Co-operative Education Manual

A Guide to Planning and Implementing Co-operative Education Programs in Post-Secondary Institutions

Canadian Association for Co-operative Education
www.cafce.ca

Co-operative Education Manual:
A Guide to Planning and Implementing Co-operative Education Programs
in Post-Secondary Institutions

The Co-op Manual provides comprehensive information on how to plan and implement a co-operative education program within an institution. The Manual contains a set of generic guidelines encompassing co-operative education practices.

It includes background information on the philosophy and concept of co-op as an educational strategy and elements of co-operative education programs that build quality into program delivery. Many of these elements form the criteria for national accreditation standards.

The Manual is not meant to be prescriptive. It is impossible capture all permutations and combinations of co-op procedures but examples have been drawn from a range of co-op programs across Canada. Due to geographical disparity and institutional differences, co-op practices are subject to variation. Similarities do exist, however, and it is the aim of this Manual to present an integrated model of co-operative education in Canada. It is hoped that institutional will adopt the practices that best fit their institutional culture.

This Manual is only a starting toward a basic understanding of co-operative education. Institutions interested in implementing are encouraged to contact the CAFCE National Office for referrals to experienced co-op educators in their region and discipline of interest.

It is hoped that this Manual contributes fulfilling one of the goals of CAFCE – to broaden the interpretation and understanding of the significance and values of the co-operative education philosophy, and to extend the participation of co-operative education in Canada.

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Part 1: Overview

CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE) commissioned the CAFCE Accreditation Council to develop a manual to assist institutions that are implementing co-op programs for the first time or that are expanding their Co-op operations. Co-operative Education practitioners from across Canada have provided input to this manual which is intended as a resource, presenting best practices from various institutions. The content is not meant to be prescriptive or regulatory. Through CAFCE's Accreditation Council, criteria have been developed that set standards for Co-operative Education programs nationally. The CAFCE Accreditation Guide and Application is available online on www.cafce.ca under the accreditation section (http://www.cafce.ca/pages/guideandapplication.php)

1.1   What is Co-operative Education

Co-operative Education is a program that formally integrates a student's academic studies with work experience with participating employers. The usual plan is for the student to alternate periods of experience in appropriate fields of business, industry, government, social services and the professions in accordance with the following criteria:

(i)   each work situation is developed and/or approved by the co-operative educational institution as a suitable learning situation;
(ii)   the co-operative student is engaged in productive work rather than merely observing;
(iii)   the co-operative student receives remuneration for the work performed;
(iv)   the co-operative student's progress on the job is monitored by the co-operative educational institution;
(v)   the co-operative student's performance on the job is supervised and evaluated by the student's co-operative employer;
(vi)   time spent in periods of work experience must be at least thirty percent of the time spent in academic study.

This approach to education relies upon a three-way partnership: the student, the institution and the employer. Success depends upon the co-operative efforts of each party.

There are two approved co-op program structures or models that are recognized nationally:

* co-op programs with more than one work experience integrated into the overall program providing students with the opportunity for career exploration, development and exposure to more than a single type of work environment in their discipline; and
* co-op internship programs with one work experience period where students receive an in depth exposure (normally) to one employer organization, which provides the student the opportunity for development commensurate with the length of the overall program.

1.2   Co-op Education as an Educational Strategy

Co-operative Education is an educational model rather than a job placement strategy. Co-op Education promotes continuous learning through the integration of classroom and applied work-based learning. It has gained recognition within the employer and academic communities as having an increased educational value, providing the opportunity for students to develop both discipline specific and general education goals. With the development of the concept of employability skills identified by the Conference Board of Canada and essential skills identified by Human Resources Development Canada, there is increased validity for relevance of the Co-operative Education model. (Conference Board of Canada Employability Skills; see HRDC website: http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.htm

Students graduating from post-secondary programs are now facing profound social, technological and economic change. Through Co-operative Education, employers and educators share the responsibility to prepare students for these rapidly changing conditions. Co-operative Education prepares students by providing them with opportunities to operate as a learner/worker. Employers become co-educators helping to develop today's students to become productive members of society. Co-operative Education is a learner-centered model where the onus of responsibility is on the students to direct their own learning and to make a valuable contribution in the work place. The learning is guided and supported by both by the employer and the institution. While the goal is to develop high calibre, well-trained graduates ready to assume productive careers in a dynamic and demanding work market, all parties benefit from this work and learning model.

1.3   Co-op Experience – Outcomes

Through this educational strategy, co-op students can gain an enriched understanding of their academic program through practical application. The co-op experience can motivate students to further education as well as lead to relevant employment after graduation. Studies show that co-op students gain employment sooner after graduation, have higher salaries, and are more likely to find employment related to their degree area than non-co-op graduates.

Through the competitive co-op placement process, students develop the ability to assess their skill level, to prepare a polished résumé, and to interview successfully. Through their work experiences, students develop and refine employability skills, gain an understanding of career opportunities in their field, and gain an understanding of the realities of the workplace. Co-op coordinators observe students growing in maturity and self-confidence as they progress through their co-op program.

1.4   National Standards

In 1979, the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE) established a system and process for the accreditation of co-operative education programs in Canada. For co-operative education, the articulation of appropriate criteria and standards is crucial to establishing co-op as an educational strategy that is identifiable, and is delivered in a consistent manner throughout Canada.
The accreditation criteria are designed to:
- assist institutions at the post-secondary level to meet a common set of standards necessary for quality program delivery;
- provide guidance to those seeking to establish new programs;
- ensure that quality is built into the planning for the program from the earliest stages; and
- ensure the development of co-operative education programs that truly meet the needs of students, employers and society.

The different regional associations affiliated with CAFCE may have additional requirements, standards or criteria that complement the national standards (for example, there is an Accountability Council for Co-operative Education in British Columbia).

CAFCE has also developed recruiting ethics guidelines for employers, students, and institutions that may be used in conjunction with administering your placement process. English copy available at: http://www.cafce.ca/downloadables/RecruitingEthics.pdf

1.5   Partnering with Employers

Employer participation as partners in Co-operative Education varies with the degree to which co-op programs meet their needs as employers. When co-op programs provide access to students who meet assessed employer and industry needs, employer participation can extend beyond hiring both work term students and graduates, to include on-campus education activities, engaging students in industry events, fund raising and co-op program development.

1.5.1   Hiring Co-op Students and Graduates

- Provision of students, well trained in their discipline, and well prepared for both job competition and workplace realities, ensures student hiring to meet employer needs.
- Ethical hiring practices, work term monitoring and quality employer services help to keep employers coming back to hire again.
- Building bridges between Co-op and Graduate Employment functions within your institution can enhance graduate hiring for both students and employers.
- Branch offices can provide introductions to market to Head Offices, and vice versa.
- Multi-national organizations may facilitate international exchanges or work terms.

1.5.2   On-Campus Education Activities

- Many employers will participate in on-campus seminars, speaker forums and panels and events like Career Fairs to profile their professions and organizations.
- When given the opportunity to meet students and assist in their development, some employers are willing to conduct mock-interviews, resume critiques or provide information interviews.
- Organizations will provide company literature to help build and update your Employer Library.

1.5.3   Business/Industry Events

- Often professional associations will provide special student rates, or occasionally free admission to encourage students to attend regular meetings and industry events.
- Co-op student volunteers can provide useful services at industry events and their conferences, while gaining valuable networking opportunities.
- Co-op students, active and visible in the business community, can positively profile and market their program.

1.5.4   Fund Raising

- As employers and professional associations recognize co-op programs are an important recruitment strategy to build their organization and/or their profession, they maybe willing to dedicate funds or launch fund raising events to create co-op student scholarships.
- Larger scale commitment from program advisory committees or corporate donors can result in establishment of endowments to support specific co-op programs or the co-op administrative infrastructure.

- Successful fund raising requires dedicated co-op coordinators who maintain visibility in program-related industries, take initiative to build partnerships and networking expertise to identify funding sources and size up the nature of their requests. As employer "Champions" for programs emerge, their fund raising capabilities can be sizable.

1.5.5 Co-op Program Development
- Employer commitment and impact on co-op program development increases through their membership on program advisory committees.
- Co-op Program Advisory Committees are comprised of :
    – selected representatives from various sectors of the related business/industry. They should be recognized for their success in their field, in the business community, and as representatives of their professional associations.
    – Students who want to be involved in planning which affects them, and who will serve as communicators with their classmates
    – Graduates who represent views of program graduates
    – Institutional representatives (faculty and co-op coordinators) who seek advice and counsel to keep the co-op program practical and attuned to community needs.

1.5.6 Other Means To Build Partnerships with Employer
- to facilitate additional ways to meet a wider range of employer recruitment needs that will build stronger partnerships.
    – Referral to Student and Graduate employment services to meet needs not met through co-op programs
    – Referral to key contacts who coordinate other experiential programs in the institution, which could provide students to do practica, volunteering and special projects
- Providing contact information about other institutional services which could assist employers in their employee training and development programs
- Provide employer recognition events; profile individuals and their organizations by using employer feedback to solicit endorsement statements for use in promotional materials
- Encourage employers to join CAFCE, to get involved in regional groups and to attend local co-op events.

CHAPTER 2   HISTORY AND ASSOCIATIONS

2.1   History of Co-operative Education

2.1.1 British Sandwich Program
- was first introduced at Sunderland Technical College in engineering and naval architecture in 1903
- was meant to be a rigorous integration of academic learning and industrial training
- required substantial training periods:
    - 18 months for a four-year program
    - 12 months for a three-year program

2.1.2 Co-operative Education in the United States
- was first introduced at the University of Cincinnati by Herman Schneider in 1906 in Engineering
- Schneider's rationale:
    – many elements of most professions cannot be taught successfully in the classroom, but require practical experience for adequate mastery
    – most students will need or want to work during their post-secondary education, but the work performed is usually menial and unrelated to their course of study

2.1.3 Co-operative Education in Canada
- was adopted in Canada in 1957 when the University of Waterloo started its first co-op program in Engineering
- grew slowly but after the 1970's quickly expanded to both colleges and universities across the country.
- in 2004, over 78,550 co-op students enrolled in 78 Canadian institutions.

2.2 Co-operative Education Associations

2.2.1 CAFCE

The Canadian Association for Co-operative Education was created in 1973 as a national, non-profit organization to represent employers, governments, students and educators in the co-operative education process. Co-op practitioners from colleges and universities across Canada work together voluntarily to exchange ideas, foster understanding and promote the benefits of co-operative education in Canada. In its 6 regional groups; BC/Yukon Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic region, members are pro-actively involved in the advancement of co-operative education at institutions, governments and employers. Canada provides one of the most widely developed co-op models in the world.

2.2.2 CAFCE National Office

- Staffed by a full-time Office Manager to run the association.
- manages the CAFCE web site
- administers membership fees
- supports the Board of Directors and committee activities

Can be contacted at:
Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE)
834 Yonge Street, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2H1
Tel: (416) 483-3311 Fax: (416) 483-3365
E-mail: cafce@cafce.ca / Website: http://www.cafce.ca
Register with **CAFCE's Discussion Board** (http://www.cafce.ca/discussion/) and click on "watch this topic" to obtain helpful information and participate in discussions of mutual interest.

2.2.3 Accreditation Council

CAFCE promotes quality co-operative education programming across the country. The Accreditation Council, established in 1979, accredits those programs that meet specific criteria indicative of quality co-operative education practice. The Council also provides guidance to institutions establishing co-op programs, ensuring that quality is built into the planning process. The Accreditation Guide and Application is available through the CAFCE Website: http://www.cafce.ca/pages/guideandapplication.php.

2.2.4 Regional Associations (and Weblinks)

There are seven (7) regional committees across Canada which addresses local concerns and promote the growth and standards of co-operative education in their region:

- ALBERTA
- BC/YK (Association for Co-operative Education (ACE) (http://www.co-op.bc.ca)
- SASKATCHEWAN
- NB/NL/NS/PEI (CAFCE Atlantic)(www.mgmt.dal.ca/cafce-atlantic/)
- ONTARIO (Education at Work Ontario) (http://www.ewo.ca)
- QUEBEC

(Check the CAFCE website http://www.cafce.ca/pages/boardofdirectors.php for the direct contact to Regional Representatives from Provinces with no websites)

2.2.5 International Associations

- **WACE**

  The World Association for Co-operative Education, Inc. (WACE), was founded in 1983 to foster co-operative education and other similar work-integrated education programs worldwide. At present it has 440 members, both individual and organizational, representing 26 countries. In July 1995 WACE established a permanent secretariat in Boston. More information about this organization is available at its Website http://www.waceinc.org/ or by contacting:

  Peter J. Franks, Chief Executive Officer
  World Association for Co-operative Education Inc.
  International Secretariat
  360 Huntington Avenue, Suite 384 CP, Boston, MA 02115-5096 U.S.A.
  Tel: 617-373-8885; Fax: 617-373-3463, Email: p.franks@neu.edu

- **CEIA**
  The Co-operative Education Association (CEIA) is the American national association for co-operative education, established in 1963. It serves professionals around the world who practice and promote the educational strategy of combining work and study, the most common model being co-operative education. The CEIA produces the *Journal of Co-operative Education* and the *Co-op/Experience* magazine and the CEIA Newsletter. They also organize an annual conference, support research and special projects and provide networking support. More information about CEIA is available at its Website http://www.ceiainc.org/.

- **CED of the ASEE**
  The Co-operative Education Division of the American Society of Engineering Education strives to develop high principles and maintain the integrity of co-operative education throughout academia and industry. The general goals of the division are to foster a better understanding of co-operative education, improve co-op services to employers, and promote co-operative education in engineering and engineering technology to business and industry both national and international. The division also emphasizes professional standards and accreditation of co-op programs. Members are encouraged to participate and become involved in various CED committees. More information about CED is available at its Website http://www.coop.msstate.edu/ced/.

  Links to other International Co-operative Education Association are available at http://www.cafce.ca/pages/links.php.

2.3 Relationships with Government

Co-operative Education programs meet the goals of government at both the provincial and national levels. Students who graduate from co-op programs find work faster, tend to receive higher salaries, and are more likely to be employed in a field related to their academic program. They also tend to graduate with a lower student debt load, have greater job satisfaction and, therefore, longer periods of engagement once employed.

In the past, the Canadian Federal government provided direct funding support for the implementation or expansion of co-operative education programs. While this grant is no longer available, in some provinces, there may be direct support for co-operative education or co-op programs may benefit indirectly through wage supplements for summer or sector-specific placements. Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec provincial governments provide a tax credit incentive for employers who hire co-op students. (info available at http://www.cafce.ca/pages/links.php)

Both federal and provincial governments provide placement opportunities within their departments and agencies. At the federal level, the Public Service Commission, in conjunction with Treasury Board, sets co-op hiring and salary policy.

Co-op programs benefit from developing relationships with government employee relations offices, and departmental human resources offices to ensure they are considered for postings that are relevant to their programs and to keep apprised of any changes in hiring policies and salaries or benefits.

CHAPTER 3   DEVELOPING THE CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION CONCEPT

Regardless of the organizational structure – centralized, decentralized or a combination of both – it is important to regularly review the organizational and administrative structure to determine if it is meeting the needs of students, employers, and the institution. It is helpful to identify a basic understanding of the mandate and purpose of the co-op unit and to ensure that the unit is properly resourced at the initial stage. As the program grows in student numbers and the number of programs offered, it becomes incumbent upon the direct staff involved as well as the senior-academic administration, to properly determine where the unit should be best placed in the organizational structure of the institution. It is imperative that whatever the arrangement, the unit not be seen as solely an administrative unit, but as an academic service supporting the academic goals of the unit, of co-operative education and of the institution. Faculty needs to be closely aligned, both philosophically and organizationally, to the co-operative education unit. This can be facilitated through formal organizational linkages, regular meetings, communications, involvement with job development, and informal meetings, etc. The unit should be seen as an integral part of the academic model of co-operative education. Listed below are the benefits and responsibilities that institutions should consider before implementing a Co-operative Education program.

3.1 Preliminary Considerations

3.1.1 Identifying Programs for Co-operative Education

- the proposal to offer co-op may come from many sources, and for a variety of reasons:
  - by senior administration, faculty, or career/employment services staff as a mechanism to attract good students and enhance the school's profile
  - by students to enhance their employment prospects upon graduation
  - by employers to help with their recruitment of graduates and to fill their short-term employment needs

3.1.2 Guidelines

- senior administration and faculty should be supportive
  - support should include a commitment to provide sufficient financial resources
  - support must also include a willingness to modify curriculum, course content, and scheduling in order to accommodate accreditation requirements of Co-op
- there should be a measured market demand for the program
  - this should be demonstrated by successful graduate employment statistics, viable student enrollment, and supporting documentation from other education institutions in addition to market surveys of short term employment opportunities suitable for co-op students
- where co-op is being proposed for an academic program which is already in place, the program should be relatively well established and organized
  - co-op should not be used to save a poorly received program

3.2 Benefits (Institution, Students, Employers)

3.2.1 Institutional Benefits

- increased enrollment as co-op programs attract top quality, superior, well-motivated students
- Co-op students who enrich the general educational community of the campus upon returning from work terms
- well-qualified graduates who are prepared to assume a productive role in society
- enhanced visibility and reputation through interactions with the community
- feedback from employers on the quality and relevance of program curriculum
- information on current research and development in employer sectors, with opportunities for collaborative projects

3.2.2 Student Benefits

- a well-rounded education, enriched by practical application of classroom learning
- opportunities to gain relevant employment skills and realistic expectations of the work force before graduation
- opportunities to test and gain broader understanding of career options, often in a variety of employment settings
- maturity and self-esteem as productive members of the work force as well as confidence and skills developed through working with others
- documented practical experience, a résumé, job search skills and a network of contacts upon graduation
- financial remuneration which help to defray educational costs

3.2.3 Employer Benefits

Reduced Recruitment and Hiring Costs
- employers enjoy access to a year-round supply of highly motivated and capable students from many different disciplines to perform specific tasks or projects
- employers can select from a group of applicants who have already met above average academic requirements and have completed some post-secondary training as well as some preparation for operating effectively in the workplace
- students can be employed for work terms of x, y, or z months and, depending upon their academic schedule, may be available for 2 consecutive work terms
- employers have a cost-effective means of evaluating future employees – an extended interview

Effective Human Resource Management
- employers can meet short-term needs due to vacation schedules, transfers, promotions, training commitments, peak work loads or special projects by hiring co-op students

- employers have the ability to increase effective utilization of permanent employees and an opportunity for employee development in the area of (co-op student) supervision
- Co-op students bring enthusiasm and a host of new ideas and approaches which can have a positive effect in the workplace

Investing in Our Future
- employers share in the training and development of our students to help them become productive members of society and potential leaders
- employers are considered co-educators as they provide learning opportunities beyond the bounds of the classroom
- Co-operative Education provides the opportunity for employers to directly influence to the educational process; suggestions on how to make curriculum more relevant or improve the pre-employment training are encouraged

3.3 Responsibilities (Institution, Students, Employers)

3.3.1 Institutional Responsibilities
- ensuring the integrity of its Co-operative Education programs and compliance with various levels of accreditation standards
- developing and maintaining relevant curricula which reflects the needs of employers
- providing relevant academic training for students in their chosen career field
- providing adequate resources to the co-op program
- developing co-op programs which meet the needs of employers

3.3.2 Student Responsibilities

Co-op students are expected to:
- conform to all the conditions and rules that apply to employees in the organization
- exercise ethical workplace conduct
- set goals for learning
- work on enhancing their academic, professional and personal skills
- maintain employer confidentiality
- accept feedback, suggestions for improvement in a positive manner
- participate in work-site visits
- resolve problems or issues that may arise in a prompt, professional manner
- advise the employer and their coordinator of any concerns or problems with their work assignment or environment as soon as an issue arises
- keep in contact with their co-op office

Co-op students are required to:
- complete a pre-employment training program prior to undertaking their first work term. Pre-employment training is designed to prepare students for the work term and covers topics such as co-op program objectives and expectations, job seeking skills, transferring skills to the workplace, workplace conduct, developing learning objectives, job performance progress and evaluation. (See also Section 8.3.1).
- complete a written report for each work term. The work term report, depending upon the program, may be a report required by the company; a technical report; a report on the work term experience; or a combination thereof. Students should discuss with the employer their work term topic and any issues of research confidentiality. If a report contains confidential information, the employer may arrange to undertake the assessment or arrange for a non-disclosure agreement with the co-op office. This report and the employer's evaluation are used to evaluate the success of the work term, as recognized on the student's transcript.

3.3.3 Employer Responsibilities

Employer/Employee Relationship
For a co-op work term to be successful, the supervisor and the student must establish an effective relationship. For the majority of placements, the student becomes an employee of the employing organization and is expected to be treated as any other temporary employee regarding benefits and other employment requirements as defined by the Employment Standards Act or a Collective Agreement. As such, the employer assumes responsibility, as they would for any other employee, for the period of the co-op employment, and students accept the responsibilities of an employee.
In order to increase the student's productivity and facilitate learning, it is recommended that employers:
- at the outset, advise the student with regard to all issues of confidentiality in the workplace and ensure that any non-disclosure agreements are signed prior to the commencement of work

- prepare the student's co-workers and other staff for the arrival of the student
- provide the student with an orientation to the workplace, including an overview of the organization (e.g., mission statement, products, etc.), physical layout, relevant personnel, safety practices, and the duties or tasks expected during the work term
- provide a supervisor for the co-op student who will oversee the student's work and discuss expectations for the work term with the student and, on a regular basis, give the student feedback on how he/she is doing, including areas of strength and areas which require improvement

Learning Environment
- assist students to set realistic learning objectives and provide relevant learning opportunities (See also Section 8.4).
- acquaint the student with relevant resources and materials

Evaluation of the Learning
- participate in the work-site visit or follow-up measures by the institution to assess the student's progress and performance (See also Section 8.7.1).
- complete a final evaluation of the student's performance during the work term, which they are encouraged to discuss with the student (See also Section 8.8).
- discuss with the student the topic of the work term report and, if necessary, may be required to evaluate the work term report if considered confidential

CHAPTER 4   ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS OF CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

There are a number of organizational models and reporting relationships that can be used for the administration of co-operative education. It is important to consider the culture and support within your institution when choosing the reporting relationship. In regard to the choice of organizational structure, institutions should be aware that programs will evolve and the organizational structure must evolve with it. Usually there are two options for a reporting relationship; one is to report to the academic side and the other is to report to the service side. Various organizational models are outlined below with associated considerations. (See Appendix 1 for Organizational Charts).

4.1   Centralized Administration

A centralized model situates all co-op operations and personnel in a single location with staff reporting to a Co-op Director/Manager. The Co-op Director/Manager usually reports to the Vice-President level (Academic or Administrative).
Considerations:

- A centralized co-op program can be more administratively efficient (e.g., centralized functions, direct reporting lines, non-duplication of tasks, etc).
-
- The co-op directors/managers have closer control of the operation to ensure quality of co-op delivery and consistency across program areas.
- Uniformity in policy administration can be assured and a united image projected to the employers.
- Centralized functions (e.g., arranging interviews, site visits) enables co-op coordinators to deal with a larger number of students across disciplines and consequently reduce the cost of coordinating activities.
- A single co-op budget allows for easy administration and identification of expense items.
- Interaction between co-op staff and teaching staff is reduced.
- Not being integrated within the academic units could result in unilateral budget cuts unless there is there is firm support for co-op at the senior administrative level.
- Extra efforts have to be made by the co-op office to ensure that faculty members are aware of, and sympathetic to, co-op related issues.

4.2   Decentralized Administration

A decentralized model situates co-op operations and personnel in the relevant academic unit.
Co-op staff report to the head of the academic unit (department or Faculty) in which they are located.
Considerations:
- Interaction between co-op staff and the faculty can be enhanced by proximity.
- Co-op coordinators are more accessible to their students.
- Involving co-op staff in teaching allows them to become familiar with the curricula and associated skill development and more closely integrated into the academic unit.
- Often faculty are assigned co-op tasks in addition to their teaching commitments. When faculty undertake work site visits and assess work term reports, they gain a better understanding of the relevancy of their curriculum.\

- A decentralized co-op operation may be more costly because it allows for little or no sharing of human and physical resources.
- Consistent standards, policies, and procedures may be more difficult to ensure.
- No coordinated approach or central body to lobby or speak for the overall program.
- Can result in increased competition across co-op program areas.
- Student participation rate must be large enough to support co-op infrastructure (staff and operating budget), otherwise, the co-op staff/student ratio will be too low to be cost effective.

4.3   Centralized/Decentralized System

The centralized/decentralized model involves a centralized management to which the decentralized, academically-based personnel report.
Considerations:
- This model incorporates all the advantages of both centralized and decentralized models (e.g., central coordinating body, close ties with the academic unit, a budget dedicated to co-op).
- Can build support for co-op across the institution in a coordinated manner by providing centralized leadership at a senior level while maintaining a "grass roots" operation.
- Requires strong and effective leadership in order to promote the unity of the overall program.
- Maintaining effective communication between co-op units and the centralized management can be more difficult.
- It is more difficult to gain consensus and a perceived common vision.

4.4   Self-Directed Work Team

A self-directed work team involves a centralized administrative team who shares the leadership role as well as handles day-to-day operations. This involves a flat organizational structure where the team may be responsible to a Dean, Director, or Vice-President who has ultimate accountability for the program. Often the senior administrator is distanced from the co-op operation and holds the responsibility as part of a broader mandate.
Considerations:
- Considerable autonomy and flexibility in conducting day-to-day operations of the department
- The team structure fosters professional development and interpersonal skills as members share responsibility for the leadership and management of the co-op program.
- Easy accessibility to a support network
- Eliminates a level of bureaucracy that can impede moving forward with ideas and projects (e.g., visual identity development, new program implementation, etc.)
- Everyone on the team is aware of the need for accountability with respect to budget, travel, hiring, etc. hence a shared understanding of and responsibility for managing resources and requirements.
- Considerable financial saving to the institution as the cost of a Director is eliminated.
- Logistics of involving the total team in decision making
- The need to reach consensus on issues before moving forward
- The need to deal with performance issues and working within collective bargaining parameters
- The lack of a "director" who can keep Co-op in the forefront of all senior management meetings internally and externally
- The increased workload of sharing an administrative role takes time away from placement activities.

4.5   Combined Co-op and Career Education Office

Since co-operative programs involve the placement of students with employers, it is becoming increasingly common for Co-op to have some alignment (formal or informal) with the career centre and/or employment office on campus. Both co-operative education and the career and employment centre offer career services and employment opportunities for students. As well, the career/employment centre will handle part-time students, summer students, or students who are about to graduate into the work force. Some co-op programs, usually professional schools, may also provide career placement services for their graduates.

Career services covers activities such as operating a resource centre with information about individual firms, opportunities for employment – locally and nationally – and career preparation resource materials. As well, programs on employability and career preparation are offered, e.g. resume writing, interview skills, networking, the nature of work, and entrepreneurship. Thirdly, career services can be involved in arranging for employers to recruit students on campus and to advertise full-time, part-time and summer employment positions for those students not in co-op. Many of these activities are similar to those in co-op education.
Considerations:
- Common core activities of both co-op and career services can lead to efficiencies.
- Allows for uniform, consistent level of service to students and to employers.
- Opportunities for cross-linkages to develop in either area.

- Can be beneficial for both the employer and for the institution to offer a comprehensive set of employment services to employers and to the students of the institution.
- Can meet evolving needs of employers who have a wide variety of requirements to accommodate their work and human resource needs.

Note: Another unit that overlaps with co-op education and career services is counselling services. In some instances it is appropriate to link counselling services and career services as one unit, the commonality being the provision of information to students about career opportunities and career preparation. In many cases, this overlaps the personal counselling needs of students. Here again, it depends on a variety of factors in the institution as to whether or not it would be appropriate to link career services, and in some cases even co-operative education into a counselling services unit. In any of these discussions, it is important to define the common elements or activities between co-operative education and potential partner departments and as well to identify the differences.

4.6   Co-op Reporting Relationship within the Institution

The organizational structure of the institution will normally place Co-operative Education reporting to either an academic/education division or an administrative/service division.

The advantages of academic/education reporting relationship are:
- Co-op is recognized as an educational model.
- The integration of a work and learning model is seen as an institution priority.
- Co-op personnel are more likely to be viewed as educators than service providers are.
- Greater opportunity for faculty to recognize the educational value of Co-op.

The disadvantages of academic/education reporting relationship are:
- Co-op can be more costly due to professional staff salaries and benefits.
- Co-op may compete against other academic units for resources.

The advantages of administrative/service reporting relationship are:
- Can be a more cost-effective model if the administrative staff is considered professional.
- Usually there are fewer administrative units to compete with for resources.
- Greater potential for sharing resources or consolidating with Career and Employment Services.

The disadvantages of administrative/service reporting relationship are:
- Greater tendency for Co-op to be viewed as a placement service than an educational model.
- Need to work harder to build and maintain relationships with faculty and academic units.

Part 2: Structure and Planning

CHAPTER 5   PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

There are a number of steps required to implement a co-op program from concept to the first intake of students. Those who are driving the process need to gain an understanding of the benefits, philosophy, and the impact on the institution. The following outlines some of the planning steps required to implement a successful co-op program.

5.1   Planning and Implementation

The following is a general outline for program implementation – detailed information for some steps will be outlined later in this section.
- consult with experienced co-op educators to gain an understanding of co-op models, procedures, and costs
- gain the approval of the institution's senior administration to proceed
- analyze employer interest, job market potential and student interest
- gain departmental, Faculty, and Decanal support
- determine co-op program structure best suited for academic area (e.g., academic requirements, academic/work schedule, projected enrollment)
- consult with appropriate institutional units (e.g., Registrar's Office, Accounting Services)
- consult with appropriate professional organizations and governing bodies, if appropriate, to ensure professional standards are met
- determine co-op office and staff requirements
- undertake budget and cost analysis (See Chapter 9).
- prepare proposal for Senate or Board approval

5.1.1 Employer Interest

- employers should be surveyed to determine their interest in hiring students and the co-op program's feasibility
    - develop employer sample by using institutional resources such as graduate employment information and faculty contacts, and externally, by researching the Chamber of Commerce, professional organizations, directories, yellow pages of telephone books, and the Internet
    - employer sample should be representative of the public and private sector, and large and small employers, unless the proposed program is specific to an industry or geographic area
    - survey options may include some combination of in-person interviews, mail, phone, and possibly e-mail and/or the Internet
    - survey should ask for information about the organization, including their service/product, whether they currently hire students and if so, the type of educational and skill requirements, the time period of their greatest need for students, and their willingness to consider hiring co-op students from the institution
    - initial responses may be more positive than when the institution actually solicits work term positions

5.1.2 Student Interest

- based on proposed program design, and after receiving employer survey results, survey students for their interest
    - provide description of proposed structure, potential types of jobs and their geographic locations, anticipated co-op work term salary ranges, etc.

5.1.3 Academic Requirements

- in consultation with the academic department set the minimum GPA for admission to and retention in the co-op program
- determine policies for student probation or withdrawal from co-op if academic requirements are not met and to readmit students who improve their grades

5.1.4 Academic / Work Schedule

- most institutions structure their schedules in accordance with the CAFCE definition and its Accreditation Council criteria:
    - work and study periods alternate in a formalized sequence
    - work terms are normally 50% of the time spent in academic study, with a minimum of 30%
    - the program begins and ends with a study term
    - work terms are structured to include more than one season of the year, except where the work is clearly seasonal, or the overall program length allows for only one work term (and meets all of the other criteria above)
    - co-op internship programs involve one work experience period after completion of 50% or more of the academic program, and provide students with an in-depth exposure to one employer organization, incorporating the criteria above

- timing of the first work term should depend on the level of practical knowledge and personal development required for students to make a useful contribution to employers; this may vary, depending on the academic discipline and overall program length
- See Appendix 2 for examples of typical campus/work sequencing.

5.1.5 Enrollment Projections

Projecting enrollments will assist with:
- planning staffing level requirements at various growth stages of the program (e.g., start-up through to steady-state)
- determining coordinator workloads, projecting cost recovery from co-op fees, and analyzing student supply/ employer demand
- planning the timing and availability of courses to correspond with the number of co-op students enrolled in optional and optional selective programs – in consultation with academic unit will be necessary

5.1.6 Consultation Within the Institution

- Various constituents within the institution have responsibility for areas which may interact with the co-op department and/or co-op students:

- Faculties/deans (academic programs/policies)
- Registrar's Office (registration for work terms, grades/transcripts, diplomas, calendar entries)
- Accounting Services (co-op fee assessment)
- Student Services (career/employment, counselling, health)
- High School Liaison Office (marketing and promotion)

5.2   Structure (Mandatory/Optional/Selective)

There are several ways of structuring a co-operative education program. A mandatory co-op program is one in which all students accepted into a particular course of study have to participate. In the optional mode, both co-op and regular programs are offered parallel to each other, and students have the choice of electing the type of education that best fits their needs. The selective co-op program is a variation of the optional mode whereby students are admitted into co-op based on a set of selection criteria.

5.2.1   Mandatory Co-op Programs

Considerations:
- Students will follow the same sequence for academic and work terms, making course scheduling easier for the administration.
- Student intake into the program is predetermined thus facilitating planning for needed resources
- All graduates from the program will have received more or less the same training and therefore certain aspects of 'professional practice' could be eliminated from the more academic components of the program.
- In unfavourable economic conditions, when it may be difficult to place all students seeking a work term, unplaced students may find few or no appropriate courses available to them for that term; and normally, students would be required to make up the missing work terms at the end of their program.
- Because co-op offices may not have direct control over the quality of students admitted, unsuitable students may enroll in the program. These students may either be weak academically or not have the right attitude for work. Placing these students with employers may be difficult and/or may jeopardize the credibility of the co-op program. Students who realize that they are unsuited for co-op will not have a regular program to which they can revert.

5.2.2   Optional Co-op Programs

Considerations:
- Offering an optional co-op program gives students the choice regarding the mode of education they wish to pursue or which suits their personal needs (e.g., extra-curricular activities, inability to relocate, family responsibilities).
- Students who decide after a short period of time that they are not yet ready for the world of work can revert to the non-co-op mode.
- The optional mode appeals to some academically focussed students as they revert to non-co-op programs with relatively little loss of time.
- Sequencing and scheduling of courses to accommodate both co-op and regular students can be difficult and expensive.
- Some courses may need to be offered twice a year to meet the academic needs of both co-op and non-co-op students. If the co-op program has only a limited number of students, offering the same course twice to a small group is not cost effective.
- In unfavourable job market conditions, students who cannot be placed may revert to the non-co-op mode.

5.2.3   Selective-Optional Co-op Programs

Considerations:
- Allows the academic program more direction in some aspects of program administration and development (e.g., setting admission G.P.A., intake numbers).
- Protection is provided for employers as well as students — only appropriate students are selected and placed to ensure the possibility of effective and efficient work during the work term.
- Limited resources may make it necessary to restrict student intake into co-op and students who have not been selected, while they can still participate in the academic program, will not have access to the co-op experience.

5.2.4   Selection Process and Criteria

It is common practice to have students reach a level of practical knowledge and personal development before participating in a work term so that they can make a useful contribution to the employer and be able to derive significant professional and personal benefit from their co-op experience. Therefore, scheduling for the first work term depends on when the academic program feels that the students are ready.

- Selection Process
  - In the college system where programs are of shorter duration, the work term is often scheduled after a minimum of two academic terms.
  - In some universities, students embark on their first work term after three to four terms of study.
  - Selection usually occurs during the first or second semester of a course of study.
  - A co-op orientation/information session is normally conducted by a co-op office where students will be informed of the benefits of co-operative education, how the program operates and the kind of commitments students must make if they wish to participate.
  - Students submit applications to the co-op office before a deadline.
  - The selection process may be administered by the co-op office or the faculty.
  - The selection committee should comprise of co-op staff, faculty and administrative staff in the program area.
- Selection Criteria
  - Student applications are evaluated on the basis of a set of selection criteria — usually academic performance, a personal interview and/or scores in diagnostic tests in some cases.
  - Many institutions examine both the students' performance in high school as well as their GPA in the first two academic terms in the program. It is important to ensure that students possess a solid academic background to be able to undergo the rigour of a co-op program.
  - In the personal interview, students are evaluated for suitability to participate in co-op based on their understanding of co-op, their strengths and weaknesses, attitudes towards work, career focus, commitment to co-op, communication ability and personality.
  - Some institutions also administer diagnostic tests or require students to complete a co-op questionnaire to supplement the interview, and allow examination of the students' personal interests, social interests, past work experiences and special skills.

5.3 Academic / Work Term Sequencing

Academic/work sequencing for both college and university programs vary depending on the length of the academic program. See Appendix 2 for sample academic/work schedules. Please note that these are sample schedules and many other variations are possible. It is important to consider CAFCE Accreditation guidelines when developing a work and academic schedule, e.g., a co-op program schedule should not end with a work term. See also Section 5.1.4 for the rationale for academic/work term sequencing.

5.4 Co-op Staffing and Support

The positions that facilitate the operation of co-operative education programs include support staff, coordinators, and management. Typically, the support staff's function is to provide day-to-day program support and the coordinator's function is to facilitate and evaluate the learning process and to develop employment opportunities. Most programs have a manager and bigger institutions may have a director and other management staff.

5.4.1 The Management Staff Function

In a centralized or centralized/decentralized model, Co-op is usually headed by a Director or Manager. It is important to have the Director/Manager's position included among the senior institutional staff, again in recognition and support of the value-added experiential component that co-op provides to the learning environment. Persons at the Director/Manager's level typically hold a graduate degree and often hold term appointments.

As programs grow, the increasing complexity and diversity of demands on the Director/Manager may require the next level of administration – the Assistant Director. While the Director/Manager maintains overall responsibility for policy framework and final decisions, the Assistant Director position can be used to transfer tasks such as detailed program planning, policy formulation and execution, staff management, liaison functions, special projects and/or staff development activities. Such an arrangement provides for better long-term coverage, plus offers a succession planning opportunity.

Other approaches have mid-management positions with responsibilities similar to the Assistant Director, but with a specific focus (e.g. technology) or program area (e.g. engineering). Depending on the size of the organization, we may see a Manager/Assistant Director/Program Administrator, and/or Section Heads/Senior Coordinators and/or special roles and designations for personnel in key performance areas such as communications, fundraising, or technology.

- Skills
  - excellent interpersonal skills
  - knowledgeable in student development and learning theory

- a strong working knowledge of co-operative education and an understanding of experiential learning
- able to liaise effectively with senior administration and be recognized as an educator and an equal by academics
- competent in the development of long range Program goals and the ability to integrate institutional vision with Program direction
- solid program planning, implementation and evaluation skills, including quality assessment and benchmarking
- a good understanding of the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, as well as professional associations and foundations, and how they can be accessed in terms of research collaboration, fundraising, program development and review, and academic and employment partnerships
- broad background in HR, IT, administrative, organizational, presentation, and financial planning areas

- Responsibilities
  - planning for program development in the 3-5 year time frame
  - ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of the philosophy, policies and procedures of the co-op program
  - staff recruitment and professional development
  - revenue generation, fiscal management and co-op fee determination
  - playing a key role as a senior administration official with respect to both internal and external liaison
  - assisting with employer recruitment at a very senior level
  - sitting on institutional committees, participating in Co-op professional associations, and utilizing advisory groups (employer, student, and/or faculty) for program feedback

- Relationships
  - typically reports to a Vice President (Student Services), Vice President (Academic) or Dean(s) of Academic units
  - requires close working relationships with Registrar, Systems, Recruitment, Alumni Office, and other employment / counselling / student service areas
  - regular interaction with Deans, Chairs, and Program Heads
  - often acts as a conduit for employer feedback to academic departments on curriculum relevance and may contribute to curriculum planning, especially if a co-op option is being planned
  - usually has line authority over all coordinators and support staff.

5.4.2   The Co-op Coordinator Function

Whether they are professional staff, faculty, or administrative staff, regardless of title (coordinator, educator, or consultant) and irrespective of the academic level of achievement required to enter the position (diploma, degree, or graduate degree) – coordinators are the workhorses of any program. They bring in employers, attract students, develop learners and represent their program areas and specialty knowledge areas at all levels of the organization, and to external parties. (See Appendix 3 for sample job posting).

- Skills
  - exceptional communication skills (aural, oral and written)
  - able to multi-task in a disruptive work environment
  - strong interpersonal skills and team player
  - solid technical skills in a professional area
  - an understanding of labour markets, and how to market in areas of their responsibility
  - a concern for the welfare and development of students
  - presentation skills and/or teaching skills
  - lifelong learner and computer literate
  - superb organizational skills and able to work independently

- Assets would include:
  - knowledge of student development and learning theory
  - knowledge of co-operative education and an understanding of experiential learning
  - knowledge of employment legislation
  - competent in program planning and delivery

- Responsibilities
  - planning for the maintenance and growth of one or more program areas
  - developing/maintaining employment opportunities in a given market sector(s), discipline(s), or geographic area(s)

- employment readiness training of students, or design and/or implementation of career preparation program(s)
- student recruitment, admission to Co-op, student assessment, and student continuation/graduation evaluation
- counselling students on an on-going basis, regarding career, personal and academic issues
- conducting site visits to monitor student performance, advise on work report topic selection and determining/ facilitating employer satisfaction with the student, the institution and the co-op program
- may or may not participate in work report evaluation
- should be demonstrably supporting decisions of senior program management, and developing their program areas in accordance with organizational/departmental mission and goals.

- Relationships
  - typically reports to the Director, or possibly to a senior coordinator of their program area.
  - should have regular interaction with faculty in their program areas and discuss student performance and curriculum issues
  - may have teaching responsibilities within the academic department
  - primary conduit for employer feedback to academic departments on curriculum relevance and may contribute to curriculum planning
  - may have supervisory responsibilities for support staff and or junior coordinators
  - may sit on various institutional committees
  - generally participates in professional organizations linked to their technical specialty, Co-operative Education, and/or community organizations that provide marketing/ networking opportunities
  - builds employer relationships through regular interaction with employers

5.4.3   The Support Function

Typically, programs have a clerical or administrative function that performs a legion of duties associated with the efficient flow of information to/from employers, and to/from students, is responsible for maintaining the data records of the program, and typically provide support and backup to the program coordinators.

- Skills
  - computer literate and confident in the application of office software and Internet functions
  - able to understand concepts of data organization, storage and retrieval
  - service orientation and excellent interpersonal skills
  - able to multitask in a disruptive environment
  - skilled in the function of modern office equipment/services (voice mail, fax, copying, express shipping)
  - knowledgeable of the philosophy, policies and basic operations of all aspects of the program
  - competent in administering simple budgets
- Responsibilities
  - tracks student entry, progress, and completion information, using electronic and/or hard copy files
  - maintains database on employer participation, and interview scheduling and engages in employer liaison including posting jobs and sending résumé packages to employers
  - may schedule site visits for coordinators
  - is often the front-line contact for students and may engage in some student advising
  - responds to or redirects employer queries
  - often assists in the compilation of training materials, but may also play a role in the design, development, and/or delivery phases
  - may have budget tracking responsibilities
- Relationships
  - may report specifically to the director, or to any management level above them in the co-op structure
  - works closely on a day-to-day basis with the coordinators
  - often has indirect working relationships with support staff in other administrative units including registrars, scholarships, finance, duplicating, mail, room bookings, academic advising, systems, and/or facilities management
  - may have supervisory responsibilities for junior clerical staff
  - through daily interactions, builds rapport with students, employers and suppliers.

5.4.4 Faculty Support/Involvement

Faculty involvement in a co-op program reinforces the academic nature of the program.
- faculty in senior administrative positions can promote co-op as a means to attract good students and enhance the institution's profile
- faculty who have already participated in co-op or have seen favourable results from it at previous institutions may be very supportive
- faculty may be involved in a co-op program in the following ways:
  - as members of initial co-op planning committees, and subsequent committees which consider additional co-op program proposals
  - for employer referrals
  - for employer consultation about the academic program and students' skill levels
  - as members of co-op advisory committees
  - to conduct work term visits
  - to mark work reports
  - to participate in co-op program review processes

5.4.5 Committee Structure

Co-op committees assist in the administration of co-op at various levels – to advise the co-op program on issues such as policies, appeals, new programs, and program reviews; members may include employers, students and faculty, or some combination of the three. Some possible committees to assist with co-op administration should be:
- Department Co-op Committee – handles student admissions, program policy, matters of student discipline and student appeals
- Co-op Committee (overall program) – handles policy development and procedural changes, and other issues (governance, budget) that may impact the overall program
- Employer Advisory Committee – brings the perspective of the employer community to assist the institution in the development and operation of the co-op program (See Section 8.7.2).

5.5   Training

Staff training, whether it is at the support staff level or the coordinator staff level, is an effective tool, to ensure that a common view and vision is known at all levels of functions. The training concepts that apply to co-op programs should be applied to its staff. Training programs can facilitate staff orientation, technology development and evolving staff needs.

New coordination staff should be provided with an orientation to Co-op, including the academic nature and goals of the program, service the institution provides to students and employers, typical funding support and wage subsidies (if any) available to employers in your region.

5.6   Professional Development

Most co-op professional staff consider professional development to be critical in order to stay current in their discipline. Most staff join discipline-related organizations and associations in order to take advantage of current conferences and workshops. Keeping abreast of current events and market trends or changes helps to keep coordinators apprised of the changes in the job market and respond accordingly. In a time of rapid change, encouraging professional development at all staffing levels is important.

CHAPTER 6   CO-OP INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

6.1   What is Information Management

Managing information is ultimately about capturing information, filtering it and transforming it into useful knowledge that is used by the organization to operate, evaluate and plan effectively.

Information Management is the process whereby all of this information is filtered to retain that which is useful to the efficient and successful operation of the co-op program. It includes information generated outside of as well as within the co-op program. The information management strategy must be deliberately designed by the co-op team. It cannot be allowed to simply happen. A well-designed information management protocol provides for accurate record keeping of student and employer information. It makes the generation of reports easy and accurate. It supports a strong and effective marketing strategy. It provides a context for program evaluation and a dependable base for planning. Taking the time to develop a new or review and strengthen your existing information management structure makes your job in co-op easier and more effective.

6.2   What does an Information Management System Do

A well-designed information management system will allow you to do the following:
- Keep track of all new student applicants to co-op
- Keep track of current and potential employers
- Track the qualification of potential employers
- Record student placements and all of the detailed data related to that placement
- Keep accurate anecdotal records of student, employer or work place issues and their resolution
- Analyze student, employer and placement data
- Track student completion of requirements relative to their qualification for co-op
- Track student completion of required work term placement requirements before and after the term.
- Generate routine institutional, provincial and federal reports
- Generate exceptional institutional, provincial and federal reports
- Provide easy access to co-op support materials for students, employers and co-op staff and faculty
- Support a targeted marketing strategy or any other type of contact marketing approach used in developing co-op placements
- Quickly and accurately share employer and placement information with colleagues
- Easily maintain contact with students who are on the work term
- Provide support for the strategic planning process
- Provide data for evaluation

The information management system must be clear and robust for the co-op program to be efficient and effective. It provides the information that can be analyzed thereby providing the intelligence necessary for sound decision making. It is an integral component of the internal budgeting strategy that supports the value of co-op within the institution. It is needed to handle the huge amount of information received y that helps the program and its students. It is not a coincidence that successful companies have highly developed information management policies and procedures. Marketing efforts cannot be handled effectively without such support. A well-designed information management system will assist the program in making the best decisions possible.

6.2.1   The Importance of a Business Analysis

Before deciding on a new information management system or on a revision of a current one, it is of utmost importance to define exactly what the purpose of that system will be. An analysis of the entire co-op process should be completed before designing and adopting new systems. This process must be inclusive and exhaustive. Information management includes all of the information of the program. The management system must reflect this.

6.3   Information to be collected within the Information Management System

The co-op program should undertake a business analysis to study the business process to be used or in use by the co-op program. From this research will come the design for the information system.

6.3.1   Examples of Information Collected in the Information Management System

There is a common core of information that all programs would collect and manage and there is also unique information required by individual programs. Each province, region, institution might have differing expectations and requirements in one or many areas. Below is a sample of information that would make up a strong base for most co-op programs. It is not meant to be exhaustive and needs will vary.

Information on Employers:
- Contact person
- Address
- Phone Number
- E-mail address
- Website URL
- The number of students they hire
- Their past placements
- Job descriptions
- Risk management issues associated with the job site

Co-op Student Information:
a. New Applicants
- Name
- Address

- Phone Number
- E-mail address
- Website URL
- Application information
- Status – pending, accepted, not accepted
- Program
- Major

b. Current Co-op Students

- Job preferences
- Number of work terms completed
- Academic standing
- Work term eligibility
- Current placement
- Record of completion of required assignments / reports
- Grades for co-op work term
- Salary for the work term
- Number of hours/weeks/months completed on each work term

c. Graduating Co-op Students

- Graduation date
- Credential received
- Exit information

Institution Information:

- Number of co-op programs in the institution
- Number of students enrolled in the co-op programs
- Student placement rate
- Student completion rate
- Internal communications
- Budget records
- Accreditation information
- Advisory board member information

There are many more types of information that could and should be captured. What these are and how they are implemented will be guided by the results of the business analysis mentioned above. The information management system must refer to legalities such as privacy legislation and the institution's information management policies. Each province and each institution will differ.

6.4   Applications for the Management Information System

The information management system will be used in most aspects of the day to day operations, evaluation and planning of the co-op program.

6.4.1   Daily Information Management System Usage

On a daily basis student and employer data is recorded, new employers are contacted, new students inquire about entering co-op. Students on placement contact the office for assistance or guidance. Site visits are done. New placements are finalized. Many other routine administrative events take place.

On a slightly broader scale, information is used by co-op professionals to gauge the student's progress through the co-op learning process. Special projects are undertaken such as conference planning or employer events. All of these make use of the information management system.

6.4.2   The Information Management System and Evaluation

From the evaluation standpoint, the information management system should provide all of the information necessary to prepare routine and exceptional reports. Number of placements, average student salaries and other program characteristics may be accessed to assist the institution in evaluating co-op programs. Student time worked, assignments completed and related employer and site visit evaluation information may be used to evaluate the co-op student on the success of her or his placement. At the provincial, national, and international level, the information management systems of groups of institutions might work as a team to provide information on the overall effectiveness of co-op programs.

6.4.3 The Information Management System and Planning

Planning is critical to the continued strength and growth of any program. Co-op is no different. The strategic planning process assumes the existence of a robust information management system. Planning exercises use selected information to create forecasting simulations. The information management system also assists in the identification of trends. It can help in the budgeting process allowing for an accurate tracking of such variables as staff and faculty salary changes. A well designed information management system provides a means of capturing, filtering and applying the masses of information dealt with daily to plan for the continued good health of co-op programs.

6.5 Kinds of Information Management Systems

In most cases, a computer or network of computers will form an important part of the information management system. However, an information management system is much more than a computer and a data base. It is the total set of tools, policies and procedures used to transform information into useful forms. Once the business analysis is completed, the policies and procedures that together will comprise the approach to information management can be developed. This system will generally include but not be limited to an electronic or paper file based record subsystem, a budget subsystem, a computer database subsystem, an internal monitoring and communication subsystem, and an external monitoring and communication subsystem. The exact structure of each will differ from institution to institution. On top of the information management system structure co-op program, administrators will need to create a climate where information management is valued and used effectively.

6.6 Technology and Information Management Systems

The co-op information management system can make effective use of technology, most commonly through the application of a computer database. The database, in particular the relational type, is an excellent way to hold large volumes of detailed information and manage its transformation into reports and other usable forms. Combined with a regular backup system it can hold much of the data needed by the program.

6.6.1 Database Solutions

Picking the right computer database system is important and the selection should be done through involvement of the institutional IT department. Integration with the rest of the institution can be useful and contributes to MIS efficiency.

Guidance on the type of database to use will come from the business analysis. It might indicate an off the shelf solution or a custom designed one. Regardless of that decision, it must be scaleable and ongoing support must be available. A co-op program in a medium sized Community College recently went through the exercise of replacing a Y2K non-compliant system with a new one. Thanks to input from all of the co-op faculty and staff, from students, employers and their IT Department, a new compliant database design using MS Access was adopted and will serve into the foreseeable future. It is scaleable, has a Visual Basic front and back end for security and is distributed over the institution's network. The co-op coordinator working with the IT Department's Network Analyst control rights to it.

6.6.2 Other Technology

Other areas of technology that might be useful in certain settings are wireless communications devices such as cell phones. Laptop computers with the capability to access remotely the institution's network using, for example, PC Anywhere can greatly assist co-op program where coordinators travel widely and often.

6.7 Conclusion

Managing information is ultimately about capturing information, filtering it and changing it into useful knowledge that is used by your co-op program to operate, evaluate and plan effectively. It is much more than a database or a new computer system.
A good Information Management system is an absolute necessity for a well-run co-op program. In the next chapter, you will read about Co-op Marketing. This is one area where a good information management system is an absolute necessity.

CHAPTER 7 CO-OP MARKETING

This chapter will deal exclusively with the issues of the career market place. The thoroughness with which the procedures outlined are implemented will depend on the intended size of the co-op program. A proposed program involving only four or five placements per work term in a market which is already well understood by some of the existing faculty and staff, may require very little research, particularly if no additional investment is required. However, where additional investment in staff and facilities is anticipated, well-documented market research will be critical to the credibility of any business plan seeking funding support, either from within the institution or from external sources.

7.1   Preliminary Market Research and Analysis

Initiatives to explore co-op program feasibility are usually founded on a perception that a co-op program would be of value to students and that a market exists for appropriate work terms for these students. The challenge is to obtain appropriate data to either confirm or invalidate these perceptions.

Experience has shown, as it has in many business situations, that all too often, co-op programs have been implemented based purely on these initial perceptions and the enthusiasm of proponents, with the real market situation turning out to be quite different from that initially perceived.

Preliminary Market Research should include:
- A study of the demographic, economic and geographic features of target market areas and appropriate business and/or industrial sectors.
- A documentation of any existing similar co-op programs operating in these market places and the levels of success being achieved. The question as to whether or not the market can absorb additional co-op programs will have to be considered.
- Specific labour market data relating to the target markets and the proposed co-op program disciplines.
- Preliminary discussions with key informants in the market place to establish a sense for the potential market acceptance and attitudes towards the proposed program.

Sources for this preliminary research would typically include:
- federal and provincial labour market statistics.
- forecasts available from relevant professional trade, labour, occupational and economic development associations and agencies.
- appropriate trade journals and specific industry publications.
- key employers within these source areas.
- the institution's alumni.

Once the appropriate preliminary data has been obtained, documented and analyzed, the proponents should be well positioned to make a basic decision – to drop the proposal or proceed with more detailed research. Obviously, if the preliminary research indicated potentially weak demand, adverse trends or market saturation, together with a low level of enthusiasm from key informants, it may be just as well to stop here and devote time and energy to other endeavours.

7.2   Detailed Market Research

A common mistake, both in business and in the implementation of co-op programs, is to proceed with the investment prior to completing the necessary detailed market research – the research that should tell us whether or not there is a reasonable match between our perceptions and reality. Even then, there are hazards:
- The potential for biasing, even unconsciously, the detailed research based upon enthusiasm generated from conclusions and preliminary research.
- Lack of sensitivity to market changes over time. A major limitation on any detailed market research is that it usually captures a picture of the market place at a specific time. However, six months or a year later, economic or industry trends may have taken a different track than might have been predicted at the time the data was obtained.

At this point, the proponents should also make a decision as to who should conduct this detailed research. Research conducted by the proponents may have less credibility, due to perceived bias, than that conducted by independent, knowledgeable professionals. Financial resources available to the proponents, however, will be key in making this decision. Should proponents find it necessary to conduct their own research, they are urged to consult appropriate texts and knowledgeable sources for guidance on survey design, implementation and interpretation. These skills are normally available within most educational institutions among those knowledgeable in marketing, economics and social sciences.

7.2.1   Designing a Survey

The purpose of the research is to determine if adequate numbers of suitable work term positions for the anticipated numbers of students are likely to be available and, if not, what level of enrollment would a program support.

In designing a survey, the following steps should be taken:
- determine survey accuracy required;
- determine target market, population, geographic distribution, and sample size;
- design the questionnaire;
- test questionnaire, through pilot interviews, for comprehension and bias;
- modify as necessary;
- establish survey methodology, i.e., by phone, in person, by mail, fax, etc.

As already stated, designing and testing questionnaires is specialized work. A typical result of an improperly designed questionnaire could be a conclusion that adequate numbers of work term opportunities exist when, in fact, they do not. It has been known to happen that co-op program market surveys have yielded totally inaccurate information with little or no significant change in the market environment from the time of the survey to time of implementation.

Naturally, we cannot treat a response to a survey by a potential employer as a commitment. However, we can phrase the questions to obtain more specific and valuable information. For example, if we compare the following pair of questions, it should be clear as to which one will reveal the most accurate information:

"If a co-op program were available in environmental engineering, would you consider hiring students for work terms?   Yes   No."

<div align="center">or</div>

"If a co-op program was introduced in Environmental Engineering with the 1st work term scheduled for January, 2000 and assuming business conditions remain unchanged, how likely would it be that you would actually hire?

- Certain
- Very likely
- Probable
- Possible but unlikely
- Very unlikely

7.2.2   Conducting a Survey

Surveys can be conducted in a variety of ways:
- through the mail, e-mail, or by fax
- personal visit
- by telephone
- a combination of the above.

Personal visits by program proponents can help develop rapport and a relationship that will be very valuable when implementing the program and confirming placement opportunities. However, it will be likely impractical to administer all questionnaires in this way.

When conducting interviews by phone, it can substantially improve the response rate and validity of response if the questionnaire is transmitted ahead of time and the respondent has had a chance to read it prior to a phone call.

If the questionnaires are administered solely by mail, fax or e-mail, a telephone follow-up may be necessary to increase the response rate. Without telephone follow-up, there is a strong likelihood of response rate falling short of design requirements.

7.3   Promoting a New Co-op Program

Once a decision is made to implement a co-op program, considerable promotion is necessary to the market for which the program is being targeted. Information obtained during the market research phase can be of substantial assistance in the initial promotion.

7.3.1   Generic and Program Specific Promotion

One of the most misunderstood aspects of a co-op program is how the work term opportunities are actually obtained. Many frequently underestimate the amount of promotion and development work necessary to ensure opportunities are identified and translated into specific commitments from employers to hire students.

The focus of the promotional effort should be in two different, but related, directions:
Generic Co-op Promotion
This involves promoting an awareness and understanding of the concept of co-op as an educational partnership and its unique features as compared with other forms of experiential learning. A commonly held myth that "any experience is better than none" will be a continuous challenge. Much generic promotional material can be obtained from CAFCE.

In opening a discussion with a potential employer concerning the proposed program, the first task is to present questions to determine how much is known and understood about the co-op concept.

Specific Program Promotion

Once generic considerations have been addressed, prospective employers will have questions concerning specific co-op program detail such as:

- the scheduling of work terms
- brief overview of academic program content
- what is expected of employers
- who to contact for further information
- what will it cost to participants.
- whether or not the proposed program will be CAFCE accreditable.

The distribution of effort between generic and specific promotion will be influenced heavily by the extent to which co-operative education is being practiced in the community to which the program is being targeted. A mature co-op market place will require substantially less investment in generic promotion.

7.3.2 Promotional Methods

There are many promotional options from which to choose; these choices will depend on the time and funds available. Here are some of the more popular options.

Print Material – this will be either generic or program specific as mentioned in section 7.3.1. above.

Media Advertising – this option can be very expensive, particularly in the electronic media, and hence is usually limited to trade and local publications and newsletters. In some areas of Canada, CAFCE regional committees have run generic co-op promotions in regional media which have "piggy backed" on co-operative promotional opportunities, particularly during National Co-op Week run by most CAFCE Regional Committees annually.

Speaking Engagements – this can be an effective method of reaching specific target markets through service clubs, trade, professional and charitable associations which typically hold weekly meetings and are often seeking speakers on a broad range of topics. Opportunities exist for both generic and specific program promotion. Be prepared to answer questions and have an ample supply of business cards. Such events are often covered by the media and hence the opportunity exists to reach a much broader audience. A prior press release to the media about the event and the distribution of the text of the presentation to the media at the event will often result in media interviews. All this is free, except for printing costs.

Trade Shows and Conferences – these events offer substantial promotional opportunity. Much can be achieved at very low cost by simply "working the show" with a good supply of business cards, promotional and informational brochures. For the larger budget, a display booth may be considered. An investment will be necessary in a display fee, appropriate display material and sufficient help will be necessary to ensure adequate staffing throughout the event. You are advised to consult references on how to profit from trade shows prior to committing to a display. Approached properly, these opportunities can result in substantial returns. They can also be a waste of time and money.

Press Conferences – low cost promotional opportunities requiring three or four days prior written notice of time and place of event to the appropriate media. Light refreshments and media kits are usually provided. A short prepared statement is usually delivered by a key institutional representative who, together with a key co-op practitioner, should be prepared for media interviews and questions following the statement. Those choosing to schedule press conferences are advised to consult a public relations specialist in planning such events.

Press Releases – these are also low cost promotional opportunities. Again, public relations assistance is highly recommended in the timing and drafting of press releases. They may be circulated in print format by mail, hand delivery, fax or e-mail. Press releases may also be in the form of taped oral statements via phone. Use high quality recording equipment.

Feature Articles – many trade, professional and association journals and newsletters welcome articles of interest to members. Be prepared to advertise in the publication if you are seeking significant coverage and editorial support.

<u>Promotional Reception/Program Launch</u> – a very effective method of promoting a new co-op program. With similarities to a press conference, a launch reception may typically include:

- refreshments appropriate to the budget and the occasion.
- invitations to selected prospects from employer database.
- late afternoon or early evening timing.
- attendance by institution's CEO, Academic VP, Academic Dean, co-op staff and other appropriate personnel.
- introductory remarks by the CEO and/or dean.
- multimedia presentation (15-20 minutes) by co-op director or coordinator.
- opportunity to circulate and network.
- promotional/informational kits for all guests,
- a "business card" door prize.
- appropriately printed invitations and nametags.

These are just a few of the promotional opportunities available. It is not a complete list, for no such list can be complete. New, innovative and creative promotional ideas are surfacing daily. However, the above list, if implemented professionally, should provide adequate promotion for a new co-op program in most markets.

7.4 Developing Work Term Opportunities

Establishing and maintaining good relationships with employers in order to generate meaningful educational experiences for students is critical for co-op programs. During employer visits, coordinators should encourage management to support co-op as a long-term human resource strategy. It is important, as well, to gain the full support of the staff who will be supervising the students since they are the ones who will be directly involved in providing training, guidance and evaluation of the students' performance.

7.4.1 Initiating Employer Contact

- Compile a list of employers to be contacted
- Research general company facts – type of company, size, awarded any large-scale contacts, etc.
- Send a letter describing the program and promotion material on the benefits of co-op
- Follow up by phone call or arrange a personal visit within a couple of weeks
    - A personal visit is the best method to establish a relationship
    - Mail campaign and phone interview should be used only if the personal visit is impossible
- Try to contact the top management for an initial interview. If the support is ensured at the top, it is easier to establish rapport at the Human Resources department level
- For the initial visit, try to obtain specific information about the:
    - Nature of the business
    - Number of employees
    - Job classifications
    - Employment and training policies
    - Long term and short staffing needs
    - Areas of staffing requirements
    - Potential role of co-op in the organizations
- Co-op information, program information and student skills profiles should be given to the organization. Make suggestions on how co-op can satisfy needs of the company:
    - As a recruitment tool
    - As additional staffing for project and short term assignments
- As a relief for regular employees who can take on more challenging tasks. Attempt to get the employer to commit to a co-op placement
- If the visit outcome is positive and results in a job offer(s), prepare an information sheet on the employer's business, student requirements, job description and learning potential. Send a copy to the employer to ensure accuracy of the information.
- Keep a file of all activities relating to the developmental process – all the calls, visits, correspondence, comments and outcomes, etc.
- If an employer indicates an interest but is not ready to commit to a placement, make periodic contacts with the employer.

7.4.2 Ongoing Employer Contact

Subsequent to the initial visit, regular contact should be maintained with the employer.
- Keep the employer informed of student availability and dates of the placement process

- If the student's supervisors are not the ones with whom the jobs have been negotiated, try to meet with them to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities in the plan
- During work site visits, an effort should be made to meet with the supervisors as well as the co-op recruiters of the company to provide feedback about the employer program and to look for possible openings for other co-op students

7.5   Confirming Work Term Opportunities

No promotional program can be deemed a success until the work term opportunities are confirmed by prospective employers and they have committed to participating as educational partners in the co-op program. To achieve this, the marketing program must move into the actual sales mode through which employers provide actual job descriptions for advertising to the co-op students. The promotional activities alone are not likely to result in employers automatically sending in their positions for posting.

The sales task involves the following steps:
- developing a prospect list from an employer database already developed. (See Section 7.5.1. below).
- qualifying prospects – undertaking sufficient research to indicate a likely application for co-op students.
- identifying the appropriate contacts within a qualified prospect organization.
- implementing a direct mail campaign.
- follow up through telemarketing and/or sales visits.
- closing the sale.

7.5.1   Developing Prospective Employer Database

Throughout the promotional period, it will be necessary to develop a potential employer database from the following sources:
- association membership lists
- business cards acquired from networking contacts
- association journals and publications
- media reports
- newspaper advertisements
- referrals

This database becomes the information source from which further sales activity is generated. For example, it would be used to generate mailing labels for a direct mail campaign.

7.5.2   Direct Mail

At least 5 to 6 weeks before positions are advertised for the first work term, it will be necessary to undertake a direct mailing to all those from whom confirmation of a placement opportunity is being requested. It represents a formal invitation to prospective employers to participate in the program and provide a position description for advertising to the students.

The "invitation" may be sent by e-mail, fax or through the traditional mail. While it may be targeted to a specific group, it can also be given very broad circulation through the program's Website or homepage. Typically, the following would be included:
- a short letter or note of formal invitation.
- a listing of important dates for posting, screening, interviewing and matching.
- space for the employer to provide a work description.
- the numbers and academic focus of students available.
- corporate or organizational information such as contact person, address, etc.

It is unlikely that the mailing alone will generate sufficient numbers of responses to satisfy the students' needs and therefore a follow-up telephone approach will likely be necessary.

7.5.3   Telemarketing

Telemarketing needs a carefully planned approach but yet should not appear "canned". The objectives should remain clear:
- to confirm participation, or;
- to assess the need for a sales visit or further follow up call.

The caller should not attempt to "close the sale" on the telephone if the employer seems reluctant. This can be an easy way to loose the opportunity. Many of the skills necessary to make a successful sales visit, such as dealing with objections, assessing employer needs and closing the sale, will also be necessary to conduct an effective telemarketing campaign.

7.5.4 Conducting the Sales Visit

It is important to understand that most employers have competitive alternatives to hiring co-op students. The sales task of the coordinator, upon assessing the employer's need, and where appropriate, is to show the employer how co-op can be a viable alternative. In this sense, the coordinator may be viewed as an "applications marketer". That is, he or she must be able to accurately assess the employer's need or problem and then advise on the application of co-op to the solution. Any attempt at hard sell or arm-twisting can have serious repercussions. Any employer participating against his or her better judgement is unlikely to be motivated to provide a stimulating learning opportunity for the student.

A good sales person will retreat from a situation that may not be in the best interest of the client, whether it be the student or the employer. The coordinator's role is to optimize returns to both parties. We strongly recommend that coordinators, and any faculty involved in sales, take appropriate sales training prior to embarking upon this aspect of the marketing plan.

Here are some specific skills the coordinator will need on a sales visit:

Deal With Objections: the coordinator must be able to assess the difference between a real, genuine objection and an excuse, and respond in such a way as to assist the prospect in satisfying the objection. Typical objections which can be overcome with sufficient skill are:
- "I'm too busy this week"
- "We don't hire co-op students"
- "We don't have any funds left in the budget"
- "We don't have sufficient office space".

Closing the Sale: a sales visit can often end inconclusively where the employer promises to consult with others and "I'll get back to you when I've written up the job description". The objective of closing is to make things easy for the employer. An alert coordinator who has effectively assessed the employer's need will understand the job requirement and will be able to offer to write the job description and forward it for approval. This speeds things up for the employer and, if a sales discussion has reached this far, it is highly likely that the opportunity exists. Don't lose it by giving the employer the opportunity to procrastinate!

7.5.5 Job Development – A Continuing Process

The sales function in co-operative education, often referred to as job development, must be a continuous process for as long as the co-op program exists.

While a well-serviced co-op program will maintain partners who continue to hire students from the program, term after term, year after year, market conditions and trends are continuously changing. Employers come and employers go, however, and it is unlikely that any substantial co-op program can rely solely on its loyal participants, particularly through weak economic cycles.

Many small to medium sized enterprises will not have the capacity to hire co-op students on a continuing basis but will be keen on participating in the program on an occasional basis, when the need arises. A stable co-op program, therefore, must maintain a continuous resource and SMEs in its employer database to ensure consistent numbers of work term opportunities are available.

One of the greatest tests of the strength of a co-op program is its ability to survive prolonged adverse economic conditions as has been witnessed in most parts of Canada throughout the early and mid-1990's. This is the time when program promotion and job development activity must intensify. However, it is also the time that institutional administrators will be under considerable pressure to more rigidly control budgets and expenses. While internal marketing has not been discussed in this chapter, it is critical that institutional administrators are made fully aware of constraints faced by co-op programs during a weak economic cycle.

7.6   Summary

The more thorough and professional the market research concerning the implementation of a new co-op program, the better are the odds that the program will develop to adequately serve the needs of both its employer and student clients.

Effective promotion and job development are essential to effective implementation. An important component of a coordinator's professional development should include market research, promotion and the development of sales skills.

Job development is a continuous process in the maintenance of an effective program that adequately serves the needs of its partners, the students and employers. Job development efforts must intensify during weak economic cycles; coordinators should seek to understand and track changes in labour market trends as a key to job development focus.

A unique feature of co-operative education is that it functions directly at the market interface whereas programs that are purely academic are not directly affected by labour market swings. In the short term, a program that is purely academic, therefore, will not find pressures to respond to labor market changes. These pressures are real and constant in co-operative programs.

CHAPTER 8   CO-OP ACTIVITIES – RECRUITMENT THROUGH GRADUATION

The following describes the activities and events that occur in the Co-operative Education activity cycle.

8.1   Student Recruitment

8.1.1   External Recruitment

Student recruitment techniques to the external community can include:
- visit high schools to meet with students and counsellors
- distribute program information to high schools in target areas
- bring groups to the campus for information/orientation sessions
- supply facts and anecdotes for inclusion in institutional calendar and promotion brochures
- advertise in target group publications or other appropriate media formats

8.1.2   Internal Recruitment

Student recruitment techniques to the internal community can include:
- mass orientation for students newly admitted to the institution, and their parents, in the summer prior to enrollment
- participation in institution-wide new student orientation sessions
- distribution of posters in strategic locations such as departmental offices, library, student union building
- short in-class presentations
- use of articles and advertisement in student newspapers, student newsletters, campus radio and television
- individual mailing to inform newly admitted students about co-op

8.2   Student Admission

The three types of co-op programs – mandatory, optional, or optional-selective – have different student admission requirements.

8.2.1   Mandatory Programs

Admission to the academic program automatically admits the student to co-op and no further admission process is required for co-op. (See Section 5.2.1).
- admission criteria for students is normally set by the department

8.2.2   Optional Programs

Enrollment in the academic program would be the only condition for participation in co-op. (See Section 5.2.2).
- The option to participate in co-op lies with the student and not necessarily with the program

8.2.3   Optional-Selective Programs

Students are admitted into co-op based on a set of selection criteria. (See Section 5.2.3). These could include:
  – normally a higher GPA than institutional admission standard is required
  – an application package which may include letters of references, transcripts, or other evaluative material
  – an interview
(See Appendix 4 for a sample Application to Co-op form.)

8.3   Pre-employment Training

Co-op students are required to participate in pre-employment training. This training may include material presented through the students' program curriculum or in classes/workshops delivered by Co-op practitioners. The pre-employment component of a co-op program can either be for credit or non-credit depending on the institution. Pre-employment classes can provide an open forum discussion regarding the co-op process and clearly outline how students can be successful in achieving and maintaining the work placement.

8.3.1   Pre-employment Curriculum

Pre-employment curriculum could include topics such as:
- the dynamics of the labour market
- the importance of learning objectives
- setting of learning objectives
- pro-active job search and application skills
- researching organization information
- cover letter and résumé writing
- interview techniques
- responding to acceptance and rejection of co-op positions
- first day on-the-job orientation
- employer, student and coordinator work term roles and expectations
- effective conflict management techniques
- effective personal management skills
- effective teamwork skills
- effective communication skills
- purpose and timing of site visits
- employer evaluation – receiving feedback
- work report guidelines
- post-employment debriefing
- safety in the workplace
- applicable employment legislation, e.g., human rights, harassment
- ethics in the workplace

8.3.2   Pre-employment Learning Outcomes

Topics within pre-employment training could prepare the students for identifying and setting learning outcomes by:
- identifying the connections between learners and workers
- applying job search techniques to secure co-op and graduate employment
- applying job keeping skills to be successful in the workplace
- planning for successful completion of work terms
- planning for return to full time study following work term

Recognition of the transition between learning and application allow students to gain greater awareness of their employability, such as:
- importance of a positive attitude
- recognition of ethical versus unethical behaviour
- acceptance of responsibility and accountability
- level of adaptability and flexibility in the work approach
- importance of excellent oral and written communication skills
- ability to set goals and action plans to achieve them
- relevance of performance feedback in employment success

8.4   Learning Objectives

Learning objectives can give direction to what students learn during their work term. Learning objectives can help students get more out of their co-op experience and allow students to focus on their career goals. As students progress through their co-op program, learning objectives assist them to recognize, demonstrate and evaluate some of the learning that has taken place. (See Appendix 5 for an example of a web-based interactive learning objective form for students).

Learning objectives for the work term:
- should be set by students in consultation with their coordinator and employer to ensure that they are realistic and attainable within the work term position
- should outline what the student will learn, how this learning will be accomplished, and when the learning objective will be achieved
- fall into two main categories:
    - <u>personal</u> which might include developing or improving interpersonal, communication or other social skills that allow students to work more effectively
    - <u>professional</u> which might include improving a skill, learning a new task, solving a problem, or other professional objectives
- may cover routine duties, problem solving, new skills and assignments, personal improvement, or creative opportunities

It should be noted that not all co-op programs require students to develop learning objectives.

8.5   Placement Process

There are two major methods for the placement process — matrix and continuous placement. Programs would choose the method which best suits their administrative needs.

The **Matrix Placement** process posts jobs in rounds, i.e., all jobs available are posted for a certain period of time. Students apply to positions and then interviews are conducted over a set duration. Once interviews have been completed, employers rank the students they wish to hire and students rank the positions for which they have been interviewed. Then students are matched with jobs, taking into consideration the rankings of both employer and student in order to optimize placements. In preparing a matrix, coordinators begin with matching the student's first choice and the employer's first choice; then, matching 1 to 2 rankings; and working down through the rankings until all matches are made. It is not always possible to give everyone his or her first choice. This system, however, endeavors to achieve the fairest distribution, both for students and employers, and to ensure that a maximum number of students are placed.

The **Continuous Placement** process posts co-op positions as they arrive; students are interviewed and the employer ranks the students as in the Matrix system. However, when offers are made to students, they must decide immediately or within a specified period whether or not to accept the position and, if the position is accepted, students are required to forego any other interviews. There are advantages and disadvantages with each method. Matrix Placement allows students to consider all the positions and choose accordingly; however, some employers dislike waiting to the end of the round without knowing which student they will receive.

Matrix Placement also ensures the largest number of students are placed. However, Continuous Placement more closely emulates "real world" hiring practices in that students must choose and commit to positions as the opportunities arise.
In order to maximize the chances of obtaining suitable positions, students should be prepared to consider a variety of locations and duties, and to select at least five or six positions for which they are eligible. Some programs begin with matrix placement (Round 1) and change to continuous placement when Round 1 postings are filled. The placement process will vary depending upon the size and geographic location of the institution, nature of the discipline and other factors. The basic elements include the following events.

8.5.1   Determining Job Interview Period

When deciding on a set of dates for the job interview period, a co-op office should:
- Consider the students' academic schedule, e.g. examination schedule, when determining dates
- If employers post and interview at more than one institution, institutions may wish to coordinate the interview period and ranking date (if possible)

8.5.2   Inviting Employers to Participate

Programs can choose from a variety of methods to contact employers to solicit job descriptions — mass mail-out, e-mail distribution, or mass fax solicitation. Invitations to employers to participate in upcoming interviews can include the following information:
- Invitation letter (See Appendix 6) should normally contain information on the following:
    - Date and venue of interview period
    - Program of study
    - Number of students available
    - Background of students (academic and work term experience)
    - Date of availability of students
    - Contact person from institution
    - Deadline for response

- A response form should be enclosed to solicit the following information:
  - Name and address of organization
  - Name and phone number of contact person from organization
  - Preferred interview date and time
  - Name(s) and title(s) of interviewer(s)
  - Format of interview – group or individual
  - Number of students required
  - Job title(s)
  - Job descriptions – responsibilities, qualifications, skills required

8.5.3 Receiving Job Descriptions

Ensuring the return of job descriptions can be difficult:
- Follow up if responses not received by deadline
- Assign job numbers to positions received
- Begin to make arrangements for interview rooms

8.5.4 Posting Job Descriptions

When posting job descriptions:
- Prepare job lists for posting including such information as job title, name of company, work location, salary, description of position, qualification or skills required, deadline for application. (See Appendix 7).
- Job descriptions can be posted as a paper posting, posted on an e-mail newsgroup or posted on an on-line database

8.5.5 Application Process

The application process for students include:
- Students select jobs to apply for based on their own experience, career interest, and the qualifications sought
- A limit may be set on the number of jobs for which students may apply
- Some programs may set other requirements (e.g., must apply for some out-of-town positions, must vary their work environment experience)
- Students may be required to complete a job application or selection form to facilitate the grouping of applications by the co-op office. (See Appendix 8).
- Students submit cover letter (if required), résumé and transcripts (if required) before the deadline
- Deadlines for application may be extended or the job may be reposted if the position receives limited response

8.5.6 Sending Applications to Employers

The co-op office collects student applications to send to employers:
- Collect and file student applications by organization
- Send packages to employers after the deadline containing:
  - Students' cover letters (if applicable) and résumés
  - Students' transcripts (if applicable)
  - Job description(s)
  - Letter(s) confirming details of interview (e.g., date, time location, room number, etc.)

8.5.7 Preparing Interview Schedule

Advice to consider when preparing an interview schedule include:
- Interviews are usually held on campus for the following reasons:
  - Students need to attend class during the academic year
  - More economical for employers to travel from the work site
  - Employers can gain a better understanding of the institution by visiting the campus
- Prepare interview schedule by organization, i.e., one schedule per interviewer or job containing the following information:
  - Name of organization
  - Name of interviewers
  - Date of interview
  - Time of individual sessions
  - Names of students for each session
  - Room numbers

- It may be advantageous to prepare a listing of interviews for all programs or programs in the same faculty falling on the same day
- Ensure that students are aware of their confirmed interview time
- Prepare copies of the schedule (with student names and times) for the interviewers, for posting on the room, and for filing

8.5.8 Matrix, Ranking, Matching

- Ensure that physical facilities are in order and students report to the co-op office 10 minutes before the interview
- Students and employers are advised that all offers must be made through the co-op office and students can not accept a position offered directly by an employer
- Employers interview student candidates
- Request students to submit rankings of employers by a deadline date
- Students should be advised not to rank employers they would not be willing to work for
- Request employers to rank students after the interview period
- Employers should be advised not to rank a student they would not be willing to accept
- Match students with employers by using a matrix ranking
- Matches should be made between an employer and student pair with the best possible rankings

8.5.9 Confirming Placement

When confirming placements:
- Once the co-op office has determined the student and employer match, acceptance will be confirmed (usually verbally) with employer and student.
- On the first offer day all offers are presented to the students. Some students will receive several offers while others receive none.
- Students holding offers must accept one or reject all offers by a particular deadline (normally within 24 hours).
- Jobs which are not accepted in the first round of offers are offered to students who are still available in accordance with employer rankings.
- Offer rounds continue until all jobs are filled or all ranked students have been placed or they rejected all available offers.
- In the event of unfilled jobs and unplaced students, the co-op office will determine if the employers would:
  - offer students who were interviewed, still available, and unranked.
  - interview more students from the group who had originally applied
  - consider any students still available
- The co-op office will immediately advise employers when students accept/reject job offers
- The co-op office will send a letter confirming the placement to students and employers
- Employers will send a letter of offer to selected students (i.e. confirming start and end date, salary, etc.) with a copy to the co-op office.
- Students accepting a job offer may be required to sign an acceptance agreement, and/or send a letter of acceptance to the employer.
- The co-op office records the result of the placement in the appropriate files or database.

8.5.10 Continuous Placement

Continuous placement differs from matrix in that employers will indicate only their first choice of students and an offer is made shortly thereafter.
- Generally, students are given a specific deadline by which they must decide to accept or reject the position (e.g., 24 hours).
- Some co-op programs have a policy whereby if students reject two or more offers of employment, they are dropped from the placement process and expected to secure their own work placement.

8.6 Student Interaction

8.6.1 Intake

The interval for admitting students into a co-op program is determined by the needs and structure of each co-op program; however, the most common entry point is late September and/or late January.
- Students are typically admitted in late September, after in-class presentations to first and second year students have been conducted.

- Typically, mandatory co-op programs admit students during the Spring and Summer period, as admission to the academic program automatically means acceptance to Co-op.
- In general, for admission to a co-op program, students are required to achieve an above-average academic standing and to demonstrate the motivation and potential to pursue a professional career.

When students are admitted to a co-op program, students should give some formal acknowledgment of the offer of admission. Some programs have their students sign a written agreement, which specifies the terms of their participation in the program. This requirement may be useful in establishing with students some of the stipulations of the co-op process:

- That students should be prepared to relocate for work terms;
- That it is inevitable that economic conditions, which are beyond the control of the institution, will have a considerable effect on the number, variety, and location of job placements. Although co-op students are not guaranteed employment, every effort is made to place all students in appropriate jobs.
- That there will be some inequality in pay rates and significant variations in the degree of challenge in the positions being offered to students. Although each co-op program works with employers to determine pay scales, salaries are dependent on a variety of factors and do not govern the matching of student to work placement. The prime consideration is to provide a work setting appropriate to each student's ability and to offer opportunities for further development of relevant skills.
- A Co-op Student Handbook with information on the requirements specific to the Co-operative Education program can be invaluable in making student responsibilities and requirements clear.

8.6.2 Orientation

Coordinators should ensure that new students are provided with information and resources to understand thoroughly the structure and requirements of the co-op program and to prepare them to undertake their work terms. Topics that can be covered in an orientation session would include:

- Before the Work Term
  - Job Development
  - The Interview
  - The Matrix
  - The Job Offer
- During the Work Term
  - Work Term Schedules
  - Work Term Requirements
  - Employee-Employer Relationship
  - Professionalism
  - Work Site Visits
- After the Work Term
  - Work Term Evaluation
  - Debriefing Presentation

8.6.3 Site Visits

Work site visits play an important role in Co-operative Education. The work site visit is conducted by either the coordinator or faculty member midway through the work term. During the visit the coordinator meets with both the student and employer to ensure that the work term is functioning as it should, and that all parties are satisfied with the arrangement. Work site visits should be conducted in person wherever possible; however, out of town visits can be done by telephone or by another coordinator travelling to the area. (See Appendix 9).

Topics discussed with the student may include:

- an assessment of the assignment including: the accuracy of the original job description, relevance to academic and career goals
- the student's assessment of the supervisor, including: orientation and training, task delegation, feedback, support
- how the student is fitting into the workplace
- questions and concerns about the co-op program

8.6.4 Debriefings – Individual versus Group

Students may be required to make a brief oral presentation upon their return to campus after a work term. The purpose of these presentations is to inform the coordinator, and possibly other students, about the work term experience. It provides an opportunity for the student to reflect upon the learning gained at the work site. A coordinator may use this opportunity to discuss the employer's evaluation with each student. These debriefings may

occur with the coordinator alone or with a group of similarly returning students. As well, some co-op program areas require returning students to participate in sessions to share their experiences with small groups of new and junior co-op students. Some programs require students to make formal oral presentations upon their return from a work term. These may be formally or informally evaluated and, in some programs, may be a requirement for graduation with the co-op designation.

8.7 Employer Interaction

8.7.1 Site Visits

At some point during the work term, the coordinator will visit the work site. During the work site visit, the Co-op representative becomes better acquainted with the student's working environment and specific assignments. It is also an opportune time to discuss any problems that may have arisen and to ensure that the student's work term objective and report requirements are understood. Topics discussed with the employer may include:

- An overview of the student's assignment
- How the student and employer objectives are proceeding
- The supervisor's assessment of the student, including student preparedness, attitude and skill level
- How the student is fitting into the workplace
- Questions and concerns with the co-op program

The work site visit is also an opportunity to provide input to the appropriateness of the student's skills and training, as well as the curriculum of the program. (See Appendix 9).

8.7.2 Employer Advisory Council

Many co-op programs form Employer Advisory Councils or Boards to bring the perspective of the employer community to the planning, development, and evaluation of the Program. Their advice can be invaluable with respect to market trends, promotion, academic relevance, skill requirements, etc. The purpose of an Advisory Council needs to be clearly communicated to all stakeholders:

- to provide a major channel of communication between business/industry and educational institution
- to provide advice and counsel, but not to assume administrative responsibilities
- to continuously exchange information to keep the co-op program attuned to employer needs, to satisfy the changing needs of business, thereby ensuring that graduates are employable
- to make recommendations concerning curriculum content and timing relative to work terms
- to help promote the co-op program in the business/industry
- to identify employment opportunities for students
- to help maintain good community relations for the program through representing its goals and outcomes, and alerting the Committee to concerns where they may arise.
- to recommend and help establish standards and employment practices
- to provide fiscal assistance through fund raising initiatives, advocacy with governments where needed, establishment of co-op scholarships
- to help arrange and/or participate in special events associated with the program
- to act as a "sounding board" for new ideas

Advisory Council effectiveness can be increased by:

- establishing and keeping a regular schedule of meetings
- setting an agenda to be followed each meeting
- evaluate progress based on getting things planned, acted upon and completed in a timely manner
- facilitating employer interaction with students through networking events, presentations to enhance industry awareness, understanding of recruitment expectations, and experiential activities like mock interviewing and resume critiques
- maintaining a coherent history of committee activities and membership
- building enthusiasm through periodic social events that involve all players

8.7.3 Employer Feedback for Curriculum Relevancy

Both Employer Advisory Councils and the work site visit to employers are valuable tools for eliciting feedback for curriculum relevancy.

- Employer Advisory Councils can give advice on the development and relevancy of the curricula with respect to changing technologies and work environments.
- Work site visits give employers the opportunity to discuss the applicability of a co-op program's curriculum to the needs of the contemporary workplace.

8.8   Evaluation

As with any activity, timely evaluation mechanisms are critical to the on going success of the program. Student performance, employer suitability and overall co-op program activities require checks and balances to ensure a high degree of satisfaction by all three partners.

8.8.1   Employer Evaluation of Student Performance

An Employer Evaluation of Student Performance form should be created for completion close to the end of the student's work term. This form should be subsequently discussed between the student and supervisor, following which it is returned to the co-op office where the coordinator reviews it and subsequently discusses it with the student. (See Appendix 10). The form should consider the following:
- acceptance of criticism and suggestions
- attendance
- personal care
- communication skills
- interest in work
- initiative
- organization and planning ability
- ability to learn
- quality of work
- quantity of work
- judgement
- dependability
- relations with others
- creativity
- major strengths and areas for improvement

8.8.2   Work Term Report Guidelines

Work term report guidelines in which the student is encouraged to report on their experience with the employer and how the experience related to their learning objectives. (See Appendix 11). Goals of the report would include:
- facilitating an understanding of the employer's organization and work environment
- enhancing the student's integration of practical experience and theoretical concepts
- aid in the development of the student's communication skills
- provide an opportunity for an employer to recognize research, analytical, and written/oral communication skills in a co-op student
- assist in the development of learning objectives for subsequent work terms

8.9   Co-op Activity Schedule

In any given term, coordinators are managing three groups of students – newly admitted students, students on a work term, and students on a campus term. At the same time, coordinators have specific employer-based activities. The priority given to each activity may be determined by factors such as budget, job market, and economic conditions. See Appendix 12 for a sample co-op activity schedule. Note that regular co-op activities are cyclical and typically are repeated each term.

8.10   Policies and Procedures

As the co-op program develops, policies and procedures need to be developed to ensure that standards and requirements are met and to aid the smooth running of Co-op within the institution and with Co-op's clients.

Many of the policies that must be articulated will relate to the criteria for national (CAFCE) accreditation and should be published in the institution's calendar, and at least in handbooks or print materials for students. Generally, information outlined in the calendar must be approved by the institution's highest academic body, e.g., Senate, Education Council, or Board of Governors. In setting policy, it is important to work within the policy framework of the institution to ensure that both the institution's and the co-op program's policies and procedures are in accord.

Some examples of policies that co-op programs would establish are:
- the definition and criteria for an approved co-op program within the institution
- the minimum number of work terms that students must successfully complete in order to graduate with the co-op designation on their transcript

- whether or not a co-op fee will be assessed and, if so, whether it will be levied for academic, work, or all terms
- whether or not the co-op fee is refundable and, if so, under what circumstances it may be refunded (e.g., circumstances beyond the students' control, such as layoff, serious illness)
- whether or not students may withdraw from a work term after they have agreed to a placement and circumstances whereby withdrawal is allowed
- the requirements to successfully complete a work term (e.g., successful performance on the job, satisfactory work term report)
- the number of work terms (if any) that may be transferred from another institution
- whether or not students are permitted to undertake any coursework during a work term
- whether or not the pre-employment training is mandatory and, if so, the consequences of non-attendance
- Determine grade point average required for admission to and retention in the co-op program

Some examples of procedures that co-op programs should develop:
- Identify co-op placement process (e.g., continuous vs. matrix placement, deadlines, accepting/rejecting offers) which should be clearly communicated to students and employers
- Determine when work term reports are due and what the consequences will be if they are not submitted by the specified deadline
- Identify registration process for work terms and recognition on transcript (this will need to be worked out with the Registrar's office and possibly the Accounting office, if fees are tied to registrations)
- Identify approval process for students developing their own co-op work term position (e.g., students should advise the coordinator, may not approach active co-op employers, may or may not also sign up for posted co-op positions)
- Determine the assessment process for the transfer of work terms from other institutions
- Identify the role and expectations for students and employers (e.g., conduct, ethics, behaviour)
- Determine the process for student appeal on co-op related issues

8.11 Other Co-op Issues

There are many co-op issues that must be addressed as a co-op program develops. Some of these issues are covered below:

8.11.1 International Students

International co-op students studying in Canada must have a work authorization from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to undertake off-campus work terms. If a co-op program accepts international students, important procedures are noted below as the process can be lengthy:
- Upon acceptance into a co-op program, students should apply for a work authorization for all required work terms.
- The co-op office should produce a letter to accompany the application indicating that work terms are an integral part of the students' degree program, when the students are expected to undertake their first and last work terms, and their anticipated point of graduation.
- It should be noted that since co-op work experience is part of the students' academic program, the application fee is waived.
- Institutions should be able to obtain application packages from their local Citizenship and Immigration Canada office. Applications should be sent to the Case Processing Centre – Visitor appropriate to your region.
- It should be noted that according to federal policy, visa students may not work for federal departments or agencies

Other considerations include:
- Institutions may have an international fee differential that could impact the co-op fee for visa students
- Visa students' facility with the English language may affect their ability to be placed on a work term.

8.11.2 Students with Disabilities

Many students with disabilities have been successfully placed on co-op work terms.
- Human rights legislation requires institutions to provide program access to and accommodate students with disabilities.
- Many institutions have support services for students with a disability. Program coordinators should become aware of any special needs their students may have and utilize internal resources available to them.
- As well, coordinators should take students' special needs into account when considering prospective employers and work environments.
- In some regions, there are agencies that can provide equipment for persons who have special needs to assist with their employment.

8.11.3 Circumstances beyond a Student's Control – Illness/Strike/Layoff

In operating a co-op program there will be exceptional circumstances that fall outside the normally co-op process.

- It is helpful to establish a process to address exceptions to ensure that students should not be penalized with a failing grade due to circumstances that prevent them from successfully completing the work term
- Occasionally, students find themselves in circumstances beyond their control which prevent them from successfully completing a work term (e.g., serious illness or death, company financial difficulties/receivership, labour problems, strike or lay-off)
- Should this happen early in the work term, it may be possible for the program coordinator to find an alternative placement for the student.
- Otherwise, the program should have a policy on the minimum number of weeks or hours a student may work and still have the work term recognized.

8.11.4 Student Input

The institution should decide if it is important to have formal student input into the program. If so, one way for students to participate in the governance of Co-op is to have representation on committees. Alternatively, program coordinators could invite students once a term to meet and provide input to the program or could call together a student focus group for co-op related issues that will impact students.

8.11.5 Employer Input

The institution may wish to create an employer advisory council to seek the perspective and advice of the community hiring its co-op students and graduates. (See Section 8.7.2)

Chapter 9   Budget/Resources

9.1   Resources/Budget

A co-op program should not be launched without adequate resources to enable those administering the program to be successful. When planning a new program, the following parameters should be considered.

9.1.1 Program Start Up

When a program is first implemented, there are many time-consuming tasks that must be initiated that later may only require maintenance. Such tasks may involve developing promotional literature and handbooks for both students and employers, establishing a network of contacts, developing an employer base, establishing policies and procedures, etc. Initially, a small student intake will help the program coordinator manage the heavy administrative load and build job opportunities. Until a program has reached steady state, costs per placement may be high but this is normal. Some start-up costs could include:

- marketing study
- project coordinator: contract position
- promotional materials, including launch of the program
- advertising and recruitment costs
- office equipment (telephone, computer, fax, wiring for hookups, photocopier etc.)
- software acquisitions
- data base development
- furnishings (desks, chairs, filing cabinets, etc.)
- supplies
- development of print materials (brochures, handbooks, forms, etc.)
- facilities renovations, including barrier free access
- program resource acquisitions (books, journals, reference material)
- Raising staff awareness through training can facilitate the students' success throughout the co-op process

9.1.2 Ongoing Program Costs

Once a program has reached steady state, ongoing costs could include:

- salaries and benefits (administrative and support staff)
- operating budget
  - travel (job development and site visits)
  - general office expenses (supplies, telephone/fax, mail and courier costs, computer services)
  - professional development activities (association memberships, conferences, and workshops)
  - professional resources acquisitions

- hospitality
- employer services, e.g., parking permits
- advisory board costs
- equipment rental and maintenance
- equipment upgrades (computing hardware and software)
- printing (maintaining and revising print materials)

9.2 Human Resources

Depending upon the administrative structure and other support structures, a single co-op program may handle anywhere from 100 – 1,000 placements per year. For the majority of co-op programs, staff salaries and benefits comprise 80% of the program's budget.

9.2.1 Coordination and Support Staff

A full-time co-op coordinator (See Section 5.4.2) may handle in the area of 100 – 300 placements a year. If the program area is decentralized, the coordinator will likely handle all tasks associated with the placement process – student preparation, job development, matching, monitoring (site visits), and evaluation. In this case, a full-time coordinator, with part-time support staff (20 hours per week), may handle in the range of 100 – 140 co-op placements reasonably. If placements increase, it may be necessary to increase the support staff time.

Coordinators at the low end of this range may perform other duties such as teaching or lab instruction. If the program area is centralized, with coordinated support services, a full-time coordinator may handle upwards of 300 placements per year.

At many institutions, co-op coordinators fall into the mid-to-high range of the institution's salary scale. For budget planning purposes, it is best to determine appropriate staffing levels and then factor in the salary and operating budget costs.

9.2.2 Departmental Support

In a unionized environment it is important to determine how faculty participation in co-operative education fits into a collective agreement.

9.3 Financial Planning

9.3.1 Sources of Income

- Tuition Fees:
  While some students will be performing off-campus work assignments, on-campus space will be relieved and the institution may be able to increase its overall student intake. The total increase will depend on the tuition fees charged by the institution in every semester. In a cost analysis, it is necessary to project the expected enrollment each year until the program reaches full capacity in order to calculate the additional student intake the institution can accommodate.
- Co-op Fees:
  Most co-op institutions charge the students a co-op fee to partially offset the additional administrative cost involved in co-op activities. Some charge a fee for every work term, others may charge on a per academic term basis or a lump sum per year regardless of the number of work terms undertaken by the student. Fees should not be regarded as a placement fee or a guarantee of a job.

When determining the amount of the co-op fee, the institution should consider whether it is financially feasible for the student. The fee collected should also contribute reasonably to the operating cost.
For some institutions, the co-op fee reflects 20 – 25% of the co-op budget. Other institutions that charge a substantially higher co-op fee may be able to cover as much as 80 – 90% of the direct costs.

- Special Government Funding:
  In order to promote the development of co-operative education, some provincial governments provide special grants to co-op institutions and employers. The purposes of these grants may be to assist in offsetting co-op administrative costs or to subsidize employers in salaries paid to co-op students.
- Miscellaneous Income:
  Other miscellaneous sources of revenue would be similar to those received by a regular academic unit in the institution – donations and grants contributed by private foundations or co-op employers, fees charged on counselling, services, and consultation projects undertaken by co-op staff. However, income from these sources is usually minimal and irregular and should not be relied upon to support ongoing budget commitments.

9.3.2 Budget Planning

In operating a co-op program it is important to consider the direct costs incurred by the co-op office as well as the indirect costs assumed by other units as a result of change in the system. See Sections 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 for a list of budget items to be considered when preparing an operating budget (start-up and ongoing program costs).

The indirect costs of implementing a co-op program can affect many areas of the institution. Additional resources may be needed to account for the increased use of facilities due to higher student enrollment and a year-round operation. The alternating structure of co-op will increase the number of students undertaking a summer academic term; hence there will pressure not only on facilities but also on academic units to provide adequate course offerings. If agreement has been made for faculty to participate in grading co-op work term reports and other activities, their normal teaching load may have to be reduced and more teaching staff will have to be hired. As a result, a co-op program may be asked to provide financial support to offset increased departmental or administrative costs.

Ongoing budget planning will involve strategies for planning for program growth (new programs and/or enrollments), managing budget cuts, reallocation of resources, sharing of resources for greater efficiencies, salary and benefit changes, support to academic or other units impacted by co-op, etc.

9.4   Facilities Planning

Space requirements will depend upon the size of the co-op program and the structural model chosen. A centralized co-op office will require space for reception and support and coordination staff. As well, dedicated space for interviews and a student resource area are desirable. When co-op programs are located within the academic units, usually the academic units are responsible for providing the required space.

As co-op programs grow, there will be an increased number of students returning during the summer term to continue their academic program. This may place an increased pressure on facilities such as libraries, food services, athletics, etc. Institutions should make every effort possible to provide year-round services so students returning for a summer campus term are not disadvantaged. This will include academic units scheduling appropriate courses for co-op students to continue their academic program during a summer campus term.

The location and layout of the co-op office are important to the smooth and efficient operation of the program. The office would ideally be in close proximity to the students it serves. Ideally, parking should be convenient for employers coming to campus to conduct interviews. Signage should clearly lay out the location of the co-op office.

If designing new space or modifying existing space, the following are considerations.

9.4.1 Interview Rooms

Interview rooms really are the first impression of the co-op office. Interview rooms that preferably have solid walls and are not cubicles are really important. Ideally, the rooms would have a window and be attractively furnished. Failing a window, the air supply should be fresh and have temperature regulation. They should be well lighted with adequate data and phone lines. Hopefully, one room can be devoted to the audiovisual needs of the office. Here you might house the video camera, TV, and VCR for recording mock interviews, as well as video conference equipment if you own it. Shelving in this room can be used to store tapes, etc. Each interview room should have a spacious table, comfortable chairs, a telephone table with internal and external phone books, pens, paper, and artwork on the wall. The doors should have a glass window so that staff can check on the progress of the interviews without disturbing the process. Carpet is not helpful on the floors due to allergies.

A minimum of three fully serviceable interview rooms is required for most medium-sized co-op offices. More is great. Preferably these are in close proximity so that staff can easily attend to the needs of the employer. A boardroom with a large table that will accommodate all staff is helpful and can serve as another interview room for panel interviews, if required. It also serves as a project area when more space is required.

9.4.2 Central Area

The support staff should be positioned in such a way as to control the flow of traffic. Be sure to ensure that there are enough data and voice lines to support staff phones, the fax, and computers. A computer with a fax modem and the printers located in the central area, along with the photocopier, scanner, and the fax, will aid the efficiency of the office. Shared equipment grouped to provide easy access for support staff facilitates a smoother operation. Central office files should be located in this area. Student files, administrative files, etc., should be housed here so that the contents can be safeguarded.

9.4.3 Student Area

- This area requires considerable space. It is important that there are computers dedicated to student use, a large table, and several comfortable chairs in this area.
- The space should also house the employer files for student use and the resource library. Shelving for adequate display of resource materials takes up considerable space.
- A wooden slotted cabinet located outside the co-op office allows the students to drop off resumes after office hours. The cabinet needs individually named job slots and should be locked. This can be very helpful to the students.
- Lighting is important to all areas of the co-op office, especially in those areas students may be reading or working on computers.
- A coat rack and mirror allow students to "tidy up" before their interviews.

9.4.4 Coordinators' Offices

Each office should ensure privacy; however, a door with a window can ensure that people are not disrupted when working with students or others. The office should be professional in design with a desk, phone, computer, filing cabinet, bookcase, and a comfortable chair. It is appropriate for coordinators to display their personal academic certificates and mementos in their offices. Have peoples' names on the doors.

9.4.5 Director's Office

- The director's office should be larger than the coordinators due to the fact that the director may have to have several people in the office at once.
- There should be ample cabinet space for filing of confidential documents, as well as a bookcase, a table to interview people, comfortable chairs, and computer.
- The overall tone of the co-op office should be an efficient, friendly atmosphere. Warm colours on walls with interesting artwork will liven the environment. Borrow artwork from your art gallery. It is important to create the reality of a modern, efficient office that is friendly to students, employers, and faculty alike.
- The centre should prominently display CAFCE accreditation certificates, etc.
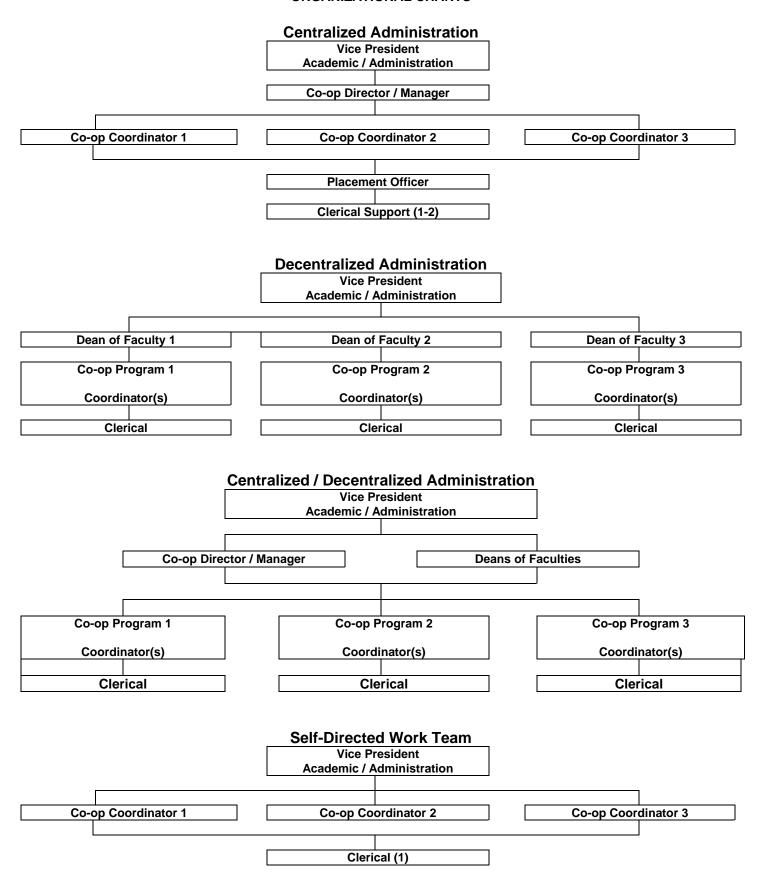
List of Appendices

Note: Some of the appendices shown in the hardcopy (2000 Edition) are not included in this list because they have been revised. We have included links in the chapters to direct you to the most current copies available on www.cafce.ca.

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APPENDIX 1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Centralized Administration

Vice President Academic / Administration

Co-op Director / Manager

Co-op Coordinator 1	Co-op Coordinator 2	Co-op Coordinator 3

Placement Officer

Clerical Support (1-2)

Decentralized Administration

Vice President Academic / Administration

Dean of Faculty 1	Dean of Faculty 2	Dean of Faculty 3
Co-op Program 1 Coordinator(s)	Co-op Program 2 Coordinator(s)	Co-op Program 3 Coordinator(s)
Clerical	Clerical	Clerical

Centralized / Decentralized Administration

Vice President Academic / Administration

Co-op Director / Manager	Deans of Faculties

Co-op Program 1 Coordinator(s)	Co-op Program 2 Coordinator(s)	Co-op Program 3 Coordinator(s)
Clerical	Clerical	Clerical

Self-Directed Work Team

Vice President Academic / Administration

Co-op Coordinator 1	Co-op Coordinator 2	Co-op Coordinator 3

Clerical (1)

APPENDIX 2

ACADEMIC/WORK SEQUENCES

Typical College Progams
(X = Work Term / H = Summer Holiday)

Four Academic Semester Program

Year 1			Year 2		
F	W	S	F	W	S
1	2	X	3	X	4

Year 1			Year 2		
F	W	S	F	W	S
1	2	X	X	3	4

Year 1			Year 2			
F	W	S	F	W	S	F
1	2	X	X	3	X	4

Year 1			Year 2			
F	W	S	F	W	S	F
1	2	X	3	X	X	4

Six Academic Semester Program

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3				
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W
1	2	X	X	3	X	4	5	X	X	6

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F
1	2	H	3	X	4	X	5	X	6

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S
1	2	X	3	X	4	X	5	6

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S
1	2	3	X	4	X	5	X	6

Typical University Programs
(X = Work Term / H = Summer Holiday)

Six Academic Semester Program

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S
1	2	3	X	4	X	5	X	6

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F
1	2	X/H	3	X	4	X	5	X	6

Eight Academic Semester Program

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4				
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W
1	X	2	X	3	X	4	X	5	X	6	X	7	8

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4		
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S
1	2	3	X	4	X	5	6	X	7	8	

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4				
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W
1	2	X	3	X	4	X	X	5	X	6	X	7	8

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			
F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	F
1	2	X/H	3	4	X	5	X	6	X	7	X	8

CO-OP COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION (SAMPLE)

TITLE: CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION COORDINATOR
DIVISION: EDUCATION
GENERAL: Reporting to the Director, Co-operative Education, and working with the Program Assistants and Co-op Secretaries, the Co-operative Education Coordinator is responsible to facilitate the participation of students, faculty and employers in Co-operative Education. In addition, the Coordinator initiates and maintains effective working relationships in the instructional program area to facilitate employer development and relations; student development; monitoring and evaluation of the work term experience; and general administration.

TYPICAL DUTIES:
1. EMPLOYER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONS:
    1.1 Develops career related work terms by marketing, promoting and selling the Co-op program to prospective employers. (i.e. Trade Shows, Invitations to Hire, one-on-one visits, cold calls, etc.)
1.2 Develops profiles of student skills, knowledge and capabilities for employer information.
1.3 Assists employers in development of job descriptions, job specifications, and employer profiles for student information.
1.4 Reviews and approves the technical and career related content of work term placements (i.e. job description).
1.5 Provides advice for hiring and recruitment processes in relation to Employment Standards.
1.6 Develops connections, maintains contact and participates with professional organizations.

2. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT:
2.1 Markets, promotes and sells the Co-op program to prospective students. (i.e. Orientations, Intake Interviews, Trade Shows, etc.)
2.2 Provides one-on-one consultation with Co-op students and makes appropriate referrals when necessary. (i.e. Advising, Counseling, etc.)
2.3 Provides academic and work term schedule planning.
2.4 Instructs pre-employment seminar including the development of materials, course outlines and alternate delivery methods.
2.5 Critiques resumes, cover letters and interview skills.
2.6 Facilitates student initiated work term development.
2.7 Prepares and counsels students to effectively compete in the interview and work term processes.
2.8 Provides guidance on effective work keeping skills.
2.9 Provides advice on seeking post-graduate employment and further academic courses/programs.

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE:
3.1 Monitors students and employers via on-site visits, and maintains on-going contact to ensure continuing success.
3.2 Mediates and resolves any student-employer difficulties and refers to appropriate resources as required.
3.3 Evaluates student work term reports, reviews employer evaluations and submits grades in a timely manner.
3.4 Facilitates group meetings for the exchange of information and learning from Co-op experiences. (i.e. Intake Interviews, Post Employment Interviews, etc.)

4. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & DEVELOPMENT:
4.1 Assists with the overall promotion of Co-op programs at the College.
4.2 Assists with the development and ongoing review of Co-op policies and procedures.
4.3 Develops time lines and schedules for Co-op processes. (i.e. orientations, on-sites, post-employment and intake interviews, etc.)
4.4 Develops and maintains a database of prospective Co-op employers.
4.5 Monitors the prerequisites and transcripts of students applying for and participating in Co-op.
4.6 Provides direction and guidance to support staff.
4.7 Develops reporting techniques for student and employer feedback.
4.8 Communicates with instructional faculty and participates on Advisory Committees.
4.9 Drawing upon individual strengths and specialties, assumes a leadership role in program-wide initiatives and projects.

QUALIFICATIONS:
This faculty position requires the full academic qualifications and experience stipulated by the Co-operative Education department and program area. Exemplary communication and customer service skills; strong organizational skills; familiarity with or experience in employment training or counseling; and, proven interpersonal, marketing and sales experience are required. Advanced computer application skills. (Presently Windows 98, MS Office, Outlook, and Netscape; Winfax and HTML are assets). Must be able to maintain confidentiality. Willingness to participate as a productive team member and maintain a positive atmosphere in a challenging and progressive office environment. Travel is required.

(Name) Co-op Program

S TUDENT A PPLICATION

Application Deadline: (day/date)

All applicants must:

1. be registered in a degree program at (**Institution name/program**);

2. have a GPA of 5.0 or more, and 5.5 in their major;

3. attend the **APPLICANT ORIENTATION SESSION** on (**day/date/time/place**)

4. submit an application form, cover letter, résumé, *unofficial* transcript(s) (UVic plus any previous post-secondary institution) and signed "Terms and Conditions" agreement. State your reasons for applying and what you hope to gain from the program.

5. students must submit (**any other requirements, e.g., portfolio of accomplishments**)

NOTE: Undergraduate applicants who have completed third year or higher may NOT apply for the program. Graduate students are welcome to apply.

Name _____   Citizenship _____

Student Number _____ S.I.N. _____   Email Address _____

Local Address _____   Permanent Address _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Local Tel # _____   Permanent Tel # _____

Seeking admission to (choose ONE): Arts Co-op _____   Professional Writing Co-op _____

Faculty (e.g. Humanities, Fine Arts) _____

Major(s) (e.g. History, Theatre) _____

Current Year (e.g. 2, 3, 4) _____   Academic credits earned to date _____   Most recent GPA _____

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Academic Criteria

GPA _____   Evaluation Points _____ /9

1st (2nd) Year Grades OR Professional Writing Minor Grades

_____   Evaluation Points _____ /9

_____   Evaluation Points _____ /9

_____   Evaluation Points _____ /9

_____   Evaluation Points _____ /9

_____   Evaluation Points _____ /9

Enrolled in _____ units (15 units = 6, 12= 3, < 12 = 0)   Evaluation Points _____ /6

Total Academic points _____ **/60**

Non-Academic Criteria

Résumé & Cover letter _____

_____ _____/4

Communication skills _____

_____ _____/4

Personal presentation _____

_____ _____/4

Confidence/poise _____

_____ _____/4

Preparation _____

_____ _____/4

Willingness to travel _____

_____ _____/4

Faculty recommendations _____

_____ _____/4

Work experience and skills _____

_____ _____/4

Maturity and reliability _____

_____ _____/4

Initiative _____

_____ _____/4

Total Non-academic points   _____/40

Academic Points   _____/60

All points   _____/100

Portfolio: Acceptable _____   Not acceptable _____

Recommendation:

Accept _   **Not accept** _____   **Conditional accept:** _____

_____

_____

Evaluated by: _____   Date: _____

CO-OP TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

*The following **Co-op Tips & Techniques** is brought to you by **CAFCE's Accreditation Council** in our effort to provide co-op practitioners with various topics relative to quality co-op programming.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES - *MAXIMIZING THE LEARNING ON A WORKTERM*
Prepared by Audrey McFarlane, University of Victoria's Engineering Co-op

If a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound? If students learn on a workterm, but they don't know what they have learned, has learning occurred?

To ensure the learning that occurs on a students workterm is recognized by all the stakeholders, UVic has incorporated having students write and evaluate learning objectives in our Employer/Student Evaluation forms. This process provides a number of benefits:

- X Employers who have worked with students who use learning objectives appreciate the organization and direction that it provides for the co-op student. It shows that students are serious about learning during the workterm.
- X Learning objectives can give direction to what students learn during their workterm. They can help students get more out of their co-op experience and allow students to focus on their career goals.
- X Learning objectives provide students with a listing (a portfolio) of documented learning outcomes resulting from their workterm experience. This also helps give their Co-op experience more academic integrity by providing documentation of learning outcomes.

What are learning objectives?
A learning objective is a written statement describing measurable achievements students hope to accomplish during their workterm experience. For example:

> **"By July 4th, I will devise, print and post a safety check sheet, following Federal Government guidelines, which will make safety information readily available to all staff members. I will have this safety check sheet evaluated by my supervisor for accuracy prior to posting."**

Why use learning objectives?
The student's goal for each workterm should be to maximize the opportunity and then be able to document what they have learned as a result of their participation in the Co-op program. To assist students in accomplishing this goal, it is recommended that students develop specific and measurable learning objectives for each of their Co-op workterms. By preparing learning objectives students are declaring their intentions to document their learning outcomes for the workterm and to accomplish these objectives in a satisfactory manner.

Some workterm assignments may lend themselves to easily written objectives, but learning objectives can be written for every workterm. The major idea behind setting objectives is not to control every moment of the Co-op experience, but to set a direction or agenda for the workterm.

How do you implement learning objectives?
The easiest way to incorporate learning objectives into the co-op workterm is to incorporate them into the employer/student evaluation form.

The Employer/Student Evaluation Form should have 3 sections:

Section 1:   With the supervisor, during the first week of the workterm, the student develops the learning objectives for the workterm, following the model described later in this report.
The learning objectives which students develop should:
- X relate directly to their job assignment, and
- X represent the job functions and duties students will be performing during their co-op workterm.

Section 2:   With the supervisor, midway through the workterm, the student evaluates the learning objectives, documenting any factors that may affect the achievement of the objectives. If needed, the objectives may be revised or updated. Coordinators normally review the objectives during the work site visit.

Section 3:   With the supervisor, during the last week of the workterm, the student evaluates the learning objectives against the set measurable goals. Again, any factors that affected the achievement of the objectives is documented.

These evaluations are returned to the Co-op office for review by the co-op coordinator.

The learning objectives that students develop for each Co-op workterm should be <u>realistic</u> and <u>achievable</u> within the time frame of their workterm assignment. Also, the objectives should be as specific as possible, so that they can be measured at the end of the workterm experience. There is no magic number of learning objectives that should be developed for each workterm, but a good guideline would be for students to develop from 5 to 8 objectives for each workterm.

How do you write learning objectives?
Writing SMART learning objectives is relatively easy. Smart objectives are:

S   pecific
M   easurable

A chievable
R ealistic, and
T ruthful.

For each learning objective students have, make sure it answers the following four questions:

X   What is the task to be accomplished?
X   How will it be accomplished?
X   How will it be measured/evaluated and by whom?
X   When will it be completed?

Learning Objective - Bad Form: "I will learn to use a word processor."

Learning Objective - Good Form: "By August 15th, I will be able to execute Microsoft Word on a Macintosh computer incorporating advanced editing capabilities. I will attend a 2-day seminar on Microsoft Word and complete my workterm report using the program for evaluation by my coordinator."

What are the types of learning objectives?
Learning objectives fall into two main categories:

Personal - include developing or improving interpersonal, communication or other social skills that allow students to work more effectively. For example:

"By the end of my workterm (**when**), I will develop better listening skills (**what)** by practicing reflective questioning techniques (**how**) and I will submit a diary of these experiences to my supervisor for his/her evaluation (**evaluation**)."

Professional - include objectives aimed at practicing or improving a skill, learning a new task, solving a specific problem with measurable results or other professional objectives that would enable students to improve their work performance. For example:

"By July 1st (**when**), I will give a presentation to a group of at least ten people using a microphone and overheads (**what**). I will follow the guidelines outlined in the manual "Effective Presentations" (**how**) and will ask each participant to evaluate the presentation for clarity, style and message (**evaluation**)."

Some of the various topics that learning objectives may cover include:

3   routine duties
4   problem solving
5   new skills and assignments
6   personal improvement
7   creative opportunities

And in summary:
Because it may be difficult for students to know exactly what they will be doing in their workterm and what their employer will expect of students, it may be hard to establish specific learning objectives prior to reporting to their workterm assignment.

Therefore, during the first week of work, students should set some rather general objectives based on their job description and the preliminary knowledge that students have of the job and the employer. When their familiarity with their employer, supervisor and their job increases (usually after a few weeks), students should be able to set a more realistic number of learning objectives that students wish to accomplish during their workterm. These may be the result of adapting their general objectives identified earlier, or defining new objectives.

The first set of learning objectives students develop may be too optimistic and students may have to postpone some of these until a future workterm, or students may find that they haven't identified enough, or the right learning objectives at the beginning. Students need to feel free to add new objectives, and to modify existing ones.

Employer Invitation Letter
(contributed by the University of Victoria))

Title, First Name, Last Name
Jobtitle, Department
Company
Address
City, Province Country
Postal Code

Dear Title. Last name:

The (Co-op Program) at the (Institution) is inviting employers to participate in the Co-op work term period that begins next (month/year). If you have any positions you wish filled by students studying either (program(s)), please complete the enclosed job description and return it to me on before (month/day/year).

The recruitment schedule for the filling of positions for the (date) to (date) period is as follows:

Post job description:	Week of (date)
Résumes sent to employer:	Week of (date)
Interview Period:	(dates)
Placement matrix:	(date)

For the Spring work term we expect to have approximately (#) students available, ranging from second year to fourth year levels.

On the back of the enclosed job description form is a list of all co-op programs at (institution). If you feel that there might be opportunities for other co-op disciplines at your location, then we would appreciate your assistance in bringing any interested parties together.

Thank you for your support; I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

(name, title, dept.)

JOB DESCRIPTION FORM

(contributed by the University of Victoria)

INSTITUTION'S LOGO **JOB DESCRIPTION FORM** **CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**
1. Employer:
Address: (leave appropriate space)
Contact:
Telephone: Fax: E-mail:
2. Employment Period: Year ——————— ☐ Jan-April   ☐May-Aug   ☐ Jan-April 3.Do you have a position for the period indicated?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Possibly If NOT Yes, please elaborate: (leave appropriate space)
4. Is this position being advertised elsewhere?
5. Position Title:
6. Description of Duties: (leave appropriate space)
7. Number of Positions:
8. Approximate Wage Range $ ——————— to $ ——————— per ——————— 9. Will you be interviewing on campus?
10. Special requirements? (leave appropriate space) 11. This position is most suitable for students seeking their: ☐ 1st or 2nd work term   ☐ 3rd or 4th work term   ☐ 5th or higher work term 12. Do you wish to have this position posted in other Co-op Program areas? if so, please indicate area(s):

(provide pertinent information such as Provincial Tax Credits, i.e. the Ontario Co-operative Education Tax Credit (Form 96-2R) for Ontario employers information @ http://www.gov.on.ca/fin/english/tb96e2r.htm)

CO-OP PROGRAM
Job Selection Form

Name: ....

Preference*	Employer	Location	Job#

- Please number your selections if you have a preference.

Submitting a job selection form commits you to:

1. Allowing Co-op employers access to your résumé and transcript.
2. Participating in the placement process, including all interviews for which you are selected.
3. Not accepting a job offer prior to the end of the interview period without the consent of the coordinator.

Additional job descriptions will be posted as they come in. Make your interest in new posting known to the coordinator.

Please keep a check on the board as some jobs may only be posted for a day!

Work Site Visit Form for Faculty
(contributed by the University of British Columbia)

Institution's Logo
contact information

Faculty Site Visit Report

Student:	Discipline:
Advisor:	Date of visit:
Employer:	Supervisor:

Section I. Student and Employer input on the placement

8. What are the student's responsibilities and tasks?
9. What is the relevance of this work to the student's academic program?
   What new skills did the student need to learn in order to do the job?
   Are there any skills that the student should have learned at (institution) before starting the job?
10. What type of work environment (team, individual, structured/guided, autonomous, etc) is this job?
11. What do you propose as the topic of the technical report (to be agreed upon by the student and supervisor)? The content of the report is to be useful and reviewed by supervisor before it is submitted to you.
12. What level of confidentiality needs to be observed with this report? (please circle)

student and supervisor only / student, supervisor and advisor only / faculty / faculty and students / future employers

Section II. Employer input on the student and the Co-op Program

13. How satisfactory is the student placement for your needs? If you had the opportunity to describe the job or hire / orient / train a student again, would you do things differently?
14. Are there any changes to the current curriculum / scheduling that would have fit your needs better.
15. Are there any changes or enhancement to the non-technical pre-employment training that would have been better prepared the student for this assignment (ie. oral and written communications, ethics, interview preparation)?
16. Do you feel the Co-op office administration and recruiting process met your organization's needs? How could the Co-op office improve service to employers?
17. Do you see any potential for future co-operation / synergy / ongoing relationships between your organization and the university (ie. guest lecturers, common research interests, information sessions)?
18. Do you have any other comments?

Section III. Faculty input: post-visit assessment

19. Was the visit to the student well organized with respect to timing (early enough in work term / enough time to discuss issues fully)? Were you talking to the right person? Was the location appropriate?
20. What action should be taken now or in the future to improve the value of this or future work terms to the student or employer?
21. Did you come away feeling the visit went well and was worth while?
22. How much time did you spend on the student's visit: Arranging? Travelling? Meeting? Other?
23. Do you have any other comment?

Employer's Final Evaluation of Student Form
(Contributed by Wilfrid Laurier University's Co-operative Education Department)

INSTITUTION'S LOGO	PROGRAM NAME

INSTITUION'S NAME CO-OP
CO-OP STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Dear Supervisor:
Please use this form to evaluate the performance of your (INSTITUTION) Co-op student. After completing your portion of the form, please review the evaluation with your student and ask the student to add his or her comments. Please return the form to the Co-op Office by the end of the student's work term.
If you have any questions, please call your co-op co-ordinator at (519) 884-0710, extension 4484.
Thank you for your support.

Name of Organization: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Name of Student: _____

Please list the student's primary assignments and projects: (leave appropriate space) _____

Performance Rating Key

E	Excellent	Consistently exceeds expectations for performance.
G	Good	Sometimes exceeds expectations for performance.
S	Satisfactory	Meets expectations for performance.
NI	Needs Improvement	Needs to improve performance
U	Unsatisfactory	Does not meet expectations for performance.
NA	Not Applicable	Not required by the position.
	Comments	Please provide examples to support your ratings and suggestions on how the student could improve their performance. (leave appropriate space0

Approach to Work	E	G	S	NI	U	NA	Comments:
Attendance and Punctuality							
Enthusiasm for Work							
Flexibility							
Dependability							
Compliance with Policies							
Interpersonal Relations	E	G	S	NI	U	NA	Comments:
Relations with Others							
Listening Skills							
Teamwork							
Sharing Information							
Customer or Client Service							
Communication Skills	E	G	S	NI	U	NA	Comments:
Verbal Skills							
Writing Skills							

	E	G	S	NI	U	NA	Comments:
Presentation Skills							
Reasoning	**E**	**G**	**S**	**NI**	**U**	**NA**	**Comments:**
Analytical Skills							
Investigative Ability							
Problem Solving							
Mathematical Skills							
Level of Maturity	**E**	**G**	**S**	**NI**	**U**	**NA**	**Comments:**
Judgment							
Conflict Resolution							
Acceptance of Criticism							
Quantity and Quality of Work	**E**	**G**	**S**	**NI**	**U**	**NA**	**Comments:**
Accuracy							
Innovation and Creative Thinking							
Initiative							
Job Knowledge							
Organization and Planning							
Productivity							
Technical Skills (lab, computing)							
Thoroughness							
Meeting Deadlines							

Please list other skills or qualities required for this position. (examples: empathy, teaching, leadership)

Skill/Quality	E	G	S	NI	U	NA	Comments:

Overall Performance: (Circle one)	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory

Supervisor's Comments:
Please comment on your student's performance of the projects, assignments and key skills and competencies required for this position. We invite you to mention the student's areas of strength and those needing development.
(leave appropriate space)

You are welcome to comment on your experience with (INSTITUTION) Co-op.

(leave appropriate spacing)

I would like this student to return to my organization for another work term after their next academic term.

Yes ☐   **No** ☐   **Undecided** ☐

If unsure, when would you like us to call you to confirm? _____

Student's Comments:
Please comment on this position, your performance during the work term, your response to this evaluation and your goals for future employment.
(leave appropriate space) _____

I have read this performance evaluation and discussed it with my supervisor.

Student's signature: _____   Date: _____

Please return form by mail to:	*I hereby give approval for the information in this evaluation to be released to potential employers, providing the student also signs this release.*
Department, Institution Address City, Province Postal Code	Employer's signature: _____ Print name: _____ Date: _____
Or return by fax to: (000) 000-0000	
Thank you both for your cooperation.	*I hereby give approval for information in this evaluation to be released to potential employers, providing my supervisor also signs this release.* Signature: _____ Print name: _____ Date: _____

CO-OP TIPS & TECHNIQUES

The following CO-OP TIPS & TECHNIQUES is brought to you by CAFCE's Accreditation Council, in our effort to provide co-op practitioners with various topics relative to quality co-op programming.

Tips for Sharing with Students Required to Complete Work Term Reports/Presentations
presented by the University College of the Fraser Valley

Purpose of the Co-op Ed Work Term Report or Presentation

For each work term, students in Co-op Ed programs are normally required to provide a report or presentation for evaluation and grading. The preparation of work reports is expected to benefit Co-op students in a variety of ways, including:

1. Facilitating an understanding of the employer's organization and work environment.
2. Enhancing the student's integration of practical experience and theoretical concepts.
3. Aid in the development of the student's communication skills.
4. Provide an opportunity for an employer to recognize research, analytical, and written/oral communication skills in a co-op student.
5. Assist in the development of learning objectives for subsequent work terms.

Who Will Read or Listen To The Report?

Because information which is redundant to one person might be essential to another, students should know their audience. Reports should communicate ideas effectively to employers, who will benefit from its contents, and those responsible for the report's evaluation.

How to Prepare the Report or Presentation.

Criteria to be considered:
1. Clarity
2. Conciseness
3. Completeness
4. Accuracy
5. Objectivity

A proper plan which assures the your arguments/discussions are developed in an orderly and rational fashion aids greatly in achieving these criteria. In fact, the preparation of an outline before starting is recommended to indicate what the essential elements of the topic are and to avoid including great amounts of extraneous material which may contribute to detail, at the expense of obscuring ideas.

Much more important than length are conciseness, clarity and completeness. In other words, use as much space as required to cover the topic adequately, but no more. Care in preparing prompting key words and phrases will help make the development of ideas orderly and clear.

Many ideas are far better explained using graphs, diagrams or photographs. Clearly identify where you are going to show a diagram, table, photograph, etc., and credit the sources. One should bear in mind, however, that in any illustration the main ideas to communicate must be clearly discernable. Use of main topics and sub-topics aid in indicating divisions of the material and assist the development of ideas in a logical manner. Major sub-headings should be listed and indented into levels of importance consistently throughout. Simply photocopying pages from tests or manuals is not satisfactory. Reports and presentations must be professional, i.e. neat, adequately documented, with correct spelling and grammar. Errors are not acceptable at the professional level.

Additional Tips

Most reports go through two or three drafts before the final version is issued. Students must be encouraged to review and revise the first draft as many times as required to produce a satisfactory proofread quality.

In addition to referring to published material relative to the employer (in either internal or external publications), it will likely be necessary to ask questions of selected individuals within the organization. Although in most instances, questions will be answered, there may be the odd case in which resistance is experienced. To avoid such a situation students should:

1. choose the resource people carefully.

2.   be well prepared before asking their questions.
3.   phrase your questions so they are as straight-forward as possible.

In some cases, Co-op employers may be uneasy having what they consider to be "confidential information" appear in a student's work report. Students should discuss this with the employer early in the work term when planning the outline. To ensure that no confidential information is contained in the report, arrangements can be made for the employer to review the report prior to submission. If the employer feels certain information is confidential, modifications should be considered or perhaps policy is in place to have the report graded by the employer.

Report and Presentation Components

A formal written report may contain the following components. Students should be provided with specific guidelines for each component.

        Report Outline, Cover letter, Front cover, Title page, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Introduction, Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendations, Glossary, References or Bibliography, Appendix, Back cover.

The formal Presentation may contain the following.

        Presentation Outline, Cover letter, Front & back cover, Title page, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, *Speaker Notes, Closing.

*The following Speakers Notes topics may be addressed:

Description of the Companies Employed By:
24. State job title and full name of company.
25. Brief history including products, activities or services provided.
26. Size in terms of personnel, departments, etc.
27. New technologies.
28. "Corporate culture".

Description of the Departments, Areas or Units You Worked In:
29. Department organization and relation to the overall organization.
30. Major activities of the department considering employees and work flow.

Description of Your Responsibilities:
31. Summary of responsibilities and relationship to activities of the overall department.
32. Contribution to the productivity of the department.

Personal Awareness:
33. What was the main learning objective for the work term? Has it been met?
34. What effect has the work term had on career objectives?
35. What motivators have been discovered?
36. What has been identified as specific job needs (e.g., working alone, teamwork)?
37. How well did the Co-op Ed/Academic program prepare students for work experience?

Work Term Report Guidelines
(Contributed by the McMaster University's Science Co-op)

Institution's Logo and contact information

WORK TERM REPORT GUIDELINES

Your work term report must be typed or produced by a word processor, and must present a polished, professional appearance.

Two copies of your work term report must be submitted to (department) within two weeks after completion of each 4-moth period of a co-op work term.

Please ensure that your supervisor has read your work term report before the submission date. This review is not for marking purposes, but an opportunity for your supervisor to review the content of the report.

The cover page of your work term report should contain the following information: student name, work term time period, title of work term report, name of work term supervisor, and the location. The entire report should be 5-10 pages in length.

The format and content of the work term report is described below:

Location : Summarized where your work term conducted and where your particular work group fits into the overall organization. Describe the general goal of your work group.

Responsibilities : Describe your actual responsibilities during your work term. Explain your role in the context of your immediate work group.

Skills and Knowledge : Describe the skills and knowledge required to fulfill your work term responsibilities. Discuss how your knowledge base and personal skill set evolved during your work term experiences. Explain how your new knowledge and skills are relevant to your academic studies and future goals.

Outcomes : Describe your work term achievements. Give examples of these accomplishments, e.g., experimental outcomes, report production, and consequences of your work.

Please note that some employers may require you to submit a report in the traditional format of a scientific paper (i.e. Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion). While this is an important part of your work term activity, it does not constitute a work term report. However, you may append this paper to your work term report.

Co-op Activity Schedule

Month	New Students	Working Students	Returning Students	Employers
1	Promote Co-op to new students; hold information sessions; call for and begin processing applications	Students set learning objectives for the work term, in consultation with supervisor and coordinator	Returning students debrief with coordinator Work term reports due	Invite employers to submit job postings
2	Process applications; begin intake interviews	Work site visits begin; discuss work term report topic	Students update resumes; apply for jobs Revisions to work term reports due	Post jobs; discuss work term progress with employers either onsite or by telephone; interviews begin
3	Co-op Orientation sessions held	Site visits continue	Students apply for jobs; interviews held	Site visits continue; interviews continue
4		Students prepare work term report Employer evaluations due	Students register for next work term	Encourage employers to complete final evaluation forms; confirm following term's placements
5	Accept students based on eligibility criteria Start pre-employment training; start posting jobs			
6	Jobs posted Pre-employment training continues			
7	Interviews held Rankings; job offers			
8	Confirm placements; students register for work term			