Cooperative Education
Information for teachers/administrators

All Ontario cooperative education programs have specific requirements, which include the following.

Pre-course interview

The purpose of this initial interview with the student applicant is to ensure that:

• the student is ready to undertake learning in the workplace, and is taking, will be taking, or has taken a course that is related to the proposed cooperative education placement (where a student's readiness or commitment is not sufficiently evident, his or her acceptance into the cooperative education program may be postponed until the requirements are met);

• barriers to success in the workplace are identified, and appropriate supports can be put in place (e.g., assistive devices, job coaches);

• there is a placement that is appropriate to the student's goals and interests.

Establishment of the placement

Placements for students must be arranged by the school and must meet the following requirements:

• A placement must be assessed by a teacher before the student is assigned to it to ensure that the placement offers a positive learning environment in a safe workplace.

• It is not general practice for a cooperative education student to receive remuneration for work done in a placement, since the emphasis is on learning. However, provided that all the criteria for the cooperative education program are met, a board may permit a cooperative education student in a specialized program (e.g., a re-entry program) or in a particular placement (e.g., a unionized environment) to receive payment.

• A placement must have Workplace Safety and Insurance coverage through the ministry or the workplace (see Policy/Program Memorandum No. 76A, September 27, 2000).

Pre-placement instruction

A minimum of fifteen hours of instruction must be provided on:

• workplace health and safety (for resources, see www.livesafeworksmart.net and www. passporttosafety.com);

• employment law, unions, workplace ethics, human rights, and confidentiality.

Personalized placement learning plan (PPLP)

A PPLP must be developed for each student. It must be:

• based on expectations from the related course in the Ontario curriculum, the requirements for cooperative education, and industry-specific requirements;

• developed by the cooperative education teacher in partnership with the employer and student (where the cooperative education teacher is not qualified in the related subject or the student has an Individual Education Plan, the cooperative education teacher will consult with the appropriate subject or special education teacher).

Samples of PPLPs are available at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

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Assessment and evaluation

A qualified teacher must assess and evaluate a student's progress in achieving the curriculum expectations and in meeting the requirements identified in the student's PPLP through regular workplace monitoring meetings (a minimum of three per credit). During workplace monitoring, the teacher will:

• observe student performance of workplace tasks, plan next steps, and troubleshoot problem situations;

• conduct formal evaluations with the student's supervisor.

Student achievement is also assessed through:

• written assignments, seminar presentations, reflective journals, and career portfolios;

• a culminating independent-study activity that links the student's cooperative education placement experience with the curriculum expectations of the related course;

• a minimum of two performance appraisals written by the placement supervisor.

Teachers are encouraged to ask employers to use the Ontario Skills Passport Work Plan to assess and record a student's demonstration of Essential Skills and work habits.

In-school integration sessions

In-school sessions of a minimum of seven hours per credit provide students with opportunities to:

• analyse and share their workplace experience;

• relate the placement experience to the curriculum expectations;

• reinforce the job-skills theory acquired in the classroom and the skills, techniques, and principles learned and applied at the placement.

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