

## Fidelity Next

### Be the Star Student: How to Optimize your Co-op Experience

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**Announcer:** Hello and welcome to Fidelity Next – a Fidelity Investments Canada podcast.

Fidelity Next is a podcast for post-secondary students, where we'll provide you with the tools you need to navigate your impending careers successfully in today's landscape.

Today show is the second of two episodes that were planned and recorded by our Summer 2022 co-op students. We'll hear directly from Fidelity's own co-op students on how to succeed and stand out in your co-op role. A panel of returning co-op students share their backgrounds and experience working at Fidelity.

Leading the discussion today is Eric Wood, recent Toronto Metropolitan University grad who has recently joined Fidelity full-time. Eric is joined by Jeffrey Leong, University of Toronto, Sam Dupuis, University of Guelph, and Khadijah Balogun, Toronto Metropolitan University.

Over to Eric to start the show, but first: the views and opinions expressed on this podcast are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect those of Fidelity Investments Canada ULC or its affiliates. The podcast is for informational purposes only, and should not be construed as investment, tax, or legal advice. It is not an offer to sell or buy, or an endorsement, recommendation, or sponsorship of any entity or security cited. Read a fund's prospectus before investing. Funds are not guaranteed. Their values change frequently, and past performance may not be repeated. Fees, expenses, and commissions are all associated with fund investments.

[00:01:33]

**Eric Wood:** Welcome to this edition of Fidelity Next. I'm your host, Eric Wood, and I'm in the last week of my third co-op term with Fidelity. Today's topic is Star Student: How to Maximize your Co-op Experience. Think of it like this. You applied for the co-op role. You interviewed for the job. You got the job. Congratulations but now what? You're here in the company, how do you stand out amongst all the other interns and how do you get the most out of your experience? Well, we have three returning students, our subject matter experts here today, to tell you exactly how they did that. I'll get them to introduce themselves, starting with Jeffrey, Sam and then Khadija.

[00:02:12]

**Jeffrey Leong:** Hi everyone. I'm Jeffrey Leong and I'm honoured to be a panelist today. I am a third-year student at the University of Toronto studying in commerce, and I've done two terms at Fidelity. The first one in TAP, which is in client services and now I just completed my second term in marketing.

[00:02:33]

**Sam Dupuis:** Hi, everyone. My name is Sam Dupuis. I'm a fourth-year student at the University of Guelph and I'm in my second placement at Fidelity Investments, currently in advisory sales and last fall within finance.

[00:02:45]

**Khadijah Balogun:** Hi, everyone. My name is Khadijah Balogun. I go to Toronto Metropolitan University, in my fifth year. I've been at two positions at Fidelity. My first one was at advisor sales and I'm currently wrapping up my position at operations.

[00:03:02]

**Eric Wood:** Great. Thank you for those introductions, guys. Let's jump right in. Each of you, as you mentioned, have completed two four-month co-op terms with Fidelity. Can you tell us after the first co-op term why you decided to continue your journey at Fidelity through an additional term? Let's start with you, Jeff.

[00:03:19]

**Jeffrey Leong:** I think what stands out to me the most about Fidelity and returning was its company culture. I just think that, from top to bottom, everyone was very friendly to me. Starting in my first term, I was just exiting first year and this was my first experience as a co-op. Everyone was willing to help, everyone was willing to invest in me as well as other students that I got to meet. There's multiple, I think, up to around 60 students that you get to bond with and get to see virtually every day. To this point, I've become really good friends with a lot of them. Finally, I think what had me come back was the ability to go see multiple divisions and be able to see different parts of the company, so that's why I returned.

[00:03:58]

**Eric Wood:** Amazing. Sam, how about you? Why did you decide to come back?

[00:04:03]

**Sam Dupuis:** It sounds like a bit of a cliché but I would say I really did feel like I was part of a team. As students, we hear the stories of students getting placements with big firms and everything seems well and grand heading into the placement but there ends up being not enough work for a student to do and it ends up being a poor learning environment. That was not the case for me at Fidelity at all. I was given meaningful work and treated like a full-time employee. I was having insightful conversations with my team, senior leadership as well as the other students. I found I had a massive learning curve just from my daily work but also some of my soft skills like presenting and just professional conversation really came a long way from all the learning and development courses that Fidelity puts on for the students.

[00:04:51]

**Eric Wood:** Great. I know sales definitely gives you a number of opportunities to present during the summer, so that's always a great way to work on those skills there. Khadijah, how about you, why did you decide to come back?

[00:05:00]

**Khadijah Balogun:** I think for me it was more of the people. Everyone was very welcoming and everyone was willing to help, was willing to teach you something. I think everyone can agree with me that the people are great at Fidelity as well as the fact that we could move within departments. For example, in my advisory sales team I was able to work with three small teams with three different people in each team and for operations I was able to work with one team but more of a big team and very different from advisor sales. I think that's the reason why I decided to continue my journey at Fidelity.

[00:05:37]

**Eric Wood:** That's great. Let's jump to you, Sam, here. You completed two co-op terms with Fidelity, both very different roles. One on the finance team, one on the sales team. One's a technical role, one is more of a client-facing role. Can you sort of speak to your experiences working in both roles and some of the similarities and differences?

[00:05:57]

**Sam Dupuis:** Yeah, for sure. In my previous role as an analyst within finance, working on a small team supporting client services, fund oversight and information systems. It was a technical role in a sense that there was set deliverables daily, weekly, pre-close, post-close, and then for quarterly requirements as well. Some of those deliverables were pulling reports, making calculations and kind of manipulating data to put it in a more presentable form.

On the other hand, with advisor sales, it's the more client-facing role. Your job is really to just provide value and support the advisors and your wholesaling team. That comes in the form of answering questions for advisors, creating fund proposals and just informing advisors about Fidelity products so they can make the right advice for the suitable Fidelity product for their clients, who are the end investor.

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Even if you aren't getting requests from advisors, there's still ways you can drive business. I think part of advisors sales is finding the best way to spend your time. As students you're not dedicated to one single team like I was with finance. I was actually supporting five different teams. It's kind of a dynamic role where you have to balance the workload of all five teams. That being said, advisor sales is not really a defined role. You kind of make the most of your experience by adding value based on what your skill set is and also what you're interested in.

[00:07:32]

**Eric Wood:** Sounds good. Sounds like you got two very different experiences, but I think both of those sort of sides of the fence will really help you going forward.

Khadijah, again, as a returning student you've done co-op terms, you've done one in adviser sales, where Sam currently is, and now you're in operations, or as we like to call it, ops. What take away from your first term have you been able to apply in your current role?

[00:07:54]

**Khadijah Balogun:** Both roles were very different, I would say, but kind of like a general take away that I took from my first into my second co-op term was just being patient. Sometimes you're getting into a new role, you might not know everything. You should give yourself the benefit of the doubt, just being patient in learning and being patient in just understanding your work. Everyone is willing to help, as I said, so just be patient in learning that it takes time and just practice and ask questions.

I would also say, what I took away from my first term into my second term was organizing and prioritizing. Both roles were different but I would say just me learning how to stay on top of my work in my first role and kind of just maybe making a list of things that I have to do every day and prioritizing what comes first and what's important, I kind of took that away from my first term and then incorporated it in my second term. That has really helped me with my time management skills as well. I think those are really good things that I took away from my first into my second.

[00:09:05]

**Eric Wood:** That's good. Yeah, I definitely think time management organization are such valuable skills and to have learned them in your first co-op term and you can take them right to your second co-op term, you've already got a head start on the strong competition there.

Jeffrey, you're currently working with a marketing team here at Fidelity. Last summer you worked in our TAP Group, which is part of client services. How has your experience been working with two different teams within the company?

[00:09:28]

**Jeffrey Leong:** I think that TAP provided me a much different experience in marketing. When I say that, I was given three weeks of thorough training, basically being prepared for anything that they were able to throw at me in a TAP position. From that perspective, it's a lot different in the sense that, in TAP, I was dealing with financial and non-financial requests, so it's more of a task-based role. When I think about marketing, it's a lot more of a project-based type position. Basically, I'm working in multiple different teams whether that be social, whether that be search, or whether that be part of the digital team. It was a lot more project-based and I think that, for me, provided two different types of ways to display my skills. Both gave me different benefits and I appreciated both of them very much. That's the difference between both of them.

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**Eric Wood:** Great. Good to hear. It looks like all three of you guys have got such varied experiences from each team and I think that really helps you become more well-rounded as an employee and a person as you're going forward. Let's jump into our next question here. Receiving a return offer demonstrates personal and professional success during your first co-op term. As returning students, can speak to some important skills and characteristics of a successful co-op student?

[00:10:45]

**Sam Dupuis:** One thing I definitely found is have good organizational skills. Have a good filing system that allows you to respond to requests quickly and with a high degree of accuracy. The rest is really just up to you. Take an invested interest in your work and ask a lot of questions and just be curious. Go into your work with a helpful mindset that allows you to make a lot of points of contact to be proactive and kind of identify where your team needs help so you can be part of the solution. My one last thing would be just be accountable for the quality of your work. It's your opportunity to kind of show that you have levels of attention to detail and that you can critically think. That's going to come through your work and you should always show it in a professional manner.

[00:11:44]

**Eric Wood:** Absolutely. I think they're such important skills to have and your teams really appreciate when you show those and show that you're developing those throughout the term. Jeff, how about you? What do you think are some important skills and characteristics of a successful co-op student?

[00:11:56]

**Jeffrey Leong:** I think that I found within both of my terms at Fidelity that open communication really stood out to me as something that you need to have in order to be successful. What I mean by that is that, for me, I've done two terms virtually and if I didn't have that open type of communication, managers and other peers and higher-ups, they would have no idea that I here to work and put my best foot forward. I think open communication via teams or Zoom as well as

Outlook emails, it's a great way of letting your peers and your manager know that you are here to do work and you're here to make a difference. I think, that is what, for me, stood out.

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**Eric Wood:** Great. Everyone at Fidelity is so friendly. You can really chat with anyone and talk to people about work, ask them what projects they have going on and maybe they'll ask you to help with that or even give you inspiration to do something on your own and take your own initiative. Great, great advice, Jeffrey. Khadijah, how about you? What are some personal and professional characteristics that you've proven and that can be successful in a co-op student?

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**Khadijah Balogun:** For me, I think it was more of networking, not just with your team or just your department, just networking in general with the whole company. Everyone is pretty willing to meet up with you or set up a chat with you or a short meeting with you. Just explore different, other parts of the company and make yourself stand out and make yourself known. I think that really goes a long way because then you're setting yourself up to be memorable, not just to your team but to everybody at Fidelity. I think that was an important skill that I think is necessary for you to be successful as a co-op student as well as taking the initiative on your work and for your team.

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Sometimes your workload may be a bit lighter than other times but don't be afraid to reach out to your manager or your team and say, hey, I don't have too much to do today, maybe I could help out with something else or learn something. I think that really puts you out there, in terms of you showing that you're willing to learn and showing that you're always available to help out more.

[00:14:11]

**Eric Wood:** That's some great advice. Let's go right back to you, Khadijah, here. As university students, we're always looking for ways to differentiate ourselves, to sort of stand out from everyone else, can you speak to your involvements in school clubs and organizations and how it's led to your co-op roles at Fidelity?

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**Khadijah Balogun:** I was actually the president of the African Student Association at Toronto Metropolitan University. It was actually something that the interviewers asked me about during my interview. They asked me about my leadership roles and I think that kind of made me stand out compared to people who are not really involved in school clubs. It shows that you're proactive and it shows that you're able to take initiative and stand out as a leader. I think that was really an important key aspect of something I could put on my resumé that made me kind of different from the usual work experience.

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**Eric Wood:** I know you've continued your work on Aspire and I hope you continue to do your great work going forwards with Toronto Met University. Jeffrey, personal development, it goes a long way in regards to how you present yourself in the workplace. Can you talk a bit about how your volunteer experience and how you've been able to continue that at Fidelity?

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**Jeffrey Leong:** First, I just wanted to say that volunteer experience is definitely very important for your personal development. When I was applying for a role at Fidelity, they were looking for things that made me attractive for a candidate. Up until this point, I didn't have any professional office experience or anything of that nature, so they look towards something like volunteer experience. I was able to discuss my volunteer experience at SickKids where I was part of a pediatric study for kids with multiple sclerosis.

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I just think it was important to show my softer skills that I was willing to get out, not only work in the office, diversify myself and then at Fidelity now, it's proven that volunteer experiences will follow you wherever you go. At Fidelity, I was able to offer my volunteer experience at Variety Village along with multiple other students, which I found very beneficial as well as I would assume that others did, too. It's just all-in-all important to volunteer at a young age to get started and basically build up your personal development.

[00:16:48]

**Eric Wood:** Great, agree. That volunteer experience sounds great. It's good to really explore the other sides of yourself outside of work as well to make sure you're becoming more a well-rounded person. I think that can even help in your work life, your personal life and really anything you do. It's really great to hear about your volunteer experience.

Let's jump to you, Sam. We talked about personal development with Jeffrey, how about professional development. It's a really large focus for students who are applying to co-op jobs. Can you share what you've done to continue your learning and development courses outside of the ones you take throughout school?

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**Sam Dupuis:** Yeah, Eric, that's a good point and definitely something I was curious about as a younger student. Prior to working at Fidelity I had an internship as an auditor and I found that I didn't really have the technical knowledge to complete tasks with the quality and with the speed that I wanted to. I just kind of found myself wondering, there's got to be a better way to do this. I took it upon myself to basically take courses in just about everything Microsoft Office. I was doing pivot tables, LOOKUPS, macros, dashboards. I even took a couple of courses in Outlook and PowerPoint.

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There are all kinds of free courses out there, LinkedIn, YouTube or Promaxis Training, you name it. I found that I had a really great learning curve once I was able to start applying those skills from the courses into my daily work. I was able to follow along through the courses while I was working to kind of output better work and increase the quality of what I did. In a matter of a few months, I went from very little technical knowledge to working in probably one of the more technical roles at Fidelity as a co-op in a financial analyst.

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**Eric Wood:** It's good to hear that you really got that prep done and that you really were able to help yourself get a head start on the role. I'm going to throw a question back to you quickly here, what are some things through the Microsoft Office suite, whether that's Outlook or Excel or any of the other Microsoft Office products that you think students may not know but would be really helpful for them to take a class on, learn, if it's a function, a feature, etc.

[00:19:02]

**Sam Dupuis:** I would say anything you can learn in Excel is going to help you at some point in your career. One function I didn't know about at all until working in Fidelity was XLOOKUPs. I think once you become more familiar with them, you'll realize how much time you'll save by using them regularly.

[00:19:20]

**Eric Wood:** Yeah, I agree. VLOOKUP is great but I think we're moving away from it in sort of the Excel industry. XLOOKUP is a new wave, so to all of our viewers, definitely get on that. It's definitely easy, it's a great time saver there. Let's look backwards, let's say, reflecting on your time at Fidelity, looking back eight months ago or eight terms ago when you started your first day with Fidelity. Can you *[audio cuts out]* *[what you would say to yourself when first?]* entering the role? Jeff, let's start with you.

[00:19:55]

**Jeffrey Leong:** I think I would say to myself back from when I first started my first day back in May, I would just say to myself, don't be scared to reach out. I think I've already touched on this. Everyone from top to bottom of Fidelity, the other students, directors, managers, whoever, they're more than willing to help you and invest in you. I just think it's important to reach out to them if you have an interest in someone's certain position or their department. I think it's important to be able to pick their brain on their experiences, their skills, their knowledge, anything, their softer skills. It's important to ask questions and be proactive in that way. Specifically, if you're looking to return, like I am, reaching out to someone in a specific department, it's just important to show interest and express your interest towards potentially moving into a position like that. I just think don't be scared and know you're able to talk to anyone.

[00:20:56]

**Eric Wood:** Exactly. Fidelity is such an open company in terms of that. As you mentioned, if you're looking into a different role why not talk to people who are already in that role, the managers who manage that role so that they can tell you what they're looking for in a candidate. They can tell you what they look for in a successful employee in that role before you even get there, you're just getting a head start on it. That's some great advice there, Jeff.

Khadija, how about you? Day one at Fidelity, what would you tell your past self?

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**Khadijah Balogun:** I think for me, my first co-op term, I had the experience of I came into the role and I thought maybe I should know everything or maybe I should be well-rounded about everything, so I was very afraid to ask questions based on my work. I saw that it kind of started to affect the quality of my work. I would say the advice I would give my past self would be just don't be afraid to ask questions, especially when it comes down to your work because you're not expected to know everything. Don't be afraid to ask questions. It'll really help the quality of your work.

[00:21:57]

**Eric Wood:** Absolutely. There's no reason to be afraid. Everyone's here, everyone's happy to answer and everyone just wants the best work to be done and the best for you. As I've experienced, even personally, I love to ask questions and you ask questions to all these people, you learn so many things and it just helps your work future. That way you ask the question, now you learn the answer and that way you can take that into your work and sort of add to your knowledge bank as you continue to go forward. That's some really great advice, Khadijah. Thanks for sharing that. Sam, how about

you? Like I said, day one at Fidelity, you're just entering the role, what would you go back and tell yourself and some advice you'd give yourself, so that way you can have even more success going forward.

[00:22:33]

**Sam Dupuis:** Absolutely. I'm going to probably take a similar approach to Jeff and say, just get involved right from the beginning. I know in the first week it may be difficult to reach out to people and you might be hesitant to have conversations with someone you don't know or try and get involved in workload where you haven't actually received any training. The reality is co-op terms are very short and they go by very quick. By the time you fully understand the role, the term will be over. Just kind of hit the ground running. In your first week, introduce yourself to as many people as you can, make connections, and kind of understand what their role is so that you can maybe leverage them later on in your term.

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I found some of my most rewarding experiences have been working with people outside of my department. For example, in sales this term, I worked with marketing to help kind of understand and promote one of our investment products. I found it was a really good learning experience as well as I kind of learned if marketing was maybe a department I wanted to work in. At the end of the day, I was still able to make connections that will last in my entire worker career.

[00:23:50]

**Eric Wood:** Sounds like a great opportunity and like you said, it's open like that. You have those availabilities within Fidelity to go and help another department, assist another department, see what they do and get involved in what they do. I'm really glad you got that experience with us.

Let's jump to our final question here. A bit of a fun one to end it off. Khadijah, what was your most memorable experience in the co-op program?

[00:24:12]

**Khadijah Balogun:** I think my most memorable experience would have to be when I was in adviser sales. Our team used to host events, kind of like virtual events for clients and those used to range from cooking events or a comedy show. I was invited and also helped to organize those type of events. I think that has been my most memorable experience, just the events were always a fun time and I also had a lot of fun kind of helping to organize those.

[00:24:42]

**Eric Wood:** Absolutely. I know Sam and I have been involved in those events being in sales this summer. They're always a lot of fun to sort of bring those people in for our clients. As co-op students, we get to take part in the event ourselves so it's a really good add-on, that we're not just sitting back and organizing it. We actually get to take part in as well so it's a lot of fun. Sam, how about you? I hope I didn't steal that from you there but what was your most memorable experience in the co-op program?

[00:25:06]

**Sam Dupuis:** No, the sales events have been really great and interesting to kind of be a part of the whole experience putting them on and also attending. I would say the highlight, or the thing I'll remember most is probably after eight months of working completely remote, finally getting to meet the students in person. We got to meet in a less formal setting, volunteering at Variety Village, and then also going out for dinner with all of you afterwards was definitely nice

to finally make the connection and meet all of you. It just kind of shows there's no substitute for meeting in person, regardless of all the Zoom calls and the team's messages we've had all term.

[00:25:46]

**Eric Wood:** Exactly. Well, we loved meeting you too, Sam. It was definitely a great experience volunteering with Variety Village. It's such a great organization in Toronto, as well as meeting the entire co-op team and meeting all the students. It was a really, really good experience. Jeff, how about you? Let's end it off here. What was your most memorable experience in the Fidelity co-op program?

[00:26:08]

**Jeffrey Leong:** I personally found that throughout both of my terms, something that I had in common was the paint cabin, and I can see yours, Eric, in the background there. Great work, by the way. I found that when I look at these paintings it reminds me of the students that came along with it as well as my position, the managers I had, the connections I made. I just think it's a great way for me to, like, during the school year I can just look back at it and be like, I had such a great summer term with Fidelity and when I return next summer, I hopefully can do another one, and that will remind me of my third term. The paint cabin was definitely a great experience.

[00:26:42]

**Eric Wood:** Absolutely. It's really great that you guys all have three completely different memorable experiences in the co-op terms. It really shows the breadth of Fidelity's co-op terms. There's so many things that we didn't even have time to mention here that we had the experience to be able to do. It's been really great to have that through our co-op program.

Well, thank you, Jeff. Thank you, Sam. Thank you, Khadijah and to our producer Rebecca as well as Emily behind the scenes. It's been a pleasure having you on this session of Fidelity Next, to give our viewers a ton of advice on how to stand out and succeed in their co-op roles.

Thank you to our audience for watching today and if you ever have any questions, feel free to find us on LinkedIn. Ask us anything, we'd love to help. Until next time on Fidelity Next.

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