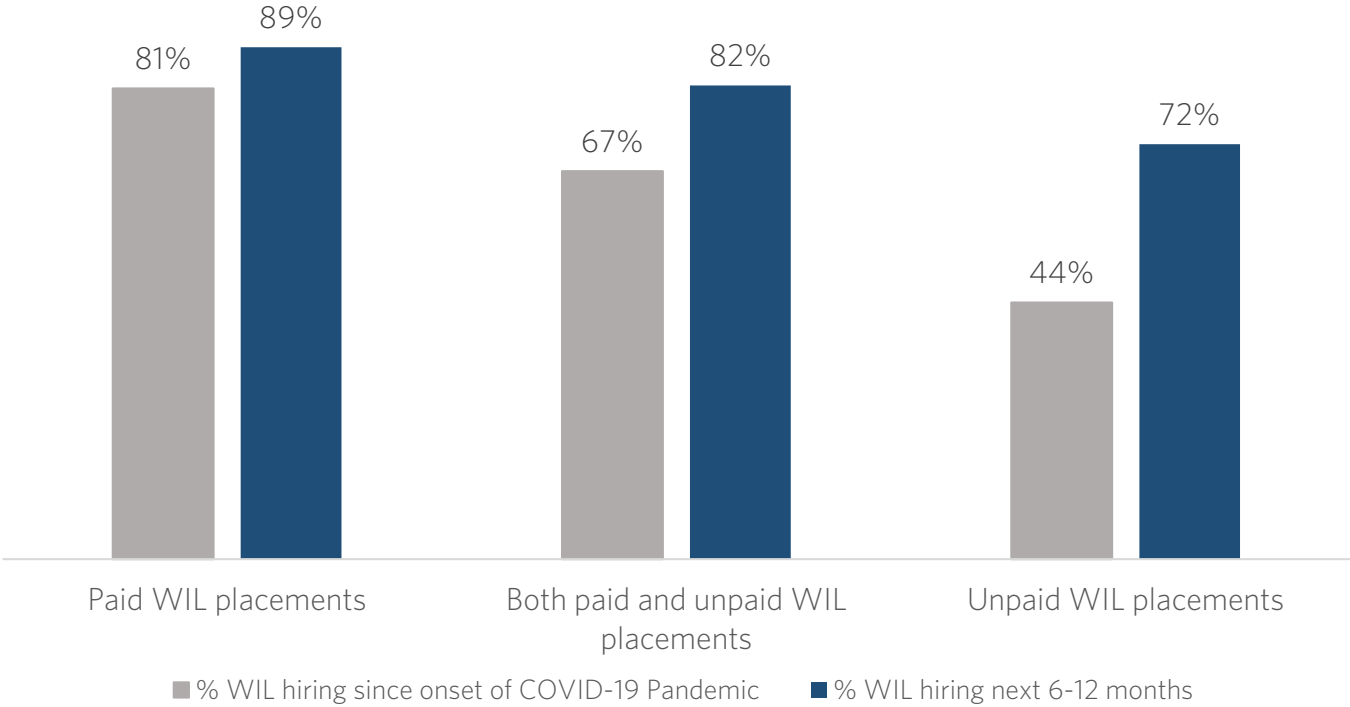
*100% = No change

Number of employers by paid/unpaid WIL type

Paid/unpaid WIL		
	Number	%
Paid WIL placements	723	63
Both paid and unpaid WIL placements	198	17
Unpaid WIL placements	153	13

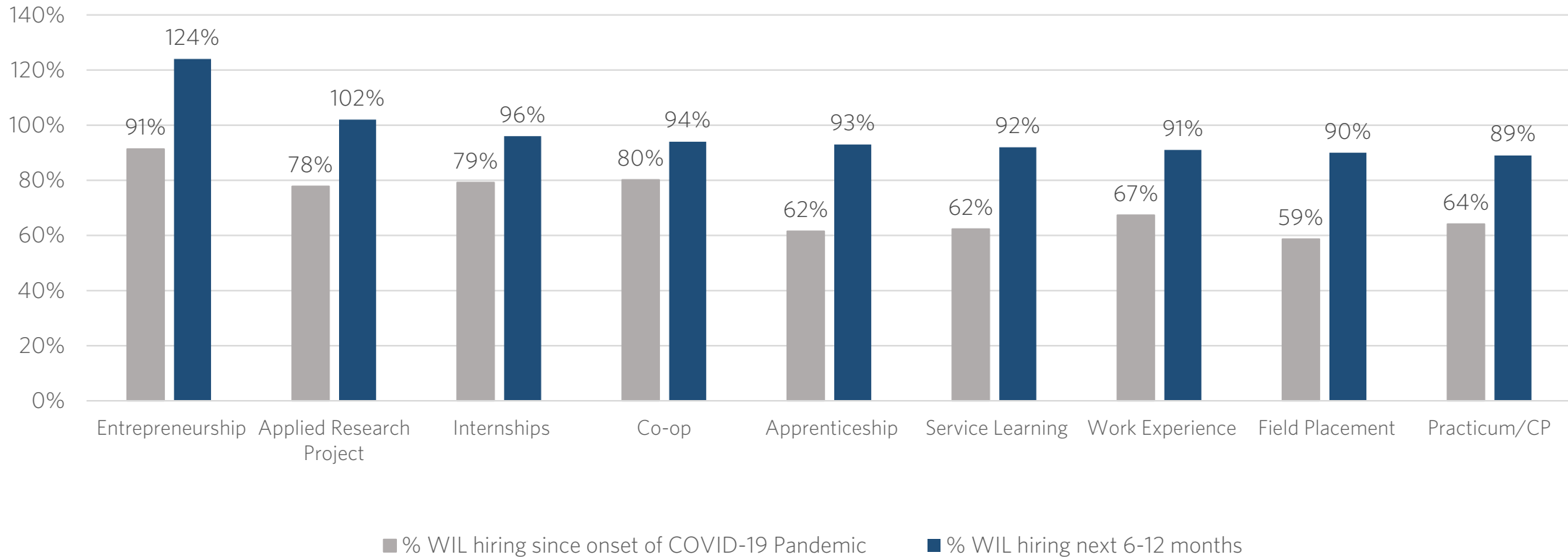
Percentage* of usual WIL hiring by paid/unpaid

Organizations engaging unpaid WIL placements report the lowest hiring rates (44% of the usual hiring since the onset of COVID-19 and 72% of the usual hiring forecasted for the next 6-12 months)



*100% = No change

Percentage* of usual WIL hiring since onset of the pandemic and forecasted for the next 6-12 months by WIL type**



On average, for all WIL types, participants forecasted a smaller reduction in WIL student placements for the next 6-12 months compared to the reduction that occurred since the onset of the pandemic.

*100% = No change

** Participants could have chosen multiple WIL types but could only report one hiring change. Assumption: that hiring change applies to all WIL types

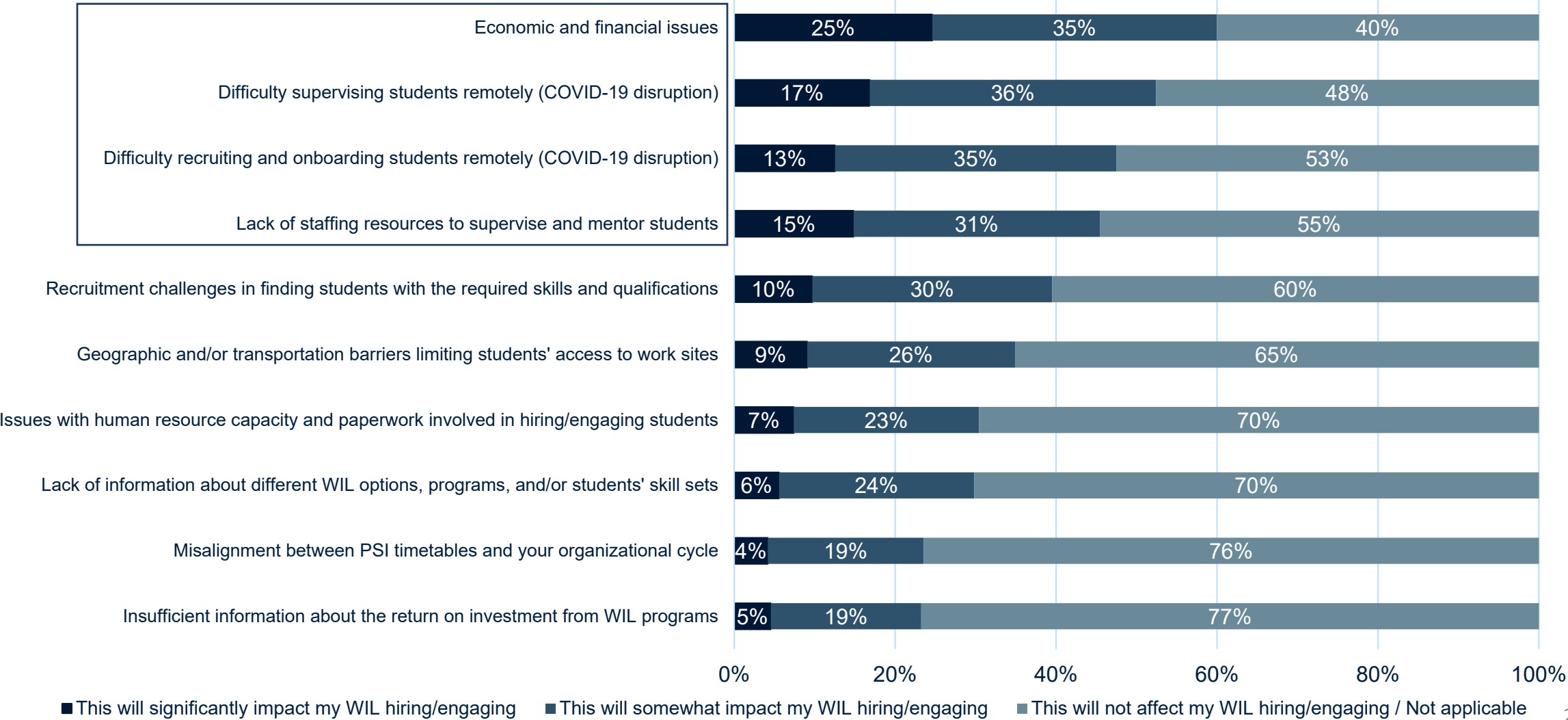
Disciplines from which participants plan to hire/engage WIL students in the next 6-12 months

Discipline*	Number of participants	%
Administration/Business	310	20
Engineering	223	14
Computer Science	214	14
Health/Legal	153	10
Science	140	9
Technical/Trades	132	9
Humanities/Social Science	131	8
Hospitality/Tourism/Recreation	69	4
Agriculture	26	2

* Participants could choose multiple disciplines

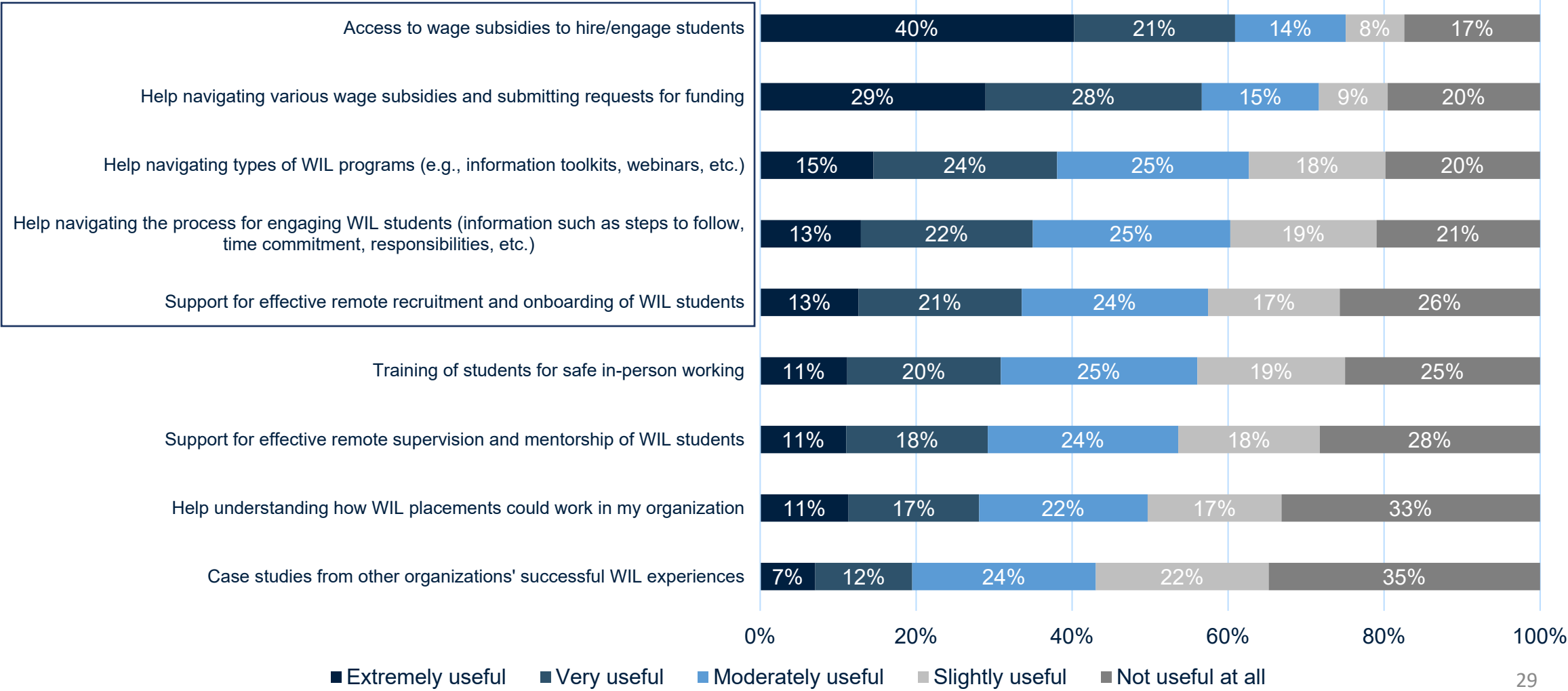
Factors affecting WIL hiring/engaging for the next 6-12 months

Percentage of participants answering the question: "For the next 6-12 months, do you think any of the following will affect your WIL hiring/engaging?"



Usefulness of resources in enabling partners to hire/engage more WIL students during the next 6-12 months

Percentage of participants answering the question: "How useful would the following resources be in enabling you to hire/engage more students for WIL positions during the next 6-12 months?"



Part II

Qualitative Analysis

Summary of themes★

- 1. Lessons resulting from WIL students having to work remotely**
 - Communication is key for remote WIL work
 - Importance of students' commitment and independence
- 2. Additional support that could have been provided by WIL program to support students' transition to remote work**
 - Guidance on how to adapt to a remote work environment
 - Financial support
- 3. Further concerns about WIL hiring/engaging**
 - Communication/reporting issues – need simplification and more information**
 - Lack of staff resources for onboarding/supervising

*Details of qualitative analysis and themes are included as a separate report

**It is unclear if this relates to government grant programs, PSI programs, or other processes: further follow-up will be done in the next stage through 31 interviews/ focus groups

Next steps

Second and third stages

- **Second stage: Focus groups / Interviews: February 2021 (*tentative*)**

Sample questions:

- What are some of the obstacles that you have found while navigating grants and funding opportunities?
 - What specific communication initiatives have worked out for your organization? What has not worked? Why?
- **Third stage: Survey # 2: April 2021 (*tentative*)**