

NVIT Co-op Frequently Asked Questions

What is Co-operative Education?

Co-operative (Co-op) Education is an academic program that “extends the students” education beyond classroom teaching and curriculum limitations. Co-op Education combines academic study with paid work experience in a career-related field. These paid work terms provide students with an opportunity for substantial work experience that complements academic study.

Companies, non-governmental organizations, and governments need motivated, trained, flexible, short-term employees who can develop into a competent, long-term labour force. In response, universities have established the Co-operative Education program, which provides students with entry-level employment opportunities in their chosen fields of study, teaches them basic employability skills, and monitors employment conditions and progress. This experience is invaluable to Co-op students applying for full-time employment after graduation.

Work terms are four, eight, or twelve months in duration. Co-op work terms are not guaranteed but are awarded on a competitive basis. The hiring decision rests with the employer.

What is a work term?

The work term is the period where students gain practical work experience. Students who enroll in Co-op may participate in up to four Co-op work terms (Coop 110, Coop 120, Coop 210 and Coop 220) and one international Co-op work term (Coop 240). Work terms are for credit and are taken after successfully completing the Coop 101, Co-operative Education Workplace Preparation course.

One work term is generally four months in length. The total length of each work term must be a minimum of 12 weeks (or approximately 420 hours).

The maximum number of consecutive full-time work terms you can take is four (16 months) as long as two are in the summer.

Why would I want to take Coop instead of finding my own work?

Co-operative education is a win-win where students gain relevant work experience, while employers benefit from students' energy, fresh ideas, knowledge and skills. These are a few benefits:

- Receive paid work and gain relevant work experience.
- Apply your classroom learning in the workplace.
- Develop practical workplace skills and learn to market your skills to employers.
- Build a valuable network of contacts and professional references in the field.
- Boost your chances of landing a great job after graduation.
- Earn money to help with your education costs.

Why do I have to take Coop 101?

The Workplace Preparation course (Coop 101) aims to provide students with the appropriate tools to secure a work placement. Co-op students are only required to take Coop 101 once (upon successfully completing it).

What does the Co-op Education Department do?

NVIT Co-operative Education Department provides several co-op services, including:

- Career Preparation
- A personal resume, cover letter and interview counselling and assistance to students to effectively market themselves
- Promotion of co-op programs to related industries through the mail, telephone and personal visits to employers
- Facilitation of the student application and selection process, including advertising job openings, forwarding applications, and arranging interviews upon employer requests
- Workplace monitoring and mediation between employers and Co-op students when necessary
- Participation in trade shows and external professional organizations aligned with specific programs

How do I sign up for Co-op Education?

It is recommended that students achieve a GPA of 2.33 for admission into the Co-op program.

Students can apply to the Co-op Education program at any time. Applications can be obtained from the Co-operative Education Coordinator or by emailing coop@nvit.ca.

Do I have to be in full-time courses to apply to Co-op?

The co-op program is for full-time students. Therefore, you should be in nine units (three courses or more) in your study terms.

Why do I have to pay tuition fees when working in a Co-op job?

Students only pay tuition fees once they have been successfully placed in a work term, and most students recoup their co-op tuition fees with their first pay cheque.

Co-op Education is part of your academic program. Fees are paid as they are for any course and help to cover the cost of your Co-op Career Education Course, the time your Co-op Coordinator spends with you, and working with our employers. Please refer to the Academic Calendar. Fees are payable at the beginning of each work term and are subject to change.

Will Co-op extend the amount of time it takes to obtain my diploma?

Yes. NVIT diploma courses on campus have limited offerings each semester. The scheduling of additional work terms into the diploma will extend the time it takes to complete all required courses.

Where are Co-op jobs usually located?

Co-op jobs may be available as close as one of the NVIT campuses or across Canada. It depends on your field of study, interests, and sense of adventure. Most students are placed in the Nicola Valley area or within the Lower Mainland.

How do I get a Co-op job?

Obtaining employment is a joint effort between the student and the Co-operative Education Department. Current Co-op job advertisements will be provided to students once they have applied to enter the program, paid the associated fees and have completed the Co-op Workplace Preparation course (Coop 101). Our Co-op Coordinator will assist in developing job opportunities, but ultimately the student is responsible for their Co-op experience.

Can I find or create my own work term opportunity?

Yes. In addition to applying for positions through NVIT, you are welcome to search for your work term. The total length of a work term must be a minimum of 12 weeks (420 hours) of full-time paid experience. Please meet with NVIT's Co-op Coordinator for further details.

Can I apply to job postings outside of my faculty or major?

Yes. Students are not limited to positions from their faculty. We encourage students to apply for any jobs they are suited to and find interesting.

Why can't I contact a Co-op employer directly?

The jobs within the Co-op Education program are not available for non-Co-op students and are thus not listed outside the program. A benefit of Co-op Education for the employer is that NVIT handles most administrative details. Being contacted by a large number of students from Co-op programs across Canada would be very time-consuming for the employer. Thus, Co-op offices at universities work with employers on behalf of the students.

What is the employer's commitment to hiring a Co-op student?

The employer will interview and decide which student(s) they choose to hire but are not obligated if they feel no candidate is suitable for their needs. It should be noted that NVIT Co-op Education students might compete with students from other post-secondary institutes for a limited number of placements.

Will there always be a Co-op job for me?

While doing its best to fill each term request, the Co-op Education Department cannot guarantee each student a job during their Co-op work term. Co-op is a competitive program where students apply and

compete for jobs. The more effort you put into the job search and preparation process, and the more positions you apply for, the more interviews you are likely to get. Likewise, the more interviews you do, the more likely you will receive a job offer. Co-op staff can assist you in all stages of your Co-op work search. The Co-op Workplace Preparation course guides students to tailor their resume and cover letter and improve their interview skills. Aside from preparation, the more flexible students are about the work experience they would like to gain and the locations they can work, the more likely they are to secure a position.

What are the average pay rates for a Co-op position?

Undergraduate students in Co-op can anticipate an average wage pay rate of \$25/hour, depending on employer and position.

How will Co-op students be evaluated?

On-the-job performance is monitored and evaluated by the employer in consultation with the coordinator. Additionally, there is a requirement for a reflective work-term assignment to help solidify the learning outcomes. Finally, the Co-op Coordinator grades the work term report or project, and the mark (pass or fail) is recorded and submitted to NVIT Student Records for processing on the student's official NVIT transcript.

Will I receive any credits for my work term?

Each completed full-time Co-op work term is worth three credits.

Student loan funding

Students on Co-op work terms are considered full-time students for student loan-related issues. However, student loan recipients on a Co-op work term may be required to submit a Reassessment form and apply for Interest-Free Status with the Ministry of Advanced Education (Student-Aid BC).

Participating in a Co-op term is different from having a full-time job when applying for student loan funding. When submitting their application, students must:

- Apply for student loan funding on a term-by-term basis
- Answer "yes" to the question "Between the start and the end of classes, will you be on a co-op/paid work term?"
- Answer "no" to the question, "Will you have a full-time job during your study period?"

Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries

The Co-op work term is not a standard three credit graded course, so students must research their eligibility for various scholarships, awards and bursaries. However, students must still meet the minimum eligibility requirements for scholarships, awards, and bursaries.

Who should I talk to if I have questions?

Direct inquiries to the Co-op education coordinator:

Anita Dumont
250-378-3366
adumont@nvit.ca