Co-operative education and work experience are experiential learning programs that integrate classroom theory with practical experience in the workplace. Co-op courses include a classroom component, pre-placement and integration activities as well as a workplace component. They are full semester or full year programs that may be full day or as little as one period each day, depending on the number of credits students are earning. Co-operative education is also available through summer school. Work experience is a component of a credit course that provides a work placement of up to four weeks.

The programs are based on a partnership between schools and community organizations. Participants include students, their parents/guardians, teachers, and placement supervisors and co-workers. Students experience the practical aspects of the job, the demands of employment, and the expectations of employers in a changing work world. The learning at school and the placement complement each other and students earn credits towards graduation.

Overview
Students are selected to these programs through an interview process conducted by co-operative education/work experience teachers in consultation with guidance counsellors and administrators. Co-operative education and work experience are available to students 14 years of age and older. Ministry of Labour age requirements in specific workplaces must be adhered to.
Prior to placement
Students attend structured pre-placement orientation sessions at school. They are also required to participate in scheduled integration sessions throughout the semester or term. These activities are designed to reinforce the connections between what students learn at their placements and their related courses at school. Students work in placements which best match the educational needs of the students with the interests of the organization. Co-operative education and work experience programs are designed to promote closer associations between students and working adults who are willing to share their knowledge and skills. The placement supervisors provide safe working environments, appropriate learning experiences, and assist students in making the transition from school to apprenticeship, college, community living, university or the workplace.

The placement supervisor will have the opportunity to interview the student and decide if the student is appropriate for a position in the organization.

Once the student has been accepted, the teacher will contact the employer to complete a Placement Assessment which will include information about:

- Site-specific health and safety training and procedures including personal protective equipment
- Student orientation procedures
- Accident reporting procedures
- The student’s Personalized Placement Learning Plan (PPLP)

Insurance
The Work Education Agreement (WEA) or the Experiential Learning Placement Agreement (ELPA) is an agreement between the student, parent/guardian, (if the student is under 18) employer and the teacher. It outlines the student, placement and school contact information, work schedule, and Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage or Peel District School Board insurance coverage for teaching assistants. The Ministry of Education provides WSIB coverage for unpaid students outside of the classroom. Paid students must be covered by the work placement. A completed and signed WEA or ELPA prior to the start of the placement ensures that the student has insurance coverage.

Students are covered by the Peel District School Board’s general liability insurance for property damage accidentally caused while performing activities outlined in their PPLP. Students are not covered by WSIB or Peel District School Board insurance while travelling to and from the placement. Students are encouraged to purchase Student Accident Insurance which protects students against accidental injury while at school or on an experiential learning placement.
The Peel District School Board has no liability insurance coverage for the placement organization or the student for damages arising out of the operation of a motorized vehicle. The risk of having a co-op student drive a vehicle is assumed by the organization. **Work experience students are not permitted to drive motorized vehicles.**

**Monitoring Appointments**
The teacher visits the workplace regularly to consult with the placement supervisor and the student and to observe the student’s learning at the placement. These appointments are essential as they ensure that the educational expectations outlined in the PPLP are being met.

During the first monitoring meeting, the teacher, placement supervisor and student will discuss:

- How the placement experience relates to the curriculum expectations of the related course(s)
- The development of a Personalized Placement Learning Plan (PPLP)
- Procedures involved with monitoring, communication and evaluation
- Completion of weekly logs
- Confidentiality policies
- Health and safety practices and procedures
- Assignments and integration activities

At subsequent monitoring appointments throughout the semester or term, the teacher, placement supervisor and student will meet to discuss:

- The student’s progress in achieving curriculum expectations
- Any revisions to the PPLP
- Written performance appraisals
- The student’s progress with learning skills and achievement of employer expectations
- How the placement has provided direction for the student’s future goals

The teacher is ultimately responsible for the overall evaluation and the assignment of grades.

**Student Attendance**
Students are expected to attend their placements as outlined on their Work Education Agreement or their Experiential Learning Placement Agreement. If a student is absent, he/she must notify the placement supervisor and teacher prior to the start of the work day. Any questionable student absences or lates should be reported to the teacher as soon as possible.

**For More Information**
If you have questions or require more information contact a co-operative education or work experience teacher at a local secondary school or “Student Stuff” at www.peelschools.org
Secondary programs which include an Experiential Learning component:

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)
- OYAP is co-op in an apprenticeable trade
- If students are 16 years of age and have 16 credits, they may register as apprentices and begin their formal apprenticeship training while they are still in high school
- The hours they work and the skills they attain can count towards their apprenticeship training
- Students may graduate with both an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and a head start on an apprenticeship

Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM)
- SHSMs are Ministry of Education approved specialized programs that allow students to focus their learning in a specific sector while meeting the requirements for the OSSD. This program assists students in their transition from secondary school to apprenticeship training, college, university, or the workplace.
- SHSMs enable students to gain sector-specific skills and knowledge in the context of engaging, career-related learning
- Co-operative education and other experiential learning opportunities are essential components of SHSM programs

Summer School Co-op
- Summer School co-op is a 2-credit package involving 3 days of pre-placement lessons in school, approximately 5 weeks of workplace experience and 3 days of integration classes
- Students are interviewed, first by teachers, then by employers prior to the beginning of the program

Job Twinning
- Involves the pairing of a student with a co-op student for a half to one-day observation at their placement

Job Shadowing
- Involves the pairing of a student with a worker in a specific occupation for a half to one-day observation at their workplace

Work Experience
- Involves a short-term (1-4 weeks), subject-related work placement that is a planned learning opportunity within a credit course

www.makingmyway.ca