

EMPLOYER FAQs

Is the Science Co-op office open during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Science Co-op office is open virtually. In an effort to promote physical distancing, all staff are working remotely. You are welcomed to contact our team by email during normal office hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday.

How has Science Co-op adjusted its service delivery and protocols in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Some changes are inevitable due to the pandemic: our team is working remotely; meetings and site visits are now conducted remotely, and some changes have been made to the hiring process. We have instituted some changes to the interview process and are supporting Co-op employers with increased flexibility (i.e.: later start date for the summer term).

If you already have plans to bring on a new student in May, we are supportive of work terms continuing as planned. If that is not feasible at this time, you are encouraged to adjust the start date that works for both you and the student. Please note, some students might be required to self-isolate in case they return from abroad and may delay the start date. If you would like to delay the start date (i.e.: June 1st or later) and shorten the length of the work term (minimum of 10 weeks), we are in support of your decision.

Job Postings

Are students still available for the summer work term?

YES! We have many qualified, eager, and engaged students who are hoping to have co-op work term this summer. We understand that summer co-op work terms may begin at a date later than originally anticipated.

Has the job posting process changed?

For Computer Science students, the deadline for employers to post, interview and submit rankings is Monday, April 13th. Any students remaining available after rank/match will move to a second round.

For all other programs, the job posting process remains the same. Employers are welcomed to email our office with their job postings.

When is the latest date I can hire a student for the summer term?

We understand that the current situation is causing a lot of uncertainty with regards to your future hiring needs. Based on recommendations from [CEWIL](#) (Cooperative Education and Work Integrated Learning) Canada, the national association overseeing co-op and work-integrated learning at Canadian post-secondary institutions, Science Co-op has relaxed the minimum 12 weeks requirement for students' summer work terms. At this time, we will accept positions of a minimum of 10 weeks in duration. Please contact the Science Co-op office if you have any questions around specific start times for the summer co-op work term.

Interviews & Job Offers

Has the interview process changed?

YES! To encourage necessary physical distancing, all interviews take place either by telephone or virtual (Skype, Zoom, WebEx, etc.).

How can I set up virtual interviews? Can Science Co-op assist with this?

YES! Science Co-op will gladly assist in scheduling your remote interviews! You may choose to conduct the interviews by telephone or via various video-conferencing platforms such as Skype, WebEx, Zoom or Google Hangouts. To schedule the interview, please contact the Science Co-op office for assistance.

Is there a deadline for interviews for the summer co-op work term?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes that some employers may need to make, the latest date (subject to change) to interview for the summer term is **June 1st**.

Has the job offer process changed?

NO! The job offer process remains the same. For Computer Science, please submit your rankings by Monday, April 13th. Matching will take place the week of April 13th and both employers and students will be notified of their matches.

For all other programs, after you have interviewed candidates, please advise the Science Co-op office if you would like to extend a job offer. When extending an offer, please provide the following information:

1. Position title
2. Duration (start/end date)
3. Salary
4. Supervisor name and contact information

Students will have two (2) business days to reply to the job offer.

Physical Distancing - Impact on Current Co-op Work Terms

Our workplace is considering moving to working remotely, but we are unsure of how to transition our student's co-op position. What do you suggest?

There are a few options you could explore:

1. Continue to offer employment at your physical location. However, create reduced or modified work hours or schedules for employees to allow for compliance with physical distancing requirements as communicated by local public health authorities.
2. Consider having co-op students only working at the physical location for essential tasks that must be completed at the workplace and moving other work remotely.
3. Examine the duties of the position and explore the possibility of changing the tasks originally outlined for the position to other tasks that can be completed remotely.

Our organization has transitioned to working remotely until the pandemic is resolved. What options are there for my new co-op student(s)?

Science Co-op understands this has been the situation with many other employers during these unprecedented times. Many employers are supporting their co-op students by: students are provided laptops (or asked to use their personal laptops in some cases), VPN access and other options to work remotely. For new co-op students, orientation and training tools can be virtually delivered to facilitate the process. In fact, many of our students (particularly Computer Science students) have had some experience with working remotely, so it is not entirely new to them. However, some positions which require a physical presence in a lab or a field site are a definite concern and Science Co-op supports any arrangements that individual employers may wish to adopt. The student's Co-op Coordinator can speak with both you and the student to make sure that the student feels comfortable with the arrangement.

Do you have any suggestions on how to conduct orientation and organize the first day for new Co-op students if we are still required to work remotely when the summer term starts?

More and more employers are inquiring about how to accommodate onboarding for new co-op students. At the University of Manitoba, all classes are now delivered online and students are becoming well-versed to online learning. Below are some suggestions for on-boarding new co-op students:

1. Some employers have created online training which includes online resources pages for co-op students to access, and mentorship models for onboarding their co-op students.
2. Employers are exploring use of online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Google Hangout and Slack to facilitate training and day-to-day communication with all employees.
3. Some best practices to using this approach are to ensure the co-op student is available at all normal business hours on these communication platforms.

4. Alternative methods include creation of training modules shared via employer intranet or using secure video sharing platforms.

Science Co-op supports any mentorship or student engagement strategies that your organization may develop.

Our workplace does not have a working remotely policy and our co-op student does not want to come to work. How can Science Co-op office support both the student and employer?

As the COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation, there are some students who are concerned about their health, work, and transportation to-and-from work. We understand the expectations from both the student's and employer's perspective. Our Coordinators will speak with the student and the employer to find the best possible solution which meets the needs of both parties.

Our workplace has transitioned to a temporary working remotely workplace but the co-op student's work cannot be completed remotely. What do you suggest?

There are a few options you could explore:

1. **For students currently in positions scheduled for consecutive work terms:** Employers and students may consider 'pausing' the work term in hopes of reinitiating the position later in the summer term should physical distancing requirements allow return to the physical workplace. As well, employers can explore providing students with alternate work which can be completed remotely.
2. **For new work terms:** If the work term cannot be completed with a working remotely option, Coordinators can discuss possible options with both the student and employer. Employers can potentially change the start date to a later date or potentially change the work term to a later term so that the work can be started when physical distancing requirements allow return to the physical workplace. As well, employers can explore providing students with alternate work which can be completed remotely.
3. **In the worst case,** if alternate arrangements are not possible, employers may retract offers given the exceptional circumstances. Science Co-op will try to find an alternative position for the student; however, we know it is not always possible. Please consider this as a last resort as students may have made housing and financial commitments in anticipation of their work term.

Changes to Scheduled Co-op Work Terms

Things are too uncertain right now. I would normally hire for the summer term but am thinking of delaying until the fall, is that an option?

YES! Postponing your position for a later work term is certainly an option. Please note if you have already hired for your position, the student you have hired may have prearranged plans (either work or study) and may be unavailable for a later term. We will work with you and the student and do what is best for all parties involved. At this point, the hiring process for the Fall 2020 work term is still scheduled to commence in May. Should that change, Science Co-op will advise employers.

Our organization has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and we no longer think we can afford a co-op student this summer. What are our options?

Science Co-op will work with employers to explore federal and/or provincial wage subsidy and/or tax credit programs for which you may eligible to apply.

Despite our hopes that this does not happen, we acknowledge the possibility that employers may face grave financial consequences as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and may be unable to continue with the currently scheduled co-op position.

Please let us know if you have to retract your job offer and we will work with you and the student. We trust that you will consider this option only as the last resort.