March 26, 2020

CEWIL Canada recognizes and applauds the many efforts being undertaken by our institutional WIL partners to adjust and adapt support for our students and employers in the face the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of our students and employers is our priority; as such, CEWIL Canada recommends all co-op programs (accredited or not) adjust or accommodate any work term period affected by COVID-19. WIL programs, students and employers should not be negatively impacted or penalized during this extremely difficult time.

The Accreditation Council acknowledges the need to show this flexibility and leniency and will not jeopardize any institutions’ accreditation status during the time frame impacted by COVID-19. Adjustments will qualify as ‘exceptions’ during the extenuating pandemic time.

In this light, adjustments and accommodations that may be considered for both students and employers include any/all of the following:

- Ending the current work term early or starting the upcoming work term late (i.e., it is okay to reduce the number of hours below 420 hours and/or the number of work weeks to fewer than 12; adjustments to be assessed/approved on a case-by-case basis by your Co-op Program)
- Shifting students to working remotely (strongly recommended that employers conduct a regular check-in with each of their students working in this manner)
- Completing work term report requirements, as required by your Co-op Program, must still be met including employer evaluations (in this light, Co-op Programs may want to consider alternate requirements given the unique situations in which students may find themselves)
- Revising co-op student job duties to accommodate remote work. Some possibilities include:
  - Developing research projects related to the impact of COVID-19 on the organization and/or the community it serves
  - Assisting organization’s operational transition to online formats
  - Supporting businesses with the movement of staff to remote locations
  - Delaying the start of the upcoming work term (e.g., May to August) (i.e., will result in a reduction in the number of hours/weeks)

Thank you very much for all that you are doing in support of our students and employers.

Sincerely,

Scott Davis, Accreditation Council Chair on behalf of CEWIL Canada