

Frequently Asked Questions

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” *Confucius*

Q: *Why should I hire a co-op student?*

A: Because you can! There are many benefits for co-op employers, such as:

- Co-op is a cost-effective solution for your short term hiring needs.
- Co-op is a great way to evaluate a potential future employee.
- Co-op students can relieve seasonal fluctuations and complete special projects so regular employees can concentrate on their other high priority job requirements.
- Co-op students offer a fresh perspective to your organization. By hiring a student every four months, you have the opportunity for a continuous flow of new and innovative ideas.

Q: *When will students be available for work terms?*

A: We have students available to meet your co-op needs all year round!

Co-op work terms (paid)	Work period (16-18 wks; 35 hrs/wk min.)	Job Submission due (approx)	School Year (4 year program)
#1	Sept – Dec	May	Year One
#2	May- Aug	Jan	Year Two
#3	Jan – April	Sept	Year Three
#4	Sept - Dec	May	Year Three*

Table 1: *Students have **direct patient care** objectives to fulfill in either work term #3 or #4. After completing work term #4, students enter Year Four (8 months of academic).

So you’ll notice we actually have two different levels of students concurrently on co-op during September-December, which means a larger pool of great students keen to work for employers.

Q: *How much are students paid?*

A: Students are required to be paid for their work terms (16-18 weeks duration, minimum 35 hours/week). The University of Waterloo does not set pay scales for co-op students. This is your decision. The rate of pay should be commensurate with the work required. A recent salary survey for first and second work term pharmacy students indicated a pay range of \$12 – \$22 per hour, with the average hovering around \$14. Students are responsible for their own transportation and accommodation while on work term. However, some employers do provide assistance in these areas.

Q: *Does the government provide any financial assistance for hiring co-op students?*

A: In return for investing in the future of a University of Waterloo student, the Ontario government provides eligible employers with a tax credit: a 25 per cent **Co-op Education Tax Credit** rate and an enhanced 30 per cent rate for small businesses. The maximum tax credit available is \$3,000 per co-op student on a work term.

<http://www.rev.gov.on.ca/en/credit/cetc/index.html>

The Ontario government also has a program for employers in Northern Ontario (private and public sector), called the ***Northern Ontario Youth Internship and Co-op Program***:

http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/yiacp_e.asp

The Canadian federal government has a regional development program for Northern Ontario for small business and non-profit employers called the ***FedNor Youth Internship Program***:

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/fednor-fednor.nsf/eng/fn02367.html>

The Canadian federal government also has a program called ***Canada Summer Jobs*** for small businesses, non-profit and public sector employers. This applies for *summer positions only* (i.e. during our “Spring” co-op term):

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/ye/p/programs/scpp.shtml>

Q: *How is the School of Pharmacy preparing first year students to function in my work environment?*

A: Each student will have their own unique skills, abilities and past experiences. Our students have at least two years of university education and a number have completed at least one university degree. Our curriculum for first year includes the following courses:

Semester 1: Human Physiology, Metabolism, Pharmaceutics, Intro to Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences, Computing for Pharmacists, Intro to the Profession of Pharmacy, Professional Communication Skills, Professional Practice

Semester 2: Human Physiology, Histology, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology/Medicinal

Chemistry, Professional Communication Skills, Professional Practice, Preparation for Co-op

At the end of semester two, our students will:

- Have been introduced to the variety of pharmacy practice sites available and will understand the role pharmacists play within the entire health team.
- Understand the laws and regulations governing pharmacy.
- Have been introduced to pharmaceutical care principles.
- Be able to identify different sources of drug information and use critical appraisal skills to review the data.
- Have some experience in sterile preparation under a laminar flow hood as well as non-sterile compounding techniques.
- Demonstrate professional interviewing techniques, including assessment and triage, focusing primarily on patient self-care and adherence.
- Be able to demonstrate the use of various medical devices
- Have a working knowledge in medical terminology and prescription abbreviations and be able to use that knowledge to interpret prescriptions
- Be familiar with safety measures such as those proposed by the Institute of Safe Medication Practices and be able to perform a safety audit

In addition, the students are involved locally through their community service projects. To support these projects, students will develop skills such as fundraising, report writing, marketing, and event organization, evaluation of services, project management and sales.

Q: *What kind of roles and responsibilities will the first year students be able to take on?*

A: The students are working for you. You will define the roles and responsibilities appropriate for your work place. You can indicate the specific skills you require in your job description. The students should be given activities that are suitable to their skills and abilities, will allow them to grow professionally and will help prepare them to become competent, practising pharmacists. We encourage you to challenge them.

A work term for a student could include: assisting in drug distribution, assisting the pharmacist with the Meds Check program, and hosting a smoking cessation clinic day. In addition, you might consider a patient safety initiative, informatics, or a drug usage evaluation project. Alternatively, the work term could include government relations, health policy development, pharmacoconomics evaluation or research. As an employer, feel free to be creative, think outside the box and use the student to tackle those items you always wished you could get to, but just never seemed to have the time for. The possibilities are endless.

Q: *What are students' objectives regarding direct patient care?*

A: As our students progress through the curriculum, where applicable, we ask that employers consider incorporating responsibilities related to the provision of pharmaceutical care. Many students have already forayed into supervised provision of OTC and prescription patient counselling, drug information, MedsCheck, medication reconciliation, and clinic days.

Students on their *third or fourth work term* will be expected during co-op to provide direct patient care to a minimum of *thirty* different patients in total. Giving students the opportunity to incorporate direct patient care skills on co-op will

help develop confident and competent practitioners.

Direct patient care should involve: developing a professional relationship with patients, actively monitoring and making recommendations for patients' medication therapy, documenting and following patients' response in order to identify and resolve or prevent medication-related problems.

Q: *What are the next steps towards employing a co-op student?*

A:

- Complete the Pharmacy Job Submission Form.
- The job is registered with Co-operative Education and Career Services (CECS) at the University of Waterloo.
- Students are given an opportunity to review job postings and apply for positions.
- You select the candidates that you wish to interview.
- CECS co-ordinates the interview schedules to meet the employers' needs.
- Interviews take place at the University of Waterloo. You may choose to interview the candidates in person, by phone, by webcam, or by video conferencing.
- Following interviews, you rank students; students rank employers and the co-op system finds an appropriate match.
- Assistance is available for you at each step of the employment process.

Q: *What information can I include in my job summary?*

A: Consider the following:

- A descriptive and relevant title.

- A short overview of your organization, department, or project team.
- Details about roles and responsibilities (students will have direct patient care objectives in their 3rd or 4th work term).
- The necessary knowledge and skills.
- Any special requirements (i.e. driver's licence, shift work, language, etc.).
- The number of hours per week (minimum of 35) and whether overtime is expected.
- If support is available for travel or accommodation

Q: *What expectations are there for evaluation of the students?*

A: Employers will complete a midpoint and final general evaluation of the student at the completion of the work term. Students will complete an Online Professional Learning Outcome tracker (PLOT). The employer will be asked to review the completed PLOT online, and provide a rating and feedback to the student. Finally, students on their third and fourth work terms in a patient care setting will be keeping a Direct Patient Care Log, which the employer will be asked to review. Additional details on these evaluation tools will be provided to employers/supervisors at the start of the work term.

Q: *Can I hire the same student for all four work terms?*

A: The School of Pharmacy has adopted a number of criteria for co-op. These include:

- No more than two work terms with one employer.
- No more than two work terms in one type of practice setting
- By the end of the second work term, must complete a minimum of one work term with a drug distribution component.

- In the third or fourth work term, must complete a minimum of one work term with a direct patient care designation.
- Must have a minimum of one work term that is in an underserved geographic area in Ontario, currently defined as outside of Hamilton and the Greater Toronto Area.
- Must incorporate into a minimum of one work term service to an underserved population where the student interacts with these patients and makes a meaningful contribution to their well-being.

Q: *Who do I contact for more information or to proceed?*

A: The following are full-time members of the experiential team at the School of Pharmacy.

For general inquiries, please e-mail:
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