

# Cooperative Education

## HANDBOOK FOR EMPLOYERS AND PLACEMENT SUPERVISORS

This handbook provides specific information concerning goals, program design and benefits to the student, the employer and the school about Cooperative Education. General responsibilities of the employer, the student and the teacher are also outlined.



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## GOALS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

All students can benefit from participating in cooperative education. In their co-op experiences, students will develop:

- a reflective habit of mind to derive meaning from their experiences;
- the ability to apply their learning to influence decisions and actions in various aspects of their lives;
- the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind required to become competent and confident education and career/life planners.

## THANK YOU

**A sincere thank you to our Employers and Placement Supervisors  
On behalf of secondary schools in the Halton District School Board,  
we extend our sincere appreciation to you, the employers and placement supervisors  
of the Cooperative Education program.**

## DESIGN OF THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Cooperative Education provides opportunities for secondary school students to apply, refine, and extend their learning in the classroom and in the community through a Co-op placement.

### The Classroom Component

Student learning in the classroom component of a Cooperative Education course is based on course expectations. The purpose of the classroom component is to ensure that students are prepared for their community experience and focused on integrating their learning throughout the course.

### **Preparing for the Co-op Placement**

Students will spend approximately two weeks in class (two days for students enrolled in summer school) preparing for the placement at school. Before the Co-op placement begins, students will:

- Understand legislation, regulations and policies related to health and safety to be prepared for job/sector specific training at the co-op placement
- Understand legislation, regulations and policies and various strategies and skills that support well-being during their Co-op placement
- Explore their personal skills, interests and strengths to help identify an appropriate Co-op placement
- Develop initial employment skills to secure a co-op placement such as a resume, complete Workplace Education Agreement (WEA) forms, and develop a Co-op Learning Plan

This includes learning to ensure job readiness, the development of a Co-op Learning Plan, and health, safety and well-being awareness.

### **Integration Days**

Several days will be scheduled throughout the semester for students to attend classroom learning sessions to formally integrate and reflect on their learning. These days assist students in making connections between the skills and knowledge described in the curriculum and their learning throughout their Co-op placement.

### The Co-op Placement Component

The co-op placement in the community takes place during a semester.

Semester 1: September - January

Semester 2: February - June

Summer: July - early August (5 weeks)

Students will typically spend half of each day in school and the other half at the Co-op placement. In some cases, students may spend all day at their Co-op placement. Hours for the work placement are arranged and agreed to prior to the placement and indicated on the Workplace Education Agreement (WEA).

### **Monitoring Meetings**

Teachers will meet and/or connect with supervisors and students approximately every 2 weeks during placement (weekly during the summer). Frequency may be increased for students who require additional support to be successful at their co-op placement.

During Monitoring Meetings, the following may be discussed:

- Development and review of the Co-op Learning Plan
- Student progress and supervisor feedback
- Setting learning goals with the student
- Strategies to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the student
- How students are documenting evidence of their learning (e.g. photos, videos, reflections)



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### What are the responsibilities of the Co-op employer?

#### The employer and/or supervisor will:

- Interview the student prior to the placement to determine suitability
- Sign the Work Education Agreement (WEA)
- Assign a supervisor for the student during the Co-op placement
- Provide job-specific orientation at the Co-op placement about workplace values and ethics, human relations, safety, confidentiality, and work expectations
- Provide instruction on health and safety requirements and practices particular to the placement, and ensure that workplace safety rules are adhered to at all times
- Develop workplace expectations with the student (e.g. attendance expectations, workplace behaviour, uniform expectations)
- Provide and discuss feedback with the student in a timely fashion
- Consult with Co-op teacher to discuss the student's progress during regular Monitoring Meetings
- Assist the Co-op teacher and student in developing a Co-op Learning Plan
- Treat the student as a regular employee as much as possible
- Attempt to resolve any problems with the student as with a regular employee, involve the Co-op teacher where necessary
- Inform the Co-op teacher if the students have failed to call in absences or are missing from work frequently
- Report an accident immediately to the Co-op teacher
- Verify students hours at the workplace on a regular basis as required by Workplace Safety and Insurance (WSIB)
- Provide WSIB coverage for students who are being paid a wage



## What can you expect from your Co-op student?

### The student will:

- Commit to attend the placement for the planned duration of the program
- Participate in both classroom and community components of Co-op
- Sign the WEA
- Report to work punctually and to notify the employer in case of lateness
- Contact the workplace supervisor and school in advance if they are unable to report to work (including inclement weather, illness or school function)
- Act as a responsible employee
- Respect the confidentiality of the employers' work and clients
- Follow specific company safety regulations and those contained in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Students must check with the supervisor when they are unsure of the safety practices.
- Report any accidents/injuries immediately to the supervisor, co-op teacher and their parent/guardian
- Maintain a level of cleanliness and grooming, including appropriate workplace attire, acceptable to the standard of the placement as established by the supervisor
- Track their workplace hours on a regular basis as required by WSIB and have them verified by the supervisor
- Inform the co-op teacher of any problems or concerns which may affect workplace performance

## How will the Co-op teacher support you?

### The Co-op teacher will:

- Strive to ensure a compatible match between the student's skillset and career interests and the employer's requirements
- Sign the WEA
- Discuss health and safety requirements and procedures with the employer and will assess the potential placement as a learning environment
- Provide a general health and safety awareness information to the student prior to the Co-op placement
- Provide a contact number and email to be available to discuss any student's concerns that may arise
- Promptly address any questions or suggestions that will enhance student learning
- Monitor Co-op placements according to the Ministry of Education policy and discuss the student's performance with the student and employer on an ongoing basis
- Assist the student in developing a Co-op Learning Plan that will ensure a worthwhile and varied work experience, with input from the employer
- Promptly report any student injuries for the purpose of WSIB reporting for unpaid co-op students
- Work to resolve any concerns collaboratively with the student and employer. As a last resort, a student may be withdrawn from the Co-op placement in consultation with the employer, student and school administration



**GENERAL INFORMATION****Insurance Coverage**

Coverage is provided by the Ministry of Education under the WSIA, 1997 for students, including adult learners, who are participating in co-operative education where the student is considered a worker. To ensure WSIA coverage, the WEA form must be completed before the student begins the placement.

In cases where the student and/or the placement employer wish to modify the hours or change the dates set out in the WEA form, a WEA amendment form must be completed and attached to the WEA to ensure that the necessary WSIA coverage remains in place for the student.

WSIA coverage arranged through the Ministry of Education applies only to the hours and dates stated in the WEA form and amendment form if applicable. WSIA coverage is not provided by the Ministry if a student receives an hourly wage or a salary. In this case, the placement employer is responsible for providing WSIA coverage. School boards, with the assistance of placement employers, must ensure that WSIB requirements are properly adhered to both prior to and during work placements.

If a student sustains a work-related injury or contracts a disease while participating in a work education or experiential learning program, that student is eligible to receive benefits and services through the WSIB. Any injury or disease, however minor, suffered by a student during a work placement must be reported by the student to the placement employer and to the Cooperative Education teacher. The teacher is responsible for following accident reporting procedures.

**Student Attendance at Co-op Placement**

Students will usually attend their Co-op placement on each school day for half a day or a whole day as indicated on their WEA. If a student is going to be absent, the student must inform their employer and teacher of the absence.

In general, students do not attend their Co-op placement on any school and statutory holiday, including PA days. If attendance is necessary, it must be approved through the Co-op teacher and school.

If schools are closed due to inclement weather, students do not attend their co-op placement. Students must notify the employer that they will not be attending.

Students do not attend the Co-op placement during a strike/walkout or lockout.

**Driving**

In general, Cooperative Education students should not drive a vehicle as part of the Co-op placement.

Driving may be a natural or necessary component of certain job sectors. If the student is required to be driven by a supervisor during their placement, there is paperwork that is required to be completed prior to this driving occurring. If the student is required to drive during the placement, the supervisor, student and teacher will collaborate to determine the parameters, build the expectations into the student learning plan and complete the necessary forms prior to the student driving.

**Remuneration**

It is essential that the emphasis in cooperative education be placed on learning and that cooperative education be differentiated from part-time employment. It is therefore not general practice for a student in Co-op to receive remuneration. In some circumstances, a school may allow a student to receive payment, provided that the requirements of the Cooperative Education course are met. Students who receive an hourly wage or salary or are employed beyond the hours or dates stated on the WEA, must be given coverage by the employer under the WSIA. A community partner may provide students with an honorarium or an expense / transportation allowance. These are construed as "remuneration" for the purposes of WSIA coverage.

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For more information about Cooperative Education Policy in Ontario visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/subjects.html>

## HDSB PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

Secondary schools in the Halton District School Board run more than 60 different specialized programs that involve Cooperative Education as a component of the program. Learn more about our programs at [www.haltonpathways.ca](http://www.haltonpathways.ca)

### Specialist High Skills Major

The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) is a specialized program that allows students to focus on knowledge and skills that are in a specific economic sector and obtain certifications recognized in those sectors. The SHSM diploma will allow a student to experience a range of customized career-focused learning which will give them the opportunity to make informed career decisions. All students in the SHSM are prepared for success in the post-secondary destination of their choice, whether it be apprenticeship training, a college or university program or the workplace.



### Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) offers Ontario secondary school students the opportunity to get experience in any apprenticeable occupation. Through our Co-op program, successful students can begin to train as registered apprentices while enrolled in high school. OYAP allows a student to complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and gain apprenticeship training towards a certificate of apprenticeship, which may lead to a journeyman status. Through specialized cooperative education and appropriate in-school courses, students can get experience in an apprenticeship trade and, if they show the ability and drive, they can start an apprenticeship while still in high school!



#### Benefits to Youth:

- Provides experience to make better career choices and a possible start in a chosen career
- Eases the transition from school to work
- Increases opportunities for post-secondary training and employment
- Develops both specialized and general employability skills including: problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork, good work habits, confidence and self-reliance
- Develops an understanding of employer expectations in the work world and the need for lifelong learning

#### Benefits to Employers:

- Directs motivated, young people to the career sector and the skilled trades at an early age
- Provides the opportunity to be involved with schools and informs educators of your requirements with respect to future employees
- On-going involvement provides your business with a continuous source of potential apprenticeship candidates and future employees

#### How can an Employer Participate?

- Agree to supervise a Co-op student
- Consider employing the student after the co-op term or placement is finished
- Consider signing OYAP students as an apprentice during the Co-op placement (even if you cannot commit to keeping the student on after the end of the Co-op)
- Contact the Co-op teacher for more information





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