

**CO-OPERATIVE  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAM**

**EMPLOYER  
MANUAL**



**NVIT**

NICOLA VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**SHARING KNOWLEDGE  
PREPARING LEADERS**



***Interested in participating?***

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## **EMPLOYER FORMS**

The following forms can be found on [nvit.ca/coopforms](http://nvit.ca/coopforms):

- **Employer Written Evaluation of Student**
- **Employer Evaluation of Student**
- **Employer Application form for NVIT Co-op Wage Subsidy**

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) Co-operative Education Program! This handbook is intended to provide employers with information about the partnership between themselves, students and NVIT. The commitment of NVIT staff and faculty to Co-op is a reflection of NVIT's overall vision, mission, values and strategic direction.



Shannon is doing multiple consecutive co-op work terms. She is currently working with the Scw'exmx Tribal Council/ Timx' Research as a Referral's Administrator.

Noreen Cross, Finance Manager,  
Scw'exmx Tribal Council

*"We at Scw'exmx Tribal Council have been very happy to provide training for Co-op students and the wage subsidy program has been a big help in providing the means to do this."*

## CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

NVIT's Co-operative Education department is committed to assisting students gaining relevant industry work experience and in achieving career success. Students are eager to learn, help and grow your business! We sincerely thank all of the employers who have decided to participate as partners and co-educators in NVIT's Co-operative Education program. Your commitment in assisting students to achieve learning outcomes in the work place is much appreciated by all involved!

Co-operative education blends on-campus learning with practical applied learning. We link highly motivated students with employers in various fields. Co-op students have the opportunity to alternate their study terms with paid, monitored work terms in industry, non-profit, private business, and public sector organizations.

Co-op is a flexible, cost-effective partnership between employers, educators and students. Typically, Co-op work terms are 4, 8 or 12 months of full-time, paid employment beginning in May, September or January.

Our Co-op coordinators assist organizations with finding the most suitable candidate for a work term. They will post your position, organize and host multiple forms of interviews, assist with follow-up and offers of employment.

## **BENEFITS OF CO-OP FOR EMPLOYERS**

Employers have found Co-op to be an effective recruiting model, providing many benefits to their organization!

### **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 4, 8, or 12 months and, depending upon their academic schedule, may be available for 2 to 4 consecutive work terms;
- Employers have a cost-effective means of evaluating future employees – an extended interview;

### **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.



# EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Hiring a student as a Co-op student does not require much more work on the employer's behalf than hiring a non-Co-op student. Added responsibilities include:

- Completing an evaluation of the student's work term
- Participating in a site visit by a Co-op education coordinator around the middle of the student's work term
- Applying for wage subsidy funding, if available.

## ● **Employer/Employee Relationship**

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 for a successful work term, we recommend that employers:

- 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 the 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.

## WAGE SUBSIDIES

Wage subsidy programs provide temporary wage subsidies to employers who hire and provide work experience and skills enhancement of eligible program candidates. To be eligible for a wage subsidy program, BC employers typically must meet the following criteria:

- Be a registered business with a legal business name and number
- Have been in business for at least one year
- Have an open position that is normally part of ongoing business operations - Net New is waved during COVID-19
- Confirm that the client would not have been hired without a wage subsidy
- Offer a full-time position (minimum of 35 hours per week) - exceptions during COVID-19
- Offer the likelihood of long-term employment - exceptions during COVID-19
- Pay a reasonable, competitive wage



## COVID-19 Funding Updates

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have announced changes to many of the funding programs in order to support businesses, not-for-profits and community organizations. This means more funding, faster access to the funding and more flexibility.

Since the specifics continue to change rapidly to adapt to these unusual circumstances, we recommend that you contact each funding organization directly for the most current requirements and opportunities.

## Where to get funding?

Considering hiring a Co-op student for your organization? Both the Provincial and Federal governments have a commitment to encourage opportunities for Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning and you may be eligible for a subsidy.

### ● ACE-WIL

Association for Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning BC/Yukon (ACE-WIL) maintains a website of current wage subsidy opportunities. [ACE\\_WIL Funding](#)

### ● Student Work Placement Program

#### [Student Work Placement Program - SWPP](#)

The Student Work Placement program gives post-secondary students in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and business programs across Canada paid work experience related to their field of study.

[Employment and Social Development Canada](#) works with Employer Delivery Partners. Employer Delivery Partners are a group of recognized associations and organizations that represent the interests of employers in industries.

They work with businesses and post-secondary education institutions to:

- Provide wage subsidies to employers that offer quality student work placements; and
- Create partnerships with colleges, universities, polytechnics and CEGEPs to recruit students for these placements.

### ***How much you can get***

- Up to \$5,000 for every student you hire through the program
- Up to \$7,500 for every student you hire that is in their first year or is from an under-represented group including:
  - Women in STEM
  - Persons with disabilities
  - Newcomers
  - Indigenous students

### **● NVIT Grant**

NVIT has secured a small amount of funding through the [RBC Future Launch Program](#) which will enable NVIT to give eligible employers the opportunity to apply for a small grant to help offset costs associated with hiring an NVIT Co-operative Education student in 2020/21. This grant is a financial incentive set up to encourage small businesses and non-profits to hire a Co-op student, if they cannot access funding from a Federal or Provincial program.

The NVIT Employer grant for Co-op students is funded in part by the RBC Foundation, in support of RBC Future Launch, a commitment to helping young Canadians prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.

RBC Future Launch is a 10-year, \$500 million commitment to empower Canadian youth for the jobs of tomorrow. With a focus on networking, skills development, practical work experience and mental wellbeing supports and services, the initiative aims to help break down the barriers facing young people.

Employers must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the grant.

- Have a business registration number;
- Proof of comprehensive liability insurance; and
- Must not be eligible for other wage subsidies or grants.

Please submit application directly to the NVIT Co-operative Education Coordinator. Applications will be looked at on a first come first served basis. If the employer application is approved a cheque will be issued before the end of the student work term.

Dana Egan, Owner,  
The Grand Pub and Grill,  
Merritt

*"It's a fabulous program. Great for the apprentice. Great wage incentive."*



Joel is doing his work term at the Grand Pub & Grill.



# FAQ'S FOR EMPLOYERS

## Student Availability

Students are available for work placements throughout the year. Employers may submit job postings year round. Employers may submit jobs to the Co-op Coordinator directly ([mhohner@nvit.ca](mailto:mhohner@nvit.ca)) or through the NVIT Co-op Portal online at [coopeducation.nvit.ca](http://coopeducation.nvit.ca) you may also visit the National portal at [Outcome Campus Connect](#)

## The Hiring Process

The Co-op placement process is administered through the Co-op Education Department.

1. Employers submit their job descriptions to the Co-op Coordinator.
2. Co-op students view employer postings.
3. Staff forward the résumés, cover letters, and other requested documents of interested students to the employers.
4. Employers' short list the students they wish to interview.
5. Staff will then assist with the necessary interview arrangements. NVIT can also arrange recruitment facilities for the employer, on campus. NVIT can also arrange telephone interviews, or video conferencing for non-local employers.
6. Students may also approach an employer directly, in which case, if the employer wishes to hire the student they may bypass the posting process.

### ● Placement Process

Upon completion of the interviews, employers are asked to advise the Co-op Coordinator of their hiring choice(s). The Co-op Coordinator will confirm acceptance with the student and employer.

### ● Acceptance of Offer

NVIT requests that the Employer provide an offer that will include salary, start and end date and any other relevant conditions of employment. We also ask that the Students respond to the employer within a twenty-four hour period.

### ● Student Job Development

Co-op students are encouraged to develop their own work term opportunities and may approach potential employers directly. If employers have not been actively employing Co-op students previously, we recommend that they contact the Co-op coordinator to discuss the position and hiring procedures.

## ● **The Responsibility for Securing a Work Placement**

It is the goal of NVIT's Co-op Program to make the work placement period as structured, engaging and relevant as possible. To this end, Co-op Coordinators will assist students in finding appropriate work placements and monitor the student's progress on the job.

Co-op Coordinators assist in identifying work experience opportunities for the students but ultimately, it is the responsibility of the student to work with their Co-op Coordinator to find a meaningful work experience.

## ● **Evaluation/Grading/Employer Feedback**

NVIT establishes formal feedback tools and methods during the work term between the student, the Co-op Coordinator and the employer. This is necessary in ensuring that the learning needs and expectations of employers and students are met. Ultimately, the work term experience should complement the curriculum content of the program in which the student is enrolled.

### ● **Formal feedback mechanisms include:**

- On-site visits (wherever possible) arranged by the Co-op student and the Co-op Coordinator. On-site visits may also be conducted by phone or video conferencing. These are normally done once per work term, to review student's performance and progress. On-site visits may include discussions with the student and the employer regarding learning outcomes, performance and job satisfaction.
- Written work term reports are required from students regarding each work experience. Evaluation of the work term report forms an integral part of the student's work term course grade.
- At the end of each work term, the supervisor is asked to complete the Employer's Evaluation of the Co-op Students Performance form provided by the Co-op Coordinator.

## ● **The Work Term Report**

Co-op students are required to submit a satisfactory work term report for each work experience, which are forwarded to the Co-op Coordinator for review and grading. The purpose of the report is for the student to reflect upon and describe the knowledge, skills and learning outcomes that they have gained from their work experience. It is also an educational tool for students to further develop their analytical, reporting and writing abilities. All Co-op students are issued work report guidelines, prior to the commencement of their work term. Students are encouraged to discuss the work term report with their Co-op Coordinator and their employer during their work term. The work term report may take a non-traditional form such as a video, or PowerPoint presentation.

## ● **Confidentiality**

NVIT expects that employers will make Co-op students in their employ aware of company policies regarding confidentiality. Authorization by the employer may be required for the release of information by the student in their work term report. Students should consult with their employer or supervisor on the proprietary nature of any information used in their work term reports. Employers are encouraged to review the work term report and sign off or refuse the release of confidential information as appropriate. If the employer deems the content of the work report confidential, upon request, the Co-op Coordinator can initiate procedures for the employer to evaluate the work report.

## General Information and Workplace Issues

### Salaries and Benefits

The salary paid by the employer will be within the standards for the industry and commensurate with the student's skills and abilities. Salaries are generally set by the employer within the pay structure of that organization. Co-op Coordinators are able to provide current wage ranges for their respective Co-op programs. Benefits are the responsibility of the employer and will be provided in accordance with the terms of the Employment Standards Act and /or relevant Collective Agreements.

### Work Term Duration

For most students the Co-op work term is approximately four months in length.

### Subsequent Work Terms

Co-op program students have the option of completing a second work term, immediately following the first. Often students in their second concurrent work term are given increased responsibilities and their salaries may be adjusted accordingly.

### Evaluation of the Work Term

All Co-op students and their employers are visited whenever possible during each work term. At the end of each work term, the supervisor is asked to complete the Employer's Evaluation of the Co-op Students Performance form provided by the Co-op Coordinator.

### Challenges at the Workplace

Should any circumstance arise during the work term, (behaviour problems or medical emergencies) employers should contact the Co-op Coordinator who will help to facilitate a resolution. Should an employer consider dismissing a Co-op student, they are urged to consult with the Co-op Coordinator as early as possible to discuss their concerns.

### Lay-offs and Strikes

If employers foresee a lay-off or strike that will directly affect the Co-op student they should notify the Co-op Coordinator as soon as possible.

*LeSandra worked on a partnership project between the School District and NVIT, providing iPads for Seniors.*



# **SITE VISIT**

## **Objectives of the Site Visit**

Around the mid-point in the work term, a Co-op Coordinator will schedule a visit at the work place. The purpose of the site visit is to meet with both the student and the supervisor to assess and discuss:

- The responsibilities/tasks performed by the student and their progress to date
- Student's learning objectives and areas to develop
- Work and classroom relationship
- The Co-op program
- Any other questions, comments or concerns

In addition, the coordinator will:

- Offer support and guidance to student and employer
- Discuss with employer the type of work and working conditions available
- Explore additional employment opportunities for future co-op students

Essentially, during the site visit students will present to their Co-op Coordinator information on their work, skills developed to date and how this compares to their initial learning objectives.

**Note:** Depending on the employment situation, what work term the student is in, and the schedule of the Co-op Coordinator, a face-to-face site visit will not always be possible. If this is the case an alternative arrangement will be coordinated between the student, the employer and the Co-op Coordinator, such as a phone or online meeting.

## **Questions Co-op Coordinator will ask the employer during employer/supervisor site visit**

1. Please give a brief overview of the student's job description, duties, projects completed to date, and upcoming projects.
2. How is the student progressing? Consider skills, knowledge, strengths, and attitudes. Are they learning and contributing at the rate you were expecting?
3. What do you think has been their most significant contribution during the work term?
4. How do you give the student feedback on their performance and how does the student receive this feedback?
5. How would you rate the student's performance to date? (on a scale of 1-5) Any comments?
6. Are there any areas where the student is particularly strong?
7. Are there areas that need improvement?
8. What do you recommend the student work on to improve their performance for the rest of the work term? And/or is there an action plan in place to improve these areas?
9. Are there additional opportunities for learning and/or other duties the student will do for the remainder of the work term? Please describe.
10. Would you consider hiring this student again?
11. Other comments?