

Student Handbook

Law Co-op Program

Law Work Experience Program

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Admission

Law Co-op Program (Law Co-op)

Law Co-op provides students in the JD Program the opportunity to combine their academic learning with practical work experience with legal employers. Students complete two or more work terms to receive a co-op designation on their graduation parchment.

Admission will take place during the Fall term of 1L. Transfer students can enroll during the Fall term of 2L.

Law Work Experience Program (LWEP)

LWEP provides students in the JD/JID Program with the opportunity to complete one work term with a legal employer to obtain work experience in the legal profession.

Admission will take place in the Fall term of 2L (second year law)

Details about the admission process for Law Co-op and LWEP will be sent out by the Law Co-op Office early in the Fall term.

Regulations, Terms & Conditions, & Program Requirements

Law Co-op and LWEP are managed by staff in the Law Co-op Office.

Admission and participation in Law Co-op and LWEP will be in accordance with undergraduate calendar regulations regarding co-operative education and work experience, the terms and conditions of participation, and the policies/guidelines outlined in this Handbook.

Specifically, students must review the following:

- Regulations for undergraduate level [Co-operative Education](#) and [Work Experience](#) in UVic's Undergraduate Calendar.
- [Law Co-op Regulations](#)
- Co-operative Education [Terms and Conditions](#)

Student Status and Co-op Units

During Law Co-op and LWEP work terms, students are registered as full-time students and receive 4.5 non-academic units. Work terms appear on student transcripts; however, the 4.5 units do not replace the academic credits required for completion of the JD and JD/JID programs. Law students are responsible for ensuring they are meeting the academic requirements for their program.

Co-op Designation

Law Co-op students that complete two or more work terms will receive the co-op designation and this will appear on the graduation parchment.

Stop Outs

Law Co-op students not enrolled in either an academic term or work term (other than during the optional work term in the summer after first year) must obtain a "stop out" from their legal studies. Students who wish to stop out must request and obtain permission from the Office of the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations.

Introduction to Professional Practice Course (IPP)

- Law Co-op and LWEF students must complete the Introduction to Professional Practice (IPP) class to be eligible to apply for work terms.
- IPP will provide the information and tools needed to participate in Law Co-op and LWEF -i.e. Cover letter/resume prep, interviewing skills, competency growth and development, networking, etc.
- IPP starts shortly after the admission process in the Fall term (October) and continues through to the Spring term.
- Students must attend IPP and complete the required assignments to maintain eligibility to apply for Law Co-op and LWEF work term opportunities.
- Students are expected to schedule extra-curricular activities, personal appointments, etc. outside class time. (We appreciate that sometimes life intervenes with illnesses and unexpected conflicts, so speak to the Law Co-op Coordinator ASAP if you find yourself in this situation)

Scheduling Options

1. Law Co-op Program

Students enrolled in Law Co-op are eligible to participate in a work term after the completion of all 1L courses. Students can start applying for Co-op positions during the Spring term of 1L.

Law Co-op students typically follow one of the three scheduling options noted below. Permission to follow another schedule requires the permission of the Law Co-op Coordinator and Associate Dean, Academic and Students.

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 are 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

2. Law Work Experience Program

Students enrolled in the LWEP are eligible to participate in one work term after the completion of Year 2 of the JD/JID program. Students can start applying for Co-op positions during the Spring term of 2L. Given the academic schedule for the JD/JID program, most work terms will take place during the summer, but students can complete a work term at another time if it fits within the overall academic programming for the JD/JID Program and does not conflict with any of the mandatory courses.

Work Term Placement Requirements

Law Co-op and LWEP work terms consist of at least 12 weeks of full-time paid employment. During the term students will:

- pay Law Co-op and LWEP 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)

Legal Supervision – most work terms must be supervised by a practicing lawyer. There can be exceptions to this and approval from the Law Co-op Coordinator is required.

Grades

Work term grades are recorded on student transcripts on an incomplete/complete basis. Grades as outlined in the University Undergraduate Calendar and are COM, N/X (incomplete) and F/X (fail).

Students receiving an N/X or F/X on a work term will typically not be permitted to participate in additional work terms.

Impacts on Academics and Extra-Curricular Activities

There are many exciting opportunities in law school. Please review the following guidelines carefully as participating in Law Co-op and LWEP may require some additional planning.

1. Mooting Program

The moot program guidelines apply primarily to Law Co-op students but are applicable to LWEP students participating in a Fall or Spring work term.

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 moot run-offs.

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 and Work Experience employment is a commitment and participation in the moot program must not interfere with the responsibilities of a work term. Employers are not expected to accommodate participation in a moot.
- Permission from an employer may be required and if this is the case, written permission must be obtained **before** a 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 work term. These commitments may impact employer hiring decisions if the moot and employment schedules are not compatible.
- Students cannot withdraw from a work term or an accepted upcoming work term to accommodate a position on a moot team. Doing this will result in a student becoming ineligible to participate in future work terms.

Mooting Team

- Participation in the moot program is a team endeavor and students must be available to participate as full members of a moot team. This may not be possible while a student is away on a work-term.
- Students are expected to advise faculty/coaches during the run-offs of their work term plans, 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 mooting team to accommodate or pursue a work term. Doing this will result in a student becoming ineligible to participate in future work terms.

2. Law Students Society

- Law Co-op and LWEF students are eligible to compete for LSS positions but must comply with any LSS guidelines about participating while away from campus on a work term.

3. 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.

4. 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 classes that occur during normal hours of employment.

5. 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.

6. 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 offered in the summer term in a preceding academic semester. The anticipated 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.

The Job Search and Work Term Placement Process

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](#). Students' login to this database with their Netlink ID and password.

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.

Communication with the Law Co-op Office

- Check your email regularly and maintain contact with the Law Co-op Office staff. The turnaround time from applying to receiving notification of an interview can be very fast (i.e. within a couple of days).

Applications

- An application 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. Most job applications are submitted through the co-op database and then co-op staff send all applications to each employer as a bundle.

Law grades

- Interim grade reports for 1L students will be available by the end of January. Students will scan and upload these reports as part of their job application packages.
- 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 inviting you to sign up through the co-op database for an interview time slot.
- Interviews may occur at the school, the place of employment, or virtually.
- 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 have 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, 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 positions for the term in question.

Setting up your Own Placement

- Students are encouraged to develop their own work terms outside of the pool of employers currently hiring UVic law students. Students should keep the co-op office informed of any efforts to secure their own position.
- Communication with active Co-op and LWEP employers must come through the Law Co-op Office to ensure the process is fair for all students.
- Co-op staff can provide guidance on how to contact prospective employers.
- The Co-op Office needs confirmation from a new employer 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. Completing work appropriate for a law student,
 3. Supervised by a practicing lawyer, and
 4. Given a written evaluation of your performance (on a form provided by the Co-op Office) at the conclusion of your employment.

During Co-op and LWEP work terms

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. Many employers pay a lump sum to students in lieu of benefits. You are responsible for ensuring that you have medical coverage. Students must have extended health insurance for the full period you are on an international co-op term.

Obtaining Effective Supervision

By participating in the Law Co-op Education Program, your employer has assumed a special role as a mentor and supervisor. The following are some suggestions on how to obtain effective supervision:

- You should be busy and productive during the normal working hours of your employer. You should expect, on occasion, that a particular project may demand an additional time commitment. If you find it challenging to manage your workload, communicate with your supervisor for guidance with priorities.
- Employers will have their operational needs and your work should include substantive work that is relevant for a law student's competency development. Pay attention to the work being done in the office and make inquiries about gaining experience in areas that interest you.
- Ask for deadlines and expectations for status updates at the time that a project or task is assigned to you. If you anticipate not being able to meet the deadline, advise your supervisor as soon as this limitation is obvious (**and a reasonable time before the deadline**) and seek further instructions.
- If assignment instructions are unclear and you have made reasonable efforts to clarify them on your own, ask your supervisor for clarification.
- Schedule bi-weekly check-ins with your supervisor so you can ask questions and clarify that you are on the right track with your projects.
- Ask for feedback on your work if you have not received any within a reasonable time period. This will vary depending on the circumstances, but two weeks is a good default setting.

Assessments and the Site Visit

Assessments for each work term include the following:

1. **Online competency assessment:** Students complete this at the beginning, middle and end of the work term. Supervisors are invited to participate by adding written comments at the mid and end of term.
2. **Site visits** take place between week six and twelve of your work term. Many site visits take place virtually, and some happen in-person. Site visits with the Law Co-op Coordinator strengthen the school's relationship with employers and present an opportunity to answer questions about the Co-op and LWEPP Programs, academic planning, career options and to discuss your experiences and how to maximize the learning opportunities.

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

3. **Work Term Report:** All Co-op and LWEPP students complete a work term report that is submitted to the co-op office during the month following the completion of a work term. This report is a reflective written report. The report should be written in the first-person narrative voice, using complete paragraphs (not point-form). The report should be 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:
 - Describe the work term setting and summarize the activities/projects undertaken on the work term. Comment on outcomes of your activities.
 - Summarize your competency growth and development throughout the work-term, linking this to your academic background, law school courses, and previous work experience.
 - Comment on the extent to which the Faculty of Law prepared you for this work term.
 - Comment on the impact the work term has had on your legal education and thoughts about your future legal career.

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

- Photo essay

4. Debriefing: After each work term you will debrief with the co-op coordinator to reflect on your growth during the work term and the impact the experience had on your legal education and thoughts about your legal career. Debriefs can be individual or group, depending on the number of students completing work terms.

Temporary Articles and Professional Responsibility

The Law Society of British Columbia regulates the legal profession in BC, including conduct of articling students and temporary articling students. Some employers will require that Co-op and LWEF 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](#).

Students should also review the Law Society Rules for information about [Articles](#) and [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. Students must be mindful of the following ethical considerations:

1. Student at Law

In dealing with anyone during a work term you must identify yourself as a law student and not a lawyer. As a student, you can provide legal information but not legal advice.

2. 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. Deletion of client names is not enough, as clients can potentially be identified by facts and circumstances. You should request permission to retain copies for your personal reference, but you may not share them with anyone else without specific permission.

3. Conflict of Interest

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.

Life After Law School – Clerkships and Articles

Co-op students should speak to the Law Co-op Coordinator and connect with the Law Careers Office about the impacts participation in Co-op will have on securing clerkships and articles. Graduation for some Co-op students will be delayed but the advantages of obtaining additional work experience and connections in the legal community are very beneficial. We encourage students to think longer-term when planning their schedule during law school.

Some legal employers 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 makes decisions about the operation of Co-op and LWEP. 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. Upper year student representatives are typically elected through the LSS elections. 1L Co-op and LWEP representatives will be elected once admission for these programs takes place during the fall semester.

Concurrent Degree Programs

JD/MPA (Master 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. The MPA degree requires the completion of two work terms, and these must be registered as MPA co-op work terms. JD/MPA students will have access to jobs posted through the Law Co-op Office when searching for work terms.