



## **Co-op orientation checklist – things to ask your supervisor at the start of your work term**

Some employers provide formal orientation sessions for their new employees. Others take a less formal approach. Either way, by the end of your first week you should know most of the following (and of course, other topics may be introduced later.)

If you *don't* know, then **ASK!!**

### **Basic contact information:**

- Your office address, mailing address, phone number, etc.
- Your supervisor's name, title, email, and phone number(s)

### **Your hours of work, including:**

- Start and end times
- Coffee and lunch breaks
- Overtime policies and procedures
- Medical and other appointment policies
- Who to contact if you will be late or absent

### **Your surroundings, including introductions to co-workers and the locations of the:**

- Restrooms
- Eating and coffee areas (are you allowed to eat and drink at your desk?)
- Bulletin boards and other notice services
- Reference materials, libraries, and manuals
- Parking facilities for your car or your bicycle – remember to ask about building access, too (e.g., times, keys, etc.)

### **Remote (hybrid) work**

Participation in remote (hybrid) work is a privilege and may change at the discretion of your supervisor. It is not available to co-op students in all workplaces.

If your workplace offers you a hybrid work schedule:

- What are your workplace's policies and practices for remote work?
- Are there days you are expected to be in the office?
  - If yes, do you know where you will sit and whether you need to book that workspace?
- What are the policies for online check-in and check-out at the beginning and end of the work day?
- What are your supervisor's expectations for your online availability during the workday?
- What software will you use for online work and meetings? Do you know how to use it?
- What are your workplace's policies for using personal computers and devices to do work?
- Does your workplace require you use a VPN for remote work? If yes, do you know how to use it?
- Does your workplace have a policy about where you cannot do your remote work? Eg. Coffeshops, friends' homes, etc.
- If you want to work more frequently at the workplace to enhance your experience of a professional work environment, have you discussed this first with your supervisor to develop a smooth transition to the workplace?



**Flex time**

Flexible time is offered in some, but not all, workplaces. The employee is required to work additional time each day to earn a flex day off work.

If your workplace offers flex time to co-op students:

- Flex time is a privilege that may change at the discretion of the supervisor
- What hours of work are you required to work to earn a flex day?
- How are you expected to earn your flex time during statutory holidays or sick days?
- What is your workplace's policy for documenting your flex time earned/taken?
- How does your supervisor want to be notified of your flex day schedule?

**Taking time off during a work term:**

- The work term is registered as a course, but unlike academic courses, you cannot drop the work term without risk of failure.
- You are expected to complete the work term in its entirety.
- You need the approval of both the Co-op program (through your Work Site Visit Coordinator) and your employer if you need to take time off for reasons related to an [academic concession](#).
- You must talk with your Work Site Visit Coordinator first, before discussing your request for time off with your supervisor and/or Human Resources at your workplace.

**Leaving a work term early:**

The Co-op Terms & Conditions (T&C) form, which you submitted to take part in co-op, contained this statement which you agreed to by the act of submitting the T&C form:

14. Once I have accepted a Co-op position (either verbally or in writing) or a self-developed work term has been approved, I am committing to undertake and complete that work term, as agreed, in its entirety. Leaving the work term without approval of both the Co-op program and my employer may result in a failed work term grade that will be recorded on my transcript.

**Health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures:**

- Safe operation of equipment, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.
- How to get equipment and find information on materials
- The locations of the nearest first aid kit(s) and fire extinguisher(s)
- Who the first aid attendant in the office is, and how to contact them
- How to report safety concerns
- How to report incidents of injury, bullying, harassment, or any other uncomfortable situation
- Which equipment you must or may use
- How to get equipment
- How to report accidents



**Office policies and procedures:**

- Phone use, including:
  - Whether personal calls/texts are permitted (even when on breaks)
  - Whether calls to the Co-op office are permitted from your office phone
  - The appropriate greeting when answering the phone
  - How and under what circumstances you should answer *other* phones in the office
- Which meetings you should attend, and which calendar app to use for work meetings

**Administrative support services, including:**

- Whether, and from whom, you can expect office assistance
- The best way to request assistance
- What you are expected to do yourself
- Where you can find office or lab supplies, and how these supplies are replenished
- Whether equipment and tools are shared

**Computer access, including:**

- Your password
- Which computers/terminals besides your own are available for use
- Which software and other hardware is available for use

**Miscellany, including:**

- Which forms you must complete
- Which associations you should join
- Upcoming social events, teams etc.

