COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Co-operative education (Co-op) is an integrated approach to education, in which you compliment your coursework with workplace learning. Co-op offers year-round career-development programming, which becomes part of your UVic academic experience. Participation requires motivation, hard work, perseverance, commitment, and reflective practice. Co-op is not a summer or career job placement service.

As a Geography Co-op student, you further develop your professional competence in laboratory, field and office settings. Example 2012-13 Geography co-op placements included:

• Seasonal Restoration Technician, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary (Victoria, BC)
• Seabed mapping geoscientist, Geological Survey of Canada (Sidney, BC)
• Geomatics Technician, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Victoria, BC)
• Updating BC Digital GIS Co-op Position, BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Gas (Victoria, BC)
• Research and Policy Analyst, Canadian International Development Agency (Ottawa, ON)
• Research Officer, Universiti Sains Malaysia (Malaysia)
• Summer Student, Development Services, Columbia-Shuswap Regional District (Salmon Arm, BC)
• Wildlife Outreach/Education Officer, Parks Canada (Jasper, AB)
• Special Events Coordinator, Burns Bog Conservation Society (Delta, BC)

BENEFITS OF CO-OP

Challenging learning experiences - Co-op terms complement theoretical concepts with practical application and many times give you the chance to learn things that you did not take in classes. Through experiential education, you become a better reflective practitioner.

Evaluation of career possibilities - In a broad field such as geography it is extremely useful to sample different areas before making career decisions. Many students are surprised to discover what they like or don’t like!

Personalized support & resources – Your co-op program team help you understand, apply and describe your competencies so that you can actively engage in your career development. With our support and instruction, you are also well equipped to compete for jobs.

A special degree - Completing three co-op terms earns you a co-op designation. (eg BA, Geog (Co-op)) This makes a statement not only about your education but also about your hard-working ethos.

Better job opportunities - With relevant workplace experience, you also benefit from employment references, a network of contacts, and a portfolio of professional accomplishments. Many find permanent work through co-op experiences.

More workplace skills & confidence – As a co-op student, you can become savvy in job search activities (i.e. networking & interviewing). You also increase workplace competence.

Income & full-time status - Students normally receive competitive wages during co-op terms… what other course pays you to learn?! During co-op placements, you are a full-time student and can enjoy the benefits of that.
PROGRAM DETAILS

Co-op Program - The Co-op Program enables students to complete co-op as part of their degree program. In addition to course requirements, students must complete three co-op terms to finish the degree program, thus earning the co-op designation. This is best suited for students in second or third year standing. Since co-op is an optional program in Geography, students may withdraw from the co-op program at any point (except after having accepted a co-op job offer or when registered in a co-op term).

Work Experience Program (WEP) - The Work Experience Program enables students to participate in co-operative education without the intention of completing the co-op designation. Work Experience students who meet the GPA requirements and wish to complete three co-op terms, can also earn the co-op designation. This is best suited for fourth & fifth year students.

Admission Information
To qualify for entry to Geography Co-op & Work Experience Programs, you must be enrolled full-time in the Faculty of Social Sciences, be in or proceeding to a Geography Honours or Major degree and have at least a B average (GPA of 5.50) in your Geog courses and 5.50 overall.

You can apply in your second year of studies at the beginning of September or January. Applications are available in the Social Sciences Co-op office, DTB A204.

Once in the Program
Before competing for co-op placements, students attend co-op seminars, which help increase proficiency in résumé preparation, interview techniques, and effective workplace skills, as well as introduce students to experiential education and career-development.

Students plan their co-op schedule and create strategies for securing placements with the support of their Coordinators. Students should plan for at least one co-op/WEP term in the Fall or Spring and at least one placement outside of Greater Victoria. Co-op/WEP terms should also be completed between course terms, not after all courses required for a degree have been completed. Many students choose to complete more than one term in a row. Each co-op placement consists of a minimum of 420 hours of work (normally at least 12 weeks full-time).

At the end of each co-op (or WEP) term, students complete a term report, which is typically marked by a faculty member. Co-op terms are recorded on students’ records (transcripts) with a pass/fail grade. There are also opportunities to share experiences during classes, conferences, workshops, or other events.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Social Sciences Co-op Office
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