



Career & Experiential
Learning

Co-op Student Handbook

Career and Experiential Learning

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Introduction: The Co-op Advantage

The TRU Co-op program is an opportunity for students to integrate academic study with practical experiences in various fields and explore different career options. Employers prefer to hire students, grads, and alumni with experience. Therefore, Co-op can be the key that helps prepare students for their dream job and career.

Students will receive Co-operative Education recognition on their Diploma or Degree if they successfully complete all the required work terms for their program. Employers throughout Canada and around the world are recognizing the added value a graduate from a Co-op program can bring to an organization. They are looking for graduates with that Co-op recognition!

This handbook describes the Co-op Program requirements, regulations, and procedures in place at TRU. Topics include regulations and procedures related to admission into Co-op, activities prior to a first Co-op work term, activities during a work term, following each work term, and work term evaluations.

All Co-operative Education students are expected to read, agree, and follow TRU Co-op regulations and policies outlined in the Student Handbook and the TRU Calendar while participating in the Co-op option.

What is Co-operative Education?

Co-operative Education (Co-op) at TRU follows national standards established by CEWIL and accreditation. The TRU Co-op model allows students to alternate between semester(s) of academic coursework and paid full-time employment. Students have the option to complete 4, 8, or 12-month work terms during their studies. Work terms begin in September, January, and May. At TRU, students enter Co-op at various points in their education depending on program requirements.

In accordance with CEWIL definitions, Co-op work terms are normally paid, monitored, reviewed, and evaluated. The Co-op model integrates a student's academic studies with learning in a workplace or practice setting. The model also includes the development of learning outcomes related to employability, personal agency, and life-long learning. Site visits, work term projects, and performance evaluations are also included throughout a student's work term.

Co-op Programs at TRU

The following Degree and Diploma programs offer the Co-operative Education option:



Maximizing Opportunities in Co-op

- Success in obtaining Co-op work terms depends on the effort made by the student. Students must compete for employment opportunities and TRU does not guarantee employment.
- Students must make sure that their résumé and cover letters are carefully prepared and effectively develop solid interview skills. Co-op Coordinators support developing these skills through Co-op 1000 and through individual advising appointments.
- While in the Co-op Program at TRU, students should list the things they want to learn, the areas in which they want to gain experience, and the personal qualities and abilities they want to improve.
- Booking meetings with your Co-op Coordinator to help identify and discuss goals and career development.
- Students that show initiative and maximize their opportunities will gain the most out of their work term experience.

WORK TERM COURSE

What is Required to Successfully Complete a Work Term?

To earn co-op credit and successfully complete a work term, co-op students must do the following:

- Successfully obtain a paid work term (420 hours/Semester).
- Pay their TRU course tuition.
- Complete roles and objectives outlined by employer.
- Complete online work term course. This includes learning goals, midterm evaluation and site visit, employer evaluation, and final project.
- Facilitate and submit an Employer Evaluation (available on the Co-op website) upon completion of the work-term.

STEPS PRIOR TO A WORK TERM

Co-op 1000

- Co-op 1000 is a prerequisite for Co-op work term(s).
- Students take this course once during their Co-op program.
- Several sections are offered each fall, winter, and summer semesters.
- Once students are accepted into the Co-op program, they will be enrolled into the Co-op 1000 course.
- TRU attendance policy will apply. Students must receive a “complete” for Co-op 1000 to maintain Co-op eligibility.

The *Co-op 1000* will cover topics such as:



Co-op Program Credits

Students should connect with Co-op Coordinator and Program Advisor to consult for correct information

Bachelor's Degree Programs	
Arts	1 st work term may be assigned for 3 lower-level elective credits outside of Arts & Science. Any additional Co-op work terms are assigned as additive credits.
Business Administration	1 st – 2 nd work terms may be used for up to 6 non-business elective credits. Any additional work terms are assigned as additive credits.
Computing Science	1 st work term may be used for 3 lower-level elective credits up to a max of 6. 1 work term can be used for 3 upper-level Computing Science elective credits.
Science	1 st work term can be used for 3 lower-level elective credits. Any additional work terms are assigned as additive credits.
Natural Resource Science	1 st work term can be used for 3 lower-level elective credits. Any additional work terms are assigned as additive credits.
Tourism Management	1 st or 2 nd work terms can be used for up to 6 non-business elective credits. It is mandatory to complete one work term. Additional work terms are assigned as additive credits.
Interdisciplinary Studies	1 st or 2 nd work terms at the 3000 level can be used for up to 6 elective credits. Any additional work terms are assigned as additive credits.
Software Engineering	2 mandatory work terms for 6 credits towards graduation requirements. Any additional work terms will be additive credits.
Diploma Programs	
Computer Science	1 st work term may be used for 3 lower-level elective credits up to a max of 6. 1 work term can be used for 3 upper-level Computing Science elective credits.
Post Baccalaureate	1 st or 2 nd work terms are assigned as additive credits.
ARET	Work terms completed will count towards additive credits.

CONTINUATION, AND WITHDRAWAL

Continuation and Withdrawal in The Co-op Program

- There is a one-time admission and withdrawal policy for Co-op programs. When a student withdraws from Co-op they cannot apply for re-admission. Students wanting to withdraw from a Co-op competition must do so by contacting their Co-op Coordinator immediately following the interview.
- It is the student's responsibility to maintain close contact with their Co-op Coordinator and to check daily for new job postings, interview schedules, and correspondence from the Co-op Office.
- Students are expected to accept a job offer immediately within 24 hours of receiving it. This includes both verbal and written offers.
- To maintain eligibility for future work terms, students must update their Career Connection accounts each semester. This can be completed by logging in and updating information under the "Personal" tab in Career Connections.
- Students cannot end their academic program on a Co-op work term. Their last semester must be on-campus with a minimum of 9 credits.
- Students must maintain full-time status (min 3 courses/9 credits) to maintain eligibility for the Co-op program and maintain a cumulative GPA minimum set by their specific program (see TRU Academic Calendar). Transcripts will be reviewed following each academic term.
- Students who have acquired a Co-op Abroad work term must notify their Co-op Coordinator and complete TRU World pre-departure requirements.

Interviews

Some interviews occur on campus, at employers' location, or video conferencing apps.

Students selected for an interview will be notified by e-mail or phone. It is the students' responsibility to check their e-mail regularly and to confirm with the Co-op office that they are available for the interview. In most cases, an employer may contact students directly. It is important to inform the Co-op office immediately when this happens.

Students are expected to attend all interviews scheduled with an employer and to be prepared for each one. If a student anticipates missing an interview for a legitimate reason, contact the Co-op office immediately.

Job Offers

Employers generally make their offer directly to a student or the Co-op office. The student must contact the Co-op office immediately as to the nature of the offer and their decision.

When the employer makes a job offer, students make a firm commitment to the employer. It's expected to accept the job offer when given within 24 hours of notice. Failure to honour a commitment will lead to withdrawal from the Co-op program. Extenuating circumstances must be handled through the Co-op office.

If a student interviews for a job and then decides it may not be the best fit for them for whatever reason they must discuss the situation with their Co-op Coordinator immediately before any job offers are extended.

Returning to the Same Employer

Although it is quite common for employers to ask successful student employees to return to work in subsequent work terms, students should consider what is best for their career development and discuss the opportunity with their Co-op Coordinator.

Developing Your Own Co-op Work Term

Students that initiate their own Co-op work term must bring in the details of the position to the Co-op Coordinator for approval before accepting any offer of employment. If accepted, students must adhere to all the regular Co-op requirements as stated elsewhere in this document.

Work Term Registration and Tuition

Once a student has accepted a position, the Co-op office will register the student for the appropriate work term(s) through the TRU Registrar's office. Refer to your program fee structure for more information.

Vacations

Due to the short timeframe of a work term, normally Co-op students do not request time off. However, students may be able to negotiate absences in advance, if necessary. This is done prior to accepting the position.

Strikes

Whether to cross a picket line and work, or observe a picket line and not work, is a personal decision. The role of the Co-op Coordinator in this situation is to inform the student of potential results of either decision.

Layoffs

Layoffs due to a shortage of work must be reported immediately to the Co-op Coordinator.

Resignations

Students considering quitting a Co-op job before the end of a scheduled work term must consult their Co-op Coordinator prior to taking any action. Failure to consult may lead to withdrawal from the Co-op program and a “DNC” will be noted on the student’s transcript.

Termination

Students that are terminated from a Co-op position must notify the Co-op office immediately. Each termination will be reviewed with the student, the employer, and their Co-op Coordinator.

Confidentiality

Some employers may be concerned about disclosure of confidential information. Student employees must comply with their employer's policies in this respect as the information they are exposed to, including the results of their own research, belongs to the employer. Evaluation of Co-op assignments that are deemed confidential by the employer may be conducted by the employer and not TRU. Students should familiarize themselves on the company’s policy regarding confidentiality.

CO-OP GRADING SYSTEM & OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

Once a Co-op job has been confirmed, the student will be registered in that work term by the TRU Co-op Program through the Registrar’s office. The work term becomes a permanent entry on the student’s transcript. Upon completion of the work term, the Co-op department, like all other academic departments, submits grades for the work term to the Registrar. This grade appears on the student’s official transcript.

The Co-op Program uses the official Grading and Transcript Notations outlined in TRU’s Policy.