

# EARLY TALENT

I N S I G H T S

## The Co-op Prep Program Preparing Students for Work Term

WINTER 2024

Toronto  
Metropolitan  
University

Ted Rogers  
School of  
Management

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# ABOUT EARLY TALENT INSIGHTS

Early Talent Insights is a series of special reports supporting employers interested in attracting and retaining early talent.

With close to 13,000 students, The Ted Rogers School of Management (TRSM) is the largest Business School in Canada supporting a very diverse student population in downtown Toronto. We offer employers a robust and industry-relevant Co-operative Education program, in addition to numerous other ways in which to connect with our students.

Each report in this series leverages our rich data set including employment and labour market data and student intentions.

## About This Report

In 2022, we asked the Supervisors of our Co-op students what resources they would like us to provide them.

They shared the desire to learn more about our leading-edge *Co-op Prep Program*, as they had observed, first hand, the value it provided students while on a work term.

This report outlines our vision behind our *Co-op Prep Program* and the elements that make it successful in supporting students on their first work term.

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## A PREP PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR INDUSTRY

Our heavy investment in the development of the Co-op Prep program has helped significantly increase student and employer participation over the last five years.

With over 2,500 active students in the program, we are now the largest Business Co-op program in Ontario.

From a student's perspective, securing a Co-op role with a great employer is their number one goal, but from TRSM's perspective, ensuring students are successful while on work term is our primary focus.

The development of our Co-op Prep Program was based on direct feedback from industry leaders, who agreed that students should be ready to add value, from Day 1.

With a strong underlying theme of student safety and wellbeing, the self-assessments, live actor simulations, technical bootcamps, and peer mentoring are all fundamental to our mandatory experiential program.

This report highlights the four elements of our Prep Program and showcases the value it has for students on their 1st work term.

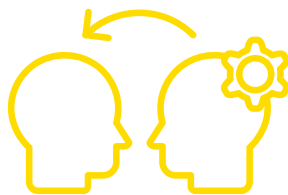
### ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM



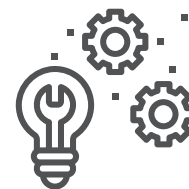
**Psychometric Assessment**



**Live Actor Simulations**



**Peer Mentoring**



**Technical Bootcamps**

# PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENT

In 2017, the Ted Rogers School of Management, with a desire to shape a strong cohort of future leaders, made the strategic decision to invest heavily in our Co-op program.

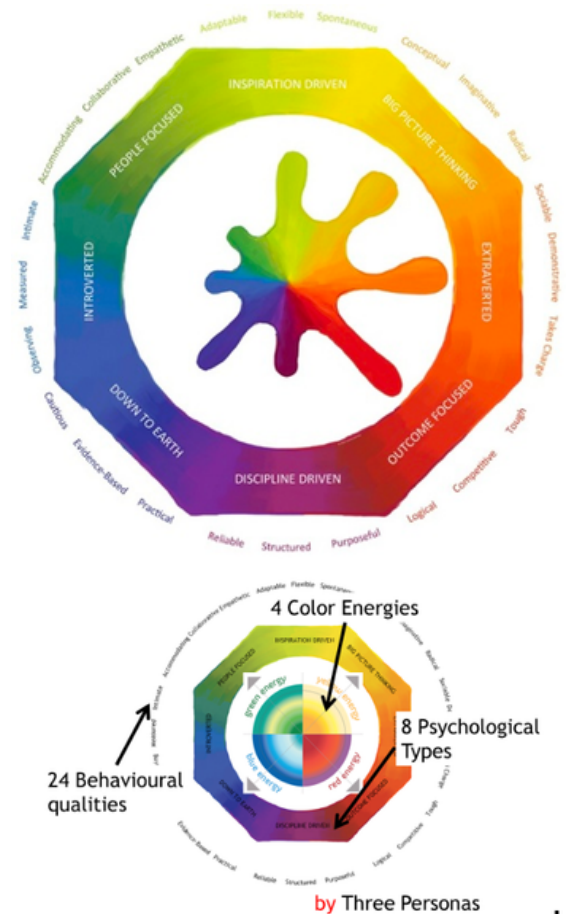
We embedded a self assessment (Lumina Spark) into the program, helping students uncover their strengths at an early stage in their exciting career journey. We went one step further and also integrated training on managing conflict in the workplace and building trusting, and productive relationships within a team environment.

Each student receives a personalized portrait of their whole personality and it speaks directly to them.

The tool is introduced immediately following their admission into the Co-op program and the Co-op team members, each certified in Lumina, facilitate workshops to enhance the understanding of the tool and to showcase its benefit.

As students are broken into smaller discussion groups, they quickly learn, even though they are all in the same program, that they have significant differences in personality and perspectives.

This workshop training tends to be an ‘aha’ moment for students, where they start to understand and appreciate diversity of thought.



## LIVE ACTOR SIMULATIONS

We recognize the value in creating ‘real-life’ scenarios for students to learn from. By using trained actors, we curate situations that feel very real for students, and in doing so, allow them the unique opportunity to learn how to deal with difficult situations, in a safe learning environment.

### **Example of a Simulated Scenario**

*You are a Co-op student working at ABC Telecom Inc. in the Corporate Project Department. Alex Hopper, Director, is your immediate Supervisor and you are meeting with him shortly. You are one month into your Co-op term and you are responsible for sending status emails to internal teams, and very senior staff members. You know who these senior staff members are, but have only really said “hi” to them before the meeting starts. You are not completely sure what the problem is, but you feel you may be in trouble as they have asked to see you privately in Meeting Room C regarding a recent email you sent out.*

Scenarios like this are presented to our Co-op students, and they are asked to prepare and practice their response. In this case, the student will walk into Meeting Room C, where their Supervisor, Alex Hopper (played by an actor) is waiting for them. The student reacts to what happens next and is then provided direct and constructive feedback on their approach. They are often provided the opportunity to do a retake, thereby leveraging what they have learned.

Although somewhat stressful, students have provided positive feedback on these live actor simulations and how they have helped them better prepare for and respond to challenging situations while on work term.



#### **Did You Know?**

Toronto Metropolitan University has its own 'live actor studio' employing more than 100 paid actors, many of whom are used in academic courses, executive education, and, of course, the Ted Rogers Co-op program.

## **PEER MENTORING**

The peer mentoring program involves more than 150 senior Co-op students, all volunteering to support students newly admitted into the program. They step up to volunteer for these leadership roles, and have accountability for 3-5 students each year.

The Co-op program is quite competitive, and typically students apply to almost 100 positions while seeking a 1st work term, so this team of passionate mentors provide students a shoulder to lean on, in addition to sharing tips on how to better approach their job search. They listen, teach, support and motivate.

The program also provides our student volunteer mentors with a meaningful leadership opportunity in which to practice their coaching of others.

## **TECHNICAL BOOTCAMPS**

Bootcamps offer students access to technical training intended to bridge the gap between academic curriculum and industry expectations.

All students in the Co-op program are required to complete at least three levels of Excel training (accounting and finance students complete additional 2-level programming in Power BI) before they start their 1st work term.

Badges are offered to students, who complete the Bootcamps and the Challenge activities - this form of recognition is something they can showcase to employers to demonstrate their commitment to continuous learning.



In addition to the Excel requirement, students have the option to participate in 12 technical programs including Python, R, Power BI, UX Design, and more. Our latest partnership with Microsoft Canada provides students with the opportunity to earn Microsoft Certifications in Excel and other topics.

## The Monthly Bootcamp Schedule

Participating in Bootcamps is an excellent way in which our students can demonstrate to you their eagerness to learn beyond the classroom. Almost all of our offerings are scheduled in the evenings and on weekends.

The following is a typical schedule for any given month of the year, Summer included.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 Excel BF 1	2 R 1 Power BI 1	3	4 Tableau 3 Tableau 4
5 Excel FM 1 Excel FM 2	6 Python 2 Agile/Scrum	7 Excel FM 3 Graphic/Visual Design	8 Excel BF 2	9 R 2 Power BI 2	10	11 SQL 1 SQL 2
12	13 Python 3 Tableau Challenge	14 Excel FM Challenge	15 SQL 3 Excel BF 3	16 R 3 Power BI Challenge	17	18
19	20 Python 4	21 SQL Challenge	22 Excel BF Challenge	23 R 4	24	25
26	27 Python Challenge	28	29 R Challenge			

## WISH TO LEARN MORE?

If you wish to learn more about the Ted Rogers Co-op program, and the process for hiring one of our students, please contact Jessica Kudlats, Director, Business Development and Program Engagement, at the Ted Rogers School of Management.

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Email: [jessica.kudlats@torontomu.ca](mailto:jessica.kudlats@torontomu.ca)



## We Offer 12 Academic Program Streams

The Ted Rogers School of Management offers employers the opportunity to hire students from each of the following program specializations.

- Accounting
- Business Technology Management
- Economics and Management Science
- Entrepreneurship and Strategy
- Finance
- Global Management Studies
- Hospitality and Tourism Management
- Human Resource Management and Organizational Behaviour
- Law and Business
- Marketing Management
- Real Estate Management
- Retail Management

➤➤➤ Visit [Ted Rogers Co-op](#) to learn more about the hiring process.

➤➤➤ Visit [Early Talent Insights](#) or scan the QR Code below to learn more about other publications and reports.

