Managing Industry Project Relationships

The Graduate Engineering Students Professional Development Club (PDC) [http://gespdc.com/](http://gespdc.com/) takes a very active role in connecting with potential clients, organizing projects, and vetting/recruiting students (first pass at resumes to find the right students with the right skills/interests).

Here is how it works when there is a potential company or organization to interact with.

The company does not need to worry about course codes, semester schedules, or university bureaucracy in general. The Project Professor and the students handle that.

A student leader in the PDC will be assigned to be the contact / liaison for the company. The Project Professor is actively involved and available, but the company gets much better support and response time with a student leader as the interface.

The company communicates the types of skills/students they are looking for and the type of tasks and/or projects they would like worked on.

PDC recruits students and vets resumes, and possibly organizes teams for the company to review. In some cases, information sessions, workshops or training are organized to recruit and ensure students fit what is needed.

Students either work directly with company, supervised by the company ... or they work at the university, mentored at the university and check in with the company on an as needed basis. Whatever suits the company best.

Students can receive course credit for a graduate project based on what they are doing with the company. The course credit requires some elements beyond what they do for the company in order to receive GNG 5902 Industry Internship Project credit (6 units): background academic research, formally approved project proposal, two interim presentations and a final graduate project report. Feedback/evaluation from the company is worth up to 30% of the final grade.

Students should get their GNG 5902 Project Proposals approved early in the work, but the actual registration to the course and grade for the course does not occur until the semester in which the project is completed. This makes it flexible for companies when work starts and how long it lasts. The company will sign off on the project proposal and it can be structured in such a way so there are no issues around IP or confidentiality that the company wants to keep private.

Students are allowed to be paid during their internships, but since they receive course credit... it is not required (Ontario law allows for unpaid internships when students receive course credit). The main motivation for the students is to get meaningful experience on their resume and put themselves in a good position for full-time jobs at the company (or elsewhere) when they graduate.

If students are paid during the internship, companies qualify for the "coop" subsidy the federal government provides. All engineering graduate professional programs (non-thesis) are registered as federally recognized internship/coop programs listed on the Government of Canada’s list of recognized programs at [https://www5.psc-cfp.gc.ca/coop/noitcanoituitsnimargorphcraes.do](https://www5.psc-cfp.gc.ca/coop/noitcanoituitsnimargorphcraes.do) (Search program = Masters, Institution = University of Ottawa). Our international students qualify for and regularly obtain COOP Work Permits to allow them to be paid full-time while they work off campus. The grad office provides them a support letter that documents the fact that their program is a recognized internship/coop program).