Co-op & Career Services
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Co-op FAQs

Mandatory Co-op Programs – International Learners

Changes to co-op work permit requirements for post-secondary international students

As of April 1, 2026, post-secondary international students don't need a co-op work permit for student work placements such as co-op placements or internships.
Co-op work permit holders can keep using their permit for its entire validity. For further information, refer to https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/intern.html [Work in a student work placement].

- Questions to ask before my co-op term begins
- Questions to ask during the term before my co-op term (active job search term)
- Questions to ask during a co-op term

Part A: Questions to ask before my co-op term begins

1. Who can participate in co-op?

Only students who are registered in a co-op program and meet the co-op eligibility criteria as stated on their program map can participate in co-op opportunities.

2. What are the benefits of being in a co-op program?

There are many benefits to being a co-op student. The most important being the hands-on, related experience you gain during your co-op term. The experience you gain may help you secure a full-time job after graduation and help you develop contacts in your profession.

3. How do I know if I am eligible for co-op?

For students to be eligible for a co-op work term, they must meet the following criteria. During their active job search term (term before going out on co-op), students will be advised by the college if they are eligible for a co-op work term based on the following eligibility criteria:

- Have successfully completed all courses in their previous academic terms; and
- Be enrolled in all courses required in the third term; and
- Have a minimum program cumulative GPA of 2.8 or greater (or as specified for specific programs); and
- Have a valid study permit that includes the condition authorizing the holder to work as part of their academic program (for international students);" and
- Fees paid in Full

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4. What can I do if I am not eligible for co-op?

Students who are not eligible for Co-op, are required to complete the WIL Project for an additional expense as stated on the website. We recommend that students budget for the WIL Project cost as a precaution.

5. What is the WIL Project?

The WIL Project is a 14-week work integrated learning experience that is designed as an alternative to co-op. Students are required to work in a simulated office environment whereby they are required to collaborate in teams to complete assigned tasks that are led by a supervisor. Weekly tasks are assigned and as a WIL Office employee, students are expected to work diligently on applying what they have learned in their courses (technical and soft skills) to solve realistic problems that they will face in industry upon graduation.

There are two scenarios where students are required to complete a WIL Project instead of an approved co-op work term.

a. Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements for co-op prior to the third term of their program must complete the WIL Project. Refer to your program webpage for the cost of WIL Project.

b. A student who is eligible for a co-op work term but is unable to secure an approved co-op by the communicated deadline date, must also take the WIL Project.

6. Do I need a co-op work permit to participate in co-op?

As of April 1, 2026, eligible post-secondary international students no longer need a separate work permit to participate in student work placements required by their program, such as co-op placements and internships. However, international students must possess a valid study permit that includes the condition authorizing them to work as part of their academic program before accepting or participating in a co-op position. Please refer to box 24 of your offer letter to determine if your program includes a co-op. Each student is provided a Work Placement Letter from the College. Students are responsible to ensure that the study permit expiry date aligns with their program and co-op term. For questions regarding study permits or immigration matters, please contact the immigration consultant at your study location:

Immigration Consultants

- **Sarnia or Ottawa:** bart.devries@dic-immigrationconsultants.com

Part B: Questions to ask during the term before my co-op term (active job search term)

1. Will I be placed in a co-op position?

Students are not placed or matched with an employer. Students in programs with co-op work experiences complete pre-employment courses prior to their job search term within their programs to prepare them to market themselves to employers. Along with the assistance and guidance from their Co-op Advisors and job developers, students are responsible to conduct their own job search and compete for available co-op positions posted on the myCareer System or found by conducting their own job search outside of the myCareer System to obtain an approved self developed co-op position.

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2. What is the myCareer System?

Students can search, view, and apply for available co-op opportunities during their active job search term in the myCareer System. The college connects with employers to promote programs available for a co-op work term. Any available opportunities are posted and promoted through the myCareer System for eligible students to view and compete for.

3. Is there a deadline date to secure a co-op position?

Yes. Please consult your Co-op Advisor for important co-op dates. This information will be shared by your Co-op Advisor and is specific to your program, intake, and study location, and will be communicated to students several times during term 3 (or the term before your Co-op.) Students must submit a Work Term Record through the myCareer System by the submission deadline date for review by their Co-op Advisor. Students who do not have an approved Work Term Record by the term deadline, will be required to take the WIL Project.

4. Will I be guaranteed a co-op position?

Lambton College does not guarantee co-op positions for students in any co-op programs. The most important factor in a student's success is the effectiveness of their job search.

Students who are fully engaged and committed to an active job search have normally done well in securing meaningful co-ops.

An active job search involves the following steps:

- Volunteer in community activities throughout the first and second term to build a network of contacts and gain experience in various work settings. Some of the best co-op opportunities are developed by students through their own community connections
- Successfully complete the pre-employment preparation courses to develop strong personal marketing materials and effective job search strategies
- Ensure that your foundational resume and cover letter template is professional and able to be customized for each position applied to
- Ensure that the formal co-op search begins early in their active job search term. Consider local, provincial, and national opportunities. Do not narrow your search too quickly
- Apply for all program-specific and relevant opportunities that are posted on the myCareer System
- Prepare and participate in interviews
- Check in regularly with our Co-op Advisor for advice and guidance

5. Can students find and develop their own co-ops?

Yes, students can use their own networks and connections to find their own co-op positions across Canada. Student-developed positions must be submitted to their co-op advisor for assessment. To allow sufficient time for proper assessment of self-developed positions, positions must be submitted by the date provided by their Co-op Advisor during their active job search term.

6. How do I protect myself from a potential job scam?

Use caution and good judgement when applying to job postings, attending interviews, and accepting offers of employment. Seek advice from your Co-op Advisor immediately if you suspect any problems or do not understand what an employer is proposing or asking of you.

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7. Can I accept a job offer and then decline it for another job offer later?

No, once you have accepted a job offer verbally or in writing, you are committed to the employer with whom you've accepted th e offer. If you accept more than one job offer you will fail co-op.

8. Will I have to move to do my co-op?

Students are expected to consider out-of-city opportunities with the possibility of relocation or commuting to increase their co-op prospects.

The Co-op & Career Services Centre develops relationships with employers and organizations locally as well as in numerous communities throughout Ontario and across Canada. Co-op students will also be expected to conduct research into various other communities to learn more about valuable opportunities that exist outside of their home or school area.

It is the student's responsibility to secure transportation and accommodations if relocation is required.

9. Can I do a co-op outside of Ontario or Canada as an International Learner?

No. Lambton College does not approve co-ops outside of Canada for International students.

10. Am I responsible for my transportation and accommodations during my co-op work term?

Yes, it is the student's responsibility to arrange for transportation to and from the job. Some locations are not accessible by public transportation – make sure you have reliable transportation to and from your co-op.

Living accommodations are also the student's responsibility. We encourage students to research transportation and accommodation options before applying to positions to ensure they can cover these costs before applying to a position.

11. Will my co-op term be paid?

Students are expected to be flexible concerning co-op wages and should approach the work term as a learning experience and an opportunity for growth, rather than looking at it solely as an opportunity for financial gain.

Approved co-op positions and co-op work terms can be paid (at least minimum wage according to each province's guidelines) or unpaid, commission-based, or otherwise. This depends on employers' preferences, the career field, and on the job market supply and demand conditions which exist, including specific provincial regulations.

Student-developed positions must be submitted to their co-op advisor for assessment. To allow sufficient time for proper assessment of self developed positions, they must be submitted to their Co-op Advisor by the date provided to them during their active job search term.

12. If I complete an unpaid co-op work term, who will provide workplace insurance for me?

When you are completing your internship or co-op and not receiving pay from the employer, the college will provide workplace insurance for you if you are injured on the job.

Please contact your Co-op Advisor for further details regarding this process.

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13. What can I do to increase my chances of securing a PAID co-op?

Engage and be committed to an active job search as defined by the activities below:

- Ensure that you understand the eligibility criteria for co-op
- Review and abide by the Work Integrated Learning (2000-8-2) policy
- Attend ALL scheduled sessions and relevant career events provided to you by your campus or program-specific Co-op Advisor
- Take the co-op preparation course seriously as the information and tools provided in this course provide a solid foundation for subsequent success
- Check your Lambton College Accounts (including mylambton email, teams, and D2L/Moodle) on at least a weekly basis for important information
- Be prepared, develop professional marketing material to sell yourself (cover letter, résumé, interview skills, LinkedIn profile)
- Engage in an active job search the term before co-op, apply for positions posted through the myCareer System and conduct an independent job search by using personal initiatives and networks
- Ask questions, if you are unsure about something or need clarification, speak to your Co-op Advisor

14. Do I need a criminal record check or a security clearance to apply for co-op positions?

Many employers require their employees to complete employment pre-screening assessments including, but not limited to, criminal record checks and security clearances.

15. Can I apply to as many co-op positions as I want?

Yes. Students may apply for as many co-op positions as they wish, but submission of an application (résumé, cover letter, etc.) indicates serious interest in the position. Once you have accepted a position (verbally or in writing) you must stop your job search and can neither apply for nor accept any further positions.

16. What is included in my co-op fee?

Students in a co-op program are assessed a fee during their academic terms to cover the cost of co-op related activities, supports, and services offered by Co-op & Career Services.

The Co-op & Career Services staff manages the co-op experience process including:

- Preparing students for work terms
- Providing job search training and career advising
- Providing résumé preparation advising
- Developing and maintaining employer relationships
- Developing co-op opportunities
- Organizing and scheduling interviews
- Monitoring co-op student work terms through CPL online modules completed by students
- Validating and issuing co-op credits
- Maintaining co-op student and employer records related to the co-op process
- Supporting employer hiring incentives, including preparing and issuing tax credit letters for employers who qualify

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17. Do I pay a co-op fee if I find my own job?

The financial model used by the co-op program is similar to other arrangements where there is a fee (e.g. health coverage, club memberships, some insurance.)

Students pay for the availability of the service regardless of the extent of services utilized. Students who find their own j ob are still using services provided by the Co-op & Career Services to assess, approve, track, and monitor their work terms.

18. Can I receive a refund of the co-op fee if I do not participate in co-op?

No. Students required to complete the WIL Project are not eligible for a refund of their co-op fees.

Part C: Questions to ask during a co-op term

1. What are my responsibilities as a student during co-op?

This information will also be provided during your Co-op Preparation course.

Once you have accepted a co-op (verbally or in writing), you are not permitted to accept other interviews or offers of employment.

- Understand and follow rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act and relevant regulations
- Complete the Work Term Record in the myCareer System and any required documents from the employer – this must be reviewed and approved by Co-op and Career Services
- Honour the contracted dates of the work term outlined on the approved Work Term Record
- Adhere to the current version of the Work Integrated Learning (2000-8-2) policy
- Adhere to all employer policies and procedures and safety
- Exercise ethical workplace conduct at all times and follow all company regulations
- Maintain workplace confidentiality
- Resolve any issues that may arise in a professional manner, informing employer and/or co-op advisor of any concerns
- Strive to enhance skills, accepting both positive and negative feedback
- Submit all components of the online Work Term Report during the Work Term through D2L/Moodle by due dates
- Failure to comply with any of the above responsibilities can result in a failure of work term
- Contact your Co-op Advisor and supervisor immediately if you are injured in any way on the job
- Contact your Co-op Advisor immediately if you are experiencing any issues or have any concerns

2. What do I do if I experience problems during my co-op term?

If students experience problems (e.g. treated poorly by employer, unsafe work environment, work unrelated to my field, not en ough hours, etc.) or have any questions during their work terms, they should contact their co-op advisor and the Co-op & Career Services office immediately. Do not remain in an unsafe co-op position for any reason.

Any work term concerns must be immediately communicated to your Co-op Advisor. Do not wait until a problem becomes serious with your employer. In serious circumstances, alternative arrangements can be made to assist co-op students so that their graduation progression is not impeded by circumstances outside of their own control.

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3. What do I do if I am fired from my co-op?

If a student is fired from his/her workplace during the work term he/she must inform the Co-op Advisor immediately; a No Pass (NP) grade may result depending on the circumstances.

4. What do I do if I get hurt on the job?

If you get hurt on the job you are required to immediately report the injury to your supervisor/employer as well as to the College, contact your Co-op Advisor immediately.

Additionally, if you acquire an injury or illness during your work term that may affect your ability to fulfill the work term requirements, you must contact your Co-op Advisor immediately to inform them.

5. Can I fail my co-op?

Yes, a student may be assigned an NP (no pass) on their transcript for their co-op term for any of the following reasons:

- Breaching the Co-op Policies and Procedures
- Failure to report for work at the location specified by the employer
- Ending a work term early prior to completion of the contract dates without permission from your Co-op Advisor and employer
- Removal by the employer for cause (fired from your position)
- Failure to submit required documents to your advisor and failure to complete your work term modules
- Fraudulent or unprofessional behaviour that breaches the Student Code of Conduct
- Other actions behaviours that seriously violate College policies

6. What grade will I see on my transcript after completing Co-op or the WIL Project? How am I graded for co-op?

Students will be assigned a P (Passing Grade) or an NP (Failing Grade.) This grade does not impact a student's overall GPA but passing is a requirement for graduation.

The credit earned will be based on whether or not the student successfully completes the following:

- Students will be assigned a P (Passing Grade) or an NP (Failing Grade.) This grade does not impact a student's overall GPA but passing is a requirement for graduation
- Adheres to the employer's policies and procedures
- Submits the required documentation to register in co-op by the required dates
- Successfully completes the required minimum number of hours (420 hours), weeks and the contract dates on their approved Work Term Record which may differ from the minimum required by the College
- Completes all required online modules in D2L/Moodle during the Work Term
- Submits electronic copies of required final documents to the appropriate co-op advisor by the assigned deadline date in D2L/Moodle

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7. Is there a tax credit or a hiring incentive available to employers?

The co-operative education tax credit may be available to Ontario co-op employers.

Amount: Maximum credit of $3,000 per work term

The co-operative education tax credit is a refundable tax credit available to employers who hire students in an approved co-operative education program at an Ontario university or college. The program is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency through the Federal income tax system. View Eligibility Requirements and Application Procedures for Co-operative Education Tax Credit.

8. Who do I contact if I have additional questions about my work term or co-op program?

Each co-op program is assigned to a Co-op Advisor. Please contact Co-op & Career Services in your study location below to determine who your co-op advisor is.

- Sarnia - coop@lambtoncollege.ca
- Ottawa – ottawacoop@lambtoncollege.ca

Your advisor is assigned to you to help you prepare for your work term and they are also available throughout your work term to answer any questions you may have. It is very important to keep in touch with them throughout your participation in the program to increase your chances of success and to share any challenges that you are facing.