

Tips for Co-op Employers

A great employer utilizes students' enthusiasm and ability to learn and enjoys the success they bring their team.

Communication

- Onboard student as you would a regular employee
 - Explain company values
 - Review general office procedures
 - Show where resources can be found
 - Introduce student to the team and managers
- Establish a regular meeting schedule to review work, address issues, and provide positive and constructive feedback
- Set up goals/expectations and, if possible, align them with Co-op/Internship learning goals
- Include students in regular staff meetings and encourage input
- Provide a brief list of common acronyms
- Supply an organizational chart

Team/Community

- Provide informal and formal opportunities to meet team members early in the work term
- Ensure student is invited to staff meetings and encourage their input
- Ask for student's opinion on projects and any social team events
- Have weekly meetings
- Include student in any appropriate external and internal workshops, conferences or networking events

Learning

- Review Co-op/Internship learning goals and define any additional goals for work term(s)
- Ensure tasks allow student to be challenged but successful
- Have achievable outcomes
- Include administrative or repetitive work to reflect reality of work
- In longer work terms adjust/increase goals and responsibilities if appropriate
- If possible allow student the opportunity for in-house job shadowing of various related positions when possible
- Have student do a formal presentation to team at end of term

Projects

- Assign a project that provides student an overview from inception to execution
- Align student strengths and skills with project
- Explain importance of project and the value it will provide the company and the student
- Ensure proper resources and supports are in place and available

Other

- Be organized and prepared for student's arrival
- Provide student with structure - meetings, deadlines, expectations
- Acknowledge achievements privately and publicly with team
- If possible provide a mentor who can help with success in term and also with building a network for the future

Tips for Co-op Students

A great student makes the employer re-evaluate what students are capable of and how they can help their organization.

Communication

- Understand best method of communication with supervisor and team - email, IM, in person, phone
- Be pro-active and ask questions to determine employer expectations
- Actively listen and then add articulate and relevant comments in meetings - be clear and succinct
- If unclear ask for clarification, especially regarding context, acronyms, jargon or roles

Responsiveness to Feedback

- Ask for feedback and don't be defensive when it is provided (even when unsolicited)
- Acknowledge all feedback, ask questions if needed, follow up and integrate into future work
- Understand how your work impacts the team

Adaptability

- Go with the flow and adjust to work culture (dress and communication style)
- Be organized and learn how to shift priorities
- Try to cope with change - it is usually constant
- Be a sponge and learn other roles
- Ask good questions - learn the best person to ask and keep notes for future reference
- Work beyond job description - be innovative, suggest improvements and offer to help others

Professionalism

- Be respectful, resourceful, positive, and curious
- Be punctual and prepared everyday
- Be a positive representative of the company outside of work
- Maintain confidentiality of all work information
- Take on unpleasant tasks with a good attitude

Team Work

- Reply to emails and requests within 24 hours
- Have confidence in your work and suggestions
- Engage in social activities with team
- Show initiative and help when possible

Other

- Show humility and appreciation for the opportunity
- Be a learner - ask questions, go beyond expectations, understand goals, bring ideas
- Only offer to take on extra work if you are able to complete your priority tasks
- Take advantage of every opportunity – attend workshops, lunch and learns, conferences or larger group meetings
- Seek out a mentor and build your network