

## Information for teacher sponsors

Supporting students to compete in the Canadian Biology Olympiad (CBO) might initially seem daunting but the support you need to provide is limited and it is hoped that the competition is not a huge burden on you. The CBO competition include the preparation of practical portfolios for which you will supervise the students and writing the National Biology Competition (NBC; <https://www.biocomp.utoronto.ca/>). For this last part, your only role is to ensure your school has registered for the competition. Otherwise, students will study from home using a good first year university textbook and past NBC exams available on their web site.

For the CBO portfolios, students are expected to design and carry out the practical labs on their own. You should not be guiding them through the labs or providing specific references to them. You will need to provide them with materials and supplies as they request them but they should be working independently on the labs. Your role is supervise them and ensure they work safely in the lab but not to help them complete the labs. You can demonstrate general lab techniques but you should not be guiding them through the labs. The time that you spend in the lab should be a perfect time for you to catch up with marking and planning.

### Things you should be doing

- supervise to ensure the students are performing labs safely, so they do not hurt themselves, hurt others or damage equipment
- provide materials and equipment to the students at their request and ensure they know how to use the equipment
- provide general resources and point them in possible general directions
- taking video's of the students completing the lab according to student's instructions
- encourage the students and help them stay on a reasonable timeline. The portfolios will take many weeks to complete to the level required to be competitive
- remind them that it is the experience of doing the labs that is the reward. Only 4 students get picked for the international competition
- ensure the labs are completed at your school unless prior approval by the CBO has been given.
- Sign each Lab Cover Sheet certifying that the student perform the work on their own.

### What you should not be doing

- coaching students through labs or while taking the videos
- editing or giving advice about their lab write ups
- giving them exact procedures to follow

The time necessary for the students to complete the portfolio varies from students to students. But most students will need to spend between 4-10 h/week in the lab from February through April to complete the portfolios.