



# Cooperative Education Supervisor's Guide

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## Overview

Cooperative Education is a program that integrates classroom theory with practical experience in the workplace. The program is based on a learning partnership between the school and business/industry, and involves the participation of students, teachers and placement supervisors. Students are provided with the opportunity to experience the practical aspects of the job, the demands of employment, and the expectations of employers in the changing world of work. The learning at school and at the Co-op placement complement each other and provide students with credits towards their Ontario Secondary School diploma.

Cooperative Education students are selected for the school's Co-op program through an application and interview process. Admission is generally restricted to students 16 years of age or older. The students are placed in organizations which best match both the educational needs of the students and the interests of the training organization. Before students arrive at a placement, they attend structured pre-placement orientation sessions within their schools, and must demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

- Health and safety rights and responsibilities
- Employment laws and regulations
- Human rights
- Resume and cover letter writing
- Interview skills
- Confidentiality and ethics

## Benefits of Cooperative Education

### For the Employer

- Matches an employer with a student willing to learn who is WSIB covered by the Ministry of Education and comes with no cost to the employer
- Provides a mentoring opportunity for an experienced employee to train a high school student who may become a valuable employee
- Students can bring new innovative ideas to your workplace
- Allows an employer to sponsor a student as a Registered Apprentice with no impact to their journey person to apprentice ratio
- Building your company's reputation as a community partner

### For the Student

- Gains first hand exposure to a range of career options to help make post-secondary decisions
- Develops confidence and transferable skills in a professional work environment
- Understands the link between what is learned in the classroom and how it is applied at work
- Facilitates the transition from school to work
- Receives valuable training by experts in the field that cannot be learned in a classroom

## Supervisor's Role

As the supervisor, your role will be to establish mutual expectations and responsibilities of the Cooperative Education partnership, and to support the student's learning during the Co-op term.

As a prospective Co-op supervisor you should be prepared to:

### Prior to Placement

- Review the student's resume and cover letter;
- Interview the student to determine suitability of the placement;
- Agree to accept the student if you believe the student will benefit from and contribute to your work environment
- Discuss the student's interests, strengths and goals;
- Establish roles and expectations;
- Indicate the experience available at your workplace;

- Meet with the monitoring teacher to review the Pre-placement Safety Assessment;
- Provide an orientation to the placement, including health and safety procedures;
- Establish Co-op schedule and work hours;
- Consider who will be responsible for the direct daily supervisor of the student, if it is not you personally, prepare the employee for such responsibilities;
- Complete the necessary forms prior to commencement of student placement.

### During the Co-op Term

- Provide a safe working and learning environment;
- Offer challenging learning experiences that will encourage personal growth and develop career goals;
- Have regular communication/contact with the student and teacher-monitor;
- Help the student function as an integral part of a team;
- Confirm the student's time sheets/logs in order to verify placement hours;
- Meet with the teacher several times over the course of the placement to discuss the student progress;
- Provide input and feedback on school assignments that are related to the placement experience;
- Complete the performance appraisals for the student.

## Student Safety

Safety instruction is the combined responsibility of the teacher-monitor and the placement supervisor. [Bill 18](#) expands the definition of 'worker' to ensure OHS coverage for unpaid learners and co-op students. Students complete basic health and safety training with their Co-op teachers prior to beginning the work placement. Placement supervisors are expected to:

- provide trade/industry specific Health and Safety training in accordance with Ontario's Occupational Health & Safety Act prior to the student performing the tasks (within the first week of placement);
- provide a safe working environment;
- ensure that students know how to report injury or accidents at the workplace;
- stress the importance of safe practices on the job; and
- ensure that proper industrial safety procedures and requirements are being met.



### Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB)

Students involved in Cooperative Education are covered under the Workers' Compensation Act by the Ministry of Education, unless the student is paid wages for their work. Paid students are considered employees of the organization in which case, responsibility for WSIB coverage becomes that of the employer. The York Region District School Board and participating organizations are required to complete a Work Education Agreement. This form must be signed by the parent, teacher, student and employer before the placement begins. Students are not covered by the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board when traveling to and from the placement. Conditions of WSIB coverage provided by the Ministry of Education can be found in [Policy Memorandum 76A](#)

### Liability Insurance

Students and training organizations are insured against a lawsuit arising out of the negligence of the student while performing the duties of the Co-op assignment. The board does not cover personal injuries to the student.

## Student Accident Insurance

Student Accident Insurance is made available to all York Region District School Board students. This insurance is optional and is paid for by students and parents. This policy covers some expenses, not covered by provincial health care, associated with student accidents and injuries while participating in a school-authorized program such as Cooperative Education. All Cooperative Education students are strongly encouraged to purchase a policy.

### In Case of Accident

Should injury occur, however minor, it must be reported immediately to the teacher-monitor by the student or placement supervisor with full details including when, where and how the injury occurred. If the teacher-monitor is not available, please contact the student's [home school](#).

If a student requires medical treatment, a WSIB Treatment Memorandum (Form 0156C) must be presented to the medical practitioner, who will complete this form and then submit it to the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board. Use of this form will prevent the training organization from being charged for compensation by mistake. These forms will be made available to you by the Co-op teacher.

### Operating a Motor Vehicle

York District School Board recommends that students do not drive any sort of vehicle as part of their placement activities. If driving a company vehicle is an integral component of the student's Co-op experience, the employer is responsible for any claims resulting from an accident. It is the responsibility of the placement supervisor to ensure that students are covered under the company's own insurance policy. Employers should make sure that their insurance covers drivers under the age of twenty-one years. If students are traveling in an employer vehicle as part of their placement duties, a Trip Driver's Authorization Form must be filled in, which ensures that minimum liability insurance is met for the vehicle.

## Program Details

### Student Monitoring

The Co-op teacher will monitor the student at the placement on a regular basis to consult with the placement supervisor as well as the student, and to observe the student at work. Records of each monitoring session are kept by the teacher. These appointments are an essential component of Cooperative Education as they ensure that the educational expectations, and the placement supervisor and organization expectations outlined in the Cooperative Education Learning Plan are being met. It is during these meetings that adjustments to the Learning Plan, hours of work etc. can be made and any concerns addressed.

### Cooperative Education Learning Plan (CELP)

The teacher-monitor, Co-op student and placement supervisor develop the Cooperative Education Learning Plan (CELP). This plan outlines the expectations of the program and identifies tasks that are performed by the student which fulfill the expectations of the course and the placement during the semester. Revisions to the Cooperative Education Learning Plan (CELP) may occur at any time during the placement. The CELP consists of expectations from the: classroom component;

- related course expectations; and
- placement expectations.

The CELP forms the basis of the assessment for the student while at their Co-op placement.

### Remuneration

Students participating in the Cooperative Education Program have been told not to expect financial remuneration as learning is the focus of the program. However, a company may wish to pay a nominal honorarium to Cooperative Education students. Transportation assistance would be appreciated for the student wherever costs are being incurred by the student.



## Hours of Work

Students complete weekly logs which record their hours, days in attendance and tasks/activities performed at the training station. Placement supervisors verify these log sheets by signing them at the end of each week. Weekly verification of hours by the supervisor is a very important part of the program, and is required for attendance and reporting purposes.

If at anytime a student's hours, days, duties or location is different than stated on the Work Education Agreement, the student must fill out an Amendment to the WEA form 24 hours before the change.

## Attendance Policy

Co-op students are expected to be at the placement Monday to Friday as per school calendar. Co-op students are exempt from their Co-op placement on:

- significant faith days;
- scheduled field trip days;
- all school and statutory holidays;
- examination days;
- Professional Activity days;
- days when the Co-op student's school is closed or school buses do not operate for reasons such as inclement weather; and
- scheduled integration session (in-school) days.

The Co-op teacher will provide placement supervisors with a calendar of pertinent dates specific to the secondary school's co-op program. Students must inform the placement supervisor and Co-op teacher of any absences. If the Co-op student is absent from placement without notice, please contact the Co-op teacher as soon as possible. Habitual lateness or inexcusable absenteeism is not acceptable and should also be reported immediately to the teacher-monitor.



## Specialized Programs

### Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs ([OYAP](#))

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) encourages eligible high school students over the age of 15 (Grade 11 or 12 students with a minimum of 14 credits) to explore career opportunities in the skilled trades through co-op placements with community partners. The student earns co-op credits and hours/competencies towards their apprenticeship certification by participating in a skilled trade related co-op placement with organizations and companies in the local community.

Co-op students in skilled trade placements become OYAP participants when they sign and return an OYAP Participant Application Form to their co-op teacher.

OYAP participants also have the opportunity to be officially registered as apprentices with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Skills Development (MLITSD) at no cost to the student or placement.

Exemptions under the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021(BOSTA)

OYAP participants, including OYAP apprentices (i.e., participants with registered training agreements), are exempt from the following requirements (Ontario Regulation 877/21):

- Minimum age
- Practice of compulsory trade
- Wage rates and ratios
- Appearing on the Skilled Trades Ontario (STO) public register

Please refer to the [OYAP Exemptions](#) for the MLITSD information memo.

#### For more information on OYAP:

[www.oyap.com/](http://www.oyap.com/)  
[www.yrdsb.ca/OYAP](http://www.yrdsb.ca/OYAP)  
[www.skilledtradesontario.ca](http://www.skilledtradesontario.ca)



### Specialist High Skills Major ([SHSM](#))

A Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) is a specialized program for high schools students in Grade 11 and 12 that allows students to experience a range of customized, career-focused learning opportunities while working towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Students choose a sector available at their school, select courses that support and attend multiple pathway connected experiences.

All SHSM students complete a two-credit co-op placement connected to their sector as a requirement to their program.

If a student is part of the SHSM program at their school, the following activities could apply to their program requirements:

- Interviewing a staff member other than their placement supervisor regarding their pathway (reach ahead component)
- Attending meetings, conferences, events (experiential learning component)
- Hands on training in any certification connected to their sector (See Ministry Site for examples listed by sector)

#### For more information on the SHSM program:

[www.yrdsb.ca/shsm](http://www.yrdsb.ca/shsm)  
[Ministry of Education SHSM Site](#)



## Dual Credits

Dual Credits allow students in secondary school to take college or apprenticeship courses that count towards both the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree, or an apprenticeship certification. Co-op students who are participating in our dual credits program may be away or need to leave their placement early to attend their college program based on each program's schedule.

**For more information on the dual credits program:**

[www.yrdsb.ca/dualcredits](http://www.yrdsb.ca/dualcredits)

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long is the program and how many hours are students expected to work?  
Semester 1 is from September to January, and semester 2 runs from February to June. Most Co-op students will be ready for their placement after three to four weeks of in-school classes with their Co-op teacher. Two credit (half day) students usually work around 2.5-3 hours each day. Four credit (full day) students usually work between 6-8 hours each day with at least a 30 minute lunch break. The start and end times of their work will be determined in conjunction with the school's timetable and the hours of operation of the placement.
2. If I pay my Co-op student an honorarium, am I responsible for the WSIB?  
Supporting your student with an honorarium or transportation expenses does not make them a paid employee as long as the honorarium does not exceed \$500. WSIB coverage will still remain with the Ministry Education.
3. Are students allowed to work on nights and weekends?  
Co-op students are encouraged to have placement hours that fall generally within the regular school day. However, special situations may require Co-op students to work at their placements during evenings and weekends. If at anytime a student's hours, days, duties or location is different than stated on the Work Education Agreement, the student must fill out an Amendment to the WEA form 24 hours before the change.
4. Are students allowed to work during Winter Break, March Break or other holidays?  
No. Students are not to be working during board sanctioned holidays as there are no support staff available in the case of an emergency.
5. What type of work is expected for high school Co-op students?  
Students' tasks will vary greatly depending on the type of placement and the readiness/interest of each student. Supervisors and students are encouraged to discuss what the student's interests and strengths are to determine appropriate type of work at the placement. The hope is that students will build upon their experiences and gradually move on to assist with more complex tasks at the placement. By the end of the semester, students should have experienced a wide range of duties and tasks. This should be discussed with the student when developing the CELP in collaboration with the placement supervisor, student and teacher-monitor.

## Thank You Co-op Supervisors!

We, the Cooperative Education students, teachers and administrators of the York Region District School Board, wish to thank our communities for the excellent educational opportunities provided.

Please visit our website ([www.yrdsb.ca/co-op](http://www.yrdsb.ca/co-op)) for more information on the Cooperative Education Program. If you are interested in becoming a Co-op community partner, please visit <http://yrdsb.cc/YRDSBCo-opPartners>.