



# Co-op Employer Handbook



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Okanagan Co-op Education





# Welcome to Co-op

Congratulations! You’ve taken the exciting step in hiring a UBC Okanagan Co-op student to support your organization and your team. This opportunity will provide you with fresh talent and ideas, the ability to mentor a student who is keenly interested in the work that you do, and also allows you to help shape talent within your industry and our future workforce.

Throughout this guide you will be provided with some tools to assist you in setting up the student, yourself, and your team for success throughout the four key points in the Co-op journey:

- Onboarding and setting learning objectives
- Midterm check-in and site visit with a dedicated Co-op Coordinator
- Final evaluation at the end of the term
- Final report submitted by the student

# Co-op Employer Commitments

Integrating Co-op into your hiring practices and a new student hire onto your team is an exciting step. Co-op is a partnership between the host organization (the employer), the student, and UBC Okanagan. Through understanding our collective commitments to that partnership, we look forward to an engaging and rewarding work term, and long-lasting connection. Below we have outlined some general employer engagements and responsibilities, as well as what you can expect from your new student hire and the Co-op Program Office.

## What are your responsibilities as an employer?

- Provide your student with an engaged and productive work environment. The employer must provide a supervisor for the Co-op student who will work collaboratively with the student to outline learning objectives, discuss expectations of the student as an employee of the organization, and provide the student with continuous constructive feedback throughout the term.
- Develop a job description that is an accurate representation of the roles and responsibilities that the student will take on with your organization. Students participating in Co-op are also expected to be paid a fair market wage for the role which you are hiring. If you have questions around salary guidance, please feel free to contact us.
- Prepare the student and your team for the arrival of the student through onboarding and orientation; ensuring comfortability of the student with workplace culture, introduction to the team, safety practices, and systems.
- Participate in a mid-term site visit with both the student and Co-op Coordinator, where you will discuss the student’s progress in their role, and review goals moving forward.
- Complete the employer portion of the evaluation form prior to the end of the work term.
- Should you wish to extend an offer to your student hire to work with you for another term, we encourage you to provide increased responsibilities to that student to contribute to their ongoing learning and development.
- Comply with all [Provincial](#) and [Federal Freedom of Information](#), [Human Rights](#), [Employment](#) and [Accessibility legislation](#), including following all [WorkSafe BC requirements](#).
- The student must be hired as an employee of your organization on payroll. Co-op does not permit a student to be hired as a contractor for your organization.
- Should questions or concerns emerge during the term, we welcome you to connect with the [Co-op Program Office immediately](#). If your student is not meeting expectations of the role at any point during the work term or problems arise, please [contact the Co-op Program Office immediately](#) to determine an appropriate action plan. If possible, the Co-op Coordinator will support you and/or your student with additional coaching and check-ins in efforts to get the work term back on track.







# Co-op Student Commitments

The UBC Okanagan Co-op Program is optional and competitive. Participating students are expected to maintain professional conduct throughout their entire Co-op journey, and work towards and showcase both personal and professional growth towards their learning goals with each new experience.

## What should you expect from your student hire during their employment?

- Comply with all policies and procedures of the workplace, including policies regarding use of social media, cell phones, company vehicles, and confidential/proprietary information, both during and after a work term.
- Limit their enrollment in academic courses and seek permission prior to taking any UBC academic course work at the same time as their co-op experience. Students have a responsibility to ensure their employer is informed of all relevant commitments.
- Submit Work Term assignments for every Co-op work term (whether or not work terms span multiple consecutive work terms) in a timely and complete manner.
- Meet or exceed the expectations of their Co-op employer during their work term. Co-op students are graded by their Co-op Coordinator through a number of check-ins during their work terms. These assignments are largely influenced by their work term performance and learnings. If a student is not performing well at work, and does not adjust their approach after intervention, they are at risk of being assessed a Fail grade for the work term by their Co-op Coordinator.



# Co-op Program Office Commitments

The UBC Okanagan Interdisciplinary Co-op Program works to ensure both students and employers have positive workplace learning experiences. A dedicated team including Co-op Coordinators, Partner Engagement Advisors, and administrative staff are here to support you through your journey hiring and engaging student talent.

## What should you expect from the UBC Okanagan Co-op Program Office?

- Provide support, guidance, and training to students in their journeys towards their career goals. This includes coaching on skills, learning and development objectives to work towards during their work terms. Co-op Coordinators will monitor this progress throughout the term to ensure the student is well supported.
- Give guidance, assistance, and hands-on support to employers throughout every step of the Co-op experience. This includes from the hiring and onboarding processes, all the way until the student has successfully completed the work term. The Co-op Program Office will check-in throughout the term to make sure employer's needs are met.
- Ensure the fair and equitable treatment of both students and employers throughout their time with the Co-op Program.





# Onboarding & Orientation

During the onboarding process, it’s key to orient your new student hire to your organization’s culture, discuss expectations for the term, and set goals that align with both the student’s learning objectives and your organization’s goals within the role. It’s beneficial to the student’s learning to understand how their role contributes to the organization’s overall direction and vision. At the beginning of the work term, the student will set learning objectives which we encourage the supervisor to establish together in order to set attainable but challenging goals.

These goals are related to the job they have been hired for, and articulate what they hope to learn, personally and professionally, during the work term. Please review these goals with them within the first couple of weeks on the job to ensure that they are on the right track and have realistic expectations over the course of the term.

On the next page you will find a few key tips to onboarding and orienting your new student hire.

# Onboarding Guide

## Discuss expectations and goals

In hiring a student, you are bringing on a fresh set of eyes and ears into your organization. This also means that the student is looking to you for guidance, mentorship, and skill-development. Sit down with the student to better understand what they want to learn during your time together, and how they feel they can contribute to your organization’s goals and objectives. This helps to set expectations of the role and the student up front. In addition, it’s key to address their responsibilities within their role such as: expected team collaboration, work schedule, and any workplace etiquette that is important to share. These goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

## Anticipate and address barriers to success

Don’t be afraid to ask the student what they need to succeed, and work with your team to put strategies in place before the student starts. This will ensure the student is provided any mentorship, accommodations or structure that they require to put their best foot forward, and they’ll be thankful that you asked!

## Introduce the team and workplace culture

Building a solid foundation for your organization’s relationship with your student hire starts with introducing the team and familiarizing the student with your workplace culture. Why do people love working there? Your team will be helping to support the student throughout their journey, so encouraging team members to welcome, support, and provide mentorship to the student can both help to develop the student’s skills as well as the confidence of your staff.

## Collaborate on a training plan

Put your best foot forward by working with the student from the beginning on a training plan that fulfills their learning goals that they would like to work towards during the term. Educate the new hire on how these learning goals fit into the objectives and growth plans of the organization; this assists with the student feeling a sense of purpose and direction in their role.

## Provide opportunities to follow up and give feedback

Set consistent meetings and check-ins to ensure the student feels supported, and allow space for any questions to be answered as they come up. If a student is comfortable asking questions and being inquisitive during their time with you, they are far more likely to stay the course towards their learning goals and the organizational objectives.





# Midterm Check-In & Site Visit

Throughout the term, a student’s learning and development is monitored by a dedicated [Co-op Coordinator](#). Please know that your Coordinator is available as a resource at any time for both you and your student.

About midway through the term, your Coordinator will conduct a virtual or in-person (if restrictions allow) site visit to discuss the student’s learning, progress and performance so far. This informal meeting is a chance to learn how the term is progressing. Below you will find some general tips for success throughout the work term and expectations outlined for both employers and students:

### General tips for success:

- **Communication is key** – Keeping a consistent line of communication open for your student hire is key to relationship building, skill development, and their confidence in their role within your organization. Students are inquisitive, and having an open-door policy will not only ensure new team members stay on track towards both their learning goals and their roles and responsibilities, but also assist in developing relationships that can continue into the long-term.
- **Be intentional with constructive feedback** – Throughout the term, if your student hire veers off course, or is in need of extra support, approach the conversation with intention and in a constructive manner. Co-op students are keen and eager to learn, and providing additional context, examples, and reasoning when giving feedback can assist in creating rapport and exceptional results in the future.
- **Monitoring & documenting progress throughout the term** – There will be times during the student’s work-integrated learning experience where you as a supervisor will be asked to provide feedback on their journey, including their skills and capabilities, and growth throughout the term. We recommend keeping notes of the progress to ensure feedback and examples are easy to reference.

# Final Evaluations & Student Report

Finishing the term there will be opportunity for performance feedback and reflection by both the supervisor and the student. The supervisor’s areas of evaluation will include: student job duties and feedback, quality of Co-op administration support, and Co-op Program feedback. The student’s areas of evaluation include: job information, position feedback, technical competencies, and administrative functions of the Co-op Program. Fillable PDF forms are provided by the student.

Invite your student to participate in an exit interview before the work term is over to help them transition out of the role, wrap up any loose ends, and for you to learn about changes you may want to make to the role, the workplace, and/or your supervision.

### Some questions you might want to consider during the exit interview, include:

- How has this role and experience contributed to your personal, academic, and career goals?
- What skills would you like to develop further in your next position or role?
- Are there aspects of what you’ve learned in this role that you foresee contributing to future opportunities or work?

To complete the Co-op term, the student is required to complete a final Co-op work-term assignment in the form of a written report, presentation, or company-based project. The purpose of this final project is for students to critically reflect on the work term, including: the skills, both “hard” and “soft,” learned; the learning goals set; and how the term helped to clarify future career plans. Students are encouraged to connect and work with their supervisors to complete this project.

### These reports can take the form of any of the following:

- Oral presentation
- Poster presentation
- Written assignment
- Online portfolio
- Website
- Video
- And more





# Contact the Co-op Office

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