



“How-to” Guide for Offering High School Co-op Placements

What is Co-operative Education?

Co-operative Education is a unique program for students, which integrates classroom theory with practical experiences in a workplace setting.

Credits are earned through a planned learning experience as students apply and refine the knowledge and skills acquired in a related curriculum course.

Students may earn 1 credit per 110-hour work experience. Depending on how Co-op is structured in the school, students may earn 1, 2, 3 or 4 credits.

Students are not paid for their Co-op work experience as they are earning credits, and supervisors are investing their time. However, honorariums **may** be given, or in some cases, organizations choose to pay for travel expenses.

Insurance in the workplace is covered by the Ministry of Education through WSIB for the duration of the placement.

Who Takes Co-op?

Cooperative Education students are typically senior students who use Cooperative Education as a means of career exploration to lead to a variety of post-secondary destinations, including work, college or university.

The Role of the Student

Students choose to take Co-operative Education on their Option Sheet the spring prior to the year in which they enroll in the coop course.

The Role of the Student

Students choose “cooperative education” on their option selection sheets in their schools. They are interviewed by the Cooperative Education teacher(s) in their schools to determine a work setting that would be of high interest to them, and counseled about their choices.

Once the school year or semester begins, students attend a minimum 15 hours of pre-placement orientation taught by the Co-op teacher. During pre-placement students learn work resume writing, job application completion, writing of cover letters, as well as human rights issues, employability skills, workplace safety issues, and union information, along with a variety of other topics included in the Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines.

Once interviewed and accepted for the placement, students are expected to attend the workplace as agreed with the supervisor and teacher, complete assignments required by the teacher, and to work safely and diligently, achieving maximum learning.

The Role of the Co-op Teacher

The teachers select and prepare the students for their co-op experiences, through the pre-placement activities. They match students with appropriate placements depending on their interests and abilities and assist them with time management and interview skills. The teachers must complete a Placement Assessment prior to the students' beginning the placement, according to guidelines set down by each school board. One of the most important roles of the Co-op teacher is to complete a Personalized Placement Learning Plan for each student, in consultation with each co-op supervisor, to ensure the integrity of the credits being earned.

Throughout the co-op experience, teachers monitor the students' progress by meeting with the supervisors, assessing students' learning and troubleshooting existing and potential difficulties to ensure a meaningful learning experience for the student and the supervisor.

Co-op teachers also meet with students back at the school every 1-3 weeks for reflective learning, problem solving and presentation of learning in various forms.

The teacher is responsible for assigning the student marks based on completion of assignments, and comments of supervisors during monitoring meetings.

The Role of the Workplace Supervisor

Once the workplace supervisor has agreed to participate in this unique experiential learning opportunity, they interview the potential student to determine his/her suitability for the placement. Once a *good match* is found, the supervisor must provide a safe learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment, and ensure health and safety training.

The supervisor gives input to help the monitoring teacher set up a Personalized Placement Learning Plan, to ensure all parties are in agreement with the work to be done by the student, and to ensure growth and learning over the duration of the placement.

Regular meetings (determined by the number of credits a student is earning) with the teacher to review student progress are an important contributor to the student's success. The teacher should be contacted promptly if a difficulty arises. Most problems can be resolved if they are addressed sooner than later!

Mentoring a student can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your career as watch a young person learn and grow with your help.

Passport to Prosperity is a project of the Ontario Ministry of Education and is delivered in the Greater Toronto area by The Learning Partnership.
For more information or to offer a Co-op opportunity, please visit our website www.class2careers.com or call (416) 440-5110