



COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OP)

WHAT IS CO-OP?

Cooperative Education (Co-op) is a course that allows students to earn high school credits while completing a work placement in the community. Co-op credits provide students with an opportunity to build on their skills, gain practical work experience and prepare for their future. The employer, student and teacher work together to provide students with challenging growth and learning opportunities.

HOW DOES A CO-OP PLACEMENT WORK?

Most students are at their work placement for half a school day (~12.5 hours/week), however full day (~25 hours/week) experiences are often sought. While students spend most of their time at the workplace, they will remain in school for the first one to three weeks, where they are preparing for the workplace. During this time, co-op teachers work with students to determine their work placement interests, and to educate students in health and safety and other job readiness skills. Throughout the semester, students will also participate in classroom-based integration sessions.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME AS AN EMPLOYER?



Provide students with a safe working environment and opportunity to learn from experts in the field



Designate one employee to be responsible for supervising and assessing student performance



Provide challenging learning experiences that will encourage personal growth and help students develop career goals



Provide orientation and site-specific health and safety training



Meet with teacher over the course of the placement to discuss student progress and identify areas for improvement



Provide students with oral and written feedback

WHO COVERS WSIB?

Unpaid students are covered through a policy taken out by the Ministry of Education. For this coverage to be in place, the Work Education Agreement (WEA) form must be signed by all parties before the student begins work. Additional student accident insurance is available to all students, but it is voluntary and optional, and paid for by the student.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS?

- ✔ Work in a courteous, responsible and business-like manner and show initiative
- ✔ Comply with all workplace policy and procedures including: health, safety and well-being, dress and confidentiality
- ✔ Communicate learning opportunities or areas of interest with teacher and supervisor
- ✔ Submit assignments and timesheets as required
- ✔ Inform the placement supervisor and the teacher in advance if unable to report to work placement
- ✔ Function as an integral part of the company's team

For more information,
please visit
www.scdsb.on.ca.

DO I NEED TO PAY CO-OP STUDENTS?

No. The program is intended to provide students with the ability to develop work-related skills in a challenging learning environment. Students are awarded credits towards their diploma and benefit from the skills learned, work habits developed and experiences obtained. In certain situations, remuneration can be arranged, but is an agreement between the employer, student and co-op teacher. If students are working outside of the agreed timelines as indicated in the WEA, then students should be treated as a regular employee.

HOW DOES FOLLOW-UP OR EVALUATION WORK?

The supervisor can expect full support and assistance from the teacher, who monitors the student's progress regularly throughout the training period. In addition to feedback from employers on workplace performance, each student will be assessed through written assignments, seminar presentations, reflective journals, career portfolios and a culminating independent-study activity that links the student's experience with the curriculum.

HOW IS ATTENDANCE MONITORED?

Students are responsible for communicating with the supervisor and co-op teacher if they will be late or absent from the workplace. The teacher maintains records along with the student's timesheets. If the student is frequently absent or late, the employer should remind the student of the company's policy. The student may be sent back to the school if satisfactory improvement is not demonstrated.

WHAT HOURS DOES THE STUDENT WORK?

The student will provide a calendar which outlines the specific days and hours that they are available according to their school's timetable. If students are employed beyond their co-op placement hours, it is assumed that they will be paid and that the employer will be responsible for WSIB coverage.

WHAT PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED AT HIGH SCHOOL TO BENEFIT EMPLOYERS?

The Simcoe County District School Board offers a wide range of specialized and practical programs and courses for students which are easily transferable to the world of work, including:

- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)
- Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM)
- Aesthetics and Hairstyling
- Business and Entrepreneurship
- Construction
- Health and Wellness
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information and Communications Technology
- Manufacturing
- Transportation Technology