

Information for Employers

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's called co-operative education and it's 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. Cooperative education can also assist adults return to the work force, upgrade skills for employment or prepare for a career change.

Co-operative education is a partnership consisting of employers, students, and teachers. All parties play an important 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
- influence people's attitudes toward work and school
- develop training, supervisory, and communication skills of current employees

Workplace Safety Insurance Coverage

Registered Co-op students participating in an unpaid work placement 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). Registered students who are participating in a paid employment placement will have WSIB covered by the employer as part of their employment contract.

Related Costs

Generally, 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.

Program Details: The program runs from Feb. 12, 2020 to June 3, 2020. Unpaid placement students must be scheduled from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm Monday's and Wednesdays. Paid employment students must be scheduled a minimum of 8 hours per week and some of those hours must occur between 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm on either Monday or Wednesday. Only 8 hours per week will be counted towards the co-op credit. Specific details or modified schedules can be discussed with the co-op teacher. Students require 110 hours of combined in-class instruction and placement experience to obtain 1 credit. 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 – 2 days at the beginning of program, one at the mid point 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 Night School) or contact: Michele Reid, Head of Elective Programs – 905.436.3211 or michele.reid@ddsb.ca

Why are school-work opportunities important for students?

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 currently are or could ultimately be future employees. Every work experience can influence a student's confidence, educational goals, career choice, or commitment to stay in school.

Will teenagers/young adults or more mature adults fit into my organization?

There is no doubt that every person brings their own joys and challenges. The physical, emotional, and social changes they are experiencing make each and every 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 student, 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 student about safety requirement
- 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 with regard to how things are going and make adjustments 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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