

Law Co-operative Education Program

Law Co-op Student Handbook



LAW CO-OP HANDBOOK

The purpose of this Handbook is to acquaint you with the Law Co-op Program in the Faculty of Law and to explain the rules and procedures that you are responsible for knowing and following. The Co-operative Education learning model is based on classroom instruction combined with practical work experience. The Law Co-op Office staff, faculty and employer supervisors are all resources for learning and guidance for students.

The Law Co-op Office staff are available to you for any questions you may have.

The Law Co-op Office Staff

Law Co-op Coordinator
Room 131c, 250-721-8196
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Co-op Assistant
Room 140, 250-721-8195
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Admission to the Law Co-op Program

Students registered in first-year Law at the University of Victoria are eligible for admission to the Law Co-op Program in accordance with the Law Co-op Regulations and the Co-op policies outlined in this Handbook. Admission takes place during the Fall term of 1L. An information session will be held around the end of October and the application process will be outlined then.

The Operation and Requirements of the Law Co-op Program

Regulations AND Terms and Conditions

It is important that all Law Co-op Students review and understand the Law Co-op Regulations and the University-wide Co-op Terms and Conditions – see these links:

Law Co-op Regulations

<https://www.uvic.ca/law/assets/docs/coop/LawCoopRegulations2017.pdf>

Co-operative Education Terms and Conditions

<https://www.uvic.ca/coop/work-and-learn/before-your-first-co-op/terms-and-conditions/index.php>

Student Status

During your work term, you are considered a full-time student. This is important for financial aid considerations. If you are on a local Co-op placement, you can use UVic services, such as the athletic facilities, however, you will need to “opt-in” by contacting the UVSS office.

Work Terms

To receive a Co-op designation, students admitted to Law Co-op must complete at least two work terms with employers that can provide legal supervision. The Co-op designation will appear on the graduation parchment. Students are encouraged to seek diversity in their work-terms in order to develop a variety of relevant competencies and to assess career options in the legal profession.

Students can complete more than two work-terms. Students have priority in the co-op application process for the first three work terms over students looking to secure additional work terms (fourth, etc).

Any positions not filled by a Co-op student may be open to the non-coop student body. A student who obtains an unfilled co-op position will be enrolled in the Law Co-op Program on a temporary basis. The Co-op regulations and Terms and Conditions are applicable.

Scheduling Options

Students typically follow one of the three scheduling options noted below. Please speak to the Law Co-op Coordinator if you would like to discuss an alternate schedule and keep these points in mind.

- The Law Co-op Program is an accredited work-integrated learning program through [CEWIL Canada](#), thus there are specific program requirements.
- Schedules must include periods of study alternating with periods of work AND work-terms must be in different seasons. This means students cannot do all work-terms during the summer semesters.
- In most cases, students will be expected to take an academic summer term.

Option 1

Year 1 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 2 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 3 Fall	Spring	Summer
Study	Study	Work	Study	Work	Study	Optional Work (or Study)	Study	Study (if needed)

Option 2

Year 1 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 2 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 3 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 4 Fall
Study	Study	Opt Out	Study	Work	Study	Work	Study	Optional Work (or Study)	Study (if needed)

Option 3

Year 1 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 2 Fall	Spring	Summer	Year 3 Fall	Spring
Study	Study	Study	Work	Study	Work	Study	Study

Work Term Placement Requirements

A work term consists of at least 12 weeks of full-time paid employment. During the term students will:

- pay Co-op fees by the end of the first month of each work term (these are tuition fees to be paid directly to the University of Victoria);
- complete a work term report which demonstrates legal analysis and technical writing skills (see below for Work Term Report Guidelines);
- complete an online competency assessment at the beginning, middle and end of the work-term; and,
- obtain an assessment from the Law Co-op Coordinator. (The Coordinator bases the assessment on the evaluation of the supervisor, the work site visit, work term report, and competency assessment)

Students are evaluated on a **complete/incomplete basis**. Obtaining an incomplete on the work term performance evaluation will normally require the student to withdraw from the Law Co-op Program.

Refer to the [Law Co-op Regulations](#) and the [Co-operative Education Terms and Conditions](#) to ensure you understand the requirements and obligations of students participating in the Law Co-op Program.

Work Term Report Guidelines

The Work Term Report includes a reflective component and a sample work-product. The reflective component of the report should be written in the first person narrative voice, using complete paragraphs (not point-form). The reflective component should be approximately 5-7 pages, double spaced. Please attach a cover page, including student name, co-op employer, and term in which the work term was completed. The content should include the following:

1. Describe the work term setting and summarize the activities/projects undertaken on the work term. Comment on outcomes of your activities.
2. Summarize your competency growth and development throughout the work-term, linking this to your academic background, law school courses, and previous work experience.
3. Comment on the extent to which the Faculty of Law prepared you for this work-term.
4. Append a sample work product (5-10 pages). Provide a summary of the process you followed to complete the work product, any challenges you faced, and competency growth and development attained through completing this work product.

There are additional work-term report format options. Please speak to your Law Co-op Coordinator for additional information. Options include:

- Career action plan;
- Letter to a future co-op student;
- Student-led workshop;
- Literature Review; and
- Photo essay.

Law Co-op and the JD Program

There are many exciting opportunities in law school. Please review the following guidelines carefully as participating in Co-op requires some additional planning.

1. Academic Summer Term

Typically, Law Co-op students are expected to attend one academic summer session.

2. Academic term/Work-term Schedules

Law Co-op students typically follow one of the three approved academic/work term schedules (see page 4). Any schedule changes must be approved, in writing, by both the Law Co-op Coordinator and the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations. Approval may be granted in situations where a student's academic, career and personal goals justify a change. Students must submit a proposal to the Law Co-op Coordinator, covering these points, when making such a request.

3. Co-op Course

Co-op students must attend the Co-op class and this takes place during the Spring term of 1L. Students must obtain advance permission from the Law Co-op Coordinator to miss a class. Students are expected to schedule extra-curricular activities, personal appointments, etc. outside class time. (We appreciate that sometimes life intervenes and advance permission cannot happen – speak to the Law Co-op Coordinator ASAP if you find yourself in this situation)

4. Mooting Program

Co-op students may be eligible to participate in the mooting program. Students must notify the Law Co-op Coordinator of their intention to participate in the moot run-offs. Students must obtain written permission from the Law Co-op Coordinator **before** participating in the mooting run-offs.

The Law Co-op Coordinator will use the following guidelines when making these decisions:

General Principles

- Each student's circumstances are unique, so decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Consultations with the Associate Dean, Academic and Student relations will occur if deemed necessary.

Co-op Employment

- Co-op employment is a commitment and participation in the moot program must not interfere with the responsibilities of a co-op work term. Co-op employers are not expected to accommodate participation in a moot.
- Permission from a Co-op employer may be required and if this is the case, it must be obtained, in writing, **before** a co-op student accepts a position on a moot team.
- Students submitting applications for upcoming work-terms must advise prospective employers, prior to accepting an offer of employment, of all commitments to a moot schedule that will occur during the co-op work-term. These commitments may impact a co-op employer's hiring decision if the moot and employment schedules are not compatible.
- Students cannot withdraw from a co-op position to accommodate a position on a moot team. Doing this will result in a student being withdrawn from the Law Co-op Program and ineligible to participate in future work-terms.

Mooting Team

- Participation in the moot program is a team endeavor. Co-op students must be available to participate as full members of a moot team. This may not be possible while a student is on a co-op work-term.
- Students are expected to advise faculty/coaches during the run-offs of their co-op status, that they have obtained permission from the Law Co-op Coordinator to participate, and their current co-op work-term/academic term schedule.
- Students cannot withdraw from a moot team to accommodate or pursue a co-op position. Doing this may result in a student being withdrawn from the Law Co-op Program and ineligible to participate in future work-terms.

Academic Units

- Students will need to register the academic units for a moot as typically required and pay tuition in the terms where units are registered. This means some units may be registered during term that a student is on a work-term and tuition, in addition to the co-op fee, may be payable.

5. Taking Courses while on a work-term

With permission from the Law Co-op Coordinator, students may be eligible to take a course during a term when they will be on a work-term. Approval will not be given for course-work that occurs during hours of co-op employment.

6. Law Students Society

Co-op students are eligible to compete for some LSS positions and typically do a split term, meaning they run with another classmate who has an opposite academic/work term schedule. Some positions, such as LSS President and Treasurer, however, cannot be split between two students thus making Co-op students ineligible to compete.

7. Course selection

Due to the alternating academic/work term Co-op schedule, there will be some limits with course selection. Please refer to the Course Offerings Patterns document on the UVic Law website for guidance with course selection.

8. Convocation date

Adding work-terms to your legal studies may delay convocation. Please speak to the Law Co-op Coordinator and/or the Law Careers officer about how this may impact access to articles and clerkships.

9. Stop Outs

If at any time after being admitted to Law Co-op and before graduation, you are not on either a work term or an academic term (other than during the optional work term in the summer after first year), you must formally "stop out" from your studies. Students who wish to stop out must request and obtain permission from the Office of the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations.

10. Course Selection and Registration

Good course planning is important. The issues Law Co-op students must be mindful of are as follows:

- Since most Co-op students will attend one academic summer session, students are strongly encouraged to avoid taking classes being offered in the summer term in a preceding academic semester. The summer course offerings are noted on the Faculty of Law website.
- Some co-op employers prefer to hire students that have taken Administrative Law so second year co-op students interested in these placements may wish to register in Administrative Law in their first term of second year (space permitting)

- Co-op students are strongly encouraged to take 7.5 units in their first term of second year (2A) if the second term of second year (2B) will be during the summer academic term because course selection is more limited during the summer.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that they meet the credit requirements for each year as specified by the Faculty of Law.

Important Note about Course Registration

*****2024 Registration Pilot (June 2024-May 2025)**

Registration for Fall/Spring classes takes place over the course of three days in June. The previous registration policy for co-op students is highlighted in grey below.

The faculty is conducting a Registration Pilot which means the policy below will not be applicable in 2024. Instead, Co-op students will be able to register with their academic cohort for both Fall and Spring terms, thus eliminating Day 3 of registration.

In turn, Co-op students will no longer have priority for registration during the summer 2025 academic term.

The previous registration policy was as follows:

Students maintain their typical registration priority for upcoming academic terms.

Co-op students can register for courses during terms scheduled to be work-terms, BUT not until Day 3 of registration. This means that as a Co-op student, you may register on two days.

Specifically:

- 2L students will register for the next scheduled academic term on Day 2 and have the option of registering for courses during the next scheduled work-term on Day 3.
- 3L students will register for the next scheduled academic term on Day 1 and have the option of registering for courses during the next scheduled work-term on Day 3.

11. Awards

Co-op students are eligible for performance based academic awards. For more information, please contact the Office of the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations at lawada@uvic.ca.

The Job Search

The work term recruitment takes place during the academic semester preceding the anticipated start date of the work term. Positions are posted electronically through the Co-op database - <https://learninginmotion.uvic.ca/home.htm>.

Some students will secure positions quickly and for others, it will take longer. There is no one single path to success. It is common for students to have to apply for several positions before obtaining a job offer. Talk to other Co-op students about their experiences – your classmates are your greatest resource!

Pay Attention to the Co-op Program as Follows

- 1) The Co-op course will provide you with the information necessary for participating successfully in the recruitment and placement process.
- 2) Keep the Co-op Office informed of the types of jobs you are seeking – this helps with job development.
- 3) Talk to the Law Co-op Coordinator about setting up your own Co-op work-term.
- 4) Check your email regularly and maintain contact with the Co-op staff.
- 5) The Law Co-op Office manages all aspects of the placement process. This includes communication with employers, sending applications, arranging interviews and extending job offers.

The Co-op Work Term Placement Process

Applications

- An application generally consists of a cover letter and a resume. Any additional documents that are required, such as transcripts and writing samples, will be noted in the job description.

Law grades

- Grades will not be available for the first summer work term, but some employers will require first year students to self-report grades. Information about this will be distributed to students early in January of the 1L year. **Respond to this early and do not leave it until the date the job posting closes.**
- It is usually not necessary to get 'Official' transcripts from the University. 'Unofficial' copies can be attached with your job application through the co-op database. UVic transcripts should be available through the database under the “documents” tab and can be attached to an application package.

Interviews

- The employer will send a list of applicants short-listed for interviews to the Co-op Office. If you have been shortlisted for an interview, you will receive an email notifying you. Interview sign-up is done online.
- Interviews may occur at the school, the place of employment, or over the phone.
- It is essential that you do some research on the job before the interview. Some easy ways to do this include:
 - talking to former Co-op students or the current student on the job
 - reviewing the BC Government website
 - reading annual reports or any particularly relevant legislation for government placements; and
 - reading firm brochures/websites for private placements.

Job Offers:

- The employer will advise the Co-op office of the interview results.
- The Law Co-op Office will inform the successful candidate.
- Students are given 24 hours to decide whether to accept a job offer.
- Students cannot hold onto one offer to wait to hear the result of another competition.

Accepting the Job

- After you accept the position, the Co-op Office will send a confirmation to you. You must fill out a Work Term Registration Form promptly and submit this to the Co-op Office.
- You must contact the employer directly as soon as possible after accepting the position to arrange a start date and completion date. This is the time to advise the employer if you have a specific period of absence during the term that you require leave from work (i.e., holidays for family functions).
- Once you accept a position, you cannot apply for other Co-op positions for the term in question.

Setting Up Your Own Placement

Students are encouraged to develop their own Co-op job opportunities outside of those currently participating in the Program. You must, however, check with the Co-op Office before pursuing your own job to ensure that protocols are met and that employers are qualified.

You may not communicate directly or indirectly (through faculty, friends, or other persons) with currently participating Co-op employers except with the knowledge and authorization of the Law Co-op Office Staff. It is your responsibility to know or to ask whether employers are participating.

The key is to START EARLY - 4 - 6 months prior for a work term within Canada and 8 - 12 months prior for a work term overseas.

The Co-op Office should have a copy of a letter from any new employers stating that you will be:

1. Employed as a law student on a full-time basis for at least twelve weeks (specify the period of employment),
2. Supervised by a law graduate, and
3. Given a written evaluation of your performance (on a form provided by the Co-op Office) at the conclusion of your employment.

The letter should also contain a brief statement of the kind of work you will be assigned as well as a brief description of the employer's work. These requirements must be met in order to qualify as a Co-op position. The Co-op staff is available to offer assistance on how to contact prospective employers. In addition, the Co-op Office can provide information to prospective employers about the Program, employer requirements and obligations, and hiring procedures.

Returning to School

After you return to school, you must:

- Submit your Work Term Report (via email) and Evaluation of the Work Term Report (if the work sample portion of the Report is confidential). If you have any questions about whether your report is confidential, check with your employer.
- Submit your completed Competency Assessment form.
- Follow up with your supervisor to ensure that the employer's portion of the Competency Assessment has been completed.
- Schedule an appointment with the Law Co-op Coordinator to debrief on your previous work term placement
- Attend a group or individual debriefing session
- Complete an online evaluation

WHEN YOU ARE AT WORK

Salary, Insurance and Benefits

The salary and benefit package for each position is typically part of the posting in the Co-op Office. You may receive a written letter of offer from an employer that will confirm the salary and benefits for the position before you start work. Employers are responsible for paying you at least monthly. Many employers pay a lump sum to students in lieu of benefits. You are responsible for ensuring that you have FULL

medical coverage. You **MUST** have extended health insurance for the full period you are on an international co-op term.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unlawful. The University defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that employee; or
- c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Obtaining Effective Supervision

By participating in the Law Co-op Education Program, your employer has assumed a special role as a legal educator and clinical supervisor. Students are usually hired because the supervisor is very busy and needs help. The following are some suggestions on how to obtain effective supervision:

1. You should strive to have enough, but not too much, work. You should be busy and productive during the normal working hours of your employer, which may be 7 to 12 hours a day. You should expect, on occasion, that a particular project may demand an additional time commitment.
2. Consistent with reasonable employer needs, assignments should encompass a spectrum of substantive and procedural areas of concentration allowing for some flexibility for your interests. You should analyze the work that is being done in the office and express interest in gaining experience in areas that interest you. You may need to offer to participate in extra activities, in addition to your workload, when the employer is relying on you to produce certain defined results during your term.
3. If you perform well, your employer should provide more challenging work. If your performance requires improvement, instruction and guidance should increase.
4. Assignments should be made as specific and concrete as possible. To help you focus on relevant issues and avoid unnecessary work, the purpose of an assigned project should be clear. If you are uncertain about what to do and your supervisor is

unavailable, you should contact the student who preceded you in the position or contact the Law Coop office.

5. You should ask when the results are expected. If you anticipate not being able to meet the deadline, then you should advise your supervisor as soon as this limitation is obvious (**and a reasonable time before the deadline**) and seek further instructions.
6. Ask for feedback on your work. If you do not submit anything in writing for the first month, wait for six weeks. After six weeks, you should ask your supervisor how you are doing and for any concrete feedback he or she can give you. You should plan to ask for work in an area of interest by the end of your second month. It is common for students to have difficulty obtaining feedback, but employers should provide it, so don't be afraid to ask. Some students find setting up regular meetings with their employer (i.e., once every two weeks) helpful to obtain feedback, discuss progress, and to identify any areas of interest for the student so that new projects can be identified.

Evaluation and the Site Visit

Co-op work terms are a substantive part of your legal education. Site visits from the Law Co-op Coordinator strengthen the school's relationship with employers and present an opportunity to answer questions about the Co-op Program, academic planning, career options and to discuss your experiences and how to maximize the learning opportunities.

Site visits are also a good time to deal with concerns or problems in the office. If a problem does arise, a visit can be arranged at almost any time. **If you have any questions or problems while on a work term, please contact the Co-op Office -- the sooner the better.**

Your employer is asked to complete the online competency assessment at the middle and end of the term. Your supervisor should review this evaluation with you. This evaluation will become part of your university record. It will not be disclosed to anyone without your permission.

You will also be asked to evaluate your work term experience in writing and in the debriefing session with the Law Co-op Coordinator. These evaluations are confidential unless you specifically give us permission to discuss them with others.

Competencies

UVic Co-op uses a competency-based assessment model. UVic has developed ten Core Competencies that all Co-op students at UVic should develop throughout their work terms, as follows:

1. Personal Management
2. Communication
3. Managing Information
4. Research and Analysis
5. Project and Task Management
6. Teamwork
7. Commitment to Quality
8. Professional Behaviour
9. Social Responsibility
10. Continuous Learning

For a description and example of each of the Core Competencies, please visit the UVic Co-op and Career website at <http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/>.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Law Society of British Columbia regulates the legal profession in BC, including conduct of articling students and temporary articling students. Some Co-op employers will require that Co-op students obtain temporary articles during a work-term. All students should conduct themselves according to the standards of the profession set by the Law Society.

Please refer to the Annotated Professional Conduct Handbook at <https://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/support-and-resources-for-lawyers/act-rules-and-code/code-of-professional-conduct-for-british-columbia/>

Students should also review the Law Society Rules for information about Articles and Temporary Articles.

- Articles - <https://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/becoming-a-lawyer-in-bc/admission-program/articling-centre/details-of-articling/>
- Temporary Articles - <https://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/becoming-a-lawyer-in-bc/admission-program/articling-centre/temporary-articles/>

Students should familiarize themselves with the professional responsibility codes and legislation in the jurisdiction in which they are working. Any ethical questions should be discussed with the supervising lawyer, and when necessary, with the Co-op Office.

Student at Law

In dealing with anyone during a work term you must identify yourself as a law student and not leave an impression that you are a lawyer. You represent the lawyer for whom you are working, their office, the Faculty of Law and the Co-op Program when you are at work. Do not damage their reputation, or your own, by misleading anyone or doing anything that could be interpreted as in breach of the Professional Code of Conduct.

Unauthorized Practice of Law

Co-op work terms are a wonderful opportunity to gain experience and learn. From your first hour you are a legal professional judged and remembered for your professional responsibility. Always identify yourself as a law student or student-at-law, not as a lawyer.

Disclosure will solve many, but not all, problems. When you are working in a law office in most provinces, you are eligible for temporary articles. You must apply for temporary articles in a timely manner. You must determine your status from your supervising lawyer or the Co-op Office before you act as a representative.

Confidentiality

Everything you learn at the office that has not been put in the public domain is confidential. Any information given to you is subject to solicitor/client privilege and can only be released with your client's permission. When in doubt say nothing!!

Special care must be taken with anything you do in writing. Never take anything you produce at work out of the office without your supervisor's explicit permission. Never use a writing sample without the client's permission. Deletion of client names is not enough, as clients can potentially be identified by facts and circumstances. When you are leaving your place of work, ask your supervisor before taking copies of any of your work. You should request permission to retain copies for your personal reference, but you may not share them with anyone else without specific permission.

Conflict of Interest

Particular care should be taken to avoid conflicts of interest in your Co-op positions. You cannot personally represent clients in the same or substantially related matters while on different Co-op work terms. You must also ensure that the offices you are working in do not become disqualified in a particular matter because of your

representation of an adverse client. This is a sensitive area, and any questions should be brought to the attention of the Co-op Coordinator.

Life After Law School - Clerkships and Articles

By entering the Co-op Program, you become a hybrid as far as your year is concerned. You may not graduate at the same time as the non-co-op students you entered law school with in 1L. Depending on the timing and number of work terms you complete, you could graduate 4 or 8 months after the date you would normally graduate if you did not participate in Co-op. This has implications for your future career planning, so please discuss these issues with the Law Co-op Coordinator.

Some law firms, at least in BC, can be flexible regarding when students begin articling. This flexibility varies, however, from province to province due to the timing of courses equivalent to the Law Society of BC's Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC). In BC, PLTC is offered three times a year, but some other provinces offer their course only once a year. This can have an impact on when firms are able and/or willing to take articling, and even Co-op students.

Law Co-op Committee

The Law Co-op Committee consists of faculty members, including one faculty chair, the Law Co-op Coordinator, the Law Co-op Assistant and student representatives. The Committee can meet at the request of the faculty chair or the Law Co-op Coordinator. If you wish the Committee to consider an issue, you may raise it with anyone on the Committee. Meetings are informal and input is welcome. If you wish to attend a meeting let the Co-op Office know.

Concurrent Degree Programs

JD/MPA (Masters of Public Administration)

Students who have been accepted into the concurrent degree program should meet as soon as possible with the graduate student advisor in the School of Public Administration to plan the sequencing of their MPA degree requirements.

Students enrolled in the JD + MPA double degree program prior to starting first year law school will not be eligible to enrol in the Law Co-op Program. Students that are admitted to the Law Co-op Program during first year law and subsequently enrol in the

JD + MPA double degree program shall withdraw from the Law Co-op Program. Students enrolled in the JD + MPA double degree program will be required to complete any mandatory work-terms as specified by the School of Public Administration.