



Operating Principles for Education–Business Partnerships.

Developing and Maintaining Effective Partnerships Between
K–12 Educational Institutions and Businesses



Why Operating Principles?

The Operating Principles describe some of the keys to successful education-business partnerships in eight areas: inception and development; operation; intellectual property; resources and financing; governance; people management; communication; and assessment and evaluation.

Operating Principles can reduce conflicts and misunderstandings and assist partners in collaborating effectively.

The Conference Board of Canada, the International Partnership Network, and the Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education invite and encourage educational institutions, businesses, non-profit organizations, government organizations, community groups, and others to use the Operating Principles to provide a basis for effective partnership development and operation.

Effective education–business partnerships are ones that:

Inception and Development

- Clearly identify benefits for all partners
- Identify learners' needs and take action to enhance learning outcomes
- Develop through consultation with all partners and stakeholders to meet partnership objectives
- Identify appropriate partners, according to their mandates, missions, skills, and resources
- Set clear objectives that support the partner organizations' goals
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for all partners
- Gain commitment of leaders in the partner organizations and build grassroots support
- Articulate expectations in formal or informal agreements (e.g., contracts, Memoranda of Understanding, verbal agreements)
- Identify possible challenges and risks

Operation

- Provide adequate support for partnership participants
- Understand the bottom-line needs of all partners
- Draw on the expertise and resources of partnership-supporting organizations (e.g., government funding bodies, economic development agencies)
- Adapt to changing circumstances and manage unintended consequences
- Use appropriate practices, tools, and resources to ensure sound project management
- Manage expectations by developing realistic timelines for partnership activities and deliverables
- Identify, learn from, and apply successful practices as the basis for improvement
- Align decision-making with partnership goals and objectives

Define clear roles and responsibilities for all partners.



Education–Business Partnerships

Education–business partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships between employers and educators that are designed to enhance learning for students and other learners. They may involve other education stakeholders as partners, including students, employees, parents, communities, labour, and government organizations.

Most education–business partnerships are cooperative relationships in which partners share values, objectives, human, material or financial resources, roles and responsibilities in order to achieve desired learning outcomes.

Intellectual Property

- Clearly define ownership and use of intellectual property at the beginning of the partnership

Resources and Financing

- Identify and allocate sufficient resources to ensure successful completion of activities
- Leverage broad-based and diverse resources and funding (e.g., government funding bodies) where available
- Employ good practices in accounting and finance
- Enact policies and practices for managing financial returns (e.g., the allocation and use of monetary benefits arising from partnership outcomes)

Governance

- Share ownership to build commitment and encourage participation
- Decide on the basis of consensus
- Identify and mitigate governance risks

People Management

- Create a partnership team with a clear mandate and continuity of membership
- Recruit champions and advocates in partner organizations
- Identify and manage personnel requirements and risks (e.g., student and employee turnover)
- Involve individuals with varied experience who can bridge educational and business environments
- Train participants to carry out their roles and responsibilities, and ensure that they are fulfilling them
- Build trust through face-to-face meetings, especially as partnerships are being established



Share ownership to build commitment and encourage participation.

Communication

- Define communications needs and have a communications component at each stage of partnership activity
- Promote a two-way exchange of knowledge and ideas
- Identify and communicate confidentiality requirements to all participants (including students and employees)
- Share evaluation results regularly with all partners and stakeholders
- Build in personal recognition and feedback to participants
- Recognize and celebrate the partnership's successes and acknowledge challenges

Assessment and Evaluation

- Develop meaningful performance metrics
- Measure and evaluate performance to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement
- Evaluate partnership goals and activities throughout the duration of the partnership
- Use evaluation results to decide whether to continue or disband the partnership

Education–Business Partnership Tool Kit

Operating Principles is part of a tool kit of materials developed by The Conference Board of Canada. See also:

Ethical Guidelines for Education–Business Partnerships

Evaluating Education–Business Partnerships: Value Assessment Process

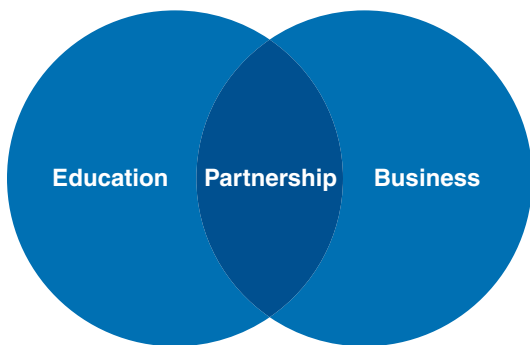
These tools can be found at www.conferenceboard.ca.

How to Use Operating Principles

Operating Principles is a tool that helps partners make effective decisions. It outlines the keys to success for education–business partnerships. Partners can use it to create, develop, and maintain partnerships.

How Do These Operating Principles Fit With Organizations' Codes of Ethics, Practice, and Conduct?

The principles listed in this document are designed to complement existing codes. They can be used by partners to address aspects of their partnership that may not be treated in their organizations' own codes.



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About The Conference Board of Canada

The Conference Board of Canada is the foremost independent, not-for-profit applied research organization in Canada. We help build leadership capacity for a better Canada by creating and sharing insights on economic trends, public policy, and organizational performance. We forge relationships and deliver knowledge through our learning events, networks, research, and customized information services.

About the Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education (SPSE)

The Conference Board of Canada's SPSE is a major five-year initiative that examines the advanced skills and education challenges facing Canada today. The SPSE involves a broad collaboration of public and private sector stakeholders working together to think through the development of a national strategy.

For more information on SPSE, visit: www.conferenceboard.ca/spse.

About the International Partnership Network (IPN)

The IPN is an independent, not-for-profit global network of education, business, and community partnerships. It encourages and facilitates partnerships both at the local level and internationally. The IPN has an internationally constructed board of directors, currently drawn from nine countries and five continents.

For more information on the IPN, visit: www.iebpn.net.

