



UBC Okanagan Interdisciplinary Co-op Program Community Partner FAQ: COVID-19

During this period of uncertainty, we want to assure our community partners that we are doing our part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and that we are supporting our key stakeholders in navigating these unprecedented times.

We have received a number of inquiries regarding the co-op program, processes, and plans for moving forward. Below we outline and address some common questions. In the event of further inquiries, you may contact us via email at coop.ok@ubc.ca for assistance.

Is the UBC Okanagan Interdisciplinary Co-op office open?

Yes. The UBC Okanagan Co-op office is open virtually. In an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19, all staff members of the Co-op Program Office are working remotely. You may continue to reach us during normal business hours (8:30-4:30, Monday-Friday).

Are students still available for work?

Yes! Our students are keen to obtain work integrated learning opportunities. They are typically available at the beginning of May, September and January of each year for 4, 8, or 12-month opportunities.

Are students available for both remote and in-person work?

Yes. Students are available to work either in-person, fully remotely, or a blend of the two.

For employers hiring students for **in-person work** during this time, note that it is the employer's overall responsibility to follow guidelines set by the Government and public health authorities to help prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. For further details on requested safety procedures, view [this document](#).

What is the latest date I can have a student begin work for summer?

The requirement of the program is that each Co-op work term be a minimum of 12 weeks or 420 hours. Most work terms begin in May, however there is flexibility to hire a student in June while still meeting the minimum requirements. If this is not feasible, or you have questions in regards to eligibility, we ask that you consult with the Co-op Program Office to see how UBC Okanagan could best support you in hiring a student.

Are we still able to post positions and interview?

Yes. We are continuing to post positions and assist in scheduling interviews for Co-op students and employers. Simply [send us your job description](#) and we will post the opportunity to our job board exclusive for Co-op students. After the posting closes, we will send you all of the applications received. If you would like to go ahead and interview any shortlisted candidates, we can assist with scheduling on your behalf. Once you have identified which applicant(s) you would like to hire, we can notify students of your decision.



Does the office provide any tips in regards to migrating Co-op students into a work from home (WFH) arrangement?

Yes. The Co-op Program Office works very closely with both employers and students, and is happy to set up a call with your organization on the subject of WFH best practices and performance management of your Co-op student.

A few things we suggest keeping in mind when considering WFH arrangements:

- (1) Methods of communication — ensure clear communication of WFH guidelines and expectations as it relates to deliverables, hours and flexibility of work, and available resources for support
- (2) Tracking of work/projects — what are the goals and objectives set for the student? How are they tracked?
- (3) Technology best practices – what device will the student use while at home? What additional security and safety measures need to be implemented?
- (4) Methods of communication – How is management communicating their vision and strategies? Whom would the student reach out to in the event of an urgent matter? How will teams collaborate?
- (5) Company culture and cohesiveness – How is the organization keeping up unity and morale?

The Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Association of Canada provides additional resources for [Onboarding Student Remotely](#) and [Supervising Student Remotely](#).

The Co-op position cannot be performed under a work from home arrangement (WFH). What are our options?

Here are a few options to explore:

- (1) If an employer is an essential service provider and the student needs to report to a physical location for their work, this is still allowed as long as safety procedures are adhered to in accordance with health Canada guidelines.
- (2) Late start dates are available for organizations with gradual back-to-work plans who may not be able to support a WFH position at this time. Please connect with us further if you require added flexibility or are uncertain on how a student can integrate into your back-to-work plans.
- (3) In the worst case, the employer may rescind the co-op offer altogether during these exceptional circumstances. We are committed to our community partners and students and hope this is a last resort, as students may have already made housing and financial commitments in anticipation of their work term.

Our organization has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and we no longer think we can afford a Co-op student for the time being. What are our options?

- (1) There are many hiring grants available to employers. Please check the [Student Work Placement Program](#), the [Tech Co-op Grant](#) and several other [sources](#) of funding. Please consider opportunities directed at hiring a Co-op student.
- (2) Despite our hopes that this does not happen, we acknowledge the possibility that employers may face grave financial consequences as a result COVID-19 and may be unable to continue with the currently scheduled Co-op position(s). Please let us know if you have to retract your job offer and we will work with you and the student. We trust that you will consider this option only as the last resort.

Contact the Co-op Office at any time for additional details or support.
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