

Information for Employers 2024

The best way to learn about work is on the job. At the Secondary School level, students have an opportunity to work outside school at jobs that match their interests and aptitudes. It is called co-operative education and it is an important part of the school curriculum. Co-operative education prepares our youth for the transition from school to work; it helps them make education and career choices; it develops knowledge, skills and attitudes expected in the workplace.

Co-operative education is a partnership consisting of employers, students, and teachers. All parties play a significant role in the program. Each must commit to the goals of the program, and each is responsible for achieving those goals to the best of their ability. The success of the program depends upon clear expectations and shared responsibilities.

Benefits for YOUR Workplace:

- improve public relations by demonstrating good corporate citizenship
- employ a motivated and eager individual in their workplace
- source, assess, and recruit potential employees
- involve employees in a rewarding experience with young people
- influence young people's attitudes toward work and school
- develop training, supervisory, and communication skills of current employees

Workplace Safety Insurance Coverage

Students in work experience and cooperative education programs are covered under the Workers' Compensation Act as part of the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Durham District School Board (except where students receive remuneration for their services).

Related Costs

The main costs are time and people. You may need to provide additional meeting and training time for staff who are supervising the student in their learning. Time will also be needed for the supervisor to meet with the teacher on a regular basis. Except for apprenticeships, students are not customarily paid for these activities.

Program Details: The program runs from July 2 to August 2, 2024. Students should be scheduled Mon – Fri – (no weekends) and between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. Specific details or modified schedules can be discussed with the co-op teacher. Students require 220 hours of combined in-class instruction and placement experience to obtain 2 credits. Students will have pre-placement and integration dates where they will not be at the workplace. Details will be provided by the co-op teacher but generally – 3 days at the beginning of the program, one at the midpoint and one at the end of the program.

You can help our future workforce by:

- providing a safe working and learning environment,
- designating one employee to be responsible for supervising and evaluating each student,
- providing students with written or oral feedback after an employment interview as part of the learning experience,
- helping to develop personalized placement learning plans by identifying workplace applications,
- providing orientation and workplace health and safety training,
- providing challenging learning experiences that will encourage personal growth and develop career goals,
- helping students function as an integral part of a team.

For more information, please visit our website at www.dce.ca (under Summer School) or contact:
Michele Reid, Head of Credit Programs – 905.436.3211 or michele.reid@ddsb.ca

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Employers – Frequently Asked Questions

Why are school-work opportunities important for young people?

As adolescents go through the transformation from child to adult, they spend a lot of time exploring future roles and careers. Experiences at this age can lay the foundation for successful employment and a productive life in adulthood. School-work experiences provide students with access to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they need in the workplace. As a result, students are better able to set realistic and obtainable goals for themselves.

Learning in the workplace helps students develop good employability and citizenship skills and behaviours. Some of these competencies include effective resource management, working co-operatively, acquiring, using, and managing information, understanding organizations and how they function, working with different technologies, and strategies for problem solving.

Does my organization have anything to offer?

Every organization has a great deal to offer students who could be future employees. Every work experience can influence a student's confidence, educational goals, career choice, or commitment to stay in school.

Will teenagers fit into my organization?

There is no doubt that teenagers and even young adults bring their own joys and challenges. The physical, emotional, and social changes they are experiencing make each one of them a unique entity with unique characteristics and needs. They may be highly energetic, active, outspoken, and impulsive. They are also enthusiastic, and eager to please, anxious to learn, and excited about new experiences and interacting with other people. Their preference for active over passive learning means you can engage them fully in appropriately designed learning activities.

Working closely with their teacher will help you to understand the characteristics of the age group, any specific student needs, and how to plan a meaningful learning experience.

How can we provide a meaningful learning experience for the students?

You and your employees have a multitude of relevant skills to share with students. This is an opportunity to refine those skills and develop some new ones. Some common functions include:

- training, e.g., instructing students about safety requirements
- mentoring, e.g., advising individual students
- supervising, e.g., overseeing student performance
- co-ordinating, e.g., organizing work schedules

In advance of the experience, talk with the teacher to ensure that you have all the information you require about the co-op program. Identify the work skills and learning expectations to be pursued at the workplace, and how they relate to classroom learning. Clarify the expectations for the employer, the student, and the school. Communicate with the teacher and the student about how things are going and adjust as needed.

Can we involve students with special needs?

Absolutely! Although students with special needs may need additional, personalized attention when it comes to planning and monitoring their involvement, there is no doubt that they have the makings of reliable and loyal employees. You will want to work closely with their teacher(s), spend time getting to know their strengths, and make plans to work with their individual needs to build success.

The classroom teacher will be a key resource for you in the area. In general, all adolescents benefit from: - positive social interaction with adults and peers - structured and clear boundaries, and expectations - opportunities for creative expression - meaningful participation in small groups - activities involving some choice.

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