CO-OP work-term excellence
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Introduction

This workshop session includes several online activities, two of which should be completed before you attend the session so that you can work with the results of the activities.

In addition to the activities found on the CO-OP Blackboard Learn site, you will find checklists and guides that may be helpful during your participation in the CO-OP program.

Professional development
The key to work-term excellence

Professional development refers to activities that you may participate in to further your career growth. Growth can refer to skills as well as knowledge, and the activities may range from taking courses or mentoring other people at work to self-study or reading. The CO-OP Professional Development Plan is designed to enhance your work-term experience. In this session, we will discuss how professional development occurs. You are the lead-in with the CO-OP Program’s staff, your employer, and your professor, each of whom play a key role.

Below is a diagram of the CO-OP Professional Development Plan. This workshop will explore each of the steps in the plan.

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University of Ottawa policy on accessibility

The University of Ottawa is committed to recognizing the dignity and independence of all employees, students, faculty and visitors, and it seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have genuine, open and unhindered access to University goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment.

The University complies with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal legislation on accessibility and with the standards specified under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA, 2005).

Disclosure of disability:

Students will be encouraged to disclose disabilities and the Professional Development Specialists will offer students the opportunity to talk through the issues that disclosure raises in a confidential setting.

http://www.uottawa.ca/accessibility/policy.php
Step 1. Prior to the work term

We begin by exploring the transition from school to work by discussing two topics:

- Finalizing details for the work term
- Managing expectations

Your responsibilities:

1. Complete WorkSmart Campus training: see instructions in “Resources” section
2. Complete requirements requested by CO-OP employer
3. File a copy of your employment contract

Finalizing details of your work term

Contract or letter of offer:

- Some companies and organizations send contracts or letters of offer. If you receive such a letter, read it carefully and verify that the offer matches what was discussed in the interview.
- Sign and return your acceptance as quickly as possible.
- Keep a copy for your records.

First contact with your supervisor:

- Your supervisor will contact you. Ask if there is anything you can pick up and read about your new position before your work term. For example, a more detailed job description or any other material on the company such as products or services offered.
- If you require security clearance from your employer, make sure to contact them early to get the process started. By nature of the security clearance process, delays can and do occur, depending on various factors outside of the University’s jurisdiction.
- If your letter of offer or contract does not give the location, date, and start time of your first day, remember to ask for these details when speaking with your manager.
- Ask about dress code.
- For government jobs, ask if you need to complete security clearance forms and clarify how you will be admitted into the building on your first day.
- Help! My supervisor hasn’t contacted me yet. What do I do?
  - If by two weeks prior to your work term you have not heard from your employer, then contact the CO-OP Office.

*See Resources section for more tips

My first day of CO-OP was scary and exciting at the same time. I had never worked in an office setting so I didn’t really know what to expect. Of course I worried about whether or not my co-workers would like me, whether I would do a good job and even if I was wearing the right clothes. By the end of the day my initial worries disappeared since I found out that my co-workers were very supportive people and I knew that they would guide me through my work term.

–Jessica Petrocco
Managing Expectations

Purpose:
To understand how expectations, realistic and unrealistic, play a role in how well you adapt to a new environment

Rationale:
To acknowledge your expectations, by identifying your worries and what you are most looking forward to, can help you better prepare for your work term and enable you to better face and prepare for the challenges.

Activity:

Part 1 – Individually-read through questions and take the time to write down your answers

Part 2: In a group setting share your answers and discuss possible solutions

What are you most looking forward to during this first work term?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What worries you the most about this first work term? How can you get re-assurance?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What will you miss the most from your “student life”?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What will you miss the least from your “student life”?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What do you feel will be your greatest challenge during your first work term? How will you cope/face this challenge?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Step 2. Beginning of the work term

Co-operative education is an educational strategy and, therefore, more than just going to work and getting paid. It is about learning about your career path. In keeping with this mandate the University of Ottawa Co-operative Education Programs incorporate a number of learning tools into your work-term experience.

We’ll discuss three:
- Updating the COOP Navigator
- Writing and submitting work-term objectives (performance and learning)
- Writing and submitting work-term reflections

Your responsibilities:
1. Update the COOP Navigator with your work-term location and your supervisor’s name and contact details. This information is needed to schedule the mid-term evaluation. Your salary can be added (make sure to enter it as a number with the $ sign).
2. Schedule and attend a meeting with your work-term supervisor.
3. Update the Navigator with your work-term objectives (performance and learning) and work-term reflections.

First day on the job

Make sure to bring with you:
- Personal identification such as your Social Insurance Number (S.I.N.), driver’s license (if required) and other relevant official certifications (e.g. First Aid).
- Personal address and phone number and phone number of person to contact in case of emergency.
- Blank cheque (marked "VOID") for direct pay deposits.
- Your lunch or your lunch money!

You are an ambassador of the university

Students enrolled in CO-OP are ambassadors for the University of Ottawa, the city, the province of Ontario, Canada, and the world. Take pride in the role and bring your best to the task.

* Twitter and other social media *

Remember to “manage your reputation”; employers can and do check your Internet presence.
Work-term objectives - A plan for success!

The University of Ottawa Co-operative Education Programs help you develop skills and abilities to excel in your field of choice. Setting work-term objectives makes this achievement possible.

Work-term objectives
As you saw in the activity in the Work-term Excellence section of Blackboard Learn, work-term objectives describe goals that you will attain during your CO-OP work term. The objectives combine elements from the job description, your supervisor’s expectations, and your learning aspirations to create specific performance targets. When designed between you and your supervisor, work-term objectives help ensure a successful work term for everyone involved.

Partnership for success
Working with your supervisor is a key success factor in the co-operative education learning experience. By meeting with your supervisor early in the work term and regularly throughout the employment period, you will be better able to:

- Clearly articulate the job requirements as well as performance and learning expectations.
- Apply academic learning to the work environment.
- Work productively and with direction from the onset of the term.
- Proceed efficiently and effectively.
- Perceive and maximize performance and learning opportunities.
- Work with greater motivation and energy.
- Increase contribution as the term progresses.
- Improve performance and learning with each successive term.

In short, work-term objectives help you perform to the best of your abilities and gain a rich learning experience.

- To see more examples of work-term objectives, see the Resources section of this workbook.

*Work-term objectives allowed me to think about what I wanted to accomplish: as you move along you have to modify them often, but it’s like a to-do list and I found it rewarding to check them off at the end. Things evolve so you have to change those objectives.*

– Alphonse Chu
SMARTS framework

Work-term objectives are effective if they meet some basic criteria: (a) they use the SMARTS format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Rewarding, Time-sensitive, and Shared) and (b) they are understood as works in progress and in need of regular (re)vision.

Specific: Objectives need to be precise.
Oftentimes, objectives are too vague, for example, “I will work hard.” A specific objective outlines precise details, for example, “I will thoroughly document my work and communicate my progress in weekly team meetings.”

Measurable: Objectives need to be quantifiable.
Measurable objectives give concrete information, for example, “I will produce three mini reports and one final report during my work term.” Including a number and being specific clarifies whether the objective has been met.

Achievable: Objectives need to be reasonable and achievable.
At the onset, many students believe they can achieve more than what is reasonable given the available time, resources, and so on. Frequently, success or failure depends on setting practical goals. An unachievable objective would be, “I will revamp the entire SAP system by the end of the work term.”

Rewarding: Objectives need to be important to you on a personal level.
Dreams are important. We do need to be wary of objectives such as, “I will overcome my fear of public speaking during this CO-OP work term.” Nevertheless, it is important to stretch ourselves, try new things, and feel rewarded by our personal achievements.

Time-sensitive: Objectives need to have a set date and time.
A due date gives a sense of urgency—the impetus to take action—and therefore increases the likelihood that the objective will be met. In addition, a specific date allows some monitoring of progress.

Shared: Objectives need to be made public.
Work-term objectives are effective when you share them with the CO-OP Programs and your work-term supervisor. Consequently, at the beginning of the work term you are required to not only create objectives, but also initiate a meeting with your supervisor to discuss and approve the objectives. Once you have completed this step, you will enter your objectives into the COOP Navigator and meet with a CO-OP Program Coordinator during the mid-term evaluation to discuss your objectives. The mid-term evaluation occurs at the mid-point of your work term.

Perfection not required
Work-term objectives are rarely perfect. But, if you design them with care, an open mind, and the willingness to modify, you will be more effective and productive. In fact, with a little planning up front, you may well exceed your employer’s expectations!
Writing and submitting work-term reflections

The University of Ottawa’s Co-operative Education Programs encourage you to take the time to consider your career path. Writing reflections on your work term will help you deepen your understanding of your values and beliefs and, therefore, what career path will be the most rewarding for you. Reflecting on one’s actions is part of continuing education process and is common in many professional disciplines.

Reflections

Reflection questions enable critical thinking with regards to career path development. The questions are designed to start up your reflective process.

Reflection no. 1: So far, what do you like and dislike about your work term and why? (For example, what do you think about the tasks, environment, people, roles and responsibilities?)

Reflection no. 2: Based on your performance and learning so far, what strategies do you propose for continuing to boost your performance and learning for the remainder of the work term?

Reflection no. 3: Based on the work you have done and anticipate completing over the rest of the placement, what do you think you will write about in your work-term report?
Step 3. Mid-point of the work term / Mid-term evaluation

Mid-term evaluation
Performance and learning are an active process. Consequently, a CO-OP Program Coordinator will touch base with you and your supervisor at the mid-point of your work term to discuss your work-term objectives (performance and learning) and your reflections. Depending on your sequence and your location, the mid-term evaluation may be conducted in person or by phone (or maybe even by Skype or Skype video).

Expectations at the mid-point evaluation are that you don’t need to “have it perfect.” Rather, we will be there to help you and discuss where you are at in the on-going performance and learning process.

The topic covered in this section of the workshop is: Participating in the mid-term evaluation.

Your responsibilities:

1. Participate in the discussion either in person or by phone: give your feedback on the work term and have questions ready for discussion.
2. Complete your work-term objectives and reflections in the COOP Navigator and have them with you for the meeting/discussion; if necessary, revise them after the discussion.
3. Only if necessary, communicate with the CO-OP Academic Coordinator for your program (your professor) to discuss the content of your work-term report (www.coop.uOttawa.ca/en/en-contact-us/en-cc.asp).

Thinking back on the reflection activities, I realize they helped me sit down and think about what I wanted from my CO-OP job and what I wanted to achieve. Reflecting also helped me realize that it’s OK to say I can’t get that done, there isn’t enough time...

~Stacey Saucier
Participating in the mid-term evaluation

Mid-term evaluation (approximately 45 minutes)

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the CO-OP student’s performance, learning, and professional development. The mid-term evaluation is conducted by the CO-OP Program Coordinator (CPC) and takes place at the employer’s location or by phone (depending on the student’s sequence and the employer’s location) around the mid-point of the work term.

The CPC first meets with the work supervisor (20 minutes). When meeting with the employer, the CO-OP Program Coordinator will:

- Evaluate the job particularly with regards to the quality of the student’s learning experience, including the instruction and support provided by the supervisor.
- Request feedback from the employer to share with the student. Topics include preparedness for the job, skills and performance on the job, learning that is occurring on the job, and strategies and advice on how the student can improve for the remainder of the term.
- Answer questions and provide information to the employer regarding the academic discipline, the CO-OP program, as well as hiring prospects for upcoming work terms.
- Identify areas for further job development and changes in industry that would inform direction of further job development.
- Enable the employer to provide feedback on the work term and the CO-OP program. Respond to feedback with appropriate and timely solutions.

Next, the CPC meets with the CO-OP student (20 minutes). When meeting with the student, the CPC will:

- Share the employer’s feedback with the student. Topics include preparedness for the job, skills and performance on the job, learning that is occurring on the job, and strategies and advice that the student can build on for the remainder of the term.
- Utilize the student’s “work-term objectives” and “work-term reflections” to ask in-depth questions, provide feedback, and offer strategies with regards to career path development and management.
- Illustrate for the student links between CO-OP program components to demonstrate how the workshops, work-term objectives, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, and work-term report add up to “What have I learned?” in terms of the student’s academic discipline.
- Answer questions and provide information to the student regarding the academic discipline, the CO-OP program, as well as placement opportunities and industry specifics.
- As appropriate, troubleshoot workplace issues. Clarify issues between the student and the employer and determine a joint solution, and follow-up.
- Enable the student to provide feedback on the work term and the CO-OP program. Respond to feedback with appropriate and timely solutions.
- Briefly discuss work-term report topic.

Note: The information discussed, as well as the CPC’s assessment, will be entered into the COOP Navigator.
**Mid-point evaluation grid**

Employer’s evaluation of the CO-OP student

<table>
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<th>Exceptional A+</th>
<th>Excellent A to A-</th>
<th>Very good B+ to B</th>
<th>Good C+ to C</th>
<th>Needs improvement D+ to D</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory E to F</th>
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**Strengths and areas for development**

Employer’s comments on the student’s strengths and areas for development

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** For tips on how to get an exceptional evaluation, see the Resources section at the end of this workbook. **
Step 4. End of the work term / Final evaluations

At the end of your work term there are a number of final evaluations: a) Employer evaluation of the student, b) Work-term report, and c) Student evaluation of the work term. These evaluations are used to evaluate your performance and learning as well as the quality of the work term.

The topics covered in this section of the workshop are:

- Attending the employer’s evaluation of your work term
- Planning and writing the work-term report
- Completing the student evaluation
- Preparing for the next phase of the CO-OP program

Your responsibilities:

1. Attend the employer's evaluation of your work term and obtain a hard copy of the evaluation. Print and submit with your work-term report.
2. Write the work-term report and cover letter and submit them to the CO-OP Office.
3. Complete the student evaluation, also to be printed and submitted with your work-term report.
4. View and print a copy of the employer’s evaluation.
5. Complete the CO-OP mandatory workshop (“Work Term in Review”), and begin planning for your next CO-OP placement.

Attending the employer’s evaluation of your work term

At the end of each work term your employer will complete an evaluation in the COOP Navigator. They should also meet with you to discuss their evaluation. Their comments and feedback are the final evaluation of your performance and learning.

The final evaluation is based on the same criteria as the mid-point evaluation: See grid on previous page

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I had never worked in an office before; I worked on a farm in high school. I found that I had to overcome my fear of formalities and go with the flow. It's hard not to be intimidated when you meet ministers...but I learned that you have to treat them like any other human being. After all, they understand that you're a university student and they want you to work for them—the government needs young gifted students.

—Allister Morrison
Work-term report requirements

Guidelines:
For more information on the types of work-term reports and what must be submitted with them, see your Work-term report guidelines available on the CO-OP Blackboard Learn.

Remember:

Writing help:
Have your report reviewed and critiqued by the Academic Writing Help Centre (AWHC), your employer, a professor, friends or family.

Deadline:
Deadline for the submission of your report (or evaluation form from the employer confirming the submission of a confidential report) is the 2nd Friday of the following semester. You will submit your report to the CO-OP Office. Students completing 8- or 12-month work terms must submit their work-term reports after every four-month term.

Pick up:
Once your report has been marked (allow six weeks after the report submission deadline), please pick it up from your department or directly from the CO-OP academic coordinator.

Planning your work-term report

☐ With your employer, discuss the work-term report, its purpose and how it relates to your job.
☐ Confidential reports: If the report content is confidential, your supervisor must review and evaluate your work-term report and fill out Appendix H of the Work-term report guidelines (www.coop.uOttawa.ca/en/en-coop-students/en-wt-guidelines.asp) and submit it to the CO-OP Office.
  ☐ To write a confidential report you must get permission from your CO-OP academic coordinator.
  ☐ Even if your report is deemed confidential you must still submit a cover letter to the CO-OP Office.

My advice is: be yourself and do the best job you can. Be proactive, take initiative, and above all, learn. Even if it’s not what you thought it would be, you will learn something from every work term.
–Julie Léger
Completing the student’s evaluation of the work term

Post work-term evaluation

A post work-term evaluation is to be completed at the end of each work term. It is your opportunity to share your thoughts on your CO-OP work term and on your experience with the various aspects of the CO-OP programs. For example, you will have the opportunity to comment on services and on the Navigator, as well as on the work term that you have completed.

This evaluation should take you no more than ten minutes to complete. It will form part of your work-term report and will be submitted to your faculty for review. The CO-OP Office reviews the results of the evaluations in order to improve the CO-OP experience.

Questions

| 1. How satisfied were you with the following aspects of your CO-OP experience? |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| **Services**                        | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable |
| Assistance received at the CO-OP reception desk | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Ability of CO-OP staff to resolve interview scheduling conflicts | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |

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<th><strong>Use of technology</strong></th>
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<td>Resume review provided by the Professional Development Specialist</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mock interview provided by the Professional Development Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job search strategy meeting with the Professional Development Specialist</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job search strategy meeting with the CO-OP Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Jobs postings on the Navigator</strong></th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of jobs posted</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of jobs posted</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Work term</strong></th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of your work term to your program of study at the University of Ottawa</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work tasks you were assigned</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of work tasks you were assigned</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision you received</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term evaluation by the CO-OP Program Coordinator</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work term’s role in developing your transferable skills for future employment</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work term’s role in advancing your program of study at the University of Ottawa</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Work term assignments</strong></th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of writing work-term objectives</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability of writing reflections</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of work-term report guideline</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which it matches how you feel about your overall CO-OP experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO-OP met my expectations</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:

I would recommend CO-OP to others

Comment:

---

Have you now completed ALL of your required CO-OP work terms?  □ Yes  □ No
Preparing for the next phase of the CO-OP program

- View your employer’s evaluation through your COOP Navigator account.
- Check key dates and complete “Work Term in Review” on-line session on Blackboard Learn.
- Assess your work-term objectives (performance and learning). Think critically about what you achieved this term and what you would like to develop and achieve during your next term.
- Assess your reflections. Think critically about what you valued about your job and what that means for the coming placement process.
- Update your resumé using the initial job description as a guide. You may want to submit it to colleagues or your supervisor for review. Afterward, update your resumé in the COOP Navigator as soon as possible.
- If you are returning to the same company or organization, the CO-OP Office needs a letter of confirmation from the employer.
- If you are looking for your own job, use your newly established contacts. While still employed, visit departments, talk with colleagues and visit the Human Resources Department. Start this process before the end of the third month.
- Adjust your placement strategy. In some cases, students can be more selective when applying for jobs for their second work term.
- Go to our website (www.coop.uOttawa.ca) or the COOP Navigator in “Key dates” near the end of your first work term to get the calendar of student activities for your second work term.

Tip: Your colleagues are an excellent source for job prospects and your best allies in a job search. It’s in your best interest to maintain these professional relationships.
RESOURCES

Work-term excellence checklist

☐ Input in COOP Navigator all workplace information within the first two weeks of placement.
☐ Prior to starting or within the first few days of placement, get all work related information such as: job description, duties and expectations, dress code, work schedule (including lunch and break periods), who to report to, colleagues, email and phone etiquette, pay, etc.
☐ Draft work-term objectives based on job description, duties and personal/professional goals. Make sure objectives have SMARTS (See workbook and CO-OP website for assistance, www.coop.uOttawa.ca).
☐ Set up a meeting with supervisor to review work-term objectives within the first three weeks of work and get feedback. Keep in contact with supervisor, ideally having regular meetings scheduled throughout the work term.
☐ Complete work-term reflections.
☐ Submit work-term objectives as required in key dates calendar.
☐ For all Telfer School of Management students: refer to School of Management website and submit work-term proposal within the first six weeks of placement.
☐ In the workplace, take advantage of all learning opportunities.
☐ Complete all requested documentation prior to mid-term evaluation (you will be notified via email, by the CO-OP Office). Attend the mid-term evaluation meeting with CO-OP Program Coordinator and discuss work-term objectives and reflections.
☐ Start thinking of your work-term report and its content. Refer to CO-OP website for more information. Discuss with supervisor for insight and feedback.
☐ Attend final evaluation meeting before the end of your placement. Complete employer evaluation prior to ending placement. Complete the student evaluation of your work term.
☐ Sign up for and complete the “Work Term in Review” online workshop.
☐ Submit work-term report; update resumé with new experience and references; eliminate older, less relevant information.
☐ According to key dates, start applying for jobs for next placement period.

Congratulations!

PS: For questions or issues, please contact the CO-OP Office at 613.562.5741.
Work policies, health and safety checklist

In Ontario, if you work less than three months as a full-time employee, you are entitled to paid civic holidays. This law is only one of many that regulate the workplace. Ultimately, your employer is responsible for applying and adapting these laws and regulations. Larger companies and organizations generally have written regulations covering work-related issues such as:

- Working hours
- Overtime
- Breaks and leaves
- Health and safety
- Security of intellectual property (proprietary information and non-disclosure agreements)
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Grievances

For more information on any of these topics at your workplace, read an employee handbook or discuss them with your supervisor during your first week. Remember, it’s essential that you know what is expected of you.

Health and safety standards are set by provincial and federal laws. If you need more information, look for the ministry concerned in the blue pages of the phone book. If you work in an industry or a laboratory, review all safety procedures at the beginning of your work term. Do not put yourself at risk. Consult [http://www.youth.gc.ca/eng/topics/jobs/safety.shtml](http://www.youth.gc.ca/eng/topics/jobs/safety.shtml) for more information.

Companies often have guidelines to deal with harassment, discrimination and grievances. These issues are intricate and must be treated seriously. If you have any question or want to report an incident:

- Contact your CO-OP Program Coordinator.
- Discuss the problem with your supervisor (unless he or she is the source of harassment or discrimination).
- Contact the company’s Human Resources personnel, or the Ministry of Labour.
- You can also speak with the University of Ottawa Sexual Harassment Officer at 613.562.5222 and [www.harassment.uOttawa.ca](http://www.harassment.uOttawa.ca).

**Worksmart online free training:**

Complete the fields to gain access to the training. All information entered on this page will appear on your certificate EXACTLY as you have entered it. **VERIFY** prior to submitting.

- **Campus ID:** “MEVT2747” (no quotes)
- **E-mail:** your uOttawa email address – this is very important as it will allow the website to recognize you as a uOttawa student
- **Institution & Faculty:** Scroll the menu down until you reach “University of Ottawa” and select it
- **Course:** “WorkSafe Campus” (no quotes)
- Click submit

Tips: Check out the Ontario Ministry of Labour at [https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/](https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/).
Check out the University of Ottawa website for Environmental Health and Safety Training: [www.uOttawa.ca/services/ehss/courses.htm](http://www.uOttawa.ca/services/ehss/courses.htm).
Work-term objectives - Details

The University of Ottawa’s Co-operative Education Programs require that each student set work-term objectives. Success in developing, setting, and meeting the objectives depends on the partnership between the work supervisor, the student, and the co-operative education programs.

Supervisor responsibilities
- Meet with the student early in the placement to discuss the job requirements and the student’s learning aspirations.
- Work with the student to design and set work objectives. Sign a copy of the work objectives form.
- Train and support the student in order that they may achieve success.
- Meet regularly with the student to review their performance and provide guidance.
- Review the student’s progress with the CO-OP Program Coordinator during the mid-term evaluation.
- Complete the final student evaluation based on the work objectives.

Your responsibilities
- Attend the CO-OP programs workshop on setting work-term objectives.
- Prepare preliminary work-term objectives.
- Set meeting with your work supervisor to (1) articulate learning aspirations and (2) understand expected performance targets.
- Design and set work objectives. Enter them into the COOP Navigator.
- Continually review, refine, and improve work performance.
- Meet regularly with your supervisor to review performance and receive guidance.
- Review progress with the CO-OP Program Coordinator during the mid-term evaluation.
- Reflect upon the work experience: What have you learned? How could you apply this experience?

CO-OP programs responsibilities
- Train each student to design work-term objectives.
- Answer questions from employer and student.
- Follow-up with employer and student at the mid-term evaluation.

Writing work-term objectives

Work-term objectives are effective if they are meaningful and have SMARTS:

1. Meaningful: You can answer, “Why do I want to achieve this objective?”
2. SMARTS: The objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Rewarding, Time-sensitive and Shared.
Samples of well-written performance objectives

By June 6, I will complete my report on environmental exposure to cosmetics, which I started during my last work term. Writing this report will allow me to develop my research skills, enhance my report-writing skills, and allow me to use new applications in Microsoft Word, such as the “track changes” mode.

By May 30, I will distribute the questionnaire that I have developed to various associations for salons and spas (to evaluate their cosmetics use and disposal practices). As the responses come in, I will incorporate them into my report on cosmetics. In performing this task, I will further develop my interpersonal skills.

By August 22, I will have conducted thorough research on existing sharps take-back programs, after which I will produce a report outlining the findings of my research. This will allow me to gain valuable research experience, as well as improve my report-writing skills.

I will study the literature to find possible applications within the field, as well as other novel possible applications. I will find at least one specific non-neural application for chips by August 29. Various applications (plant, heart, or cancer cell electrophysiology) will be used in future grant proposals.

By June 13, I will install and set up the Admin Agent on at least two other laboratory computers so as to be able to run my test scripts on multiple computers simultaneously. By completing this task, I will gain insight into executing programs over a local area network.

By August 31, I will have continuously monitored and verified various fixes and improvements developed by the engineering team and provided technical and professional feedback. In doing this, I will obtain a solid understanding of how to properly document and record technical experiments and verifications.

Samples of well-written learning objectives

Between now and August 22, I will learn to prepare/give an effective presentation and develop my communication/oral skills by giving a PowerPoint presentation outlining the findings of my research on cosmetics and a presentation on sharps take-back programs to members of my division and other government departments.

By the end of the term, I will gain a better understanding of neural electrophysiology, neural networks and their applications by working with X group members. By gaining insight into the issues being studied in the field, I will be able to determine which aspects of current prototype chips will need to be improved for end-use.

By May 23, I will create a design document and UML diagrams for automated test scripts, which will be used for regression testing on the Web interface. I will present these documents to the software test group. Preparing this design document will improve my knowledge of software design principles.

During the last week of my work term (August 18-22), I will prepare documentation and written instructions to instruct members of the software test group on how to create and execute automated test scripts for the applications. In doing so, I will enhance my written communication skills.

By the end of the work term (August 31), I will develop my analytical skills by working with the project management software to verify product development. In doing this, I will learn to analyze and act on documentation, reports and technical applications.
Professional designations and work-term objectives

If you are in accounting or engineering, you will want to review the professional designation requirements set by your respective associations and gear your work-term objectives accordingly.

For those in engineering, check:

Professional Engineers Ontario
www.peo.on.ca

For those in accounting, check:

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario
www.icao.on.ca

Certified Management Accountants of Ontario
http://www.cmaontario.org/

Quebec Chartered Accountants
http://ocaq.qc.ca/become-ca.html

Certified General Accountants of Quebec
http://www.cga.org/

Quebec Certified Management Accountants Order

List of Professional organizations
Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
www.cicic.ca/profess-en.php
List of personal values
As the Work-term Excellence section activity on Blackboard learn showed, it’s important to consider values when choosing a career.

Activity: Reflecting on values

Purpose:
To develop skills for reflecting on your work-term experience and career

Rationale:
Developing skills for reflecting on your work-term experience and career will:
- Encourage you to analyze and synthesize new knowledge about yourself and your values during your upcoming work term.
- Deepen your professional development.
- Clarify career interests and goals.
- Enable better career decision-making.

Review the list of 15 personal values you made prior to the session and select the five that you think are your key values. Write them in the left-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Activity or practice that reflects the value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

In your group, take turns describing how you think each of your values could materialize in your work life. Group members can help each other identify activities/practices that reflect different values.

For example, the value **Integrity** might materialize as you being honest about your successes as well as your failures. The value **Having a family** would need to be carefully considered if you plan on working towards partnership in a top law firm.

My career:

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
Sample reflections

Reflection no. 1

So far, what do you like and dislike about your work term and why? (For example, what do you think about the tasks, environment, people, roles and responsibilities?)

**Example of a good, well-detailed response:** It’s important that I gain work experience, and the CO-OP work term is definitely providing that. But I’ve already discovered that there’s more to CO-OP than just getting paid work experience. For example, I firmly believe that organizations need to act as good corporate citizens. I like that this company has been recognized as a leader in corporate citizenship, and it has encouraged me to participate in one of their initiatives. Corporate citizenship is something I will look for in my future employers. I dislike the commute.

**Example of a poor, incomplete response:** It’s important that I gain work experience and the CO-OP work term is definitely providing that.

Reflection no. 2

Based on your performance and learning so far, what strategies do you propose for continuing to boost your performance and learning for the remainder of the work term?

**Example of a good, well-detailed response:** In terms of performance, I complete all the tasks required, I am always prompt, and I work hard. I also make a special point of demonstrating my work ethic by listening carefully to what’s required, seeking clarification when necessary and showing initiative by taking on more than what’s expected. In terms of learning, I have been asked to chair two meetings, and this has called on my leadership skills and given me the chance to try some of the management strategies covered in my academic program.

However, I do need to learn more about human-resource policies and the strategic plan of the organization. Therefore, I will ask my supervisor to provide me with more information on these topics. If I show the initiative required to learn more, I would boost my performance and learning for the remainder of the term.

**Example of a poor, incomplete response:** At this time, I would give myself an "A" for my performance and learning. I complete all the tasks required, I am always prompt, and I work hard. Additionally, I am learning a lot.

Reflection no. 3

Based on the work you have done and anticipate completing over the rest of the placement, what do you think you will write about in your work-term report?

**Example of a good, well-detailed response:** My work-term report will focus on what I have learned, with a special emphasis on labour relations.

**Example of a poor, incomplete response:** My work-term report will probably demonstrate what I learned from my work term.
Examples of well-written reflections

1 Based on my experience thus far, I believe that this work term will be very valuable for my career path, in that it involves real-life, hands-on experience, dealing with real environmental issues, and being part of a dynamic team. This type of experience definitely surpasses the experience that one can obtain in a classroom. Also, I am learning valuable skills from this experience, including interpersonal, research and writing skills, all of which will prove to be very valuable over the course of my career. Furthermore, I believe that the environment is a beautiful gift, and I love that my work focuses on protecting the environment from everyday products. This experience has motivated me to excel in my field.

2 Based on my performance and learning thus far, I would give myself a score of 8 (A-). I am always punctual, I am very interested in my work, I put a great deal of effort into my projects, and I am willing to learn new things. This work term, I am working on a few different projects simultaneously; therefore, I must manage my time in order to ensure that I complete all of my work in a timely fashion. For instance, I have to ensure that I submit projects to my supervisor in time for her to review them, and then I have to make time to incorporate her suggestions, all the while continuing to progress with my other projects. I think that I have been quite successful in accomplishing this task, thus far. In terms of learning, I have done a great deal of research to date (from which I have learned a substantial amount of new things!), and I am not afraid to ask questions when I am uncertain of something. In order to increase my performance and learning for the remainder of the work term, I can take advantage of more learning opportunities (i.e. attending learning sessions, etc.), continue to strive to excel in my work, continue to enjoy my work, and maintain good relationships with all of my coworkers, from whom I can learn a lot!

3 I think that my report for this work term will consist in one of the reports that I developed and completed over the course of the work term—most likely my finalized report on environmental exposure to cosmetics.

1 This work term will allow me to focus on the biotechnology aspect of my degree. Biotechnology speeds up the progress of science in terms of size and speed/effectiveness. I believe that partially automating and improving the tools available to scientists will allow us to better understand the workings of our bodies. The neurochips being developed in this project will be used by neurobiologists to monitor the activity of cell networks as simplified brain models. Neurodegenerative diseases can be simulated in cell culture, and the neurochips will allow electrophysiological changes to be studied directly. In parallel, these chips can be used by pharmaceutical developers to study drug interactions with cell electrophysiology.

2 I am participating in the project, familiarizing myself with the procedures, and organizing my time to maximize involvement in all areas of neurochip production. I feel I am staying on top of the tasks assigned to me, and taking on a fair amount of responsibility. To improve my efficiency, I continually work on two of the following areas. First, I make sure to communicate with my employer with maximal effectiveness. Communication is most effective when information is summarized succinctly, and questions are defined carefully. Effective communication has been a focus area during all of my CO-OP terms, and I will continue to improve this skill. Second, I need to continue to increase the initiative required to work independently in the field. Reading extra papers and devising new approaches to problems will allow me to succeed in this goal.

3 I will probably submit a Type II report, describing both the main project I worked on this summer, as well as other side projects.
1 To date, my CO-OP term has involved a number of unexpected problems and issues. As I work to complete my tasks, I find that I cannot rely solely on the skills listed as “required” in the job description. When I encounter an unexpected challenge, I have to rely on skills seemingly unrelated to my job. My supervisor also encourages me to consult coworkers and specialists, and in doing so, I must use my communication and research skills. This is in sharp contrast to my academic courses, where I can succeed using one specific technical skill combined with a good grasp of the content of the textbook. After these first few weeks of CO-OP experience, I believe that I must develop a variety of skills to succeed in the next stages of my career.

2 Based on my performance and learning so far, I would give myself a B+. I feel I deserve this grade because I have learned so much in the first few weeks of this work term; however, I also believe that I am not working as efficiently as possible. That said, I do not have any examples within the company on which to base a comparison. At the beginning of my work term, I was basically given the X Tester program without any detailed guidance from my coworkers. I figured the program out in less than a week, so I feel that is why I deserved a high “grade” for learning. As for performance, I don’t see my work having a major effect on the company. After two weeks of writing automated test cases, I have only written enough to save a manual tester a few hours. I find that most of my time is wasted deciding between the many different methods I can apply to my work, and that I do not focus on the actual goal of creating a useful tool for my coworkers. That said, I cannot compare this “cost/benefit ratio” to anyone else because no one in the company has done the same task as I. To improve upon my performance, I have started to work on my time-management skills. I will set clear goals for each workday.

3 My work term so far has been based on solving problems and documenting their solutions; as such, I plan to write my work-term report on problem-solving in a work environment. I will compare problems encountered in an academic setting versus those encountered at work.

1 The positive knowledge acquired in producing a safe, working and polished final product will be added value for my particular career path. Engineers have a duty to the community to produce proper designs and follow strict procedures in order to ensure the system design is produced in a positive way without risk or harm; therefore, I believe these skills will overlap with my personal beliefs, values and specific career path. The process involved in such a design is extensive and requires large amounts of teamwork at all stages – design, implementation, production and verification. These stages are important in all areas of engineering, especially computer engineering, where verification plays an extremely important role.

2 Based on my performance and learning so far, I would give myself a 10. I have continuously strived to enhance my understanding and knowledge of the skills required by someone in my position. By always being willing to accept constructive criticism, I have been able to greatly enhance my knowledge in what it takes to be an engineer and how every person involved in the process is equally important. The process to develop my skills in product verification and technical documentation is ongoing. By continuing to take an active role in wanting to learn and be a part of the company, I feel I will increase my performance and learning over the remainder of the work term.

3 I anticipate that the topic of my work-term report will be the product verification process, including its purpose, how it is implemented, how it can be improved, and specific examples of my work in this area.
## Tips to getting an exceptional evaluation

### Mid-point evaluation grid / Employer final evaluation grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Tips and techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Produces expected quality of work&lt;br&gt;The quality of your work is essential to your employer. Although you will not be expected to perform like a seasoned professional, your work will have to meet company standards. Consider the following:&lt;br&gt;• Listen carefully when someone is giving you instructions and make the most of the training time allotted to you. Be sure to ask questions.&lt;br&gt;• Take notes. Confirm your understanding by asking questions to clarify the instructions. As a CO-OP employee, you are expected to ask questions.&lt;br&gt;• Focus on the task. Don’t allow yourself to be distracted.&lt;br&gt;• Double-check your work and, when possible, compare it with established company guidelines.&lt;br&gt;• Discuss any difficulties with your supervisor or colleagues; make it a real learning experience.&lt;br&gt;• Act professionally and accept responsibility for your work. Avoid blaming others for your shortcomings. Don’t make excuses.&lt;br&gt;• Ask for guidance to improve the quality of your work. You can’t know everything; in fact, learning is a lifelong process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Produces expected quantity of work&lt;br&gt;The amount of work you produce is also important to your success. As with the quality of your work, listen carefully to instructions, take notes, and ask questions. When possible, go above and beyond expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resolves problems using the required skills or knowledge&lt;br&gt;• Identify problems, face challenges and come up with viable solutions.&lt;br&gt;• When possible, attempt to resolve problems independently before approaching your supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Demonstrates creativity or resourcefulness in exploring possible solutions&lt;br&gt;• Draw from past experience but also demonstrate creativity and inventiveness in developing ways to problem-solve.&lt;br&gt;• Use networking and information-finding skills to maximize resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Speaks effectively&lt;br&gt;• Demonstrate excellent verbal communication skills.&lt;br&gt;• Be articulate.&lt;br&gt;• Present information clearly and effectively.&lt;br&gt;• Speak up in groups.&lt;br&gt;• Share opinions.&lt;br&gt;• Use appropriate language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Writes effectively&lt;br&gt;• Write appropriately for the given environment.&lt;br&gt;• Be concise, use proper grammar and spelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Tips and techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 7 Works independently | • Require only the appropriate level of supervision.  
• Know when to ask questions and which questions to ask by following the lead of others in the work environment.  
• Solve problems independently. |
| 8 Works well in a team | • By showing sound judgment and working to the best of your abilities, you will reduce the possibility of conflicts at work. Maintain positive working relationships with your colleagues.  
• Be willing to help, and make efforts to fit in well in your work environment. |
| 9 Deals with people, problems and situations professionally, i.e. honestly, ethically and with integrity | • Be professional.  
• Be honest and hardworking; demonstrate a good work ethic, and overall sense of ethics.  
• Be reliable and accountable. |
| 10 Shows initiative and effort | Initiative and flexibility reflect an employee’s motivation and eagerness to learn. As a CO-OP student, you will probably learn many new concepts and tasks during your work term. To get the most of your work-term experience, consider the following:  
• Be open-minded and willing to learn new skills.  
• Ask to take on new responsibilities whenever possible.  
• Rather than presenting problems to your employer, come forward with solutions. At the same time, present solutions diplomatically to avoid hostility.  
• Be creative and think of ways to work more efficiently.  
• Set aside time each day to review the day’s activities and how you could have performed better. Record your experience in a journal.  
• When you have downtime, learn a new skill, or perform non-urgent routine tasks. |
| 11 Accepts feedback | • When receiving feedback, be sure to listen carefully, avoid being defensive and control your emotions. Both positive and negative feedback is for your benefit. |
| 12 Learns from mistakes | • Try to understand where a situation went wrong and learn quickly from your mistakes.  
• Try to see mistakes as opportunities for growth and development. |
| 13 Complies with standards of punctuality | • Arrive on time (preferably a few minutes early).  
• Leave work at the set time, not earlier.  
• Take only set coffee breaks and lunch times.  
• If you cannot avoid being late, call your supervisor and explain why. |

Tip: If you run out of things to do, ask your supervisor or your colleagues for work. Take the opportunity to learn all you can about your new workplace.

Tip: Do not make the mistake of thinking that being three minutes late once in a while makes no difference. Your supervisor and co-workers are assessing you each day.
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<th>Criteria</th>
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| 14 Complies with standards of          | • If you have a valid reason for missing work, always contact your supervisor personally to discuss the situation.  
| attendance                             | • Sick leave should only be taken when you are truly sick. Do not abuse privileges.  
|                                        | • Schedule health care appointments and other personal appointments after work, if possible.  
|                                        | • Do not schedule vacation during your work term, as you are not entitled to this leave. |
| 15 Demonstrates dependability          | • Be accountable for your work.                                                      
|                                        | • Be present and reliable.                                                           
|                                        | • Offer to help others as needed.                                                    
|                                        | • Be responsible and mature: identify personal strengths and weaknesses.             |
| 16 Meets deadlines                     | The efficiency of your work depends largely on organization. Here are some time management tips:  
|                                        | • Use an appointment calendar.                                                      
|                                        | • Schedule all your appointments, deadlines and other activities.                   
|                                        | • Communicate/negotiate deadlines and manage your time effectively.                  
|                                        | • Make daily to-do lists; prioritize each item.                                     
|                                        | • Cross off tasks as they are completed; this will give you a feeling of accomplishment. |
Leveraging your experience post-CO-OP and bridging

We strongly encourage students on a work term to take the opportunity to network with colleagues, and learn more about the organization and how to access future employment opportunities, either CO-OP or full-time employment post-grad.

Start thinking about this from early on to the mid-point of your work term, once you know more about the job, the organization and the people.

- Contacts are an invaluable source of information and connections that could lead to future employment opportunities.
- Events and activities are ideal ways to make contacts and develop relationships.
- Seek out opportunities to connect with people through activities such as group meetings, social events and other activities in which interesting contacts are likely to participate.
- Attend external events such as conferences, professional association meetings and other activities that are relevant to your field of study and/or professional interests.

Networking is key to finding the opportunities that interest you, and CO-OP students should seek out and take advantage of as many opportunities to network as possible during their work term.

Bridging

If you are doing a CO-OP work term with the Federal Government, you should familiarize yourself with the federal “bridging” program.

Bridging:

- can greatly facilitate access to employment for university graduates who have had at least one work experience with the Federal Public Service.
- can lead to you being hired for a full-time, permanent position without having to complete the competition process.

The success rate for students who apply for post-graduate jobs through the bridging process is much higher than for those who go through the regular process.

*Note: Be aware that the process can vary greatly from one government department to the next, and that you may need to apply prior to graduation.*
Workplace survival strategies

Company culture
Every company has a culture that honours and encourages certain values, behaviours, and knowledge. As a new employee, you must recognize these shared ideals because they will affect how you are expected to dress, act, and work. To determine a company’s culture, examine:

- Style of dress (formal vs. casual)
- Arrival and departure times (early vs. late)
- Forms of communication (debate vs. discussion)
- Decision-making styles (autocratic vs. consensus)
- Corporate structure (flat vs. hierarchical)

Realistic expectations
- Initial tasks are sometimes clerical or repetitive. Remember that you need to build trust with your employer, so complete all tasks efficiently and effectively so that you may move on to more complex projects.
- A work term may not be your dream job, but it may get you one step closer to that ideal. Take time to notice your strengths and weaknesses as well as your likes and dislikes.
- Although you do have knowledge and skills to offer, take care when suggesting revolutionary change to your supervisor and colleagues. Because you are new, your ideas may be perceived as arrogant.

Physical appearance
- Unless you receive specific instructions, wear clothing appropriate for an interview for the first few days, until you can determine the appropriate dress code. In a majority of professional work environments, it’s not appropriate for female employees to have a bare-midriff, short skirts, or low tops; for male employees to have long, loose hair or to be unshaven and, in either case, to wear ripped or dirty clothing or shirts with graphic language or images. Also, take care with casual or open-toed shoes, piercings, and jewellery.
- You do not have to buy a new wardrobe, but do make sure that your clothes are clean and well pressed. In general, err on the conservative side until you understand what is acceptable.

Reliability and use of company resources
- Do not make personal calls on work time.
- Do not access social media sites during your work term (Twitter, Facebook, FourSquare, etc.).
- Never make long distance calls.
- Personal errands should only be done during the lunch hour or after work.
- Do not use office supplies for personal use.
- Do your part to reduce waste (paper and supplies) and to reduce operating costs.
- Respect company property at all times. The appearance of your work, work area and your care of equipment and materials must comply with the standards in your field and workplace.

Interpersonal skills
- Listening is more than just hearing. It’s also trying to understand what is being said.
- One efficient way of respecting your bosses’ and colleagues’ time is to take notes and prepare for meetings. In this way, you will also remember important items.
- Facial expressions, posture, gestures and cues such as tapping fingers (which can mean boredom or lack of interest) are all forms of communication. Be conscious of the message that you are sending.
- Never participate in office gossip or political battles.
- Be sure to maintain your professional reputation in the social media world.
- Proper exercise, diet and sleep can help reduce stress levels. Learn your coping mechanisms and change your behaviour accordingly.
Websites


CO-OP website: www.coop.uOttawa.ca


LinkedIn Group: uOttawa CO-OP Programs


National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE): www.nsse.iub.edu


The Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE): www.cafce.ca

Twitter Community: @uOttawaCOOP and #uoCOOP

UPASS: www.upassottawa.ca

Virtual Career Library: This guide is designed to give you access to career development resources both within the Library collection, and via the University of Ottawa's on-campus career services groups. Please access it here: http://uOttawa.ca.libguides.com/vcl

