

Cooperative Education Supervisor's Manual

Cooperative Education provides secondary school students with a wide range of rigorous learning opportunities connected to communities outside the school. It is designed to recognize and respond to the diversity of Ontario's student population, and it can engage all students in all pathways. In Cooperative Education, students learn in safe and welcoming environments within the community, and they are actively involved in shaping what they learn, how they learn, when and where they learn, and how they demonstrate their learning. Participation in Cooperative Education can lead to transformational change, engaging students in unique experiences that provide skills and knowledge they can refer to throughout their lives.

This brief manual is designed to assist supervisors in carrying out their responsibilities, and contains advice and suggestions which should make the tasks more manageable.

On behalf of the Toronto District School Board, we thank you for your contribution toward the education and career exploration of our students. Your expertise, enthusiasm and education commitment are highly valued.

The Role of the Co-op Supervisor:

As a Co-op Supervisor you should be prepared to . . .

- Meet with the teacher to discuss program aims, responsibilities of participants and student performance
- Conduct a realistic interview with the prospective student
- Agree to accept a student if you believe the student will benefit from and contribute to your work environment
- Complete a safety placement assessment with the teacher
- Ensure the student has health and safety training at the beginning of the placement and on-going training as appropriate
- Agree to instruct and assess the student in conjunction with the teacher by completing Student Performance Appraisals
- Contribute to the student's Learning Plan and provide realistic learning objectives
- Sign the Work Education Agreement (WEA) form to ensure WSIB coverage is in place for the duration of the placement
- Contact the teacher if there is a student injury or incident or if other concerns arise
- Regularly monitor student performance and overall well-being and contact monitoring teacher when necessary

Easing the Student's Transition Into Your Organization:

Please consider the following to help your student adjust to the new environment...

- Introduce student to co-workers
- Show student the work space and equipment to be used
- Inform student of the expected hours of the working day
- Provide student with contact information should student be late or absent
- Conduct a tour of your facilities, show student where to find supplies, restrooms, lockers and lunch room
- Outline Health and Safety procedures
- Discuss role of the union, if applicable
- Discuss the purpose of your organization and how your department is part of the larger picture
- Work with the student and teacher to develop a student learning plan that connects with the student's learning goals and the duties in the organization
- Outline important rules and regulations, discuss company procedures and supply a manual, if available
- Remind student to ask questions about following proper procedures
- Help student to feel part of your work team

Developing and Maintaining the Learning Plan

All co-op students will develop a *Learning Plan* in collaboration with the Co-op teacher and the placement supervisor. In developing their learning plan, students create and reflect on their learning goals and plan how they will achieve these goals. The development of the learning plan helps students determine the types of learning opportunities (i.e., tasks, activities) in which they will participate, where those opportunities will occur, the timelines within which the experience will take place, the resources that will be required, and the nature and extent of support and feedback the students will need. The Learning Plan is a working document, and because of this, it can change over time so that it reflects the growing understanding of their placement and the tasks and skills required.

You Can Enhance the Student's Co-op Experience If You...

- Plan with student appropriate activities for each day and week and ensure that tasks are clearly defined
- Allow student to observe tasks before being expected to perform them, explain what you are doing and why
- Ensure (by careful questioning) that student understands task, have student repeat the instructions, or practice while you observe
- Monitor student performance and behaviour and report any concerns to Co-op teacher immediately
- Show student how to safely operate any equipment to be used and enforce safe work habits
- Have challenging but attainable expectations
- Praise student for a job well done; offer constructive criticism with specific suggestions for improving performance
- Have 'back-up' work activities or reading available when student's regular work is completed early
- Give student opportunities to show initiative by gradually reducing degree of close supervision
- Vary student's daily tasks as much as possible
- Explain how previous work learned connects to new tasks
- Continue to co-develop the student's Learning Plan once you are more familiar with student's capabilities
- Encourage student to develop global competencies. Example: participating in leadership opportunities; collaborating with others, problem solving

Other Useful Information

- Teachers are required to visit and assess the Co-op placement before the student begins to ensure the placement is appropriate and safe for the student. The date and time of the visit will be arranged with the supervisor
- Students will return to the classroom periodically throughout the semester/year to integrate their learning, reflect on and share their experiences with peers and teachers and to receive ongoing feedback and coaching
- Co-op students follow the school calendar, meaning that they will not be at placement if the school is closed, or during PA days
- Teachers are required to monitor/visit students throughout their time at placement. Please discuss with the Co-op teacher the best way to allow this to happen
- Students will have Co-op assignments related to their placement. Encouraging students to share assignment requirements and adding personal experiences will lead to a deeper understanding of industry
- Students are expected to follow the hours and the duration of placement dates outlined in the WEA (explained below)

Regulations

Insurance Coverage: Students are covered through a policy taken out by the Ministry of Education. For this coverage to be valid, the Work Education Agreement (WEA) form must be signed by all parties before the student begins work. The Toronto District School Board maintains liability insurance coverage for Co-op students participating in programs authorized by the Board. Students are covered for third party, bodily injury and property damage. The student and company are protected against damage arising from the student's negligence; the student is protected for damage caused accidentally to the property of the placement while such property is in her/his care, custody or control. Student Accident Insurance is made available to all students; however, this insurance is voluntary and optional and is paid by the student.

Remuneration: Cooperative Education students are earning credits for work experience related to in-school curriculum. The Toronto District School Board does not expect students to be paid for their assigned Co-op time, but a nominal honorarium towards work expenses – transportation, lunch, uniforms or equipment is acceptable.

If the student stays at the placement beyond the Co-op placement hours, the student may be hired as an employee and be paid. The employer then assumes responsibility for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage.

Operating Company Vehicles: Toronto District School Board recommends that students do not drive any sort of vehicle as part of their placement activities. Students are not expected to operate workplace vehicles as part of placement requirements.