



Alberta School of Business

Business Cooperative Education Program Employer Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for supporting the Business Cooperative Education Program. We are excited that you have welcomed a business student to your team! This Employer Handbook will provide helpful information to support you and your student employee for the duration of their work term.

About the Business Cooperative Education (Co-op) Program

Cooperative Education is a partnership between employers, students and the University. Student participants in the Program are typically in their 2nd or 3rd year of the Bachelor of Commerce Program. By hiring a work experience student, you will play an essential role in their career development prior to graduation. The Business Co-op Program provides a flexible range of options that allows BCom students to add paid, career-related, full-time work experience to their degree programs.

Vision

Careers and Work Integrated Learning is the vital link between the business community and the Alberta School of Business, providing employability skills development and job opportunities for all students within the faculty, delivering valuable career counseling, enhancing job search skills through career development services, and helping employers meet their campus recruitment needs.

Careers and Work Integrated Learning (CWIL) Staff

The CWIL Office manages the daily operations of the Coop Program. The CWIL Office is overseen by Amber Nicholson, Manager CWIL, under the portfolio of the Associate Dean, Office of Education.

Each Co-op student is assigned to a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Officer (see list below). If you are not sure who your student might be assigned to, you are welcome to contact any of the individuals listed. We will ensure that you receive the information you need as soon as possible.

- Melanie Tymofichuk - Work Integrated Learning Programs Lead - melanie.tymofichuk@ualberta.ca
- Ciara Murrin - Work Integrated Learning Officer - ciara.murrin@ualberta.ca
- Jessica Olesen - Work Integrated Learning Officer - jessica.olesen@ualberta.ca
- Amanda Shular - Work Integrated Learning Officer - amanda.shular@ualberta.ca (currently on leave)
- Owen Bonner - Work Integrated Learning Officer - obonner@ualberta.ca

The Work Integrated Learning Officer assigned to each student will:

- Liaise with students, employers and faculty members about Program policies and procedures.
- Facilitate communication about Business Co-op among faculty, staff, U of A Career Centre, employers and students.
- Provide ongoing coaching throughout the students time in the Program.
- Provide ongoing communication and support throughout student's participation in the Co-op Program , including the duration of their work term(s).
- Coordinate career education services including, Individual Advising Appointments, Career Coaching, Workshops, Information Sessions, newsletter communications and an associated eClass.
- Process registration for work experience courses.

During/After Work Term

- Assist students with career management-related questions and with the identification of areas for further learning while on a work term.
- Monitor student learning progress and the quality of work experiences.
- Schedule and conduct site visits and review questions.
- Facilitate eClass and respond to student questions and concerns.
- Work with students, employers and other campus resources to help resolve work term problems and issues.
- Liaise with the employer at the end of the term to determine if the student has completed the work term satisfactorily.
- Submit grades (CR/NC) for WKEXP courses upon the completion of the work term.

- Ensure that the students work term(s) appear on their official transcript and that eligible students receive a degree parchment notation (where appropriate).

About your Co-op student

The Co-op student you have hired has satisfactory academic standing and will usually be returning to full-time academic studies at the end of their work term. For the duration of this work term, they have been registered in a Work Experience course (WEXP 911, 912 or 913), which maintains their full-time student status and relationship with the University of Alberta while they are a part of your team.

While on a work term, each Co-op student is expected to:

- Positively represent the University of Alberta and the Alberta School of Business by being a responsible, conscientious and motivated employee.
- Check their UAlberta email account regularly for updates and reminders from CWIL staff.
- Honor the verbal and/or written acceptance of a work term and adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in the employment offer letter.
- Respect and meet employer policies, workplace confidentiality and health and safety regulations.
- Adapt to conditions and rules that apply to all employees in the workplace.
- Complete a work term report which includes creating mutually acceptable learning objectives with the workplace supervisor within the first two to four weeks of employment, obtain the supervisor's signature on the learning objectives document and participate in reflection exercises in eClass.
- Communicate regularly and honestly with workplace supervisors as well as CWIL staff. It is important that students are aware of their work requirements and expectations.
- Contact supervisors and/or CWIL staff and soon as possible, should any areas of concern or problems arise with work assignments.
- Engage in the performance evaluation process (which includes employer evaluations and at least one site visit), accept feedback on suggested areas of improvement in a positive manner and continue to work towards making positive changes in those areas.

Onboarding your Co-op student

Employer/Supervisor responsibilities

Employers who participate in Business Co-op have very similar responsibilities to those who hire short-term employees.

The employer's responsibilities include:

- Providing relevant, paid work experience in a safe and inclusive environment.
- Determining salary, start date, terms of employment contract, vacation pay, etc.
- Honoring the employment contract as signed by the student prior to beginning the

work term.

- Providing orientation to the workplace and direction about specific job tasks and responsibilities.
- Collaborating with the student to establish, refine and sign off on learning objectives for the work term.
- Assigning a supervisor (mentor) to support the student throughout the work term.
- Conducting a mid-term evaluation prior to the site visit with CWIL staff and submitting a final evaluation upon completion of the work term.
- Maintaining Comprehensive General Liability coverage appropriate to their operations, including Employer's Liability and Workers' Compensation, where applicable.

The supervisor's responsibilities include:

- Being a mentor, or assigning a mentor that the student can learn from throughout their work term. This person will also serve as the primary contact for the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Officer when setting up the site visit and collecting midterm and final evaluations.
- Providing strong mentorship and continued learning activities throughout the work term, which represent early professional experiences for Co-op students.
- Assisting with the development of work term learning objectives. Supervisors are asked to meet with students to help them define and develop learning objectives specific to the workplace duties and skills they will perform.
- Providing ongoing feedback, specifically by completing the site visit and final evaluation. The student will arrange the work term site visit with their Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Officer approximately 6-8 weeks into their work term. The CWIL office will send the final evaluation directly to the supervisor to complete 2-3 weeks prior to the end of the work term.

Supporting Students Remotely/Hybrid

Although students may be used to studying online, it may take some time to adjust to working remotely. Here are some tips that might help:

- Clearly communicate your expectations for working remotely. This could include your work from home policies, guidelines, expectations, and ways in which students can obtain support and ask questions
- Disclose how their work will be tracked and state expectations around daily/weekly check-ins as well as communication preferences (chat, email, video meetings etc.).
- Discuss technology requirements - computers, webcams, phones, wifi, etc.
- Ensure that the student knows who to contact if they have questions, experience issues, require support etc.
- Consider ways to effectively integrate the student into your remote team. In a remote environment, students can find it difficult to get to know their colleagues, so finding ways for them to interact with and participate in team activities will help with their work term transition.



Mentorship



As a supervisor, you play an important role in your Co-op student's professional growth and

development. Providing mentorship will ensure that your student will become equipped with the skills and knowledge to help them succeed upon their return to the classroom and beyond.

Suggestions on providing a positive mentoring experience

- Begin where the student is at. Establish a plan for growth based on the individual's strengths, interests and abilities.
- Set achievable goals and challenges and allow the student to take small risks within a safe and supported setting.
- Provide clear and consistent methods of communication so that the student feels comfortable asking questions about assigned tasks.
- Expose the student to activities, experiences and opportunities which foster growth and development and assist the student with building their professional network.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) & Accessibility

The Business Co-op Program welcomes all qualified students, including Indigenous persons; members of visible minority groups; persons with disabilities; and persons of any sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

Companies that prioritize Equity, Diversity and Inclusion while also creating accessible work environments have the opportunity to create diverse teams that foster innovation. These teams are more reflective of society and can have a positive impact on your organization as a whole. You can create a safe and supportive environment for your students to learn and grow in their careers by approaching hiring, onboarding and mentorship with inclusiveness while prioritizing cultural sensitivity without unconscious bias. Also consider adopting gender-neutral language to allow space for your employees to recognize their lived gender identities.

Providing workplace accommodations for students with disabilities (permanent, temporary, invisible or undisclosed) can remove barriers for them to be able to successfully navigate their work term and have a positive impact on your team. For more information on how we Accommodate our students at the University of Alberta check out the [Academic Success Centre](#).

Many of our Co-op students are international students. They often have diverse backgrounds, have had unique experiences and may view the world through a different cultural lens that could help bring new perspectives and innovation to your team. Please consider that their Co-op position may be their first time working in a professional environment in Canada, your guidance and mentorship in an inclusive work environment will be key in helping them have a successful work term.

Work Term Support

If any issues arise during the work term, please ensure that the student's WIL Officer is informed.

Please do not wait until the site visit to disclose this information as we are here to help with issues as they arise.

Work Term at a Glance

The following guidelines are helpful during 4-month work terms, but will likely differ for work terms that are 8- months or longer. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the student's WIL Officer if you have any questions or concerns at any time during the student's work term.

Please note these are just suggestions. We recognize many employers have well established on-boarding processes and internship and co-op student programs.

Week 1

Take your Co-op student through your new staff orientation, providing an overview of HR policies, procedures and applicable software and an introduction to colleagues and the workspace. Co-op students come to your workplace with varying levels of work experience and for many, this work term will be their first professional job. This means that they may need some time to adapt to the company culture, policies, and procedures and to become comfortable in the workplace. Typically, the learning curve will take between 1 and 3 weeks.

Week 3

Discuss the student's learning objectives and provide guidance to help them set goals that they will work towards for the duration of the work term. The student should approach you with the assignment directions to create their learning objectives.

Weeks 4 to 8

Approximately 6-8 weeks into the work term , prepare for an in-person or virtual site visit with your Co-op student and their WIL Officer/Coordinator. The site visit is coordinated through and set up by the Co-op student.

Week 9 to 13

An online evaluation is completed by the employer at the end of each 4-month work term. The CWIL office will contact the employer with a link to the online evaluation. Employers may want to go through the evaluation with the student. Discuss networking opportunities that exist both within and outside of your organization with your Co-op student and continue to support them in meeting their learning objectives through training and mentorship.

Final Week

As part of the program requirements, the student will write a work term report for each 4-month

work term. Each work term report is to be completed in the student's own time, although some research may have to be conducted during work hours.

Extensions and Offers of Rehire

You may inquire about extending your student's contract into an additional work term, and/or rehiring them at a later date. If this is the case, feel free to contact the student's WIL Officer should you need support with work term extensions.

Get Involved!

Co-op students appreciate having the opportunity to connect with employers to learn about the different opportunities they may have, both during the course of their program and upon graduation. If your organization would like to become involved with our talented pool of Business students, please visit our website for information on how to [Engage with Our Students](#). Additionally, please feel free to get in touch with us at hirebusiness@ualberta.ca

Contact Us

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Work Integrated Learning Officers

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- Owen Bonner - Work Integrated Learning Officer - obonner@ualberta.ca

Manager, CWIL

- Amber Nicholson, amber.nicholson@ualberta.ca, 780 492 5622

