Let's Talk Business

For Ted Rogers School Students

These reports describe industry sectors and career paths of interest to Ted Rogers School students and alumni. Each report leverages BCH employment data and the expertise of our staff. This collaborative effort engages staff, students, alumni and the University Business Librarian.

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A Day in the Life of an Operational Efficiency Student

We had a conversation with Zahra Adelzadeh, a Ted Rogers student, in her 5th-year of the Business Technology Management Co-op Program.

She has currently worked as an *Operational Efficiency Co-op student* in the Operations Excellence and Innovation team at *CIBC Mellon.*

CIBC Mellon is a Canadian company exclusively focused on the investment servicing needs of Canadian institutional investors and international institutional investors in Canada.

Within this report, Zahra shares what type of work she does, the software platforms she uses, and some advice for students who are interested in learning more about this interesting career path.

in **Zahra Adelzadeh**

CIBC MELLON

Q: **What do you do on a "day-to-day" basis in your current role?**

A: As part of the Operational Excellence & Innovation team, I worked with people that helped make the working lives of the rest of the groups in the company better by analyzing and streamlining processes.

In my day to day, I got an opportunity to work on multiple projects that use various technologies and tackled different problems. I got a chance to gain experience through the whole project lifecycles and improve my project management skills while learning more about fund accounting and what goes on in the back end of large financial institutions.

One of my projects was launching an enterprise-wide onboarding tool to improve tracking and accountability throughout the process by leading and directing a team of 3 Co-ops overseeing work allocation, resource management, and deliverable management.

Another was decreasing a team's workload by ~18% through creating automation in Excel VBA that reduced duplicate effort in error management and reporting processes.

Moreover, I developed a CRM tool impacting 700+ relationships using MS Lists and Power Automate that improved transparency and reporting.

I also automated an accounting review process using Alteryx that improved control and oversight over 24+ daily fund NAV validation reports by removing room for manual errors.

All these projects required continuous communication (verbal and written) with more senior team members and the client teams to be able to clearly understand requirements and build a customized solution.

Q: **What technology platforms do you use in your role?**

A: **Office 365** [Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, Excel (and Excel VBA)] to report creation, documentation, effective communication, and analytics .

MS Teams for team communications

MS SharePoint for projects (internal and external), automation and recordkeeping/storage

MS Power Platforms (PowerApps, Power Automate, PowerBI) for automation projects

Alteryx for automation projects – similar to Power Automate but optimized for accounting and reporting processes and mathematics
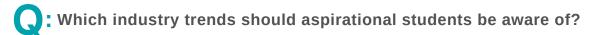
Appian for portal creation and automation projects – similar to Power Apps but optimized as a portal hosting automated processes, record creation and storage

Q: **How does your industry impact the world?**

A: The financial industry, specifically investment servicing is the backbone of all banking, investments, and funding needs internationally. Custody, multicurrency accounting, fund administration, recordkeeping, pension services, securities lending services, foreign exchange settlement, and treasury services are tasks that are needed to keep the international financial industry accurate and transparent.

Technology can help facilitate that and improve the lives of employees, customers, and regulatory bodies. I believe everyone needs to understand that Technology is an essential part of every organization, and it's not just computers and tech help desks – but something that can impact and improve everyone's lives.

Q: Which industry trends should aspirational students be aware of?

A: Students should be aware of how technology is changing and how it can improve different processes. Understanding technology is more than the IT help desk is key.

Understanding the basics of coding logic, machine learning, and process automation (RPAs), and being able to utilize technologies that facilitate easier ways of implementing them is key to thriving in any role.

Q: What advice would you provide a Ted Rogers School student who aspires to work in your industry upon graduation?

A:
- Try everything! There are different roles and try to always be open to learning new things.

- Be involved with the team and the company you work in (Women's Network, volunteering, team lunches, etc.)

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The Information Technology Management Student Association (ITMSA) represents and educates students on a career in Business Technology through offering events and workshops.

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Co-op Coordinator Contributor
Melina Elia
Melina is a Co-op Coordinator with the Business Career Hub with over 10 years of experience in career development. She has worked for government-funded employment agencies and post-secondary institutions. Melina prides herself on being approachable, supportive, and strategic in planning next steps for a successful outcome.

Student Contributor
Muneera Ali
Muneera is a Business Technology Management student who has worked as a Project Coordinator at the Business Career Hub. She is interested in self-development, gaining meaningful experiences, and strives to pursue a career in the ever expanding field of Information Technology.