

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

STUDENT GUIDE

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Introduction

Most NSCC programs have a work-integrated learning component that provides students with an opportunity to combine their classroom learning with learning on the job, which benefits everyone. As a student, you will have the chance to start building your professional network and gain hands on experience, while employers get fresh ideas, new perspectives, and an opportunity to identify potential future employees. These work experiences also help to raise the number of students who stay in Nova Scotia by increasing your chances of securing employment after graduation.

At NSCC we offer four broad categories of work experiences: co-operative education; field placements; internships; and professional practice. This guide has been written specifically for students completing co-op.

Co-operative education is paid full-time employment, enabling participants to “earn as they learn” while gaining invaluable experience as they prepare for their second year of studies, graduation and ultimately, employment in their career of choice. Co-op represents one full credit and regular tuition does apply.

There are two forms of co-op for NSCC diploma-level programs:

- Mandatory – required in Culinary Arts and Tourism Management
- Elective – optional in most 2-year programs

NSCC maintains the Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL) national standards for all co-ops. For a complete list of CEWIL standards and guidelines, visit www.cewilcanada.ca/

NSCC will track all co-operative education through NSCC’s Work Experience Portal. This portal allows us to record and track all work experiences in a single searchable catalogue. The Work Experience Portal includes student’s personal information (Name, Email, Phone, Emergency Contact, Gender, Language, and Citizenship), industry partner information, and field experience details (Start Date, End Date, Hours, Wage if applicable, etc.).

NSCC is committed to controlling the collection, use, and disclosure of the information provided by students and industry partners. NSCC is also committed to the principal of informed consent and supports the right for the industry partner to know what information is on file. If you have any questions on privacy or data use please contact us at WorkExperience@nsc.ca.

If you have any questions related to co-operative education or Work-Integrated Learning please email us at WorkExperience@nsc.ca.

Responsibilities

Students are responsible for participating in the co-op process, maintaining professionalism and submitting appropriate agreements and reports. As such, it is important that you have a clear understanding of the policies, procedures and standards that are expected of you. Should you have any questions pertaining to your responsibilities as a student you are encouraged to follow-up with your faculty.

Employer responsibilities can be found in the Employer Co-operative Education Guides on the College's website (https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/hire-a-student.asp).



Student Responsibilities

- Have a current Nova Scotia Health Card (also known as a MSI card) and SIP Accident Insurance
- International students must ensure that they are enrolled in the International Student Emergency Health Insurance (EHI)
- International students must ensure they have obtained their co-op work permit
- Attend co-op orientation/information sessions
- Prepare your cover letter and resume
- Approach co-op with the attitude of one who is eager to learn, willing to cooperate and ready to work
- Obtain faculty/academic chair approval prior to committing to a co-op
- Sign the Letter of Understanding for Co-operative Education
- Complete the Co-op Registration Form (optional co-op's) and pay the registration fee
- Complete Co-operative Education Agreement and Risk Assessment & Compliance Agreement
- Be aware of and comply with the code of professional and ethical conduct required for the field
- Serve as a good ambassador for the College
- Be familiar with, and comply with, the employer's policies, rules and regulations
- Maintain regular attendance and be punctual
- Complete the full duration of the co-op agreement
- Work in a safe and healthy manner
- Complete the Orientation and Job Safety Review Form (with employer), the Release of Information Form and the Confidentiality Agreement and return to faculty
- Undertake a self-assessment of your performance and engage in a reflective learning activity
- Remind employer to submit Employer Feedback on Student Form
- Submit completed Student Evaluation of Employer and Reflective Learning Assignment
- Contact NSCC in the event of any change in employment or at the first indication of difficulty with employment including a safe work environment setting
- Obtain a record of employment (ROE) at the end of the co-op
- Prepare an oral presentation and formal written co-op report from the established guidelines
- Provide the completed Student's Evaluation of the Employer Form to Faculty

Co-operative Education Procedures

In many cases, students take responsibility for finding their own co-op and faculty assist them with the co-op process. However, in some programs, a co-op may be assigned to a student. It is important to note that faculty must approve all co-op positions.

Preparing for your Co-op

Your Campus and/or faculty will hold co-op orientation/information sessions for students to help you prepare for your co-op searches. Information sessions should occur during the start of the semester preceding your co-op. Students are expected to attend the session(s).

Student participating in co-operative education must enroll in the co-op course. Co-op is an academic course, and as such, tuition fees apply, even if the student secures a co-op employer on her/his own initiative.

Students are also responsible for having an updated resume and cover letter ready for employers. Your faculty or Student Services team can assist when necessary.

Some co-op employers may require students to provide Criminal Record Checks (CRC), Vulnerable Sector Searches (VSS), Immunization Records, and/or Child Abuse Register Checks prior to securing a co-op. Any flags on these checks may result in a student being unable to complete a co-op, and thus, unable to complete all requirements of their program.

For information on International Co-operative Education (co-op position outside of Canada), or International Students (co-op position inside of Canada) please see the respective section in this Guide.

Faculty must approve all co-op positions. The following criteria is considered when approving a co-op position.

- An optimum degree of relevancy exists between the co-op and the student's program of study.
- The employer agrees to fulfill his/her responsibilities as outlined in the Employer Guide.
- An acceptable standard of safety is maintained at the work site.

Finding a Co-op

Co-op postings can come directly from employers or from students who source their own co-op. It is important that a co-op provide a valuable learning experience for the student.

Postings from Employers

Employers who would like to share a co-op opportunity through NSCC should provide the relevant information to WorkExperience@nsc.ca, a faculty member, or a campus and we will work with them to start the co-op process. The following details should be included in the request:

- Company Information
 - Contact Name
 - Complete address
 - Phone, Fax, Email and Website
- Job Information
 - Position/Title
 - Closing Date
 - Number of Positions
 - Position Description and Qualifications

- Job Location
 - Address where co-op will take place
 - Indicate any travel required
- Method of Contact and How to Apply
- Any documentation required
- Hourly wage

Self Directed Searches by Students

Students completing self-directed searches for co-op must communicate with their faculty. You and your faculty should connect to discuss the employers you wish to approach, how they could meet your personal goals and how it could align with your program.

Interviewing for your Co-op

Co-op employers may screen and shortlist applications. They are not required to interview all applicants. The employer may contact you directly to arrange an interview or they may request that NSCC schedule the interview on their behalf.

Students are required to participate in the co-op process this includes, but is not limited to, attending interviews, providing resumes and cover letters and providing any other documentation required by the Employer (i.e. transcripts, criminal record checks, vulnerable sector searches, etc.).

Preparing for your Interview

- Students will receive interview preparation either from their faculty and/or through their communications courses. Interview preparation services are also available through Student Services at each campus
- Students should research the company prior to their interview
- As a NSCC student, your portfolio should be current and ready to be presented during the interview.

Actual Interview

- Interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of the Employer
- Rooms can be made available for on-site interviews
- Interviews can be conducted either by phone or through an appropriate form of technology
- Should you miss a scheduled interview you may be required to write a letter of apology to the Employer

Failure to participate in the co-op process may result in a student being unable to complete a co-op, and thus, unable to complete all requirements of their program.

Accepting your Co-op Offer

The employer may contact the faculty to extend an offer or they may contact the student directly. Students must obtain faculty approval prior to accepting any offers.

Students are required to respond to co-op offers within three (3) business days. Students must not tentatively accept an offer while waiting to find out about another position. This could cause employers to question the responsibility and maturity of NSCC students and possibly result in an employer withdrawing from the co-op program.

During Your Co-op

Communications is key for a successful co-op. Situations may occur at the workplace that may cause some stress for students. If a student requires help in these situations, it is advised that he/she contact his/her faculty advisor or Academic Chair.

As the College considers Co-op to be an extension of campus studies, students are encouraged to connect with their faculty/Academic Chair if there are changes in their work assignment, or if any other unforeseen changes develop, you should notify faculty/Academic Chair **as soon as possible**.

Various forms must be submitted to your faculty during your co-op, please refer to the *Co-op Forms Guide* for a complete list of forms.

Faculty will conduct at least two check-in's with the employer during your co-op. These will be done either in person, by phone or through technology depending on the situation and location of the co-op.

During your co-op students are required to make reflective learning observations and track their experiences through a written journal. These observations will be helpful when writing their final co-op report and are to be submitted with your final report.

Evaluation of Co-op

Faculty will grade you based on: your performance during your co-op; your employer feedback; and your co-op report. Evaluation of co-op will appear on your transcript as either a "P" (pass), "F" (fail), or "I" (incomplete).

Pass – successful co-op

- Minimum of a "satisfactory" rating on the *Employer Feedback on Student* located in the Forms Guide
- Completed all evaluation requirements (co-op report, oral presentation, etc.)
- Debriefing session to review the field experience

Fail – unsuccessful co-op

- Student was terminated with just cause from the work place
- Evaluation pieces were graded below average (co-op report, oral presentation, etc.)
- Student received "below average" or "unsatisfactory" rating on the *Employer Feedback on Student* located in the Forms Guide

I/C – incomplete co-op

- Missing a component(s) and has been given an extension.
 - If the components are submitted within the timeframe given and are successfully completed, the student will earn a "P"
 - If the components are not successfully completed or not submitted within the timeframe given, the student will earn an "F"

Student and Employer Feedback

At the end of your co-op your employer must complete the *Employer Feedback on Student* form. Your performance should receive a minimum of a "Satisfactory" rating in order to achieve a successful co-op. If the employer terminates your co-op prematurely, your faculty and Academic Chair will meet to review your status. This will be followed up within two weeks, by a meeting with you to discuss the situation. Students

are required to complete the *Student Feedback on Employer* form, this feedback must be submitted to your faculty for review.

Student Co-op Report

A co-op report/project is due on the first Monday after the student returns to classes in the academic term immediately following the co-op. Reports/projects are to be submitted to your faculty member for evaluation. Requirements for your final report can be found in the *Co-operative Education Forms Guide*.

Post Co-op Debrief

Faculty must schedule a debriefing session with the student at the end of the co-op. The purpose is to review the co-op experience with the student.

Student Follow-Up Letter

Students are expected to submit a letter of thanks to their employer for their co-op. The letter and envelope are to be reviewed by one of the faculty members before it is posted. The approved letter and the stamped envelope are to be mailed to the employer and a copy placed in the student's file by October 31st.

NSCC's Co-op Student of the Year Award

Each year, NSCC awards one outstanding co-op student with a "Co-op Student of the Year" award. Employers and faculty, with the approval of the student, are encouraged to nominate candidates for this award. A committee will review applications and the award will be given to the winning student at their campus awards ceremony in June.

All nominations must be submitted to WorkExperience@nsc.ca. With consent, the winner of this award will then be nominated for the [CEWIL Canada](#) "College Co-op Student of the Year" award. These nominations must be received at the CEWIL Canada office in January each year. The winning student will receive \$1,000 (a CEWIL Canada award of \$500 and the Emery-Dufault award of \$500). For more detail on this award please visit: <http://www.cewilcanada.ca/awardsCSOTY.html>.

Exceptional Circumstances

With the approval of their faculty and Academic Chair, a student may be eligible to receive special credit in recognition of the exceptional circumstances outlined below.

Academic Review

Successful completion of all pre-requisite courses is normally required in order to qualify for a work placement. However, for some programs, at the discretion of the Academic Chair (with notification to the Principal, Academic Dean and Director, Enrolment and Registrar) a student who does not meet this standard may be permitted to participate in their work placement provided the safety of the student and other parties is not at risk.

In these exceptional circumstances, faculty and the Academic Chair will review the student's records and discuss academic plans to determine if the student is eligible for a work placement.

Incomplete Field Experience

In some cases, due to circumstances beyond their control, students may not be able to complete the entire duration of the field experience with a placement partner. In these cases, students may or may not be given credit for the field experience and are required to meet with their Academic Chair.

Appeals

A failing grade is eligible for appeal. Work placements are typically completed off campus and due to the applied nature of the learning it may not be eligible for reassessment. However, in some circumstances, it may be possible to repeat the work placement.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be granted for work-integrated learning courses, per the requirements of the RPL Policy.

Health & Safety

Student health and safety is a priority. Safety is a shared responsibility amongst NSCC, the industry partner and the student. Insurance and risk management practices are of the utmost importance in ensuring the health and safety of our students.

To demonstrate NSCC's due diligence, it is important that a risk assessment is completed, required forms are reviewed and signed, and safety plans are in place. NSCC maintains a number of insurance policies to protect employees, students and the organization. These include: errors and omissions, general liability, and student accident insurance should any accidents or incidents occur.

Insurance Coverage

Most students are automatically enrolled in or covered by existing NSCC insurance plans while engaged in work placement activities. The Student Insurance Program (SIP) Accident insurance protects students in the event of a workplace accident for some expenses not covered by NS Medical Services Insurance Program (MSI).

NSCC's General Liability insurance protects students and the College in the event that a student causes bodily injury or property damage to a third party while on a work placement. Students in Health & Human Services programs are also covered also medical malpractice coverage.

** For information on insurance for international field experiences and/or international students, please refer to the International sections of this guide.*

In most cases, NSCC requires that placement partners carry a general liability insurance policy of at least \$2 million. This not only protects our students, but also demonstrates that placement partners promote safe workplace and risk management practices.

Some placement partners may not carry the minimum general liability insurance to guard against risk within their organizations. In these cases, NSCC may allow work placements with these partners if the following process is completed.

1. Student and supervising faculty, in conjunction with the placement partner, complete the Risk Assessment and Compliance Form from the applied learning guides.
2. The assessment is reviewed by the Academic Chair, who assesses the level of risk.
3. If comfortable with the level of risk, the Academic Chair consults with OHSE to confirm his/her assessment of the risk.
4. If all parties are comfortable with the level of risk, the Academic Chair and supervising faculty sign-off on the Risk Assessment and Compliance Form

Exceptions are NOT possible if the work placement takes place in an industrial, construction, healthcare, or aviation setting, or any other setting that would be considered as potentially hazardous or high risk,

For more information, please see the *Work-Integrated Learning Insurance Guidelines* under *Work Experience on the College's website*.

Risk Management

Effective risk management is an integral part of work placements. It is important for faculty and Academic Chairs to ensure students are placed in safe work environments, and to ensure students are aware of the industry partner's safety program and policies.

Prior to the start of a work placement, faculty and students are responsible for completing the *Risk Assessment and Compliance Agreement* jointly with the industry partner (located in the forms guide). This agreement will help to identify any job hazards and control measures, determine any personal protective equipment that is required, and ensure the industry partner has the appropriate liability insurance. The original copy of this completed form must be kept with the Academic Chair while the student is on their work placement.

Student orientation is another important component of a work placement and provides an opportunity to revisit the importance of workplace safety. On the first day of the work placement, students and their placement supervisor must complete the *Orientation and Job Safety Review Form* in the Forms Guide. This will assist with establishing clear objectives, duties, safe work practices and learning opportunities. The completed form must also be kept with the Academic Chair while the student is on their work placement.

Safe & Respectful Environment

NSCC is committed to ensuring that all students and employees learn and work in a safe environment, free from discrimination and harassment, and conducive to learning and teaching.

NSCC is also committed to ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all members of its community, while maintaining the academic integrity of programs and curriculum, and an academic climate conducive to learning, free from disruptive or inappropriate behaviour.

To learn more about NSCC's commitment to providing safe and respectful work environments, visit http://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/policies_procedures/index.asp

Accident/Incident Reporting Process

Prior to students starting their work placement, it is important to ensure that they know what to do and who to contact if they find themselves in an unsafe or disrespectful working environment.

In case of a **serious accident or incident** requiring ambulance transport, hospitalization, or emergency care, contact the office of NSCC Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services IMMEDIATELY at 902-491-7233.

If the accident/incident is not serious in nature:

1. The student must complete the *Accident/Incident Report* in the Forms Guide and connect with their faculty/academic chair.
 - Completed forms must be submitted to Work-Integrated Learning by email (WorkExperience@nsc.ca)
 - Work-Integrated Learning will forward the completed form to the Faculty, Academic Chair, Principal and Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services.
 - Upon receipt of the completed *Accident/Incident Report*, if Faculty/AC and students have yet to connect, faculty will make every effort to contact the injured student.
2. The Faculty or Academic Chair must submit the online *Incident Reporting Form* located under *Occupational Health, Safety & Environmental Services on OurNSCC* (<https://ournsc.nsc.ca/Departments/OHSE/Pages/AccidentIncidentReporting.aspx>)

International Co-operative Education (Co-op positions outside of Canada)

Students considering completing a work placement outside of Canada must complete the *Intent to Complete International Form* (Forms Guide) and an orientation offered by NSCC International. This form must be submitted before the last day of classes in the Fall semester to WorkExperience@nsc.ca. Students are asked to copy faculty on this email. Work-Integrated Learning will share the details on the form with the NSCC International Office. NSCC International will then connect with the student to discuss next steps.

Health & Safety

The health and safety of students travelling internationally for study is paramount, there are risks associated with travel to certain regions and countries due to social and local factors. These conditions are dynamic and must be evaluated prior to any international trip. As such, NSCC has the right to deny requests for international field experiences.

Travel advice and advisories issued by the Government of Canada will be applied. The College may also deem other locations to be of very high or extreme risk and prohibit travel to those locations.

Insurance

When completing a work placement outside of Canada additional Student Guard insurance for students is mandatory and must be paid for by the student. The purchase of insurance can be coordinated through NSCC International. Please contact international@nsc.ca to arrange insurance coverage.

International Students (Co-op positions in Canada)

Completing a work placement in Nova Scotia is a proven factor to help international students find employment in Nova Scotia after they graduate. If international students intend to stay and work in Nova Scotia after graduation they should be advised that it is advantageous for them to complete their work placement in Nova Scotia rather than in their home country.

Insurance

International students attending NSCC must purchase, and will be automatically enrolled in, the mandatory International Student Emergency Health Insurance (EHI). To confirm coverage for international students, please contact nscplan@mystudentplan.ca.

Work Permits

International students are required to obtain a “Co-op Work Permit” in order to participate in any type of work placement. A “Co-op Work Permit” is different from a “Study Permit”. Without a Co-op Work Permit you will be removed from your work placement.

Co-op Work Permit applications can be completed online and there is no fee for this permit. You should apply for your co-op work permit at least 4 months before you are scheduled to begin your work placement. The *Co-op Work Permit Application* can be found on NSCC International’s website. (<http://international.nsc.ca>)

* *Students enrolled in health care programs are also required to have a co-op work permit for their clinical experiences.*

Quick Checks

This quick check list is to help support and organize you through the co-op program.

Preparing for your co-op

- Attend co-op information session
- Prepare your cover letter and resume
- Ensure your portfolio is up to date in preparation for interviews
- Obtain faculty approval before accepting and committing to your co-op
- Ensure following forms are completed and provided to faculty prior to starting your co-op (available in the *Co-op Forms Guide*):
 - Co-operative Education Agreement
 - Co-operative Education Registration Form (for optional co-op)
 - Risk Assessment & Compliance Agreement
 - Letter of Understanding
 - Release of Information
 - Intent to Complete International Co-op (if applicable)

During your co-op

- Ensure the following forms are completed and provided to faculty (available in the Co-op Forms Guide):
 - Orientation and Job Safety Review Form
 - Confidentiality Agreement
 - Accident/Incident Report (if necessary)
- Consider the requirements of your reflective learning assignment and final co-op report
- Remind Employer to submit Employer Feedback on Student Form

Following your co-op

- Submit the following to faculty:
 - Student Feedback on Employer Form
 - Reflective Learning Assignment
 - Co-op Report
 - Oral Presentation
- Debrief co-op with Faculty

Resources

Guides

Student, Employer and Faculty Guides have been developed to ensure there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

- Student Guide
https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/resources-for-students.asp
- Employer Guide
https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/hire-a-student.asp

A Forms Guide has been created to keep all required documents in a central location. Some forms are mandatory and must be completed by all stakeholders (Students, Employer and NSCC). Stakeholders and timing for each form is indicated in the table at the front of Co-operative Education Forms Guide and on each form.

- Forms Guide
https://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/work_experience/resources-for-students.asp

NSCC International has created an International Student Guidebook which can be found: Forms Guide

- <http://international.nsc.ca/guidebook/>

Policies and Procedures

The Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) policy and other relevant NSCC policies and procedures that apply to students during a work experience can be found on the College website under Policies and Procedures:

https://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/policies_procedures/index.asp.

Versioning

Version	Last Updated
1.0	September 2016
2.0	February 2017
3.0	March 2018
3.1	November 2018