

**CO-OPERATIVE  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAM**

**STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**



**NVIT**  
NICOLA VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**SHARING KNOWLEDGE  
PREPARING LEADERS**

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**The following additional documents and work sheets for Co-op students are available for download on Moodle or the Co-op Education website:**

1. Co-op work term tips and techniques
2. Co-op work term portfolio work sheet
3. Co-op work term networking work sheet
4. Co-op work term transferability skills work sheet
5. Work term report guidelines
6. Co-op application package
7. Co-op employer manual
8. Employer written evaluation of student
9. Employer application for NVIT Co-op wage subsidy
10. Tips for the last two weeks of your work term
11. Tips for maximizing your work experience

# Co-operative Education (Co-op)

Congratulations on becoming a Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) Co-operative Education student! The commitment of NVIT staff and faculty to Work Integrated Learning is a reflection of NVIT's overall vision, mission, values and strategic direction.

NVIT's Co-operative Education department is committed to assisting students gaining relevant industry work experience and in achieving career success.

This handbook provides Co-op students with information to enhance the partnership between themselves, the employer and NVIT. **Students enrolled in the Co-op program should read this handbook and keep it for future reference.**

## What is Co-op?

Co-operative Education is a program that formally integrates a student's academic studies with work experience with participating employers and is an educational model rather than a job placement strategy. Co-op Education promotes continuous learning through the integration of classroom and applied work-based learning. Periods of full-time study on campus alternate with periods of full-time paid work experiences off campus, in jobs related to the student's field of study. Both the employer and the institution guide workplace learning, allowing students to put into practice new levels of skill and knowledge. While the goal is to develop high calibre, well-trained graduates ready to assume productive careers in a dynamic and demanding work market, all parties benefit from this work and learning model.

Students who enroll in Co-op may participate in up to four work terms including an optional international work experience term. Work terms are for **credit** and are taken after successfully completing the COOP 101, Co-operative Education Workplace Preparation. The goal of the Workplace Preparation course is to provide the students with the appropriate tools to successfully secure a work placement. You only have to do Co-op preparation once.

Each work term will require student goal setting, an individual on-site evaluation; a work term report and a performance evaluation from the hosting employer.

Students who do not have a mandatory Co-op work term as part of their program must apply to enter the Co-op program. You will receive credit and a Co-op designation on your transcript after completing Co-op preparation and at least one Co-op work term.

The Co-op coordinator will review your application and you will receive the results via email. Once accepted into the Co-op program you will be **required to register** and successfully complete the mandatory Co-op course (COOP 101). COOP 101 is a one-credit course and One-credit **tuition\* will apply**. Students who do not successfully complete COOP 101 will not be eligible to accept a Co-op work term. Students will be assessed a tuition\*\* **fee based on a three credit course elective for each Co-op work term** (COOP110,120,210,220,240).

## Fees

Check online for the most up-to-date fee schedule:

<https://www.nvit.ca/about/policies/secivadmissionfees/c317feesandchargesforinstruction.htm>

### COOP 101:

Tuition - \$267.54

Lab Fee - \$30

Student Fee - \$20 (if a student has already paid the max \$60 for semester, this is not applicable)

\*Total Cost: \$317.54

### COOP 110, 120, 210, 220 or 240:

Tuition - \$267.54

Experiential Learning Fee - \$275

Student Fee - \$20

\*\*Total Cost - \$562.54

**Note:** Text book costs are additional to tuition fees.

Students enrolled in a Co-op Work Term are considered as having a full-time course load status for the purposes of funding, regardless of the number of credits assigned to the course.

More facts on Co-op can be found on the [ACE-WIL](https://co-op.bc.ca/students/) website: <https://co-op.bc.ca/students/>

## Academic/Work Sequences

Students may apply for the Co-op placement program during their first academic term. Students who meet the Co-op program criteria<sup>1</sup> are then enrolled in the Co-operative Education Workplace Preparation course.

Work Terms will be offered to seasonally restricted careers such as the Professional Chef program, for one or more terms. This will fulfill the ITA industry work hour requirements so that students can obtain their ITA certification.

As a small institution, the NVIT Co-op program is flexible and students may complete one Co-op work term after their first year of a certificate program or can do two or more work terms during the Summer, Fall or Spring semesters during their two-year program.

### Sample Schedule for Certificate or two-year diploma programs

Year 1			Year 2		
Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
Academic	Academic	Co-op	Academic	Academic	Co-op

### Indigenous Professional Cook Level One

Indigenous Professional Cook 1 (PC 1)	PC 1 – Industry Experience
28 weeks (240 theory/600 practical)	Minimum 400 hours (Mandatory) Can be completed in Summer, Fall or Spring (one or more)

## Benefits of Co-op

### Student Benefits

- a well-rounded education, enriched by practical application of classroom learning;
- opportunities to gain relevant employment skills and realistic expectations of the work force before graduation;
- opportunities to test and gain broader understanding of career options, often in a variety of employment settings;
- maturity and self-esteem as productive members of the work force as well as confidence and skills developed through working with others;
- documented practical experience, a résumé, job search skills and a network of contacts upon graduation;
- financial remuneration which help to defray educational costs.

### Employer Benefits

#### Reduced Recruitment and Hiring Costs

- employers enjoy access to a year-round supply of highly motivated and capable students from many different disciplines to perform specific tasks or projects;
- employers can select from a group of applicants who have already met above average academic requirements and have completed some post-secondary training as well as some preparation for operating effectively in the workplace;
- students can be employed for work terms of x, y, or z months and, depending upon their academic schedule, may be available for 2 consecutive work terms;
- employers have a cost-effective means of evaluating future employees – an extended interview;

<sup>1</sup> Co-op admission requirements include a combination of minimum 2.33 GPA and application documents.

### *Effective Human Resource Management*

- employers can meet short-term needs due to vacation schedules, transfers, promotions, training commitments, peak workloads or special projects by hiring co-op students;
- employers have the ability to increase effective utilization of permanent employees and an opportunity for employee development in the area of (co-op student) supervision;
- Co-op students bring enthusiasm and a host of new ideas and approaches which can have a positive effect in the workplace.

### *Investing in Our Future*

- employers share in the training and development of our students to help them become productive members of society and potential leaders;
- employers are considered co-educators as they provide learning opportunities beyond the bounds of the classroom;
- Co-operative Education provides the opportunity for employers to directly influence to the educational process; suggestions on how to make curriculum more relevant or improve the pre-employment training are encouraged.

## ***Roles and Responsibilities***

### **Co-op Student expectations on work term**

- Conform to all of the conditions and rules that apply to employees in the organization;
- Exercise ethical workplace conduct and follow all required safety procedures;
- Set goals and outcomes for learning at the workplace;
- Work on enhancing their academic, professional and personal skills;
- Maintain employer confidentiality at all times;
- Accept feedback and suggestions for improvement in a positive manner;
- Participate in work site visits with the Co-op Coordinator;
- **Resolve any problems or issues that may arise at the workplace in a prompt, professional manner;**
- **Advise the employer and their Co-op Coordinator of any concerns with their work assignment or environment as soon as issues arise;**
- Successfully complete all of the requirements of the work term course as specified in the course outline.

### **Co-operative Education Coordinator Responsibilities**

- assist in preparing students with appropriate skills for their work terms;
- monitor and evaluate the students' work terms and the learning outcomes achieved;
- assess and evaluate the work term, work term report as per learning outcomes achieved;
- foster fair and equitable treatment of students and employers through the placement process;
- facilitate development of relevant work placement opportunities;
- assist students in preparing effective and professional cover letters and résumés;
- assist students in identifying realistic career goals based on the student's interests, skills and abilities;
- assist students in preparing for interviews;
- assist students in developing a network of contacts for work placements and future employment.

### **Employer Responsibilities**

For a co-op work term to be successful, the supervisor and the student must establish an effective relationship. For the majority of placements, the student becomes an employee of the employing organization and is expected to be treated as any other temporary employee regarding benefits and other employment requirements as defined by the Employment Standards Act or a Collective Agreement. As such, the employer assumes responsibility, as they would for any other employee, for the period of the co-op employment, and students accept the responsibilities of an employee.

In order to increase the student's productivity and facilitate learning, it is recommended that employers:

- at the outset, advise the student with regard to all issues of confidentiality in the workplace and ensure that any non-disclosure agreements are signed prior to the commencement of work;
- prepare the student's co-workers and other staff for the arrival of the student;

- provide the student with an orientation to the workplace, including an overview of the organization (e.g., mission statement, products, etc.), physical layout, relevant personnel, safety practices, and the duties or tasks expected during the work term;
- provide a supervisor for the co-op student who will oversee the student's work and discuss expectations for the work term with the student and, on a regular basis, give the student feedback on how he/she is doing, including areas of strength and areas which require improvement.

### Learning Environment

- assist students to set realistic learning objectives and provide relevant learning opportunities;
- acquaint the student with relevant resources and materials.

### Evaluation of Learning

- participate in the work-site visit or follow-up measures by the institution to assess the student's progress and performance;
- complete a final evaluation of the student's performance during the work term, which they are encouraged to discuss with the student;
- discuss with the student the topic of the work term report and, if necessary, may be required to evaluate the work term report if considered confidential.

## Co-op Placement

- All students accepted into Co-operative Education must complete Co-operative Education Workplace Preparation a 20 hour, one-credit career management course prior to their first work term. **Attendance is mandatory.**
- Students must complete a minimum number of work terms in their diploma to achieve their Co-op designation. Students in a 2-year diploma program must complete a minimum of 2 work terms in order to receive their Co-op designation.
- Students must maintain full-time status (3 courses or more) to maintain eligibility for the Co-op program, and maintain a cumulative GPA minimum of 2.33. Transcripts are reviewed following each academic term.
- Students must submit an application for the Co-op program and authorize the release of their résumé, transcripts and attendance records to the Co-op Education Department and to prospective co-operative education employers for the duration of their program.

## Student Responsibilities Pre-Work Term

Co-op students are expected to look for suitable work placements with the help of the Co-op Coordinator. By becoming an active participant in the job search, students will learn more about conducting a proactive job search. The Co-op student is accountable to identify and confirm their work placement. To assist the student, counseling, job search skills and résumé writing assistance are made available by the Co-op Coordinator.

**Co-op positions may be one of those found by the Co-op Coordinator and posted through the Co-op department or a position found by the Co-op student. Students are encouraged to locate and secure their own work placement.** During certain periods of the business cycle, job placements may be harder to secure. Jobs posted through the Co-op department are a competitive process and in many cases NVIT students will be competing with students from other post-secondary institutions.

***Remember, when you apply for a Co-op job you must send me your application prior to submitting. This is important as I need to coordinate your work term with the employer as well as coordinate the funding (if needed). If you receive a job offer or an invitation to an interview, you must let me know.***

### Job Postings

- NVIT uses Outcome Campus Connect, an Experiential Learning Management Platform ([experience.nvit.ca](http://experience.nvit.ca)). This means students have access to a searchable job database. You will learn how to use this during your COOP101 course.

- Job postings are posted for a limited period of time as new postings arrive.
- Co-op students are expected to review posted job descriptions on an ongoing basis. It is the student's responsibility to check postings frequently for new job postings.
- Each job description will have a due date for submitting a cover letter and résumé for the position. All positions require a cover letter unless otherwise stated.
- Job postings indicate the name of the employer and the specific address. Students who are interested in a particular position will post their cover letter/résumé and any other application documents, as per the required posting procedures.
- Applications received are then forwarded to the prospective employer by Co-op staff.
- Employers notify the Co-op Coordinator of the student(s) they wish to interview and suggest convenient times and location where the interview is to take place. Students will be notified of interview schedules. While some interviews will take place on campus, most employers prefer to have students interview at their place of business. Out of town interviews might be set-up through telephone or video conference.
- If employers arrange the interview with the student directly, the student must inform the Co-op Coordinator about the interview(s).
- After interviewing is complete, the employer submits the name(s) of the students(s) he/she/they have chosen. The student is asked to contact the Co-op Coordinator to discuss the job offer.

### Accepting a Position

- Students are expected to accept a job offer once it has been extended. Students wanting to withdraw from a Co-op competition must do so by contacting their Co-op Coordinator immediately following the interview with the employer.
- Job offers must be accepted or rejected within 24 hours.
- Once the student has received a position offer from an employer they are expected to contact the employer to discuss the exact terms of employment. Normally, the employer will formally indicate by letter, the conditions of employment.
- When an employer makes a job offer, the student makes a firm commitment to that employer for the period of the placement.

## Priorities during the last month of COOP101-Co-op Preparation

1. **Register and pay for your Co-op Work Term! You and the employer cannot apply for the wage subsidy without doing this first.**
2. Find a Co-op or potential Co-op job(s) to apply for.
3. Send me your cover letter and resume before applying for the job as well as a copy of the job description.
4. I will connect with the employer to introduce them to co-op and give them the employer manual and your resume/cover letter.
5. If you get an interview I should be notified.
6. If you get a job offer, I should be notified.

### Employer Wage Subsidy:

*There is a process for applying for funding and the online paperwork must be completed as soon as possible, if an employer is counting on the money.*

1. Both you and the employer must go online to the funder website and apply for the funding. You need to talk to me first so I can direct you to the correct funder.
2. **It will take 2-4 of weeks** to find out if you are approved, **APPLY AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE-FUNDING CAN RUN OUT!**
3. If not approved, there is a small amount of funding that can be applied for through NVIT, but you need to be rejected by the other funder first.

4. **Many funders require additional reporting to be done by the employer and the student during the middle and at the end of a work term! Please keep on top of this, as your employer is counting on the funding in order to be able to pay you. Each funding organization is different, you must find out what the expectations are and put it in your calendar to complete!**

#### Assignments:

At a minimum you need to submit:

1. Cover Letter
2. Resume
3. Portfolio (optional)
4. Mock Interview - use behavioural questions - if you want me to do the interview with you, let me know.
5. Job application
6. Proof story worksheet
7. Your co-op student application package (not your registration)

**All these assignments are required to help you be successful at obtaining a job!**

## Basic steps required, when you find a job placement!

1. Register in Co-op 110 (or COOP120/210/220/240, depending on your year). You will need to do this in order to get a letter from NVIT for the funder in your funding application. Most funders require this.
2. You and your employer must apply for the WAGE SUBSIDY funding.

- ENRT students and employers apply to ECO-CANADA for funding. <https://www.eco.ca/employment-programs/student-placement/>
- Other students and employers apply to Magnet or Career Ready (Technation) for funding.
- **Note: employers with this program apply first then invite the student.**
- <https://magnet-swpp.smapply.ca/prog/summer 2020 - student work placement program />
- <https://itactalent.ca/our-programs/work-integrated-learning/for-employers/ready-to-apply/>

3. Funding applications could take up to 2 weeks to process after both you and the employer apply. If you start work prior to having funding in place, please make sure you contact the funder and let them know you have applied but need to start work prior to getting approval. This should be fine. Each funder has its own processes but the overall SWPP<sup>2</sup> rules are the same. Information Contacts are on the funder website, and they respond quickly.

- **Many funders require additional reporting to be done by the employer and the student during the middle and at the end of a work term! Please keep on top of this, as your employer is counting on the funding in order to be able to pay you. Each funding organization is different, you must find out what the expectations are and put it in your calendar to complete!**

4. Please review your student manual. The manual is in Moodle under your COOP 101 course or on the NVIT Co-op web page. You have a couple of things you need to do.

<sup>2</sup> Student Work Placement Program <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/work-integrated-learning.html>



- send me a copy of your job offer letter and terms of employment,
- send me a copy of your work term learning objectives,
- after starting work, talk to your supervisor to arrange a site visit for the co-op coordinator. This can happen mid-way through your work term,
- be prepared to **reflect on your experience**. This is your work term report and can be done in various formats,
- **you need to do the reflection piece (work term report) in order to get a passing grade in Co-op,**
- at the end of Co-op you will be given a chance to do an assessment of your work term,
- the employer will be given a chance to do an assessment of your performance on your work term, and
- at the end of your work term you also must send me an updated resume; two new contacts for your network; an updated skills sheet, and identify two new things that could go in your portfolio (optional).

## Work Term

The value of the Co-op job as a learning experience depends to a great extent on the way the student approaches it. Attitude is a major determining factor of the quality of the work experience. Co-op students are encouraged to give some thought to what they want to learn, the areas in which they wish to gain experience and their own personal qualities and capabilities they may wish to improve. By doing so, students will be able to set realistic and achievable learning and career objectives.

The value of the work term will be greatly enhanced if realistic and worthwhile objectives are established and actively pursued. Just as the Co-op student has objectives and expectations, so too does the employer. Consequently, one of the students' objectives should be to make certain that the employer's objectives are met.

### Communications

It is up to both the student and the employer to have regular contact and/or performance reviews so that the work term progresses successfully. It is the responsibility of the Co-op student to maintain contact with their Co-op Coordinator throughout the work placement period. Students are required to contact their Co-op Coordinator regarding any problems they may be having and are unable to resolve.

### Transportation and Living Arrangements

Transportation to and from the work place is the Co-op student's responsibility. Some out-of-town employers may pay return travel expenses. Living accommodations are also the student's responsibility, although some employers may assist in finding rental accommodation. Students are encouraged to discuss relocation/transportation issues with their Co-op Coordinator.

### Failure to Report

After accepting a position, any Co-op student failing to report to the employer on the date work is to begin will be reported by the employer to the Co-op Coordinator. Students who miss employment without notification or a valid reason will lose the job and may not be eligible to participate in further Co-op work terms.

### Vacations

Students requesting vacation time must have the approval of the employer and the Co-op Coordinator in advance, at the beginning of the work term.

### Strikes

Whether a student should cross a picket line and work, or observe the picket line and not work, is a decision the individual student makes in consultation with the Co-op Coordinator. The role of the Co-op Coordinator in this situation is to inform the student of the potential consequence of either decision.

## Resignation

If a student considers quitting a job before the scheduled end of the work term, they must consult with their Co-op Coordinator before taking any action. Failure to consult prior to resigning may lead to failure of the work term and an unsatisfactory (U) grade.

## Termination/Layoff

If the employer terminates or lays off a student, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the Co-op Coordinator immediately. A termination will be reviewed and assessed for future action by the Co-op Coordinator in conjunction with the student and the employer.

### To successfully complete a work term, students must:

- complete term of employment;
- receive a minimum of “satisfactory” on their evaluation from their employer;
- submit a satisfactory work term report by the deadline; and
- pay their work term tuition fees.

## Student Work Term To-Do List

Due Date	Activities to Be Completed	Estimated Time To Complete
Week One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work Term <b>*Learning Objectives:</b> to be submitted to Co-operative Education Coordinator (to be e-mailed to Co-op Coordinator).</li> </ul>	30 minutes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Description of current and possible future duties, compiled in conjunction with your supervisor (to be e-mailed to Co-op Coordinator)</li> </ul>	30 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site visit, arranged by student, in conjunction with your Co-op Coordinator and Supervisor</li> </ul>	1-2 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete questions for site visit and be prepared to discuss your <b>learning objectives</b></li> </ul>	30 min
Last two weeks of EACH Work Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure employer has completed your evaluation</li> </ul>	30 min
At the completion of your work term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student evaluation (submitted by the employer)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transferable skills worksheet</li> </ul>	1 hour
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Updated résumé</li> </ul>	2 – 3 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of at least 2 networking contacts and/or references</li> </ul>	15 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify two items to include in your career portfolio (if desired)</li> </ul>	15 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflection on your career plans &amp; <b>learning objectives</b></li> </ul>	30 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student assessment of work term</li> </ul>	30 min
	<p><b>REQUIRED EACH WORK TERM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work term report – (see Work Term Report Guidelines, Appendix 5)</li> </ul>	8-10 hours
<p><b>*Check out the Co-op Tips and Techniques handout for help on creating your Learning Objectives.</b></p>		
<p>Much of the above work can be done in the third and fourth month of your work term, distributing your work load more evenly.</p>		