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# Work Experience

A Resource for  
Career and  
Personal Planning 11/12



Province of British Columbia  
Ministry of Education

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# Introduction

**I**n September 1994, *The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan* was released. Implementation of this plan will make the B.C. education system more current, relevant, and able to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the future.

New components of *The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan* are the Personal Planning K to 7 and the Career and Personal Planning 8 to 12 curricula. The Personal Planning curricula focus mainly on personal planning and growth in the primary years, and shift to integrating personal and career plans as the student enters the secondary grades.

In Grades 8 to 12, the Personal Planning curriculum changes to become Career and Personal Planning 8 to 12 (CAPP). In Grade 9, students, teachers, and parents work together to help each student develop a formal Student Learning Plan (SLP). By monitoring their learning plans, students are able to focus on areas of interest, exploring and assessing their own strengths and weaknesses.

Career and Personal Planning 11/12 will become a mandatory graduation requirement for students entering Grade 11 beginning in September 1995. CAPP 11/12 includes a 30-hour work experience component. The required work experience component is a key element to enabling students to form realistic expectations of the workplace and to make educated decisions based on that knowledge.

This document is intended to provide information concerning the work experience component of CAPP 11/12. It is meant to introduce this new work experience requirement to teachers, administrators, students, and parents.

A more detailed *Work Experience Handbook* will be released in Spring 1995. This resource will help educators and administrators establish community-based work experience courses and career programs and ensure that work experience is a relevant and positive educational experience for students.

The new *Work Experience Handbook* will provide more information on

- evaluation and assessment
  - supervision and monitoring
  - community advisory committees
  - procedures for establishing work experience placements
  - safety issues
  - transportation issues
  - Workers' Compensation Board coverage
  - career programs
  - revised legislation
  - labour and business partnership agreements
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# Goals of Work Experience

Work experience is that part of a course or program which provides students with opportunities to participate in a variety of workplace experiences that will help prepare them for the transition to a work environment.

Work experience is intended to accomplish the following:

- to help prepare students for the transition from secondary school to the world of work or further training and education
- to increase the relevance of school by helping students connect what they learn in the classroom with the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace and in society in general

Work experience gives students the following opportunities:

- to observe and practise the employability skills and attitudes required in the workplace
- to explore possible career directions as articulated in their Student Learning Plans
- to develop the self-reliance, self-direction, and confidence necessary for effective teamwork, lifelong learning, and workplace success

Whenever possible, work experience should be community-based. The term “community,” as used in this document, is not limited to local environments. It is used in the broadest sense, extending education beyond the traditional four walls of our schools. As such, the community includes, but is not limited to, small businesses, resource industries, government facilities, Crown corporations, and volunteer organizations.

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# Career and Personal Planning 11/12 (CAPP)

The Career and Personal Planning curriculum encourages students to see career education as more than deciding what “jobs” they will do in the future. Student Learning Plans, which encourage students to think about education in relation to their career goals, begin in Grade 9 and are updated until graduation. Work experience provides students with a community-oriented opportunity to explore career directions identified in their learning plans. Work experience should be based on an understanding of personal and career development, while helping students acquire employability skills and gain familiarity with the workplace.

The successful completion of this course provides students with four credits towards satisfying graduation requirements, assigned as follows:

- planning process, including the Student Learning Plan (one credit)
- personal development (one credit)
- career development (one credit)
- 30 hours of work experience (one credit)

The work experience component of CAPP 11/12 allows students to earn credit for exploring possible career paths at a practical level. Work experience placements provide learning opportunities that range from developing and practising basic employment skills in entry-level positions to in-depth, on-site career exploration. Individual students are able to see where they are in their career development process and are provided opportunities to further that development. Many types of work experience placements may be required to meet the diverse needs of participating students.

## Granting Credit for Work Experience

The 30-hour work experience component of CAPP 11/12 is worth one credit. This can be achieved through school-arranged work experience or out-of-school employment, community service, or entrepreneurship. Prior work experiences may also qualify for credit providing they meet the learning outcomes for work experience and are related to the Student Learning Plan.

Only one 30-hour work experience credit will be granted through prior work experience. Additional credits must be achieved through school-arranged work experience activities.

Students participating in Special Education Programs, Career Preparation Programs, Co-operative Education Programs, Secondary School Apprenticeship Programs, or any new career programs will receive credit as outlined in the specific program requirements. (See page 3.)

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# Career Programs

Career programs incorporate a work experience component that may take longer or have a wider focus and duration than the CAPP 11/12 component.

Career programs consist of prescribed course packages and a work experience component that meets specific career development and exploration requirements.

Students who have completed the mandatory work experience component of CAPP 11/12 (30 hours) may apply this credit towards the work experience requirements of a career program. For example, students enrolled in a Career Preparation Program that requires 120 hours of work experience may apply the CAPP 11/12 work experience credit to this program. They would then need to complete a further 90 hours of work experience to meet the minimum work experience requirement of the Career Preparation Program. Double credit is not permitted.

There are currently four types of career programs.

## **Career Preparation Programs**

Career Preparation Programs are designed to prepare students for further study in a particular field at a post-secondary institution, and provide them with entry-level skills for employment. These programs are district-approved and currently consist of 24 credits of study related to a career field, including a minimum of four credits (120 hours) of related work experience.

## **Co-operative Education Programs**

Co-operative Education Programs provide students with opportunities to explore one or more careers. They are locally developed and include a minimum of eight credits of work experience.

## **Secondary School**

### **Apprenticeship Programs**

Secondary School Apprenticeship Programs are career programs that have established agreements to enable students to make a smooth transition between secondary school and the apprenticeship system.

## **Special Education**

### **Work Experience Programs**

Work Experience Programs for students with special needs should include significant pre-placement work study to ensure that students are adequately prepared for the workplace. Teachers in these programs should include work study and work experience that reflect interests and abilities identified in students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs).



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# Types of Work Experience

The following activities qualify as community-based work experience. A student can earn one work experience credit after completing 30 hours in any one or a combination of the following activities, providing that the criteria for the work experience credit is met. (Refer to Criteria for Work Experience Credit on page 5.)

## Work Experience Placement

Students gain hands-on work experience. They are supervised by a work site sponsor in the business or volunteer organization. The objectives for the placement are based on the Student Learning Plan. The required 30 hours can be completed in one placement with the same employer, or in a series of shorter placements with one or more employers.

## Job Shadowing Placement

Students explore a career by "shadowing" people in the community as they perform their work. Although these placements do not include hands-on performance of duties, they are useful to students who are unsure about what a specific career entails or who wish to explore different types of careers.

## Career Mentoring

Time spent in a mentoring relationship with a community member may be considered a 30-hour work experience. The mentoring should be related to the career direction established in the Student Learning Plan.

## Community-Based Career Seminars

Students who have an interest in a certain career area identified in their Student Learning Plans can gain information from group presentations and tours of community businesses. This type of career exploration is beneficial when a large number of students are interested in one career area and there are limited opportunities for work experience placements. It is also useful in career areas involving work that is dangerous or confidential, such as police or social work.

## Electronic Work Experience

Students are linked through the use of computers to community-based businesses—a distance education option via the Community Learning Network (CLN) or the Open Learning Agency (OLA). This type of work experience is useful when students are geographically isolated and have no access to businesses or careers that interest them, or if students are interested in careers involving technology.

## Student Employment

Students may apply current or past out-of-school employment for full or partial work experience credit. To qualify for credit, the work must meet work experience placement criteria.

## Community Service

Students may apply current or past out-of-school volunteer work for full or partial work experience credit, providing the work meets work experience placement criteria.

## Entrepreneurship

Students may apply out-of-school entrepreneurial ventures for full or partial work experience credit, providing the work meets work experience placement criteria.

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# Criteria for Work Experience Credit

For an activity to qualify as work experience, it should include the following components:

- a placement planning process
- a relationship to the Student Learning Plan
- a community mentor
- a community-based work site
- supervision and monitoring guidelines
- assessment and evaluation

## Placement Planning Process

With an adviser, students plan how to meet the learning outcomes of CAPP 11/12 through school-arranged placements or out-of-school employment, community service, or entrepreneurial activities. The process may include a written plan for work experience, produced with the support of parents/guardians, educators, and mentors. The plan may include placement outcomes, pre-placement orientation, defined learning activities, and assessment, review, and evaluation procedures.

## Relationship to the Student Learning Plan

Students' work experience activities should relate to their career and personal goals. These goals, as outlined in the Student Learning Plan, are individualized, and can range from basic employment skills to career exploration.

## Community Mentors

Community mentors can increase students' career awareness by providing information on employment skills; evaluation; and, where appropriate, site supervision for students.

## Community-Based Work Sites

The goal of work experience is to provide students with relevant work placements linked to the community.

## Supervision and Monitoring Guidelines

An educational supervisor should monitor each student's work experience activity, as appropriate and as determined by school district policy. The frequency of work site observation and the process for assessment will be determined at the district level.

## Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation should be based on a variety of strategies, education supervisors' input, mentors' feedback, and students' self-assessment leading to reviews of their Student Learning Plan.

Work experience placement objectives should relate to individual Student Learning Plans. These objectives can then be assessed by each student, educator, and employer. In cases where employer assessment is not available, an alternative method of assessment and evaluation should be designed.



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# Evaluating Work Experience

Criteria for evaluating work experience placements should be based on the learning outcomes identified for the work experience component of CAPP 11/12. These can be found in the CAPP 11/12 Integrated Resource Package.

The following are possible examples of how student performance might be assessed and evaluated for each of the different types of work experience activities.

## **Work Experience**

An evaluation and attendance report could be used by the employer in consultation with student or education personnel, or both, to identify basic employment skills. Placement objectives identified in the Student Learning Plan should also be acknowledged in this evaluation tool.

## **Job Shadowing, Community-Based Career Seminars, Career Mentoring, and Electronic Work Experience**

A report and evaluation detailing the career area, employment prospects, entry requirements, and follow-up plans could be completed by the student.

## **Employment and Community Service/Volunteer Work Experience**

The student could compile an evaluation report focusing on the career area, description of the tasks student performed, the skills required, employment prospects, entry requirements, and follow-up plans. It may be useful to have the community mentor sign this report to ensure

accuracy. The report could be used to document and assess the number of work experience credit hours earned.

## **Entrepreneurship**

The student could compile a report focusing on his or her community-based entrepreneurial activities, including a description of the entrepreneurial venture, market projections, task descriptions, skills required, employment and business prospects, and future plans. It may be useful to have the community mentor sign this report to ensure accuracy.

# Documenting Work Experience

Work experience can be effectively documented using the evaluation methods described on this page. Attendance and evaluation forms, student reports, and employer reports can all be used to verify participation in work experience placements and should be included as part of the Student Learning Plan.

Although each placement is customized to meet the student's needs and abilities, educators and work site sponsors may find it useful to use a general evaluation form to ensure that the attitudes, behaviours, skills, and effort required by students are assessed and evaluated. This report can also be used as part of a reflective learning process to help students further their personal and career development planning. In addition, it may serve as documentation that work experience requirements have been satisfied.

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# Preparing Students for Work Experience

Career and Personal Planning 11/12 emphasizes the strong relationship between personal and career development. Work placement choices should reflect each student's personal likes, interests, and abilities, as these factors are the basis of career planning.

A fundamental principle of work experience is that it provides students with an opportunity to gain real-life, hands-on experience. If this experience is to be successful and educationally valid, students must have accurate knowledge and understanding of the expectations in various workplaces.

It is essential that students view the workplace as a place they must "fit into." Educators should provide each student with an adequate knowledge and understanding of the work site before the student enters a work experience placement. Work site sponsors should provide the student with an accurate view of the type of work done and the expectations that must be met on the site, including those for behaviour, attire, and safety.

As part of the CAPP 11/12 course, students and educators plan in advance for the work experience. The Student Learning Plan provides the framework within which students can focus on short- and long-term planning. Work experience provides a practical opportunity for students not only to explore the workplace, but also to practise their planning and decision-making skills and test the accuracy of the career paths they have identified in their learning plans.

Schools and work site sponsors will need to be sensitive to the broad range of participating students. Schools and the community will need to work together to make work experiences relevant and meaningful for all students.

## Pre-placement Orientation

All students should participate in pre-placement orientation to prepare them for work experience placements. This orientation should consider the following:

### Employability

- job-seeking skills, including cover letters, résumés, telephone and interview skills
- attendance and punctuality
- appropriate appearance
- effective interpersonal communication (verbal and non-verbal)
- the value and benefit of teamwork
- workplace behaviours that demonstrate an appropriate work ethic
- confidentiality in the workplace

### Career Exploration

- personal development and lifestyle choices analysis
- career path choices and planning
- non-traditional occupations for men and women
- labour market information research and evaluation skills

### Employer Expectations

- workplace expectations
- employee rights and responsibilities
- Employment Standards Act
- Human Rights Act

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## **Basic Safety in the Workplace**

- common safety practices
- WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System)
- how to identify hazardous working environments
- questions to ask the employer about safety at the work site
- prevention of violence, assault, sexual harassment
- additional sector safety training, such as Food Safe and Heavy Industry Safety Preparation programs
- Workers' Compensation Board coverage
- student accident and injury reporting procedures

## **Organizational Structures of the Workplace**

- how businesses are organized
- how unions work
- governments as employers

## **Problem Solving**

- theft prevention
- conflict resolution
- anger management
- roadblocks to communication
- accepting responsibility and making commitments

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# Supervising and Monitoring Work Experience Placements

Students on school-arranged work placements should be supervised and monitored.

It is important that school personnel, the work site sponsor and the student share similar expectations about work experience. The work site sponsor should understand the course or program in which the student is enrolled and the objectives of the placement. Placements at new sites should not be allowed unless school personnel have met with the employers and inspected the work sites.

Student placements can be monitored in a number of ways. These include visits to the work site, phone calls, and electronic mail.

School boards should establish guidelines for supervision and monitoring that address the issues of work site safety, student attendance and punctuality, student conduct and performance expectations, and business, labour, and school relations.

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# Parent and Community Relations

## **Community Advisory Committee**

The Ministry of Education requires that school boards establish community advisory committees to guide the development and delivery of work experience for Career Programs.

## **Communicating with Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians whose children will be participating in work experience should be fully informed of the goals and procedures of work experience. They should know when their children will be participating in community-based career exploration and work placements and be encouraged to actively support their children's career development choices. Transportation and insurance issues should be communicated to parents/guardians.

## **Communicating with Community Business Partners**

Community support is essential to provide the variety and number of work experience placements that will be required. Businesses willing to participate in school-arranged work experience should be informed of the goals, procedures, and processes involved in placing students.

## **Communicating with Labour Partners**

In order to gain appropriate access to unionized work sites, unions should be partners in work experience placements. This partnership will assist in resolving problems quickly and efficiently. School districts could have ongoing discussions with local labour councils and may want to include them on school district and school-based advisory committees.



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# Roles and Responsibilities

## Students' Responsibilities

- Abide by the conventions and practices of the assigned workplace
- Understand the rights and responsibilities of employees in the workplace
- Observe the days and hours of work as specified by the work site sponsor
- Notify the work site sponsor when unable to report to work
- Adhere to the rules and regulations associated with the work placement, particularly with respect to safety regulations
- Respect the confidential nature of information within the work placement
- Participate in evaluation meetings as required by the site sponsor or work experience supervisor and in the preparation of a work experience report for inclusion in each student's personal portfolio
- Continue to attend all scheduled school-related activities as required

## Parents' Responsibilities

- Become informed about the work placement activities and objectives
- Channel all concerns about a work placement site through school placement personnel
- Assist the student in planning for work experience
- Provide ongoing support to the student

## Educators' Responsibilities

- Familiarize students with the responsibilities and expectations associated with participating in a work experience placement
- Prepare students to work co-operatively in a group situation and to take instruction from work site sponsors
- Endeavour to place students in appropriate situations, taking into account each student's abilities, personality, and career aspirations

- Arrange, when possible, pre-placement tours of potential work sites for students
- Visit all new workplaces to meet sponsors and view the work sites
- Inform work site sponsors of the goals of the work experience course/program and related assessment and evaluation procedures
- Establish a line of communication between the work site and the school
- Inform site sponsors of the need to do an on-site safety orientation with students before hands-on activities begin
- Establish realistic placement objectives for the work experience, in collaboration with students and site sponsors
- Establish a visitation schedule
- Compile a work experience report in collaboration with students and work site sponsors
- Identify methods of evaluating students' work experience performance
- Monitor students' progress
- Communicate directly with students to ensure that their concerns are addressed and that problems are resolved or ameliorated
- Provide positive and constructive feedback to students, based on the sponsors' assessment of their abilities, effort, and workplace conduct
- Address and resolve any problems that arise during placement

## Employers'/Sponsors' Responsibilities

- Provide a safe working and learning environment
- Provide a site-specific safety orientation for every work experience student before hands-on activities begin



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- Provide a thorough orientation for students and work experience supervisors, explaining rules and regulations and expectations of the work site with regard to matters such as dress code, discipline policy, breaks, and hours of work
  - Introduce students to regular work site employees, explaining students' roles
  - Select, whenever possible, jobs appropriate for the length of available time, and students' skills and interests, while allowing them to participate in a variety of working/learning experiences
  - Provide feedback to students with respect to workplace expectations and standards
  - Assign employee mentors to supervise students
  - Notify the school, and/or parents/guardians, immediately of any mishap or emergency, difficulty, or non-compliance

### **School Districts' Responsibilities**

- Establish guidelines regarding the conduct, supervision, and participation of students in work experience placements
- Approve work experience placements
- Ensure that work sites are supervised and monitored
- Ensure that there is a district-co-ordinated placement system for contacting community-based employers
- Check that safety training is completed before students participate in work experience placements
- Ensure that only students 15 years of age or older are permitted to participate in work site placements
- Ensure that schools are evaluating student performance on work experience placements



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