



## Breaking Barriers: Accessibility and Hiring Students with Disabilities



Photo: Sarah Hiebert

Sarah Hiebert, Senior Accessibility Coordinator at the University of Manitoba, has a decade of experience supporting students with disabilities. She shares valuable insights in our interview on hiring and working with individuals with diverse abilities.

**Can you share insights into the unique skills and perspectives that students with disabilities bring to the workplace? How can these attributes contribute positively to a team?**

Students with disabilities tend to have unique perspectives and a great deal of resilience and problem-solving skills, which are developed from a (sometimes) life-long

experience of finding creative solutions to navigating barriers that they encounter in everyday life. These attributes are an important contribution to organizations, as they provide a diverse perspective and may help identify new opportunities for growth. 22% of Canadians over age 15 have a disability [according to Statistics Canada](#) – this is a significant amount of consumers with buying power. Organizations that hire inclusively benefit from those perspectives and ideas that can ensure they are not missing opportunities to attract and serve a diverse customer base.

**In your experience, what are some common misconceptions that employers might have when it comes to hiring students with disabilities? How can organizations overcome these challenges to create a more inclusive and supportive work environment?**

I think some of the most common misconceptions out there are that hiring students with disabilities will mean having to provide costly accommodations, and manage unreliable staff.

In reality, most accommodations are actually low- or no-cost. These can include adjusted schedules, access to noise-cancelling headphones, or providing clear and concise written instructions. Other accommodations

may be technological, but in many cases, students already have the required assistive devices and software and they can bring those tools with them to work.

With regards to reliability, #AbleTo, a partnership matching employers with qualified students with disabilities, found that 85% of employees with a disability have average or above-average attendance records, and retention rates 77% higher among people who have a disability in organizations with accessible employment practices. Considering the current costs of recruiting and training new staff, the benefits are clear.

**How can organizations ensure they are creating an inclusive workplace that complies with relevant regulations while fostering a culture of diversity and equity?**

Employers have a duty to accommodate under the [Manitoba Human Rights Code](#) as well as the [Accessibility for Manitobans Act \(AMA\) Standard for Employment](#).

Organizations should review their hiring practices ensuring compliance with these requirements, and consider how the language used in job postings and on websites and other publications may be interpreted with regards to inclusion. There is a big opportunity here to put the message out there that your organization values diversity and inclusion.

**To learn more, please contact CDC at [asper.cdc@umanitoba.ca](mailto:asper.cdc@umanitoba.ca).**

# CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE NEWS



## Elevate Your Workforce: Lunch and Learn

**Date: Friday, February 16th, 2024**

**Time: 12:00 - 1:00pm | Virtual**

Are you looking to enhance your team with top-tier talent and infuse fresh perspectives into your projects? Look no further! We invite you to join us for an exclusive webinar tailored for employers like you.

### Unlock the Potential of Asper Co-op Programs:

- **Understanding the Dynamics:** Explore how Asper Co-op programs' function and discover the unparalleled benefits to your organization.
- **Talent Pipeline Boost:** Learn how Asper students can become a valuable asset, offering skilled and motivated individuals ready to make an impact.
- **Deciphering the Differences:** Delve into the distinctions between BComm and Masters Co-op students (MBA, Master of Finance, Master of Supply Chain & Logistics) to find the perfect fit for your team.
- **Tailored Projects for Success:** Uncover the types of work and projects best suited for each Co-op student, ensuring optimal performance and seamless integration into your workflow.
- **Cost-Effective Hiring:** Gain insights into wages and subsidies available, making hiring Asper Co-op students a cost-effective investment for your team.

### Why Attend?

This complimentary "Lunch and Learn" webinar is your gateway to understanding the Asper Co-op advantage. Engage with our Co-op team, ask questions, and discover success stories from Employers who have already experienced the transformative impact of Asper Co-op hires.

### RSVP Today!

Don't miss out on this opportunity to elevate your organization to new heights. Secure your spot today by registering with [asper\\_cdc@umanitoba.ca](mailto:asper_cdc@umanitoba.ca) by February 9, 2024.



We look forward to virtually hosting you and helping you find your next great hire through Asper Co-op!

## Asper Co-op: Your Next Great Hire

**Now is the peak hiring time to secure top talent through the Asper Co-op Program for Summer 2024 (May-August 2024).**

We have co-op students at both the BComm and Master's levels studying a variety of majors including Finance, Accounting, Human Resources, Marketing, Supply Chain, Management of Information Systems, and more, who can bring fresh perspectives and solutions to the issues facing businesses today.

We will continue to accept job postings until all students have secured a co-op placement, however the best way to maximize exposure on your job opportunity is to post by the following deadlines:

- BComm Co-op (Undergrad students) – by February 8, 2024
- Master's Co-op (Grad students) – ongoing until May 5, 2024

Submit your posting to the Asper Co-op office at [aspercoop@umanitoba.ca](mailto:aspercoop@umanitoba.ca) or directly on the [Asper Career Portal](#).

The [Asper Co-op Program website](#), [Co-op Program Brochure](#) and [Co-op Employer Guide](#) have detailed information on how to hire a student. Co-op students have been pre-screened and admitted to the program based on academic excellence, professionalism and communication skills. They also receive training in professional workplace readiness.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to add a dynamic and driven individual to your team! For questions regarding our co-op programs, contact us at [aspercoop@umanitoba.ca](mailto:aspercoop@umanitoba.ca) or (204) 474-8521.

Thank you to all existing co-op employers who hired Asper Co-op students in 2023.

**Thanks to your partnership, a total of 378 co-op students gained meaningful co-op work experience in 2023!**