

University of Technology, Jamaica

Co-operative Education at UTech, Ja

"Partnering with Industry to produce work-ready graduates"

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**PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION
OF PROFESSIONALS THROUGH THE**

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME





Gaining Credited Experience through the Work and Travel Programme

There are several Work and Travel programmes administered by external agencies, which provide college and university students with opportunities to work in the United States during their summer vacation. These opportunities facilitate students obtaining greater financial stability, work experience and exposure to different cultures.

Many of our students at the University of Technology, Jamaica, particularly those enrolled in the Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) course of study, readily enlist in a Work and Travel programme as it provides them with the opportunity to finance their tuition and also to obtain Co-operative Education (Co-op Ed) / Internship credits. Co-op Ed is a very critical aspect of the HTM course. Students are required to obtain a total of 800 hundred hours (400 hours in year 2 and 400 hours in year 3) of relevant and professional industry experience which are related to their area of study and career goals. Fortunately for this group of students, the positions offered through Work and Travel Programmes are usually within the tourism, hospitality and food sectors.

The University as a condition for permitting students to use the work done on their Work and Travel Programme for Co-op Ed credits, require that students utilize specific agencies, as many of them are not all ideal for Co-op Ed engagements for many reasons. For instance, there might be anomalies in their operations which the University does not want to be a part of or students in the past might have had some bad experiences and the University has seen it fit not to continue business with them.

Generally, the University performs some form of scrutiny of the agencies which facilitate the Work and Travel Programme. This is to ensure that their background, their overall deliverables and their reputations are in keeping with what the Institution requires. The list of approved agencies is revised every year and can be obtained from the Student Services Division.

Students who go on the Work and Travel programme are monitored to ensure that the Co-op Ed requirements are met. For example, students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management (SHTM) are required to submit reports every two weeks. There is a template in which students are required to outline their objectives for the week, what they have learnt, how it coincides with the actual course outline and what are the recommended areas of improvement. They also have a final report which

has a research component. Finally, the students have to add their time sheet to the report. After the students have completed their four hundred (400) hours, their supervisors sign a document which verifies same. Background checks are also done on the entities that the students work with. Contact may be made with the site supervisors via the appropriate technologies.

Mrs. Rosemarie Headley-Smith is the School's Co-operative Education Co-ordinator for SHTM. When asked what are the most frequent comments received regarding the general performance of SHTM students on the Work and Travel Programme she stated that, "Our students are considered to be skilled and highly competent. They fit in easily and one of my observations over the two years that I have been School Co-op Ed Co-ordinator is that in a short time the students get a promotion They may go in as a line staff and after a week or two they are promoted to supervisors, so that is outstanding. Employers also continue to say that they like the practical exposure that the students have when compared to other universities.

"For the past several years we have had many students and they are all amazing!"- Steven Tross, Executive Chef, Cowfish Restaurant, New York

Kori Simms is a student of SHTM. She participated in the Work and Travel Programme in the summer of 2017 and was placed at Cowfish Restaurant, Hampton Bays, New York, where her duties involved conducting offsite catering events. Her main supervisor was Mr. Steven Tross, Executive Chef. In his report of her Internship, he commended the University for running an excellent programme and for giving students the opportunity, through the Work and Travel programme to work with his team. He states, "for the past several years we have had many students and they are all amazing! Kori has done a phenomenal job this season with us here at Cowfish. She always comes to work full of energy and with a big smile on her face, transferring her positive energy and vibes to others. She has been willing to learn everything possible all season long and has done a great job at whatever task she has been given! Overall she has been a blessing to say the least!"

According to Mrs Headley-Smith, the Work and Travel programme is a very good programme. In her concluding comments she states, "I hope it is something that will remain a part of UTech', Ja. s culture. It speaks volumes and I think it also opens up opportunities for Human Resource managers across the industry and across the world to see what substance our students come with."

Student Testimonials



I must admit that I was very nervous about the prospect of being selected for a Co-op Ed opportunity at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). Throughout the interview process, the only thing on my mind was what were my chances of being selected to take part in this great opportunity. This being my first 'real' job, I was ignorant regarding what to expect, and although I was confident in my accounting skills, the thought of entering the work world was still intimidating. However, the staff was quick to make me feel at home and did well to "bring me up to speed". I also took note of the highly professional work environment, and sooner than expected I felt reassured that I was in good hands. Very soon I was up and about fulfilling my assigned tasks in the Assurance Department where I worked for 4 months (January - April 2017). During this period I was mainly assigned to the auditing of major companies.

I must say that being on the frontline of auditing has blessed me with a wealth of knowledge. Being a part of the Co-op Ed Programme and working with PricewaterhouseCoopers has helped me to grow personally and has sharpened my organizational and time management skills which I am sure will bring about a valuable change in other areas of my life. If I were to make the choice to re-live this irreplaceable experience, I would do so in a heartbeat. I would recommend this programme to any student as a means to jump-start their personal and professional development. -

Tashell Greenwood, Final year student, B.B.A in Accounting (Major) and Finance and Banking (Minor)

My Co-op Ed experience was completed at the West Indies Alumina Company (WINDALCO). While there, I was assigned to the Technology Department. I was given a main assignment along with other daily tasks to work on. The main project was to do a thorough research and investigation of the clarifier tank that was out of service for over 10 years, with the aim to restore this clarifier to service. The other daily tasks included sample collection of hydrate and calcined alumina samples for particle size distribution (PSD) analysis. The experience and exposure gained was most beneficial to me. As aspiring chemical engineers, the bayer process is among the processes we learn in school and getting the opportunity to actually see the operation of the process has highlighted aspects of the theory that were abstract to me. I would recommend this programme for every student to gain the experience in their respective field because it has definitely enhanced my readiness for the working world." - **Orane Drake, 3rd year student, B.Eng in Chemical Engineering**



"Creating an experience of a lifetime" is the mantra which guides the operations of Half Moon Resort. Completing my 160 hours of work experience there last summer was truly an experience of a lifetime. I was placed in the front office department where I worked as a Telephone Operator. Among my duties were to record, calculate, and bill telephone charges to guests, answer and disseminate calls through the switchboard, and also to create and send out reports. Performing all these duties required me to have vast knowledge of the company's software which, with the guidance of my supervisor Mrs. Armstrong, I learnt how to manipulate. Being a Business and Computer Studies student, this experience was very important as I was able to utilize knowledge gained from several modules in my course of study. For example, duties performed such as of recording, calculating, and billing of guest telephone charges required some accounting skills which is one of my core areas of study. Exposure to the different software functions provided practice for the Computing aspect of my course of study. This exposure has given me a head start if I should ever encounter that particular system or a similar one in the future. I strongly believe that the Co-op Ed programme has assisted with my professional growth and development and will definitely contribute to my future success.

- Taneil Haughton, Final year student, B.Ed. in Business and Computer Studies

The Most Common Mistakes Made by Co-op Ed Students and How to Avoid Them

- 1. Not managing time well.** Just as it is sometimes difficult to juggle assignments for multiple classes, it can also be challenging to juggle the tasks associated with your Co-op Ed experience.

How to avoid it: Manage your time effectively by getting a handle on your tasks right from the start. Create a list of goals that you have to achieve. Once you've created that list, focus on your most important tasks first and try to take care of your easier, less important tasks at the end of the day.
- 2. Complaining about trivial tasks.** Another common mistake many Co-op Ed students make is to underestimate the importance of trivial tasks. These can include research, data entry or filing and although they might not seem that important, they are actually a crucial part of running a business.

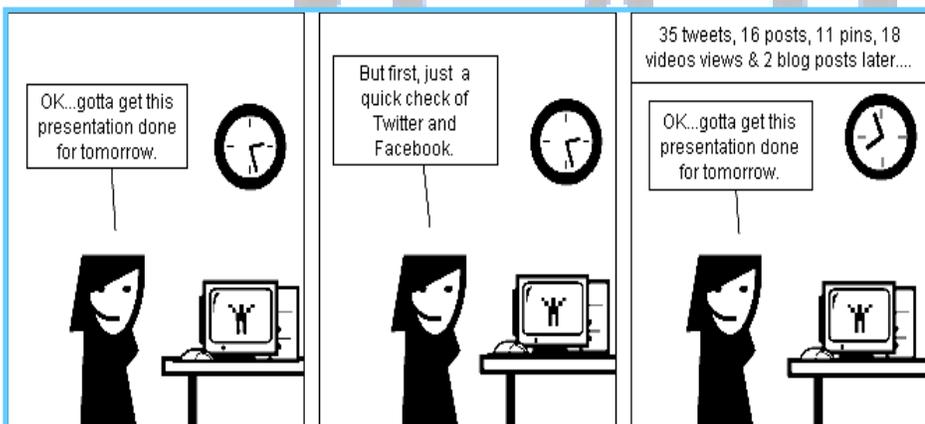
How to avoid it: Take pride in the tasks you perform — whether they involve filing or drafting emails — and be confident about the fact that you're adding value to company.
- 3. Not asking for feedback.** One of the keys to being successful in any role is asking for feedback on your performance and identifying ways that you can improve.

How to avoid it: Instead of waiting for your manager to bring up the subject of feedback, take the first step and ask them to weigh in on some of the tasks you're working on.
- 4. Dressing inappropriately.** What you wear to the office is a direct reflection of how you want your coworkers and supervisors to perceive you. If you look like you're dressing for a class rather than a job, you'll signal that you don't take your job seriously and create a bad impression for yourself.

How to avoid it: Abide by the dress code of the organization with which you were placed.
- 5. Use of social media and cell phones.** Time at work should be used for engaging in productive tasks, therefore one should try to avoid the distractions of social media and cell phones since these promote time wasting.

How to avoid it: Prohibit your use of social media sites and cell phones while on the job. Use your personal time for such activities.

Adapted from: <https://www.wayup.com/guide/3-common-internship-mistakes-and-how-to-avoid-them/>



Benefits of Co-op Ed to Employers



The benefits of Co-op Ed include:

- ready and cost-effective access to short-term employees for special projects.
- ready access to highly motivated students with sought-after skills.
- increased staff diversity.
- the opportunity to impact the quality and relevance of the School's curricula.
- the opportunity to screen students for fulltime employment.

G A R R E E R G O O R N E E R

Opportunity

by Michael Sage



Opportunity comes - opportunity goes,
 Which is the right one - nobody knows,
 Sniff out the good ones - use your nose,
 Then act on your goals - stay on your toes,
 Put plans into action - arrange them in rows,
 Don't be distracted - especially by foes,
 Expect a bumpy ride - don't see them as woes,
 By never giving up - your opportunity grows,
 The extent of your success - in time it shows,

Meet Our New School Co-ordinator



Mrs. Flo Angus
School of Business Administration (SOBA)

Meet Mrs. Flo Angus, Co-operative Education Co-ordinator for the School of Business Administration (SOBA). She was appointed to the post in January 2017, one which she fully embraces.

Mrs. Angus was asked to share briefly her thoughts and experience with the Programme so far.

S.M. What do you perceive to be one of your most important roles as a School Co-op Ed Co-ordinator?

F.A. As a School Co-op Ed Co-ordinator, I have a major responsibility to sensitize both staff and students within SOBA about the programme. I would have to say that it is a privilege for me and the introduction of the Programme to all SOBA students is a good effort on the part of the University.

S.M. What do you find to be most rewarding about the position?

F.A. What is most rewarding for me is when a student is successful in

securing placement with industry and is able to gain some work experience. Moreover, some students are subsequently able to secure more long-term job opportunities, which is tremendous.

S.M. What is most challenging for you as a Co-ordinator?

F.A. Well, so far, being able to respond to industry requests for students in a timely manner and improving the responsiveness of students to the programme have so far proven to be a little challenging. More staff support is crucial.

S.M. What change do you think is necessary to enhance the quality of the Co-op Ed Programme in your School?

F.A. The change I'd like to see is to have Co-op Ed built into **all** of the School's courses of study. Currently, the programme is only mandatory for students pursuing the Administrative and Information Systems Management specialisation. Students in other specializations will engage voluntarily. I'd also like to see this changed.

Interview conducted by Shadae Morgan

Student Editor's Note



The Co-operative Education Unit continues to work assiduously to provide Co-op Ed opportunities for the students of the University of Technology, Jamaica.

These opportunities not only allow students to achieve the desired learning outcomes but they also equip them with the necessary skills and competencies that will allow them to be more attractive candidates for employment. As such, I implore all students to make the best of the Co-op Ed programme and the opportunities presented.

We greatly appreciate the support of our new and existing industry partners, without whom these opportunities would not have been made available.

On the behalf of the Co-op Ed Unit, UTech, Ja., I wish for all our stakeholders, a most gratifying academic year as we continue *partnering with industry to produce work ready graduates.*

Shadae Morgan
Student Editor & 4th year Business and Computer Studies student, School of Technical and Vocational Education, Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies.

Summer 2017 Pictorial Highlights



BSc in Applied Science Student at the Ministry of Transport and Mining - Geology Division



BEng in Mechanical Engineering students at Windalco



BSc in Social and Economic Applied Statistics student at the Port Authority of Jamaica



BSc in Hospitality and Tourism Management student at Chocolate Dreams



BEd in Industrial Technology student at Greenway Environmental Management Solutions Ltd.



BSc in Applied Science student at the Environmental Technical and Analytical Services Ltd.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors of Co-op Ed Activities/ Events For The 2016/17 AY



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Bulletin Board

STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

- Co-operative Education (Internship Fair): October 2017.
- Upcoming Christmas placement period: December 11, 2017 to January 12, 2018.

STUDENTS

- Co-op Ed Awareness Day (Caribbean Sculpture Park)–November 23, 2017.