

# PASSPORT to prosperity

*Celebrating 10 years  
of school-work partnerships*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is Passport to Prosperity?**

For more than a decade, the Passport to Prosperity program has supported educators and employers in developing experiential learning opportunities for high school students as a cost-effective solution to recruiting, training and retaining young workers. Passport to Prosperity is a province wide campaign that seeks to provide communities with the tools and resources to respond to their local workforce development needs and contribute to the growth of the local economy. Today, more than 26,000 employers across Ontario have recognized the value of incorporating student programs into their human resources strategies.

### **Who sponsors Passport to Prosperity?**

The campaign is sponsored by the Provincial Partnership Council (PPC), a volunteer advisory committee of leaders from the private, public and voluntary sectors. The campaign is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and is implemented in local communities by business-education councils and local training boards.

### **Who are the partners supporting school-work initiatives?**

PPC partners include the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPA), the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, The Toronto Board of Trade, The Ontario Business Education Partnership, and TVOntario.

### **What are experiential learning opportunities?**

Experiential opportunities range from one-hour career talks to full-semester cooperative education. Work experiences vary in length, depending on the type of program that students select and the amount of time and effort employers are willing to provide.

“The work of a police officer has always interested me. However, this co-op experience has shown me a different side of policing, the community service side, which has more than confirmed my career choice of being a police officer.”

Eric Hoffmann – University (Windsor Police Service)

### **What are the students expected to learn in work experiences?**

Work experiences help students develop good work habits and behaviours, employability and citizenship skills. Students also gain experience in managing resources and working with others. Students count on the involvement of local businesses and organizations to gain the experience and skills they need to fulfill their career ambitions.

### **Why should employers get involved?**

Across Ontario, small and large employers are preparing for looming challenges that threaten their ability to recruit and retain the workers they need to operate and grow their businesses. While the province’s workforce continues to be eroded by our rapidly aging population, labour-market demand for employees with postsecondary education and skills is expected to surge well above the current supply. Experiential learning programs provide employers with an early opportunity to engage Ontario’s future workers, expose them to career options they may not have known about or considered and help them acquire the specific workplace skills and experience businesses seek. Experiential programs offer employers a cost-effective solution to recruiting, training and retaining younger workers.

### **What is EmployerRegistry.ca?**

EmployerRegistry.ca is Ontario’s free online community connecting employers and tomorrow’s workforce. Developed in 2008, the site acts as a single point of contact for employers looking to get involved with short, medium and long-term educational programs, ranging from one-hour career talks to full-semester cooperative education.

### **What kind of support do employers receive through EmployerRegistry.ca?**

In less than five minutes, employers will be connected to a local Passport to Prosperity Coordinator who will personally assist in identifying experiential learning opportunities to meet the unique requirements of your business.

It provides Passport to Prosperity deliverers, educators and other administrators with fast, accessible and usable tools for managing, developing and tracking relationships with local employers. It also provides a platform for an online community focused around experiential learning programs like the Specialist High Skills Major that will allow for the sharing of resources amongst educators and the promotion of local programs across the province.

### **What are the benefits of EmployerRegistry.ca for employers?**

- One starting point for involvement in experiential learning
- Ability to easily offer new forms of learning opportunities for students and manage existing opportunities
- Gives immediate clarity to a single point of contact locally
- Can access up-to-date information on learning programs in Ontario
- Forum to spotlight their involvement in helping to define tomorrow's workforce

### **How is the work placement planned?**

Before the student begins his or her work placement, the employer, the student and the teacher jointly develop a learning plan. This plan identifies the work skills and learning expectations to be pursued at the workplace and how they relate to classroom learning.

### **Which students are eligible?**

All students can participate and benefit from work experiences. For longer work experiences, students are screened to ensure that they have the maturity, interest, skills and knowledge needed in a work placement. Students also have to demonstrate their readiness for a placement with an employer.

“Our hat goes off to OYAP. It has really changed his life and has given him a secure future. Employers are now knocking on his door to have him in their workplace. That alone speaks for itself. If you work hard for what you believe in, dreams do come true!”

Richard and Francine Simon, parents

### **What are employers expected to do?**

Employers help demonstrate the work ethic expected of a successful and responsible employee, while providing a safe and healthy environment for the student. Some of the functions the workplace supervisor may perform include: training, mentoring, supervising and coaching.

### **How will this program work in a small business?**

The program requirements for students are the same regardless of the size of the business. The school maintains an ongoing relationship with the employer, providing support and problem-solving assistance.

### **Is there a cost associated with participation?**

No, there is no obligation for employers to pay students. However, some choose to compensate students for after-school or summer work, and some offer an honorarium. The cost of personal protective equipment may be covered by the employer.

### **Do employers have to pay for insurance and workers' compensation?**

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage is paid by the Ministry of Education for students on work experience, co-operative education, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship and school-work transition programs.

#### **For more information:**

[www.obep.on.ca](http://www.obep.on.ca)

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/passport](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/passport)

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