

Minister of Employment,
Workforce Development
and Labour



Ministre de l'Emploi,
du Développement de la main-d'œuvre
et du Travail

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J9

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Mr. Bryan May, M.P.
Chair, Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status
of Persons with Disabilities
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. May,

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to respond, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to the Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, entitled *Experiential Learning and Pathways to Employment for Canadian Youth*, which was tabled in the House of Commons on October 17, 2018.

Our Government commends the members of the Committee and the many witnesses who have appeared before it. The valuable perspectives expressed in the Report clearly demonstrate widespread commitment to helping young people succeed.

The Report is well aligned with our Government's commitment to supporting young people in gaining the skills and experiences they need to find and keep good jobs. The attached response addresses recommendations thematically, highlighting federal initiatives and investments in youth experiential learning and our Government's desire to leverage and build on this work to support the continued success of young Canadians.

Our Government thanks the Committee for its insightful and thoughtful work on the growing importance of experiential learning opportunities for youth, and the implications these opportunities can have on young people's ability to successfully enter the workforce. I trust that this response demonstrates our Government's ongoing commitment to supporting youth in gaining meaningful experience and skills.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Hajdu'.

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

Canada

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE
STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ENTITLED “EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING AND PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR CANADIAN YOUTH”**

The Government of Canada (“the Government”) is pleased to respond to the Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA or “the Committee”), entitled, *Experiential Learning and Pathways to Employment for Canadian Youth* (“the Report”).

The Government of Canada appreciates the work of the Committee and welcomes the analysis, views and recommendations, based on the consultations that the Committee undertook with a wide range of stakeholders. The goal of the Committee was to study experiential learning and pathways to employment for Canadian youth. The Government has carefully reviewed the Committee’s report and recommendations and welcomes the opportunity to provide a response. In particular, the Government has noted the Committee’s conclusion that close collaboration between employers, unions, educational institutions, government and community stakeholders is needed to support the creation of successful experiential learning opportunities and that current government programming can be enhanced to further maximize the benefits of experiential learning.

The Government of Canada agrees with the need for greater experiential learning opportunities, and supports for youth facing barriers, as outlined in many of the committee’s recommendations. The Government of Canada also recognizes the importance of supporting youth in obtaining quality jobs that make the best use of their skills, and supporting youth in successfully transitioning from school to work. Investments in young Canadians help to ensure the next generation of workers has the skills and talents needed to keep the economy strong and growing. Emblematic of the Government’s commitment to youth, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, serves as the Minister of Youth. Consistent with the Committee’s recommendations, the Government is already working to support experiential learning opportunities through programs such as the Youth Employment Strategy and Student Work Placement program.

The labour market youth are entering today is different from that experienced by their parents. Not only in Canada but around the world, rapid technological developments are changing the types of jobs that are available and the skills required. Work is being organized in new ways, with an increase in short-term, temporary contracts rather than “permanent” full-time positions. In order for youth to succeed in this rapidly changing labour market, they need the right skills and knowledge to fulfill workplace expectations of today and in the future. The Government of Canada has a role to play in supporting experiential learning opportunities where youth can gain the skills and experience they need to find and keep good jobs, especially for those youth facing multiple barriers to labour market participation.

The Government of Canada currently provides a wide-range of skills programming, from basic literacy and numeracy support to support for apprenticeship to financial supports and work experiences offered to students. Budget 2018 renewed the Government’s commitment to ensure

that Canadian workers have the skills they need to succeed in an evolving economy. As part of this commitment, the Budget announced that the Treasury Board Secretariat will undertake a horizontal review of skills programming to maximize the effectiveness of these programs, particularly in the way that they offer support to workers wishing to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Provinces and Territories (P/Ts) play a key role in the delivery of skills training programs and employment services. Through bilateral Labour Market Development Agreements, P/Ts receive nearly \$3 billion each year from the federal government and have the flexibility to design and deliver a range of employment programs and services including employment supports and skills training. While many jurisdictions are taking action on youth employment, needs and capacity levels vary. The Government of Canada has a critical role to play in building on the efforts of P/Ts to address gaps and better leverage existing investments to address challenges for youth seeking to gain the skills and experience they need to enter the labour market.

The Government has carefully reviewed the recommendations made by the Committee and is in agreement with the need for expanded experiential learning opportunities for youth, and the value these opportunities provide. This response outlines key actions and progress on Government of Canada commitments towards supporting experiential learning and school to work transitions around 3 themes: (1) support for experiential learning opportunities; (2) removing barriers for youth furthest from opportunities; and (3) demonstrating federal leadership.

Theme 1: Support for Experiential Learning *Recommendations 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9*

The Government agrees with the Committee's assessment of the many different types of experiential learning, and the important role it plays in the skills development landscape, for youth, as well as employers and educational institutions. For youth, it provides an opportunity to experience the hands-on application of skills and knowledge learned in the classroom, to develop important workplace skills such as problem-solving and working in teams, to inform career choices, and to develop professional networks. For employers, this work experience provides an opportunity to examine the skills and suitability of a potential future employee. The Government concurs with many of the Committee's recommendations and agrees that through such placements, youth can acquire that valuable first experience that allows them to overcome the barrier of needing to have had a job to get a job.

In the past, some experiential learning opportunities available in Canada have been unpaid. The Government of Canada strongly agrees with recommendation number eight in the Report which advocates for the compensation of all experiential learning opportunities, including through remuneration, or course credits, not just experience alone. In Budget 2017, the Government of Canada committed to amending the *Canada Labour Code* (Code) to eliminate unpaid internships in the federally regulated private sector that are not part of a formal educational program and ensure that unpaid interns whose internship is part of an educational program are entitled to labour standard protections such as maximum hours of work, weekly days of rest and general holidays. The amendments to the Code were included in Bill C-63, the *Budget Implementation*

Act, 2017, No. 2, which received Royal Assent on December 14, 2017. The amendments will come into force once related regulations have been developed. This will also allow the time needed to carry out education and outreach activities with employers, students, interns, secondary and post-secondary institutions and others so that they are aware of the new limits on unpaid internships.

Work Integrated Learning

While generally associated with co-op placements, work integrated learning (WIL) experiences encompass other learning opportunities such as internships, mentorship programs, practicums, applied research projects and competitions that encourage student-led approaches to develop industry solutions, or “boot camps” which are short-duration programs that focus on improving particular skill sets or providing exposure to other skills sets such as entrepreneurial skills.

In Canada, while today’s youth have more formal education than ever, their ability to make a smooth transition to the labour market could be at risk, in part, because of a perceived lack of work-ready skills or hands-on experience. According to Statistics Canada, while enrollment at post-secondary education (PSE) institutions in Canada is at record levels, the labour market outcomes for graduating students are mixed and often characterized by an increasing number of graduates accepting precarious or part-time work, and working in fields that have little connection or relevance to their chosen field of study.

An increasing number of PSE students are pointing to the value of WIL in helping their future employment prospects, with 60 per cent saying that on the job training is the most effective instructional technique to supplement their education. However, fewer than half of these students are enrolled in programs that prioritize these types of learning techniques. A 2015 McKinsey study entitled “Youth in Transition Bridging Canada’s Path from Education to Employment” found that over half of faculty members surveyed said that finding enough good quality work placements is a major challenge.

As outlined in the Report, the Government of Canada currently has a number of WIL programs and supports. Key among these programs are Employment and Social Development Canada’s (ESDC) Student Work Placement (SWP) program and initiatives supported through Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED). These build on the successful co-op model but also include other forms of work placements such as internships or practicums. Of note, many WIL initiatives are not limited to youth; however, youth comprise the vast majority of PSE students; therefore, youth are more likely to access existing WIL supports.

The SWP program was launched in April 2017 to fulfill the Government of Canada’s commitment to create up to 10,000 student work placements in high demand fields for young Canadians enrolled in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and business programs at PSE institutions across Canada. Within the first year of launching, the SWP program was fully subscribed, and well on its way to exceed original targets of creating 10,000 placements by 2021. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) did not historically offer many WIL opportunities; however, SMEs represent 87 per cent of employers participating in the SWP program. Through employer organizations, the SWP supports partnerships that bring employers

and PSE institutions together, on a sectoral base, to work collaboratively on the creation of student work placements that focus on developing and augmenting the “work-ready” skills students will need to successfully transition to the labour market. The SWP program also recently funded the development of a digital WIL exchange highway which links employers, students, PSE and other stakeholders by simplifying and improving the job-matching and placement process for students and employers by automatically sending student work placement opportunities that match a student’s skills profile.

In addition, the SWP supports student development of foundational and entrepreneurial/ business skills through the MaRS Discovery District and Venture for Canada. These partners support the creation of new student work placements at innovative SMEs and start-ups, and help students develop business and entrepreneurial skills.

ISED also invests in programs supporting experiential learning. It invests an additional funding of \$221 million over five years (2017-2022) to Mitacs to scale-up and offer 10,000 work-integrated learning placements annually for post-secondary students by 2021-22. Mitacs is a not-for-profit organization that builds partnerships between academia and industry with a focus on innovation and research. The Youth Employment Program, through the National Research Council’s Industrial Research Assistance Program, offers placements for recent post-secondary graduates in six to twelve month job opportunities to work on innovative projects in SMEs. The Industrial Stream of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council’s Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) Program also supports placements of students from natural sciences and engineering disciplines or interdisciplinary fields on research teams within business with commercial activities. The Digital Skills for Youth Program connects underemployed recent graduates with career-oriented work experience and digital skills training. In The Computers for Schools Intern Program, youth benefit from paid, practical work internships where they can develop more advanced digital skills by refurbishing computers.

The Government is expanding support for experiential learning by facilitating mentorship opportunities for youth. For example, funding is provided to Futurpreneur Canada, a national not-for-profit organization which provides young entrepreneurs with start-up loans and mentoring as well as pre-and post-launch coaching and mentoring. The Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund is addressing gaps and building capacity in the entrepreneurship ecosystem for women through activities such as networking, matchmaking, and mentorship opportunities. Offering a diversity of experiential learning opportunities allows the Government to support variety of youth, at different points in their academic career, to gain experience and successfully enter the labour market.

These investments in experiential learning opportunities are making important strides in strengthening collaboration among PSE and employers making sure participants are getting skills that are in demand. The success of the Government’s current WIL programming is the foundation of policy development moving forward, as well as a way to leverage broader participation through dissemination of results and best practices. Currently, both ESDC and ISED are exploring policy options to increase WIL placement opportunities through an all-of-government approach as proposed in recommendation three of the Committee’s Report.

Support for Apprenticeship

The Government agrees with the Committee that apprenticeship training is an important form of experiential learning in Canada. Skilled trades are critical to the Canadian economy and apprenticeship is a unique form of WIL in skilled trades, in which skilled tradespersons teach apprentices the skills and knowledge they need to achieve competencies and perform tasks to the industry standards. Apprenticeship is widely recognized as a high-quality approach to teaching skills through a combination of on-the-job and in-class technical training. While P/Ts have jurisdiction over apprenticeship training and trade certification, the Government of Canada plays a key role in supporting an efficient supply of skilled, mobile and certified workers to support labour market needs. The Government of Canada makes significant investments in apprenticeship through a variety of supports. These include grants, loans, tax credits and Employment Insurance benefits during in-school training, as well as support for the Red Seal Program, a partnership between the Government of Canada and the P/Ts. Apprentices can receive up to \$20, 000 in grants and loans during a 4-year apprenticeship program in a Red Seal trade, as well as tax credits, and Employment Insurance benefits during in-school training.

The Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit encourages employers, including SMEs, to hire new apprentices in Red Seal trades by providing a tax credit of 10 per cent of the wages payable to eligible apprentices in the first two years of their apprenticeship program, up to a maximum credit of \$2, 000 per apprentice, per year. The Government supports apprentices in other ways as well, for example, the Union Training and Innovation Program supports union-based apprenticeship training, innovation and enhanced partnerships in the Red Seal trades. The program provides \$25 million annually to support unions by sharing the cost of training equipment. It also supports innovative approaches to improve apprenticeship outcomes including for under-represented groups.

In addition to the existing federal supports for apprenticeship, and to further help key groups participate and succeed in apprenticeship, new measures were announced in Budget 2018. The new Trades Exploration and Experience Program (\$46 million over five years, starting in 2018–2019, with \$10 million per year ongoing) will encourage Canadians, particularly those who face barriers, to explore careers in the trades, gain work experience, make informed career choices, and develop the skills needed to find and keep good, well-paying jobs in the trades. The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women (approximately \$20 million over five years, starting in 2018–2019) is a five-year pilot project to provide women with a new grant of \$3,000 for each of their first two years of training in trades where women are underrepresented. The Women in Construction Fund (\$10 million over three years, starting in 2018–2019) supports projects that build on existing models proven to be effective in attracting women to the trades.

The Government is exploring other ways to strengthen apprenticeship in Canada and help replenish the skilled trades workforce, including with respect to encouraging the participation of employers in apprenticeship. For example, work is underway, in collaboration with the P/Ts, to test consortia models as means of helping to support employers, particularly SMEs, to participate in apprenticeship. This initiative involves supporting groups of employers to pool resources and share the responsibility for sponsoring and training apprentices.

Support for Youth Employment

The Committee's Report recommended that in the modernization of the Youth Employment Strategy (YES), consideration be given to increased supports for vulnerable youth, supporting experiential learning and greater integration of emerging skills, such as entrepreneurial skills. The Government strongly agrees with these recommendations and will take them into account as it pursues the modernization of the YES.

Increasing the number of good quality, permanent jobs for youth is a commitment of this Government, as outlined in the mandate of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour. This is a longstanding government priority, as indicated by the approximately \$300 million invested in the YES each year, as well as various other youth employment programming and supports. While the YES has demonstrated positive results over the years, much has changed in the labour market since the strategy was put in place in 1997. The Government is working together with youth, employers and other stakeholders to develop a strategy that is more responsive to the new realities faced by youth today.

The modernization of the YES was originally announced in Budget 2016 with creation of the Expert Panel on Youth Employment. The Government is in the process of designing the modernized YES, and engaging youth and stakeholders on how this strategy could be improved. The input of this Committee and the many witnesses that appeared before it is hugely beneficial in informing the modernization of this strategy, and careful attention will be paid to the recommendations the Committee put forward.

In modernizing the YES, the Government has engaged with youth across Canada with a particular focus on youth facing additional barriers to the labour market. Furthermore hundreds of service providers and employers were engaged both at the community and national level. From this engagement the Government has heard that youth want a role in designing youth employment programming. They also want access to employment support services, such as mentorship and career coaching, and on the job supports. Youth also indicated that it was important to quantify outcomes beyond just number of jobs delivered, given that intermediary or pre-job milestones are often just as impactful for youth facing barriers. Service providers and employers indicated that in order to provide employment supports they needed additional support that is flexible, and allowed for collaboration and client centric models. They also emphasized the importance of local and community based solutions.

The feedback and advice heard in the context of this engagement will be used to inform the design of the modernized YES. As indicated in the Report, efforts need to be made to leverage existing initiatives in the youth employment ecosystem, such as the Dev Degree Program and the Riipen Platform which support work integrated learning and make linkages between the private, not-for-profit and educational sectors. Social partners, private sector, civil society, foundations and academia involved in the youth employment ecosystem are being engaged towards supporting and promoting such initiatives to make them more accessible to Canadian youth.

Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ), a program under the YES, provides wage subsidies to employers from not-for-profit organizations, the public-sector, and private sector to create quality summer

work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years. While other YES programming also offers experiential learning opportunities, the CSJ program is unique in that funding is distributed according to Federal Electoral Districts and local priorities are set to guide the investments.

Based on what was heard from youth and stakeholders, CSJ 2019 has been modernized to provide greater flexibility for youth to participate and to emphasize skills development. These changes are well aligned with the Committee's recommendations related to CSJ, which proposed expanding CSJ to a broadly based youth jobs program for Canadian youth. The Government agrees with nearly all suggestions put forward in recommendation number four and the Committee will find that the changes to CSJ 2019 reflect this. The program objectives for 2019-2020 have been updated to have an emphasis on providing quality work experiences, improve access to the labour market for youth who face unique barriers; and, provide opportunities for youth to develop and improve their skills. Furthermore, new expanded eligibility now includes all youth aged 15-30, and is no longer restricted to students. These changes will remove barriers for participation and allow for an increased focus on vulnerable youth.

Theme 2: Reducing Barriers for Youth

Recommendations 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17

Canadian youth ranked first in postsecondary educational attainment among OECD countries and have one of the highest youth employment rates in the G7. However, opportunities are not distributed equitably amongst young Canadians. Compared to the 56.5% of Canadian youth who are employed: 43.9% of recent immigrant youth; 32.2% of youth with disabilities; and 39.3% of Indigenous youth are employed. Furthermore, only 25% of Indigenous youth have completed postsecondary education compared with 50% of non-Indigenous youth. It is clear that more needs to be done to support youth who are furthest from opportunity. Tailored supports are required that are responsive to the needs of these youth. This is particularly critical for youth facing barriers who may not have the networks to get that first opportunity and are at risk of being left behind. This is an important consideration in the modernization of the YES as advised in recommendation 12 of the Committee's report.

Given the government's commitment to supporting youth facing barriers, each of the aforementioned experiential learning programs has a specific stream or emphasis on vulnerable youth. For example, in analyzing any changes to the SWP program going forward, consideration will be given to moving towards a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) model which many stakeholders are advocating for. This would evolve from the past STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) focus, noting that arts and humanities students have the knowledge and creativity to help drive innovation in technology and under-represented groups such as Indigenous people and women are more likely to enroll in the arts and humanities than in STEM programs. Expanding to a STEAM model would allow the program to support greater numbers of underrepresented students. The SWP has encouraged employers to engage students from underrepresented groups, including women in STEM, Indigenous students, persons with disabilities, and recent immigrants/newcomers, through the provision of increased wage subsidies. In the first full year of activity, the SWP supported the creation of over 1,100

new work integrated learning opportunities across Canada, with 46 per-cent of those opportunities created for students from underrepresented groups.

The Government of Canada recognizes the benefit of ensuring that Canadians with disabilities are able to participate fully in the labour market, including youth with disabilities. As proposed in recommendation number 16 the Government is committed to working collaboratively with partners in both the public and private sectors to create opportunities for full participation by people with disabilities in their communities and workplaces, and to help change the way society thinks, talks and acts about disability and accessibility. To this end, in June 2018, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-81, the *Accessible Canada Act: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-free Canada*, in Parliament. If passed, Bill C-81 would benefit all Canadians, especially Canadians with disabilities, by helping to create a barrier-free Canada. The bill, which was developed through significant engagement with the disability community, academics, employers and other actors, will require organizations under federal jurisdiction to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility, including in the area of employment. Funding was also recently provided to the National Education Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) via the Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability Component to undertake an examination of the current landscape of accessibility, services and supports for post-secondary students with disabilities. This work involved a significant focus on school-to-work transitions and included recommendations to postsecondary institutions, as well as provincial and federal governments in a number of areas, including: possible changes to labour market transition programs to better support students with disabilities, including work- integrated learning, particularly in the area of STEM; and, ways to better communicate the business case for the hiring of people with disabilities and better linkages between employers and students with disabilities.

Support for Indigenous Youth

Indigenous youth are relatively more likely than other Canadian youth to face a specific set of intersecting and compounding barriers to employment including: non-completion of high school, early parenthood, and a high incidence of disability and homelessness. In addition, Indigenous youth living on reserve or in remote areas face additional barriers to employment, including: limited local employment, lack of child care services, poor housing and infrastructure, and a lack of legislative and financial support for service delivery, among other obstacles.

Because many Indigenous youth face complex and compounding barriers to labour market integration, they may benefit disproportionately from experiential learning opportunities. As recommended in the Committee's Report, the government is working, in line with its commitment to reconciliation and with a distinction-based approach, to provide these placements to Indigenous youth.

As highlighted by the Committee in their Report, ESDC's Indigenous labour market programming plays an important role in helping reduce barriers faced by Indigenous youth to succeed in education and employment. Through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) and the Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF), Indigenous peoples, including youth, are able to access training and supports along the skills development continuum such as essential skills, academic upgrading, post-secondary education and industry-recognized training to build their skills and improve their job readiness. Following extensive engagement with

Indigenous partners in 2016-17 to renew and enhance ASETS, Budget 2018 proposed to invest \$2 billion over five years, and \$408.2 million per year ongoing to support the creation of the new Indigenous Skills and Employment (ISET) Program, which will further broaden the range of supports available and help close the employment, skills and earnings gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. As part of the co-developed Performance Measurement Strategy for the ISET program, the Government is working with Indigenous partners to ensure that relevant and timely data continue to be captured to support reporting on outcomes and impacts for Indigenous labour market programming, ensuring also to analyze data to support the design of responsive programming.

The ISET Program will be comprised of four distinct labour market strategies for First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban/non-affiliated Indigenous Peoples, as well as separate approaches for First Nation and Inuit Modern Treaty Holders. Through the use of this distinctions-based approach, Indigenous service delivery organizations will have greater flexibility to design and deliver training according to the unique needs and priorities of their communities. As such, the ISET Program is well-positioned to address many of the Report recommendations by providing supports for things such as entrepreneurship training, apprenticeship and wage subsidies aligned with the Government's commitment to reconciliation and with a distinction-based approach.

The ISET Program will also enable Indigenous service delivery organizations to deliver earlier interventions to in-school youth such as career exploration, mentorship and other services complementary to the K-12 education system. These can be used to enhance workforce interest, improve participation and increase the high school graduation rates of students. Finally, the ISET Program can also be used to provide financial assistance for youth to access postsecondary education, including culturally-appropriate wrap-around services such as living expenses, transportation, counselling, and other supports needed to ensure successful skills development and training outcomes.

In addition to the ISET program, ESDC has invested nearly \$55 million in Pathways to Education since 2010, an organization which provides youth in low-income communities a suite of after-school programming to help them complete high school and transition to post-secondary education. As suggested in recommendation 13 of the Committee's Report, the Government of Canada is continuing to support this important initiative to reduce drop-out rates, with Budget 2017 committing \$38 million over four years, starting in 2018-2019. As also recommended in the Report, ESDC is committed to exploring new ways to support more disadvantaged youth over the coming years to build on Pathway's success.

The Trades Exploration and Experience Program, announced in Budget 2018 encourages Canadians, including groups that face barriers such as Indigenous peoples, to explore and prepare for careers in the trades. The program will provide \$46 million over five years and \$10 million per year thereafter. The program will help individuals explore the trades, gain work experience, make informed career choices and develop the skills needed to find and keep good, well-paying jobs in the trades.

Theme 3: Federal Leadership

Recommendations 1, 2, 5, 10 and 11

In addition to directly supporting experiential learning programs and initiatives, the Government has a broader role in supporting experiential learning and youth employment. In order to better support youth the Government of Canada takes a leadership role in providing high quality labour market information, and leads by example by providing thousands of youth employment opportunities annually.

As outlined in the Committee's Report, helping youth prepare for and navigate the workforce requires access to quality information about learning and skills development opportunities as well as career prospects in the labour market. For many youth, reliable information and general support mechanisms and guidance may be sufficient to help them make decisions about their education and find employment; however, for some youth, in particular more vulnerable youth who face barriers to developing skills and finding employment, more tailored and personalized approaches are required.

To ensure that Canadians have access to up-to-date information on training, work experience, educational requirements and other credentials that are required to be employed in a given occupation, ESDC, in collaboration with Statistics Canada, regularly reviews the National Occupational Classification. The revision process takes into account comments and suggestions received from different stakeholders (unions, professional associations, employers, etc.), qualitative and quantitative research as well as consultations with key expert stakeholders regarding specific occupations. Furthermore, as advised in recommendation one of the Committee's Report, ESDC and Statistics Canada are working to better capture data on a broad spectrum of experiential learning opportunities and outcomes. The Government of Canada is investing \$27.5M over five years, starting in 2018-19, to support the development of the Education and Labour Market Linkage Platform. The platform currently links longitudinal data from the Post-Secondary Information System and the Registered Apprenticeship Information system to tax records. This secure data platform will enable policy makers and researchers to know not only how students perform in the labor market after graduation but also the impact of WIL programs, such as co-op and other internship programs.

As mentioned in the Report, the Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) also has a role to play in helping Canadians access the labour market data they need to make employment and training decisions. The LMIC's mission is to empower Canadians, including employers, workers, job seekers, students and under-represented groups with timely and reliable labour market information and insights in an engaging way that supports their decision-making process. One of its priorities, that was identified and agreed upon by Forum of Labour Market Minister, is to address the need for more granular local labour market information, which aligns with the recommendation two of the Committee's Report. ESDC will continue to work closely with Statistics Canada and the LMIC to stress the importance of providing these elements to Canadians.

In addition to providing the information necessary for youth to make informed decisions, the Government, via the Public Service Commission (PSC) will continue to promote student hiring and the value of experiential learning in engagement activities with government departments and

agencies, as put forward in recommendation five of the Committee's report. Over the last five years, these efforts have supported a steady increase in student hiring through our Co-op/Internship program and the Federal Student Work Experience Program.

The PSC will maintain strategic outreach with Canadian universities and colleges to promote federal public service jobs, and to attract and inform students. This will include partnering with Canadian universities to enhance students' job search experience and trying new ways to match students' skills and interests with recruitment needs by drawing on data from the labour market. Aligned with the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, the PSC will continue to partner with Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada to stay informed of co-op and work-integrated learning programs across Canada, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

The PSC and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) are contributing to efforts to increase opportunities for youth from vulnerable populations and at-risk youth. As Canada's largest employer, the Government of Canada has an opportunity to lead by example in attaining a diverse and inclusive workforce. The PSC and OCHRO will continue to increase opportunities by promoting student hiring through programs such as the national Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity program which provides Indigenous youth with valuable work experience close to where they live or go to school. In partnership with OCHRO, the PSC will also look to expand the Youth Accessibility Summer Employment Opportunity program which provides opportunities for students with disabilities to consider a career in the public service and continue to identify future opportunities to support vulnerable and at-risk youth.

Our Government has also committed to hiring 5000 people with disabilities over the next five years. Furthermore, the Government will foster a diverse and inclusive workforce by establishing a Centralized Workplace Accommodation Fund to better manage workplace accessibility for federal public service employees with disabilities, and by introducing a federal internship program for Canadians with disabilities. The Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities will provide two-year internship placements at entry-level positions across the Government of Canada for Canadians with disabilities, to support increased economic inclusion and a more diverse federal public service. Together, these initiatives in the areas of recruitment, retention and promotion will support Canadians with disabilities in accessing secure, gainful employment opportunities, ultimately creating workplaces, services and communities that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers.

Evidence suggest that employer investments in employee training has been trending upward in recent years with modest increases in both the average spending on training per employee and average number of hours of learning per employee annually. The Government strongly agrees with recommendation 11 in the Committee's report, related to the importance of employee training. The Future Skills program, as announced in Budget 2017, will provide important intelligence about in-demand and emerging skills, in order to better inform quality training. The Future Skills initiative includes a Future Skills Centre which will develop, test and measure new approaches to skills assessment and development. It will also include a Future Skills Council, which will make recommendations to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour on emerging skills, workforce trends and priorities of pan-Canadian significance. It is

expected that 20 per cent of the Future Skills Centre's funding will go towards addressing the needs of youth, to identify emerging skills and new approaches to develop these skills. These investments will support youth in learning about and gaining important skills critical to successful school to work transitions.

Conclusion

This response outlines the broad range of initiatives and investments that the Government has put in place to support young Canadians as they enter the workforce. However, the Government of Canada recognizes that 21st Century skills needs requires new ways of teaching and learning. The Committee's Report offers important insights on how to develop the skills required for a resilient and successful young workforce. Experiential learning is an important part of any strategy to address the complex challenges facing young Canadians as they seek to gain a foothold in the labour market. Creating an ecosystem where youth have access to the supports and information they need to successfully get and keep good quality jobs will require ongoing coordinated and collaborative efforts. The Government of Canada is committed to continuing work in this area and to explore new ways to address barriers to youth employment and get youth working sooner, in jobs that make the best use of their skills.