



YOUR HOW-TO GUIDE TO PLANNING AHEAD

Boost your future prospects; champion an apprentice
or co-op student today



SKILLED WORKERS = SUCCESS



He is:

part of an enthusiastic labour force who is willing to learn, wanting to be part of a vibrant growing industry, and an investment in your company's future.

He is an apprentice.

He is:

an experienced professional, a mentor for your new workforce, and your competitive edge.

He is a skilled tradesperson.



She is:

a valuable member of your business team, part of a diverse group of employees that keep the work moving, and a representative of one of the many different occupations in the HVACR industry.

She is an inside worker.

He is:

serving his customers' needs, and ensuring his company's future viability by improving health and safety, reducing turnover, enhancing the skills of all of his employees, and championing the next generation of HVACR employees.

He is a business owner.



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your **How-to Guide to Planning Ahead**, prepared for you by the [Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada](#) (HRAI). The purpose of this guide is to help employers contribute to building a highly skilled workforce for the heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) industry.

➔ USING THE GUIDE

This guide provides information to help you attract, hire, train and keep good employees by nurturing them at the start of their careers and building their skills, knowledge and loyalty within your company. The information provided is generic. Links to more detailed online information is included throughout this document. The information is supported by reports on the experiences of HRAI members.

The sections in this booklet are:

Introduction – Describes the purpose of the guide

Attracting young people – The HRAI approach – Tells you what HRAI has been doing to promote the HVACR industry as a career of choice to young people

What are apprenticeship and co-op programs? – Defines the differences between apprenticeship, and college and high school co-op programs

Why hire apprentices and co-op students? – Sets out the various benefits to your company and the HVACR industry of hiring apprentices or co-op students

Apprenticeship – Tells you what your responsibilities are as the employer, how to select an apprentice, getting started with your new apprentice, and how to create an effective learning and employment experience with your apprentice; it also provides links to some government support programs

College and university co-op programs – Tells you how college and university co-op programs work, what your responsibilities are as the employer, how to select a student, getting started with your new student, and how to create an effective learning experience with your student

High school co-op students – Tells you some of the differences in responsibilities, selection and working with high school students on a co-op program

Resources and links – Provides links to some Internet sites with more detailed information

Glossary – A list of words used in this guide and their definitions

Note: *The links in this guide are current as of summer 2013. Organizations often change their websites, however, so if links in this guide do not work, use a search engine like Google to search for the organization and/or the topic you are looking for.*

ATTRACTING YOUNG PEOPLE – THE HRAI APPROACH

The [Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute](#) (HRAI) is a national association that represents more than 1,300 heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) manufacturers, wholesalers and contractors, and which provides Canadians with the tools and information necessary to ensure their total indoor environment comfort.

HRAI offers leadership and training programs for the advancement of its members' business and technical excellence, promotes a code of ethics for consumer protection and safety, and provides consumers with useful information and a database of members in good standing to support an informed buying process. Through its membership requirements and consumer feedback processes, HRAI is committed to a safe, responsible and fair industry that is environmentally responsible and sustainable.

BuildForce Canada's¹ [labour market forecasts for 2013–2021](#) predict shortages of workers in the skilled trades over the next decade. The workforce is aging and baby boomers are retiring. The construction industry – including the HVACR industry – will need to replace retiring skilled workers in a very competitive job market. All aspects of your business can be affected by the aging population to varying degrees. For the HVACR industry to continue to have the best and brightest workers, employers must actively attract, recruit and train a new generation of skilled workers.

HRAI understands these shortages are coming and has been working to increase the number of young people entering our industry. HRAI has a multi-tiered program to increase awareness

among students, parents, educators and employers about the career opportunities in the HVACR industry, including:

- A broad range of *online information* on the [HRAI Career Site](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and a mobile site
- *Connecting with students directly* through volunteer participation in exhibits, skills competitions, career days and job fairs, as well as through online and paper materials
- *Educating parents* through advertising and web materials, so they know about the careers their children could have in the industry
- *Reaching out to teachers and guidance counsellors* so they can give the best advice to students about working in the industry
- *Informing businesses and employers* about how they can best directly reach students, parents and educators to tell them about their industry
- Promoting the industry to *new immigrants* and *adults seeking a career change*
- An *international partnership* with the *HVACR Workforce Development Foundation*, a North American cross-industry organization that promotes careers in the industry

¹ Formerly the Construction Sector Council

WHAT ARE APPRENTICESHIP AND CO-OP PROGRAMS?

➔ APPRENTICESHIP

In short

Apprenticeship is a way of learning a trade that combines periods of on-the-job training (80 to 85% of the time) with periods of technical studies in the classroom or online (15-20% of the time).

The goal

- Apprentices learn the skills they need to be competent in a trade and to do their job at the industry standard.
- Apprentices are expected to master a set of specific skills defined through government regulation for their industry.

The model

- On-the-job training is provided through mentoring by a qualified journeyman. (If you do not have a qualified journeyman on your staff, you cannot usually take on an apprentice.)
- Technical in-class training is provided by provincially approved training institutions such as colleges and union training centres.
- Rates of pay are established by government and industry.
- Apprentices usually return to work for the same employer throughout their training.
- After completing the required on-the-job hours and the training modules, a Certificate of Apprenticeship is issued. Apprentices then write an exam for the provincial Certificate of Qualification and become fully qualified journeymen.²



**Apprenticeship =
A series of paid work
placements under the guidance
of experienced worker(s) with
specific learning objectives,
defined by government**

² Adapted from the [Canadian Apprenticeship Forum](http://www.canadianapprenticeshipforum.com) website

Who manages?

Provincial or territorial apprenticeship authorities

Which HVACR occupations?

Refrigeration/air conditioning mechanics, sheet metal workers, plumbers, electricians, gasfitters, pipefitters, oil burner mechanics, etc. (Check with your [provincial apprenticeship authority](#) for a complete list of regulated trades in your province.)

➔ COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CO-OP PLACEMENTS

In short

Co-op education programs, offered by both colleges and universities, are diploma or degree programs that involve a rotation of study terms and work terms.

The goal

- Help students integrate their theoretical learning from the classroom with practical experience in the workforce.

The model

- Placements typically last one or more terms, so they could be four, eight or 12 months long.
- Students are given broad learning objectives, determined by their course program and negotiated with employers.
- Students often hope to learn from different employers during their studies, rather than taking repeat placements in the same workplace.
- Students are paid at rates suggested by the institution, in negotiation with employers.

Who manages?

Co-op education offices at colleges and universities

Which HVACR occupations?

Mechanical engineering technologists, mechanical engineers, general managers, marketing managers, office administrators, service technicians, to name just a few.



College/University Co-op =
A paid work placement as part
of a training program with broad
learning objectives, negotiated
between the institution and
the employer

➔ HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP PLACEMENTS

In short

Most provinces offer high school students the option to earn some secondary school credits through a work experience placement with a local employer.

The goal

- Expose young people to industries so that they can learn about career opportunities for the future.
- Help students learn general workplace habits, attitudes and job skills.

The model

- Placements are usually part-time and last one semester or term.
- Placements are not usually paid and are not usually repeated.

Who manages?

School boards, through their co-operative education teachers and/or school guidance counsellors

Which HVACR occupations?

All the occupations in the industry are included. Jobs that may start after high school through on-the-job training include dispatcher, duct cleaning technician, sales associate, shipping and receiving personnel, trades helper and labourer, etc.



**High School Co-op =
A one-time unpaid placement**
to give exposure to career
opportunities and work habits,
arranged with schools

WHY HIRE APPRENTICES AND CO-OP STUDENTS?

Depending on the size and scope of your business, you could take on any combination of apprentices, college or university co-op students, or high school co-op students. There are different advantages for your business with each kind of student.

➔ ADVANTAGES OF HIRING APPRENTICES

The [Canadian Apprenticeship Forum](#) (CAF) describes eight advantages to training an apprentice at your business:

1. **Make your company more productive** – Training your own workforce will increase the productivity of your business better than hiring from outside. Apprentices learn how to do their work to meet your specific business needs.
2. **Improve your product quality** – Well-trained workers make better use of your equipment and materials, and produce better products and services.
3. **Enhance the skills of all your staff** – The process of training apprentices can revitalize the skills and knowledge of all your staff. Your journeypersons brush up their skills as they teach and your apprentices bring new technology back from the classroom.
4. **Improve health and safety** – Teaching apprentices about safe work practices will remind all of your staff about safety and reduce accidents.
5. **Reduce employee turnover and costs** – Apprentices build commitment and loyalty to their employer as they learn their trade. They are more likely than outside hires to stay with your business for the long term.
6. **Provide a competitive edge** – New apprentices can bring your business new ideas about the latest technology. New technology can give you a competitive edge with customers, and helps to attract the best employees.
7. **Make you more profitable** – CAF research shows that your costs in training an apprentice will be more than matched by increased revenue from higher productivity, knowledge of the latest technology, higher customer satisfaction and the ability to take on more jobs.
8. **Lets you plan a successful future** – Apprenticeship training is an effective long-term strategy to build a highly skilled workforce for your business.

Taking on apprentices and students is the future of the HVACR business. We need to start at the bottom as an industry, to get people coming out at the top. There is a lot of grey hair out there. We all have a responsibility to be sure we have licensed workers in the future.

NM, HVACR employer

Taking on an apprentice doesn't cost you any more than hiring someone off the street. You still have to pay someone to do the work.

BB, HVACR employer

Employers who hire apprentices are running profitable businesses. For every dollar invested in an apprentice, employers receive a return of \$1.47.

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

➔ COSTS AND BENEFITS OF HIRING AN APPRENTICE³

COSTS

- Apprentice's wage – increases as the apprentice becomes more valuable to you
- Journey person's time to train – decreases as the apprentice becomes more competent
- Time to administer the training plan and confirm training documents

BENEFITS

- Increased productivity and revenue
- Improved product quality and customer satisfaction
- A competitive edge from knowing the latest technology
- Enhanced skills of all staff
- Improved health and safety
- Higher employee retention for lower turnover costs
- More skilled staff to take on more contracts
- A profitable return on training investment
- The employees you need with the skills you want to plan a successful future

➔ SOME DIFFERENT ADVANTAGES OF HIRING COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CO-OP STUDENTS

Hiring co-op students from college or university programs can bring your business many of the same advantages as an apprentice, but there are some different advantages that come from working with an educational institution:

Access to a talent pool – Students enrolled in college and university co-op programs form a large pool of skilled and motivated workers, enthusiastic to put what they have learned into practice.

Cost-effective recruitment – Colleges advertise your position for you. They help pre-screen applicants to ensure you only interview people who are qualified. Some also provide interview facilities.

Flexible workforce – You can take on co-op students for short-term projects without having to commit to permanent hiring. They can also relieve your regular staff during peak periods. And they are available year round, usually starting in January, May or September.

No-risk probation period – The co-op student's time with your business is like a probation period, but with no obligation to hire. If the assignment goes well, you may want to make them a job offer in the future – but you don't have to.

Professional support – Co-op education coordinators are there to ensure that your co-op student is successful with their assignment, effectively providing your business with free human resource and technical support.

Contribute to developing educational programs – By hiring a co-op student, you get access to college or university staff and a chance to influence how future workers are trained and educated.

³ Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. (2008). *Apprenticeship Pays. Just Ask. Toolkit*, p. 4.

College co-op students are contributing employees – they are not a drag. They need some investment of time in how you assign and supervise them, but they are more than an unskilled helper. They have the basic skills to get going.

NM, HVACR employer

It is a selling point that high school co-op students do not receive salary or benefits. Their insurance is covered by the school board and they come with basic health and safety training already done in class. The student does not expect to be paid. They are there for the learning experience.

CS, co-op teacher

We co-op students can help an employer by giving the technicians an extra hand. We can speed up the work... Some kids I know haven't ever had a job. They can learn the value of respect for the customer, the need to get the job done and done well. It prepares us for the actual work world.

Thomas, co-op student

You have a hand in their training so you are better able to fit them to your company requirement. You can mould them to what you want in an employee, rather than having to train out bad habits. Then you are first in line to hire them and you already know their skills.

BM, HVACR employer

WHY YOU MIGHT CONSIDER A HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP STUDENT

High school co-op students usually come to you for their first work experience. They are not expected to know about new technologies or cutting-edge approaches like an apprentice or college or university student. But there are some other good reasons to think about taking a high school co-op student into your work place.

Develop supervisory skills – Your staff can improve their leadership and interpersonal skills by overseeing a student.

Assess potential employees – You can take a close look at how the student works, and assess whether they might fit into your business in the future.

Expand the student's horizons – You can feel good about helping young people understand the career opportunities in your industry. You can boost their confidence and help them to earn a reference for future jobs.

Encourage good work practices – You can pass on knowledge, attitudes and skills to the student that you know they will need to be good employees.

Connect with schools – You can help your local school, and the school board, keep their courses relevant to the current and future needs of your industry. In the long term, future graduates should be better prepared for your needs.

It is good PR! Students, their families, and the school will spread the word about your business. Your business will be known as a responsible member of the community that contributes to the education of youth.

APPRENTICESHIP

➔ WORKING WITH PROVINCIAL OR TERRITORIAL APPRENTICESHIP AUTHORITIES

All apprentices have to be registered with their [provincial or territorial apprenticeship authority](#). If you decide you want to take an apprentice into your workplace, you should start by contacting your apprenticeship authority to find out the rules and regulations for the particular trade in your jurisdiction.

➔ EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The [Canadian Apprenticeship Forum](#) lists some general responsibilities for an employer of an apprentice:

Hire and register your apprentice – Sign an official apprenticeship agreement with your apprentice outlining the responsibilities of all parties throughout the apprenticeship period.

Provide the workplace – Give your apprentice a safe place to work that encourages learning, with proper equipment and shop facilities.

Provide on-the-job training – Give your apprentice the required skills training in your workplace, supervised by a certified journeyperson, and work with the apprentice to successfully complete it.

Pay wages – Pay your apprentice a fair hourly wage while they train on the job. Apprentice pay is usually set by regulation at a percentage of the journeyperson's wage, with increases for each year along the way.

Support technical training – Give your apprentice time off work to complete the related instruction at each stage of the program.

Keep records – Keep accurate records of on-the-job training (hours and type of work) and update your apprentice's log book.

Keep in touch – Notify your local apprenticeship authority if there are any changes or developments that could affect your apprenticeship program.

➔ FINDING AN APPRENTICE

Where can you look for an apprentice?

- Internally – start by asking yourself if you can promote from within
- Your provincial apprenticeship authority
- Unions, trade and industry associations
- Specialized training centres associated with the trade
- Community college employment offices and high school guidance offices
- Provincial youth employment programs
- Advertise on Internet job sites such as the [HRAI's job site](#), the Government of Canada's [Job Bank](#), [Workopolis](#) and [monster.ca](#)

➔ SELECTING YOUR APPRENTICE

If you are a unionized employer you should start by talking to your relevant union.

If you are a non-union employer, selecting an apprentice is much the same as hiring any other worker: your concerns will be the level of technical training achieved, personal characteristics (timeliness, responsibility, etc.) and fit with your organization.

The basic rules about avoiding discrimination on the basis of age (except where mandated by law), ethnic origin, gender, etc. all apply. Given all that, here are a few hints that may help you choose:

- Has the individual completed a pre-apprenticeship or co-op program in the trade? If so, that's a good indicator they are motivated to stay in the trade, know about it, and are willing to work on progressing in it.
- If the applicant has done pre-apprenticeship or co-op, check with their employer to see how they performed.
- Does the prospective apprentice have a work record? If so, contact their former employers and ask about attitude, willingness to work with others, timeliness and other work-related characteristics.

- In some provinces, prospective apprentices actually complete part of their classroom training before signing on as apprentices. Locate their trades instructors and find out about the applicant's work attitudes and trade abilities.
- Consider hiring through a provincial employment office. Many of them run extensive career selection and work preparation programs that try to make sure individuals are both suited for the career selected and have the personal traits required for success.
- In the case of compulsory trades, where selection and training is done by a joint employer/labour body, much of the work has been done for you. Apply the hints above to check on how the individual will fit into your particular organization.

10 questions you might ask when interviewing a prospective apprentice

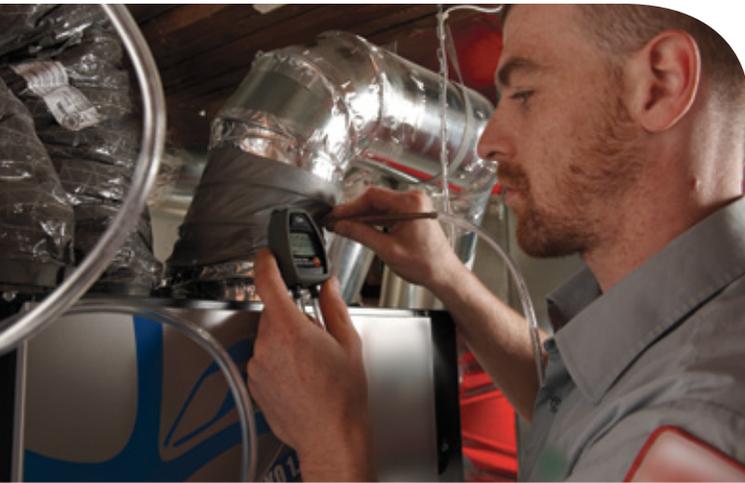
1. Why have you applied for this apprenticeship?
2. Give an example of a time when you have coped well under pressure.
3. What do you think we want from our apprentice?
4. Apprenticeships mean working while you are studying for a qualification. How will you prioritize your workload?
5. Rate your organizational skills on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest). Give an example of when you have used these skills.
6. Give an example of how you have dealt with a difficult situation.
7. What do you think we mean by customer-focused service and how will it relate to this job?
8. Give an example of a time you have worked independently.
9. Give an example of a time you have worked as part of a team.
10. Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

The effort to supervise an apprentice is reduced over the years. The supervision required changes as they get more experience.

BB, HVACR employer

We select for attitude – the right fit for the customer orientation of our business. We need some aptitude, but attitude is more important.

NM, HVACR employer



You need to accept the apprentice as part of the company from the beginning. If they see your investment in them, they will return it – and that keeps a positive morale.

BM, HVACR employer

➔ GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR APPRENTICE

You can often start a journeyman on the job by telling them what you want done and leaving them to it. With apprentices it is a bit more complex. You need a bit more effort at the start to get the most out of them on the job. It is worth the effort. Before they start:

- Make sure they are registered with your apprenticeship authority
- Ensure all typical employee documentation is completed

- Confirm working conditions, salaries, working hours, benefits, etc.
- Provide required safety training or ensure the required training is taken
- Ensure they have appropriate personal protective equipment
- Have them meet their supervisors and the person they will be working with
- Make sure they know exactly where, when, and who to report to for their first day
- Find out, and pass on to supervisors, their level of training, including safety training, and job experience
- In all orientation, emphasize safety and the potential hazards at your job sites

➔ CREATING THE BEST EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR APPRENTICE

Here are some tips for a successful apprenticeship training program:

Encourage support from all staff – Make your workplace a positive place for all your staff to learn and update their skills. Recognize their training successes.

Select your apprentice carefully – Take your time, evaluate and choose carefully. Better assessment leads to better staff retention.

Make them feel needed – Make your apprentice feel part of the business. Tell them where they fit into the bigger picture.

Plan the training together – Discuss the apprenticeship training requirements and expectations with the apprentice and their journeyman. Set a rough schedule with realistic goals. Monitor progress.

Envision a career path, not just a job – Help your apprentice to see a long-term career with your business. Tell them what they need to do to get promotions.

Gradually reduce apprentice supervision – As they learn and master skills, they should need less supervision. Show your trust in their increasing ability to work alone.

Gradually increase their responsibility – Help your journey person to review the apprentice's performance and give feedback. Give them more responsibility as they earn it.

Respect the need for technical training instruction – Give your apprentice the time off to complete the courses that are part of the program.

Stay on top of administration – Paperwork is necessary, but it is also a good tool for reviewing progress and recognizing achievements.

JOURNEYPERSONS AS MENTORS – THE CRITICAL LINK IN APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Like any new employee, the apprentice has to be supervised and mentored on the job to develop their skills and to ensure they become a productive employee. Assign one or more journey persons to mentor your apprentice.

Let the apprentice know that learning is a two-way street: they should be asking questions and working with the mentor to learn the needed skills.

BuildForce Canada's [Mentorship package](#) is a full set of materials, including a short video, to help your journey person and apprentice build a good learning relationship. A good mentoring relationship will ensure your apprentice learns the skills quickly and accurately, and you get a well-trained employee sooner.

Six key steps to mentoring an apprentice⁴

1. **Identify the point of the lesson** – Say what you'll be teaching.
2. **Link the lesson** – Link the skill to other lessons and the trade.
3. **Demonstrate the skill** – Show how to perform it, step by step.
4. **Provide opportunity for practice** – Have the learner use the skill repeatedly:
 - i. Guided practice
 - ii. Limited practice
 - iii. Independent practice
5. **Give feedback** – Tell the learner how they are doing with the skill:
 - i. Supportive feedback: tell them what they've done well
 - ii. Corrective feedback: correct any mistakes
6. **Assess progress** – Tell the learner how they are doing in the trade.

Training an apprentice instils pride in your journey person – they feel satisfaction in passing on their skills, and they continue to be better employees. It's a way of showing that you value your journey person.

NM, HVACR employer

⁴ Source: BuildForce Canada's Mentoring package

➔ GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICESHIP

The federal government encourages apprenticeship training by providing subsidies for both employers and apprentices. Many provinces and territories also have complementary programs to reward employers and apprentices for working to build a skilled Canadian workforce. Ask your [provincial apprenticeship authority](#) about special programs in your jurisdiction.

For the employer

[Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit \(AJCTC\)](#)

- This non-refundable tax credit is equal to 10% of the eligible salaries and wages paid to eligible apprentices, up to \$2,000 per year for each eligible apprentice.

For the apprentice

[Apprenticeship Incentive Grant \(AIG\)](#)

- This taxable cash grant of \$1,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per person, is for registered apprentices who have successfully finished their first or second year/level (or equivalent) of an apprenticeship program in one of the [Red Seal](#) trades.

[Apprenticeship Completion Grant \(ACG\)](#)

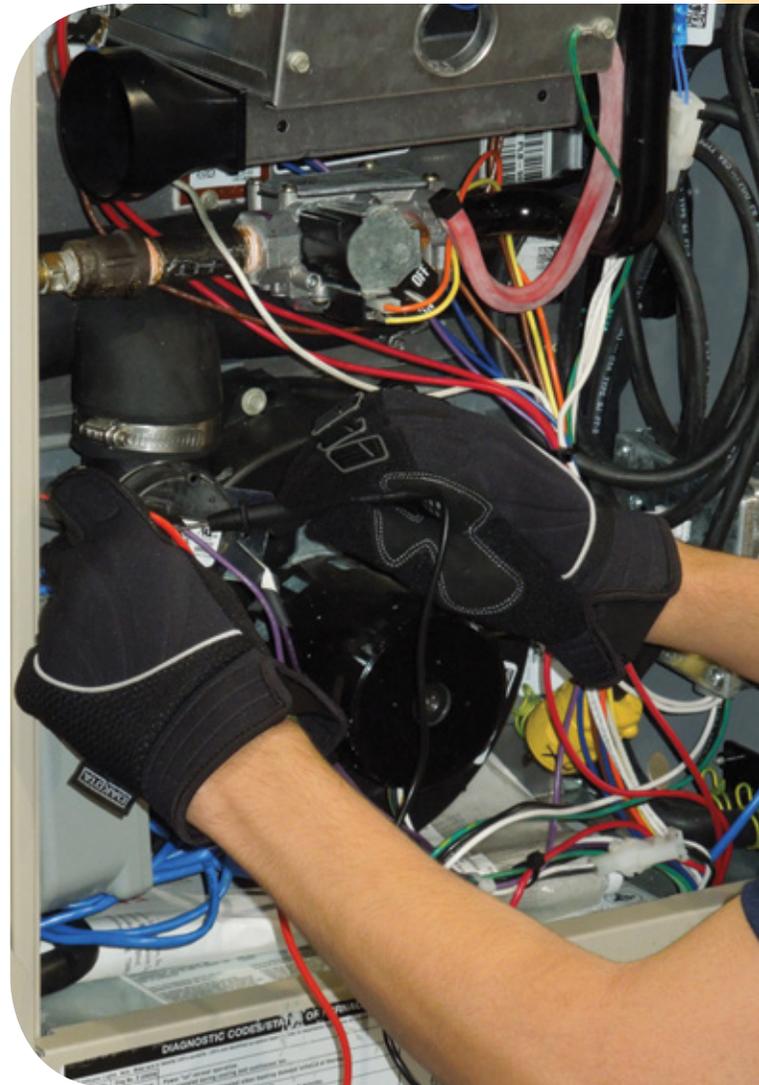
- This taxable cash grant of \$2,000 maximum is for registered apprentices who have successfully completed their apprenticeship training and obtained their journeyman certification in a designated [Red Seal](#) trade on or after January 1, 2009.

[Tradespersons Tools Tax Deduction](#)

- Apprentices and journeymen may be able to deduct the cost (including GST/HST/PST) of [eligible tools](#) bought to earn employment income as a tradesperson.

[Employment Insurance \(EI\)](#)

- Apprentices may be eligible for EI benefits while attending technical training if they have worked enough hours and satisfy all the other eligibility requirements to establish an EI claim. For more information, visit the [Employment Insurance website](#) or phone the general enquiries line at 1-800-206-7218.



COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CO-OP PROGRAMS

➔ WORKING WITH COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CO-OP PROGRAMS

A student might come to you directly looking for a co-op placement, or you might decide you want to look for a student. Either way, if you think you want to take a college or university co-op student into your workplace, you will need to talk to the co-op education office at your local college or university. You could start by looking at their website, or you could just get them on the phone.

Institutions that run co-op programs are always looking for willing employers who can provide an appropriate work experience for their students. Provided they have an appropriate diploma or degree program, they will be happy to work with you to arrange a placement.

➔ EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

If you decide to go ahead with a co-op student placement, you will have responsibilities to:

- Provide a welcoming and skill-developing work experience for the student.
- Define a full-time assignment for four months (work hours are usually a minimum of 35 hours per week for 12 weeks).
- Prepare and sign an employment contract with the student indicating the terms and conditions of employment, the period of employment, hours of work per week and rate of pay (a job description should be included).
- Ensure that the position is paid at a rate comparable to industry standards (co-op students are not meant to undercut similarly qualified workers).
- Ensure that the student's actual work is consistent with what their job description says.
- Supervise and guide the student during the placement and report any concerns to the co-op coordinator.

- Support on-site visits by the co-op coordinator.
- Complete reports on the student's progress, often a mid-term and final evaluation, discuss the results with the co-op student, and submit to the institution.

Questions an employer might want to ask the co-op education office

- When/for how long will they be on the job site?
- What are the limits to the type of work they can do?
- What sort of supervision is required?
- In addition to normal supervision, what else is required of me?
- What sort of performance records, if any, do I have to keep?
- What job site visits can I expect from the co-op education coordinator?
- How are students insured (often done through provincial workers' compensation)?
- What safety training do they receive before arriving on site?
- What safety training will I have to provide on-site?
- Are there any special safety considerations for this age group?
- In case of accident or injury, aside from normal reaction, who is notified and what other actions do I have to take?
- Who is the college/university contact?

➔ SELECTING YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CO-OP STUDENT

The college or university will advertise your position among their students. They will pre-screen a short list for you to interview and choose from. You might interview students on campus or at your business.

10 questions you might ask when you are interviewing a co-op student

1. What prompted you to apply for this particular co-op position?
2. What did you do to prepare for this interview?
3. If you are offered this co-op position, what training do you feel you require before you could become a productive member of our team?
4. Describe your learning ability by giving us an example of what you have done to help yourself learn a new task.
5. There are times on all jobs when things get slack and someone is not standing right there to tell you what to do. Has this ever happened to you? How did you handle this situation?
6. Sometimes when things are hectic and there are deadlines to meet, people have to miss their breaks just to get the work done. Tell us about the last time this happened to you.
7. There are many times when you have to be a good time manager. Times where you have to keep things organized and balanced. Tell us about a specific situation that illustrates your ability to organize and schedule people or tasks.
8. We are interested in how you show initiative to go beyond everyday requirements. Give us an example of when you've done this.
9. Tell us about a leadership role you have undertaken. What was your greatest sense of accomplishment while in this leadership role?
10. Tell us about a goal you set for yourself and successfully achieved.

➔ GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR CO-OP STUDENT

There are four stages of working with co-op students:

1. **Administration and planning** – Before the start date the student should complete documentation required for work. Decide who will be the direct supervisor of the student and discuss with them your plans. Make sure their workspace and equipment is arranged. Think about extra assignments in case the student finishes their primary assignments early. Co-op students are often enthusiastic about their new jobs and work fast.
2. **Orientation and learning** – Within the first few days, provide an orientation to your work environment. Explain work responsibilities, duties and reporting lines in detail. Students are new to the workforce and need clear instructions. Ensure that any required safety training takes place. The college may have arranged this, but check to be sure.
3. **Progress and feedback** – During the assignment, regularly engage with the student and give them feedback on their progress on the job. They may have to prepare a report for their college or university on what they learned. Discussing their report may be a good way to exchange ideas about their growth in the job.
4. **Evaluations and reports** – At the end of the assignment, and sometimes mid-term, you will have to complete evaluations of the student for the college or university. You may also get calls and visits from a co-op education coordinator. (An end-of-term evaluation might be called a “summative assessment” and the mid-term might be called a “formative assessment.”)

➔ CREATE THE BEST EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CO-OP STUDENT

Here are some ideas for making the best out of a co-op student placement:

- **Work planning**
 - Involve the student in the planning process where possible.
 - Include the student in meetings that relate to the student's responsibilities/projects.
 - Encourage the student to recommend ways of doing assigned projects. Discuss the pros and cons of the student's recommendations.
- **Communications** – Communicate frequently with the student; short weekly meetings or regular e-mail are an excellent idea.
- **Performance management**
 - Outline the expected end results and deadlines.
 - Explain how and by whom the student's work will be evaluated.

Starting a conversation about job performance

Help create a situation in which participants feel comfortable receiving regular feedback. Here are some ways you can start a conversation about job performance with your co-op student:

I know you want to do a good job here so let's talk about your skills development.

So far, I think you are really doing well with the following skills and work habits: _____.

Today, I'd like you to focus on _____ (skills/tasks).

I think you would really benefit from improving your _____ (appropriate work habits).

I'd like to have regular discussions with you about your performance. We can meet again on _____.

- Schedule periodic reviews to determine the student's progress and address any concerns early in the work term.
- Measure progress toward learning objectives, identifying skills mastered and those requiring further learning.
- **Build responsibility**
 - Entrust the student with responsibility for their work.
 - Monitor to ensure that there is enough work to do, and give additional work if they finish early.
 - Suggest contacts for the student.

➔ GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR HIRING CO-OP STUDENTS

There is some government support for employers who hire co-op students. You can ask the college or university co-op education coordinator for advice about programs in your jurisdiction. Below are a few examples of programs:

- The [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council \(NSERC\)](#), [Industrial Undergraduate Student Research Awards](#) provide partial salary subsidies of up to \$4,500 to employers who hire an undergraduate student for 12 to 16 weeks to work on a research project.
- Industry Canada's [Small Business Internship Program](#) provides one-time grants for small- and medium-sized businesses (<500 employees) to hire a post-secondary co-op student to assist them in their adoption of information and communications technologies to increase their productivity and competitiveness.
- Ontario employers who hire college or university co-op students can take advantage of a [Co-operative Education Tax Credit](#) of up to \$3,000 for each placement.

You treat a co-op student a lot like any other new employee. You have to teach them the tools, teach them about being careful in homes, dealing with customers, moving the equipment around, what is in the truck, where to find things...

BB, HVACR employer

HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP STUDENTS

➔ WORKING WITH HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP PROGRAMS

A high school student might come to you directly looking for a co-op placement, or you might decide you want to look for a student. Either way, you can get more information by talking to either your regional school board or the guidance counsellor at your local high school. Don't forget that all public and separate, and English and French school boards offer high school co-op placements. Private high schools may also give their students a co-op option.

High school co-op programs typically follow this pattern:

- Students may be doing a general work experience program or, occasionally, could be part of a registered youth apprenticeship program.
- Students are pre-screened during school interviews.
- Employers are assessed by the teacher to ensure a safe working environment and positive learning environment.
- An agreement is signed between the employer and the school, in part to ensure Worker's Compensation coverage.
- Students get pre-placement orientation in class at the school.
- Students will have specific learning goals determined by the school and negotiated with the employer, which the teacher will monitor.

➔ EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The main responsibilities for employers who hire high school co-op students are:

- Interview and accept an appropriate student.
- Supervise the student in the workplace and foster learning experiences.
- Provide real work experience in a safe learning environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Before I place each student, I have already interviewed them. I want to find them a work experience that matches their interests, what they already have learned, their aptitude and initiative. I don't place co-op students randomly. I place each one specifically.

CS, co-op teacher

With co-op students, you need to have patience. They need someone to tell them what is acceptable and unacceptable in the workplace. They don't get that in school, but they should be able to learn that in a co-op placement. And they need to learn that you have to deliver competence.

BB, HVACR employer

We all have a local high school. You can approach your high school directly, build the personal connection, and talk to the students and guidance counsellors. It needs a personal pitch to make that connection, to show that you are open [to hiring co-op students].

BM, HVACR employer

Co-op students are a lot like entry-level employees, but their young age and limited work experience may mean that they require a little more support. Our school balances the employer's effort with our one-on-one support for supervisors and students. We communicate with and visit the supervisors regularly.

CS, co-op teacher

- Provide training (including health and safety training) prior to allowing the student to complete any workplace tasks.
- Work with the teacher to develop a learning plan.
- Share expertise with the student.
- Help the teacher complete the performance appraisals.

Note: *Workplace safety and training is particularly important. High school co-op students who are often in their first job cannot be expected to already know about all normal safe work practices.*

➔ SELECTING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP STUDENT

You should give a high school co-op student a realistic interview like you would for a paid position. During a typical interview you could:

- Review the student's resume.
- Discuss the student's interests, strengths and goals.
- Outline your company expectations, including acceptable behaviour, standards of performance, dress, attendance and notification of absence.
- Tell the student what experience they can get at your workplace.
- Give the student a chance to ask questions.
- Give the student feedback after finishing the interview.

➔ GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP STUDENT

Here are some tips on how to orient your new high school co-op student:

- Introduce the student to co-workers.
- Show the student where they will be working and any equipment to be used.
- Tell the student the exact hours of the working day, times for breaks and lunch, etc.
- Tell the student who to call if they are late or absent.



- Give a tour of your facilities. Show the student where to find supplies, restrooms, lockers and the lunch room.
- Outline safety procedures.
- Discuss the role of the union, if applicable.
- Tell the student the purpose of your organization and how your department contributes to that purpose.
- Discuss the learning plan and review the student's preliminary duties. Explain how their work activities fit into the organization as a whole.
- Outline important rules and regulations, discuss company procedures and supply a manual, if available.
- Remind the student to ask questions about following proper procedures.
- Help the student to feel part of your work team.

- Have back-up work activities or reading available for when the student's regular work is completed early.
- Give the student the chance to show initiative by gradually reducing supervision.
- Be prepared to suggest to the teacher any tasks that should be added or removed from the learning plan when you know the student better.

➔ CREATING THE BEST EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP STUDENT

Here are some suggestions for ensuring a good co-op experience with high school students:

- Plan appropriate activities with the student for each day and week. Ensure that tasks are clearly defined.
- Have challenging but attainable expectations.
- Let the student observe tasks before they perform them. Explain what you are doing and why.
- Explain the link between previously learned and new tasks.
- Use careful questioning to be sure that the student understands their tasks. Have them repeat the instructions or practice while you observe.
- Show the student how to safely operate any equipment to be used. Demand safe work habits.
- Give positive feedback when it is due. Offer constructive criticism with suggestions for improving performance.

Ideally, the experience should be mutually beneficial; the student learns valuable employment and trade-specific skills and the employer gains extra help and promotes the trade to keen and capable young people.

CS, co-op teacher

I didn't know anything about the trades before I took this co-op position. Now I know about the trade, how things work, what is an average work day, how the work is seasonal ... and now I have registered at college for the fall in a HVACR program. The co-op placement really helped me make up my mind.

Thomas, co-op student

There is satisfaction in seeing the student getting excited and interested, especially when they chose to enter the industry. It's good for the whole industry.

BM, HVACR employer

RESOURCES AND LINKS

There are a lot of useful resources for employers and their workers online. Here are links to some of the best.

[HRAI](#) has links to numerous websites to assist you with general information about relevant programs and services.

[BuildForce Canada](#) has resources to help you train new employees, including a [Mentorship Program](#) and resources for improving the [Essential Skills](#) of all your workers.

The [Canadian Apprenticeship Forum](#) has information and resources for apprenticeship programs in Canada, including an [Employer Toolkit](#).

The [Canada Summer Jobs Program](#) provides assistance to small employers (<50 employees) who are willing to hire students for summer jobs.

The [CanLearn](#) website has links to all federal government support programs for students. Aside from the standard help for apprentices, there are special programs such as assistance for part-time students with children and help for students from low-income families.

SOURCES

Some information in this booklet has been adapted from materials publicly available on the Internet from the [Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada](#), [BuildForce Canada](#), [Canadian Apprenticeship Forum](#), [Red Seal Program](#), [Canadian Association for Co-operative Education](#), [Carleton University Co-op and Career Service](#), [University of Toronto](#), [McMaster University](#), [University of Victoria](#), [University of Manitoba](#), [Apprentice Eye](#), [Ontario Skills Passport](#), [Toronto District School Board](#), [Ottawa Carleton District School Board](#), and [Statistics Canada](#).



GLOSSARY

Apprentice – A person who works in a trade, occupation or craft under an agreement or contract and is registered with the apprenticeship authority. The apprentice learns the knowledge, skills, tools and materials of the trade, occupation or craft through on-the-job training and technical instruction under the supervision of a certified journeyman.

Apprenticeship – A structured system of supervised training leading to certification in a designated trade, occupation or craft. It is a systematic program of on-the-job training supplemented by technical instruction in which an apprentice gains experiential learning and develops skills.

Block release training – A method by which apprentices are released by their employers to attend technical training for a specified period (block) each year, usually five to eight weeks.

Certificate of Apprenticeship/Certificate of Qualification – A document issued to a person who has successfully completed a formalized apprenticeship training program. A certificate issued to a candidate who has successfully completed an apprenticeship program or has met all the requirements of a trade and has attained the prescribed pass mark on the certification examination to qualify as a journeyman in that trade.

Community college – A post-secondary educational institution offering programs related to liberal arts, technical and trades training.

Compulsory trade – To work in a compulsory or mandatory trade, you must be a registered apprentice or certified journeyman. Industry committees, in partnership with the provincial or territorial government, determine which trades are compulsory or voluntary.

Cooperative education – A program for those enrolled in a high school, community college or university who, through a cooperative arrangement between the training institution and employers, receive part of their instruction in the institution and part on the job through an employment agreement.

Day-release training – Technical training for apprentices where employers release apprentices from work for one day to attend in-school training (usually one day a week).

In-school training – A period of training/instruction usually provided to apprentices in a classroom setting. The emphasis is on teaching the theory component of the trade and is intended to supplement on-the-job training.

Journeyman – A formally certified, fully skilled worker whose combined work experience and training satisfy all the requirements demanded of those who practice in a designated trade.

Licensing – Some *licensed* professions may only be practiced by holders of a licence in the specific field of practice. A licence is required to perform procedures reserved for members of the licensing body, e.g., gasfitters are licensed in some provinces.

Logbook – A booklet issued to registered apprentices in which acquired skills, knowledge and time worked at a trade are recorded.

Mentorship – The process through which learners receive ongoing advice and assistance from persons experienced in their field of study or occupation.

On-the-job training – The component or portion of an apprenticeship training program where apprentices spend time working on the job site learning the skills of the trade under the supervision of a journeyman or management staff, depending on the occupation (i.e.: skilled trade vs. inside worker).

Pre-apprenticeship training – A program mainly of technical and general education, including a portion of trade practice, offered in high schools, vocational schools, community colleges and technical institutes and linked to an apprenticeship program through the credit system.

Pre-employment training – Courses providing intensive instruction for entrance into employment in a specific occupation.

Ratio – Journeyman : Apprentice – The number of apprentices a journeyman is permitted to supervise. Ratios vary from trade to trade and with the years of experience of the apprentice.

Red Seal – A nationally registered trademark symbol adopted by the Interprovincial Standards Program to signify interprovincial qualification of tradespersons at the journeyman level. It is affixed to the provincial and territorial Certificates of Apprenticeship and Qualifications of those apprentices and tradespersons who have met the national standard in a Red Seal trade. The Red Seal is a passport that allows the holder to work anywhere in Canada without having to write further examinations, e.g., Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic is a Red Seal Trade.

