

SUPERVISOR TOOLKIT

A positive co-op experience builds your company's reputation as a place where trades students will want to work – as a co-op student and a full-time employee. For guidance in creating that positive experience, review the information in this document.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PLAN

Start with safety and work procedures, then create a training plan for skill development.



MID-TERM CHECK-IN

Meet with the BCIT Co-op Coordinator to review how the work term is progressing.



DEFINING EXPECTATIONS

Be clear on what is not negotiable, and also understand what your student wants to learn.



PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

Provide timely feedback to allow your student to correct and improve; don't forget to let them know what they are doing well.



WRAPPING UP

End on a positive note; ensure the student's work is finished and complete the Co-op Evaluation form.



Defining Expectations

On the student's first day, define your expectations. Here are some things to consider in your conversation:

- Confirm hours and days of work, breaks and overall work responsibilities.
- Describe what is not negotiable [e.g. being on time, showing interest, following safety procedures].
- What are your expectations of behaviour, professionalism and customer service?
- Do you encourage students to ask questions? Take notes?
- Introduce your student to other members of the team. Is there someone who can be a "buddy" to help integrate the student into your workplace culture?
- Explain the nature of your business and how your co-op student fits into the "bigger picture." Students are motivated when they feel like they are an important part of the business.



Orientation and Training Plan

Safety and Work Procedures

- Students learn safety in their courses; however, it will also be important for them to learn safety procedures in your shop. Don't hesitate to quiz your student to ensure their understanding.
- Identify specific work procedures for the work your student will be doing [always returning tools to proper storage, sweeping up at specific times, work-related checklists].

Training is an Investment

Successful co-op employers and supervisors develop a plan for skills training during the work term. Doing so shows commitment to the student's learning and results in them feeling like a valued asset to the business.

- Spend time with your student to explain the skill requirements for the position. After all, they have been hired to perform specific tasks. At the same time, understand what your student is hoping to learn during this work term and try to incorporate some of that into the training plan.
- Write down a clear set of training objectives. Best practice is to start slow to assess the current skill level. Training plans can be amended throughout the work term.
- Be aware that not every student will learn at the same pace or in the same way.
- While employers are not expected to change their scope of work, there are ways to provide a well-rounded experience for your student:
 - Consider "job shadowing" to allow students to understand other aspects of your business.
 - Be open to and encourage your student to ask questions about the work and your company.
 - Develop an approximate timeframe and milestones to allow the student to move onto more responsibilities.
 - Encourage your student to record their learnings on their own copy of the training plan. This will help them to complete their Co-op Work Term Report at the end of their term.
- Include a plan for feedback. Will it be provided informally, during scheduled meetings, or a combination of both?
- Not sure where to start on a training plan? Find a template on our website.
- Most important: Remember your student is a student, not an experienced hire. They want to learn and grow into a productive tradesperson.

Training Plan Template

- For a template to help guide your training plan, visit bcit.ca/files/co-op/pdf/training_plan.pdf



Performance Feedback

Balance supervision with fostering independence. In the beginning, your student may need regular supervision and will develop more confidence as they progress. Students should be encouraged to work independently, but should not be left completely on their own. Some degree of supervision will continue to be necessary. As you supervise, keep in mind that:

- Formal monitoring and feedback is most effective when delivered in a respectful tone to foster good communication and understanding.
- It's helpful to the student if you deliver prescriptive feedback and let them know specifically what they need to do to improve.
- A two-way dialogue will expand your student's learning by encouraging them to ask questions.
- It's important to reinforce what your student is doing well.



Mid-term Check-in

The BCIT Co-op Coordinator will connect with you to arrange a meeting to discuss the student's activities and performance, and will meet separately with your student to discuss how they are adapting to the workplace. If needed, they can assist with performance issues or make recommendations on how to add responsibilities to continue to challenge your student.



Wrapping Up

Finish on a positive note, and ensure that your student has completed the work they were required to do. You will be asked to complete the Work Term Evaluation form (sent from the Co-op Office) and review this evaluation with the student during an exit interview to give the student feedback and to ask about their overall experience. Your student may also approach you about information needed to complete their Co-op assignment to be submitted to BCIT.