



University of Victoria Co-op: FAQ for international students

What is Co-op?

Short for “Co-operative education,” Co-op combines academic study with paid work placements as part of a student’s undergraduate or graduate degree program.

What are the benefits of Co-op?

Co-op offers students an opportunity to gain professional work experience while pursuing their degree. Students can enhance their employability in preparation for their career after graduation. While regular degree programs typically focus on theoretical knowledge, Co-op combines theory with hands-on experience in the area of study. Co-op positions are also paid, which can help fund students’ academic studies.

How much do students get paid for Co-op?

Students will receive a salary from their employer for each Co-op placement. UVic students who do Co-op earn up to CAD \$50,000 on average over the duration of their degree. Salaries vary based on their previous work experience, the industry they are working in, and the responsibilities of the Co-op position.

Average Co-op salaries for UVic students in 2022–23:

Undergraduate programs	Graduate programs
CAD\$3,287 per month	CAD\$4,028 per month

[See salary estimates for all programs](#)

Can international students take part in Co-op?

Yes, however, international students must obtain a Co-op work permit before they can legally begin their Co-op work in Canada. Students can apply for a Co-op work permit if they are admitted to a Co-op program at UVic.

Co-op work permits can only be used for Co-op positions that are part of a student’s program of study. The on- and off-campus work authorization provided by a study permit cannot be used for Co-op work.

How successful is the Co-op program at UVic?

Undergraduate students can earn an average of CAD\$3,287 per month during work terms	Co-op is available in almost every program at UVic	UVic’s Graduate Co-op program is the largest in Canada!
1,300+ employers hire UVic Co-op students every year	73% of eligible undergraduate UVic students take part in Co-op work terms	62% of Co-op students receive a permanent job offer before they graduate

In which programs is Co-op mandatory?

Co-op is built into the curriculum as part of the degree in the following programs. There's no need to apply; students are automatically enrolled in Co-op:

Undergraduate programs	Graduate programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commerce, BCom • Computer Science and Health Information Science, BSc • Engineering (all BEng majors) • Health Information Science, BSc • Recreation and Health Education, BA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Business Administration • Master of Global Business

In which programs is Co-op optional?

Most UVic majors have optional Co-op programs, which means students can choose to apply at the start of their second year. The programs listed below have optional Co-op participation:

Undergraduate programs	Graduate programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthropology, BA/BSc • Art History and Visual Studies, BA • Astronomy, BSc • Biochemistry, BSc • Biology, BSc (and combined majors) • Chemistry, BSc (and combined majors) • Climate Science, BSc • Computer Science, BSc (and combined majors) • Cultural studies (various majors) • Data Science • Earth and Ocean Sciences majors • Economics, BA/BSc • English, BA • Environmental Studies, BA • Financial Mathematics & Economics • Geography, BA/BSc • History, BA • Kinesiology, BSc • Linguistics, BA/BSc • Mathematics and Statistics majors • Microbiology, BSc • Music, BA/BMus • Philosophy, BA • Physics, BSc (and combined majors) • Political Science, BA • Psychology, BA/BSc • Religion, Culture and Society, BA • Sociology, BA • Theatre, BA/BFA • Visual Arts, BFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Data Science, MEng • Biomedical Systems, MEng • Industrial Ecology, Meng • Telecommunications and Information Security, MEng

In which programs is Co-op unavailable?

As the following majors require a "practicum" (a course that integrates classroom learning and practice in a supervised professional setting), no Co-op is offered: Applied Linguistics, BA; Child and Youth Care, BCYC; Public Health, BA; Social Work, BSW; Teacher Education: Elementary Curriculum, BEd.

What kinds of Co-ops are there and how long do they last?

Depending on the degree program, there may be the following options:

- **Traditional Co-op:** Undergraduates: 3 to 4 work terms alternating with study terms
Graduate students: 1 or 2 work terms alternating with study terms
- **Work experience program:** 1 to 2 work terms
- **Co-op internship:** 3 to 4 consecutive work terms
- **Post-study internship:** up to 3 consecutive work terms at the end of your degree
- **Parallel Co-op:** part-time work term while you study
- **Entrepreneurial Co-op:** 1 work term self-employed or in your own business venture
- **International Co-op:** 1 or more work terms outside of Canada

More details on Co-op types are available [here](#).

Although Co-op usually increases the length of the degree studies, students will gain a lot of work experience that will help them get a head start on their career.

How is Co-op structured?

At UVic, Co-op students can get up to 16 months of paid work experience. Co-op is structured differently depending on the program, but the core elements are the same. Co-op students typically alternate between academic terms, in which students take classes, and work terms, in which students get paid professional experience.

When can students take their Co-op work terms?

A typical* undergraduate traditional Co-op schedule with 4 work terms might be structured like this:

Year of study	Fall term	Spring term	Summer term
1	Study term 1	Study term 2	<i>Free term</i>
2	Study term 3	Study term 4	Co-op term 1
3	Study term 5	Co-op term 2	Study term 6
4	Co-op term 3	Study term 7	Co-op term 4
5	Study term 8 / Graduation		

* This is just a sample — UVic Co-op coordinators help each student find a schedule that works.

Will students earn any credits during Co-op?

Yes, undergraduates earn 4.5 units of credit for each completed Co-op work term, and graduate students earn 3 units of credit. These credits do not replace academic credits but count toward the Co-op designation that is displayed on their diploma upon graduation.

How much does Co-op cost?

Students will pay a tuition fee but it is a lower cost than for regular courses. The international student Co-op fees are as follows:

- Undergraduate business and engineering students: CAD\$755 per term
- All other undergraduate students: CAD\$1,510 per term
- Graduate students in all programs: CAD\$976 per term

How do students find a Co-op job?

Before starting a Co-op job, students must complete a workplace preparation course led by UVic Co-op coordinators. Students will gain knowledge in creating a résumé and cover letter, and they also have the opportunity to participate in a mock interview.

When applying for Co-op positions, students are in competition with other Co-op applicants, and go through the process of searching and applying for job postings much like a typical job application. However, they will have the valuable support of the Co-op office along the way.

Job postings are available on the [Co-op portal](#). Students should check back regularly as new postings are frequent. Students can also reach out directly to any employer to ask if they'll take them on as a Co-op student. The [Co-op office](#) will assist in making connections and providing guidance.

What type of jobs can students do during Co-op?

Jobs must be related to the academic study, but students can try out different jobs and industries during different work terms. Students can apply to any Co-op jobs they see in UVic's Co-op portal — employers select relevant degree programs for their postings, ensuring only suitable jobs appear in a search. Students can even use Co-op terms to develop a product/service/business of their own design.

Many graduate students engage in Co-ops that are connected to their final projects, theses or dissertations. If they are already working closely with a faculty member or an industry partner on research related to their project, this collaboration might qualify as their Co-op experience.

Which companies do UVic students get Co-op placements with?

UVic students work for employers in the Victoria region, across Canada and around the world! International students can work in their home countries or get professional experience in a new country. 1,300+ employers hire UVic Co-op students every year, including:

- AOT Technologies
- Canadian Space Agency
- Deloitte
- Department of National Defence
- Google
- Government of Canada
- Ecofor
- KPMG
- Meta (Facebook)
- Microsoft
- Nature Bee
- Pacific Institute for Sports Excellence
- RMIT Australia
- Tesla
- WidPlay Element Parks
- Winchester Galleries

More information can be found [here](#).

Do students have to work for the same employer in each work term?

Typically, students are expected to work for several different employers during Co-op, but they cannot move between employers within a single work term. This approach offers students the opportunity to gain acquire varied work experiences across different industries, helping them understand their preferences and contributing to their overall learning and professional growth throughout the Co-op program.

Want to hear student experiences?

Watch this [video](#) to listen to international students discuss their Co-op placements.