

## **Module 1: Welcome to Co-op at Laurier!**

We have designed this module to teach you about participating in the co-op option. You will learn about:

- Laurier Co-op – History, Sequences, Coordinators
- Fundamentals Course – Modules, Speaker Series, Timing
- Outline of Course - Themes, Assessment
- Employment Process – Rank/Match, Continuous Round, Personal Job Search, Historic Employment Rates, Functional Areas and Locations
- Important Resources
- Co-op Fees
- Maximizing Your Co-op Success

### **Section 1: Laurier Co-operative Education**

History, Sequences, and the Role of Coordinators

Co-operative education originated in the United States in 1912 at the University of Cincinnati. The first Canadian co-op program began in 1954 at the University of Waterloo, which now has the largest co-op program in the world.

Co-op at Laurier was first introduced in 1974 in the Business program; 27 students completed their first work term in 1976. Laurier Co-op has grown to more than 2,700 students in over 50 major disciplines within arts, business, science, double degree programs and four graduate programs. Today, Laurier boasts the largest accredited business degree co-op program in Canada.

Most co-op programs at Canadian universities and colleges are structured according to the same general principles outlined by Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL). CEWIL's mission is "Building the capacity to develop future-ready students through quality work-integrated learning".

Many of Laurier's programs are accredited by CEWIL and are structured according to the following definition and criteria:

"Co-operative Education Program" means a program which alternates periods of academic study with periods of work experience in appropriate fields of business, industry, government, social services and the professions in accordance with the following criteria:

- each work situation is developed and/or approved by the co-operative educational institution as a suitable learning situation;
- the co-operative student is engaged in productive work rather than merely observing;
- the co-operative student receives remuneration for the work performed;
- the co-operative student's progress on the job is monitored by the co-operative educational institution;
- the co-operative student's performance on the job is supervised and evaluated by the student's co-operative employer;

- the time spent in periods of work experience must be at least thirty per cent of the time spent in academic study.

The co-op program offers an opportunity for you to synthesize your academic studies with formal work experience. Your learning will occur through a series of in-class sessions called the Co-op Fundamentals Course, your assignments during work terms, the mentoring relationships you build with colleagues, and the work term report you will write during each work term.

Students are required to be enrolled in full-time studies and meet progression requirements in their honours program(s) each term to be eligible to continue in co-op. Please see co-op admissions conditions on MLS for more detailed information about progression and co-op requirements.

It is the responsibility of the student to inform the co-op office if he or she is considering dropping a course and if there are any extenuating circumstances. Part-time students are not eligible to continue in co-op, even if they have already been matched with an employer (unless special approval has been granted due to an extenuating circumstance such as a serious illness).

It is important to note the Laurier Co-op Student Code of Conduct. As a co-op student at Laurier, you will be accountable, treat people with dignity, and act with integrity. You recognize the importance of conducting yourself professionally and ethically during the job search process and in the workplace. The full code is posted on MLS.

#### Job Applications

You will:

- Provide factual and accurate information in your application documents.
- Submit an accurate record of marks (prepared by the Registrar's Office) and not amend any information on the record.
- Meet the minimum number of applications, as established by the Co-op Office

#### Interviews and Selection Process

You will:

- Attend all interviews for which you are selected and provide employers with factual and accurate information.
- Refrain from communicating with any employer after an interview, until results of the matching process have been released to students.
- Accept any position you obtain through the employer ranking process.
- Honour your commitment to an employer upon accepting any approved position.

#### Work Terms

You will:

- Work for your co-op employer throughout the entire work term, starting and ending your work term on the dates specified. *See clarification below on requests to complete work term one week early.*
- Meet your employer's requirements regarding working hours, including start and end times.
- Contact your employer immediately if you will be late for, or absent from, work.

- Refrain from asking your employer for vacation time.
- Use discretion when discussing your employers, their business, clients, customers and suppliers, and not disclose any confidential or sensitive information.
- Inform your employer of any situation where there may be a conflict of interest, and not use your position, or knowledge gained through employment, for private or personal advantage.
- Abide by rules, regulations, and policies set by the Co-op Office and your employer.
- Abide by ethical and legal guidelines, including but not limited to those concerning use of information technology.
- Treat every person equally, without discrimination. You understand that offensive remarks, jokes, and materials are inappropriate.
- Develop learning objectives, work hard, and do your best to complete your responsibilities and meet your employer's expectations. You understand you must obtain an overall rating of at least "satisfactory" on each performance evaluation to remain in co-op.

**Clarification on requesting to end work terms early:** For requests to participate in training for on-campus leadership positions such as Varsity Sport training camps, Residence Life Training or Executive Level extracurricular training, students must adhere to the steps below. Note that this process is similar to a petition, and only cases where leadership training cannot be altered would be considered for approval. Vacations and other voluntary engagements will not be considered.

- Co-op students are required to be available to start and end their work terms according to the dates listed in the Laurier calendar (unless an employer outlines some variation based on their needs)
- Students requesting to have these dates altered due to extenuating circumstances must submit detailed information and support documentation to their consultant **before the primary on-campus interview process**. Approval is normally not given for more than one week unless a major health issue is documented.
- If approved to have their work term shortened by a week, **students must outline their circumstances during any interviews secured with employers** to ensure employers have this information before submitting their rankings of students
- Students may submit detailed information and support documentation after the primary interview period only if documentation confirms their extenuating circumstances were unknown earlier. In these situations, employers are under no obligation to approve requests and students will be removed from Co-op if they do not agree to honour their commitment to their employer
- Students who do not secure employment until after the primary interview period must follow the same process of having their extenuating circumstances approved by the Co-op Office and informing all employers of their situation during the interview process
- If students are applying to be dons they must submit verification of acceptance from the Department of Residence to the Co-op Office before the employer interview and notify potential employers during interviews. Upon agreement by their employer, Residence will

excuse the don from the first week of their two-week training. Applicants must also acknowledge that they are required to complete their second work term during the winter term of third year. Students are committed to working full-time with their co-op employer during the winter term and they may be required at times to work outside of normal business hours. Only about 20% of our students routinely secure a position in the Waterloo/Kitchener/Cambridge/Guelph area across all co-op programs.

#### Failing to Comply with Conditions

You understand that the Co-op Office will review your status and you may be withdrawn from co-op if you are dismissed by your employer or fail to comply with any of the conditions outlined above and in your offer of admission.

#### **Work Term Sequences**

For those completing the **Computer Science or Data Science Program** you will follow the work term sequence as indicated below.

Term	Fall (Sept-Dec)	Winter (Jan-April)	Spring (May-Aug)
Year 1	Study Term	Study Term	Vacation
Year 2	Study Term	Study Term	Study Term
Year 3	<b>Work Term 1</b>	Study Term	<b>Work Term 2</b>
Year 4	Study Term	<b>Work Term 3</b>	Study Term

#### **Co-op at Laurier**

Laurier Co-op operates out of a central office at 192 King Street North in Waterloo, and six staff members work from offices in the GTA. There is also a Brantford office with two staff who work with the Bachelor of Business Technology Management (BTM) students and User Experience Design (UXD) students.

The role of marketing the program to employers and assisting students with their job search is handled primarily by the Associate Director, Co-operative Education & External Relations, Brantford Manager along with ten co-op consultants. Their responsibilities include:

- Offering guidance to students on career and job questions or concerns
- Marketing the program to encourage employers to hire Laurier co-op students
- Following industry trends and labour market information
- Conducting visits to monitor student performance during work terms
- Evaluating student work term reports after the first work term (faculty assess first work term reports)

When you were admitted to co-op, you were assigned a co-op consultant who will help you in your search to secure employment for your first work term. Each time you secure employment, you will be assigned to the co-op consultant responsible for the geographic region in which your job is located.

(Students in arts and science are usually assigned to a consultant by discipline rather than region.) Here is a [link to consultants' contact information, as well as territories and responsibilities](#)

## **Section 2: The Co-op Fundamentals Course (COOP-000)**

This section will provide you with a brief overview of the requirements of the program and a link to Co-op events, which is the central calendar for the Co-op Fundamentals Course modules.

### *Module 1: Welcome to Co-op*

You are asked to attend a welcome event which will include a brief orientation to the program and Fundamentals Course.

### *Module 2: Personal Branding*

Students will use reflective skills to identify goals, ambitions, talents and transferable skills to define their personal brand for use in resume, cover letters, interviews and while also networking and job searching

### *Module 3: Networking & Personal Job Search*

Learn key networking skills and approaches while also understanding concepts pertaining to online presence, LinkedIn. Discuss job search strategies, including recruitment data, co-op resources and public resources that will help students to get an edge.

### *Module 4: Resume*

Will help you identify important content to include in your resume and will teach you how to write and format the document effectively.

### *Module 5: Cover Letter Writing*

Learn how to provide examples of the skills required for each specific job in your cover letters.

### *Module 6: Interview Skills*

Designed to offer you strategies to enhance your performance in a job interview, and to practice techniques that can help achieve success.

Mock Interviews give you an opportunity to observe your interview performance. A trained senior student will conduct a videotaped role-play interview with you and provide integral feedback regarding your interview strengths and weaknesses.

### *Module 7: Rank/Match*

Introducing you to important concepts such as the visible and hidden job market, and show you how to collaborate with your consultant to approach potential employers about securing a co-op work term. Learning how to rank employers by whom you were interviewed, how a match is determined, and the principle of "low score wins."



### Students Seeking Employment

This session will offer additional support, resources, guidance and practice for those students who have not secured employment during the Primary Round of interviewing, and to help prepare for the Continuous Employment Period.

### Module 8: Preparing for Your Work Term

Uncover tips to ensure you have a rewarding and productive work term. Senior co-op students will share their insights and learning. You will also find out how to write a work term report.

*Tutorials will be provided on MyLearningSpace for each of these workshops in the corresponding module folder. Slides are not provided unless students require accommodation.*

### Speaker Series Sessions

Students are also required to attend a minimum of four speaker presentations that can add value to their planning, skills, and future success. Sessions include functional areas presentations, employer presentations, and skill development presentations. Students are welcome to attend more than the minimum of four sessions.

Even if you have already obtained an approvable co-op position for your first upcoming work term, you are still expected to complete the modules, as you may need the information presented in order to navigate your senior work terms should you want to move through the Rank-Match rounds. You also cannot progress in Co-op without earning a Pass in the Fundamentals Course as well as work terms.

Please check the online co-op events calendar on Navigator regularly for the times and meeting links for different sessions. For Speaker Series sessions, It is required that you register in advance, partly because some sessions impose participation limits, and also so that we can better track student participation and progress.

**Please read the Speaker Series Attendance Policy and the Module Session Attendance Policy carefully.** Both can be found in the course Syllabus.

Students are allowed to count any event from either the Brantford or Waterloo Events Calendars that are labeled as Speaker Series or Employer Information Sessions.

### **Accreditation**

Students will receive credits for completing the Co-op Fundamentals course and for the work terms that are completed successfully. While these courses and credits will appear on the transcript as Pass/Fail, PLEASE NOTE that these credits do NOT replace the requirements for your program, nor do they replace electives. They also do not count towards your overall credit count (ie. they don't count towards full-time credit requirements, OSAP requirements, RESP's, and Scholarship eligibility). In other words, these co-op credits will count towards your requirements for co-op completion, but nothing else.

## Section 3: Outline of Course

### Academic Integrity

This course counts for academic credit, therefore policies regarding misconduct are upheld. Be true to yourself – it is okay to collaborate, but your wording, examples, and submissions should be unique to YOU. Originality will be checked via TurnItIn.

Course timeline and schedule – View your specific schedule for your section in the General Info folder on MLS.

### Reflective Practice

- Critical examination of our patterns of personal norms (Hibbert, 2012)
- Requires that you ask yourself the right kinds of questions with the right amount of depth and specificity
- What are my strengths? What areas of academics have I been successful in? What technical areas do I need to improve in to improve my competitiveness?

### Assessment

Based on feedback, practice, reflection; less on a specific grade. Pass/Fail on each assessment is based on demonstrating an understanding and application of concepts. A Pass in the course requires 100% completion of the requirements – ie. attending and completing every module at an acceptable level.

### Goal Setting

- Many types of goals (career, financial, family, physical, etc.)
- Normally, goal-setting starts with the biggest scope, ie. *What do I want to accomplish in my life?*
- Goals can also be set with recent experiences and short-term needs in mind, ie. *What do I want to achieve in my first co-op term?*

### SMART Goals

Specific  
Measurable  
Action-  
Oriented  
Realistic  
Time-Bound

## Section 4: The Employment Process

This section will introduce you to the two main phases of the recruiting process, give you specific information about the chartered accounting employment process, and offer employment statistics pertaining to your co-op program.

The recruiting process entails two main phases:



1. Primary Recruiting / Rank-Match
2. Continuous Employment Period

### **Primary Recruiting/ Rank-Match**

#### **Overview:**

- We post jobs and you submit applications during a specified time frame, until the interview period begins. Ideally, you will apply to many jobs in different locations.
- Students are responsible for ensuring they are competitive by developing strong application documents, preparing for interviews, applying to sufficient posted opportunities, and participating in a personal job search if seeking position types/locations where postings may be fewer.
- Employers decide which applicants to interview, and we schedule the interviews on campus, online, telephone, and off-campus.
- Following the interviews, employers will provide a ranking for all the candidates that they interviewed.
- Through Navigator, you will see how employers ranked you. You will then rank the employers with whom you interviewed.
- You may non-rank (NR) two positions in the primary round.
- Students are matched to organizations by a computer matching.
- We release results of the match and then begin posting jobs for students who did not secure employment.

We will provide more detail on the mechanics of the rank-match system during the Personal Job Search & Rank/Match module. You may also consult the ranking instructions on MyLearningSpace, under Module 7. Please regularly review the co-op events calendar on Navigator for accurate posting dates, interview schedules and ranking deadlines.

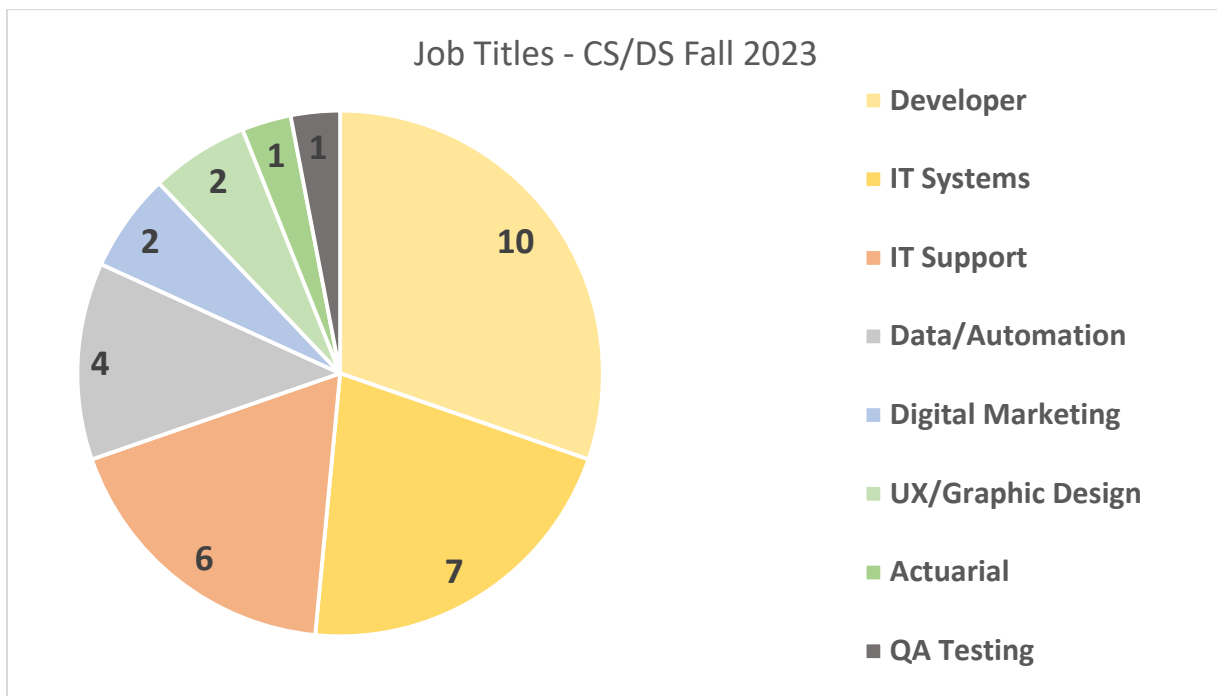
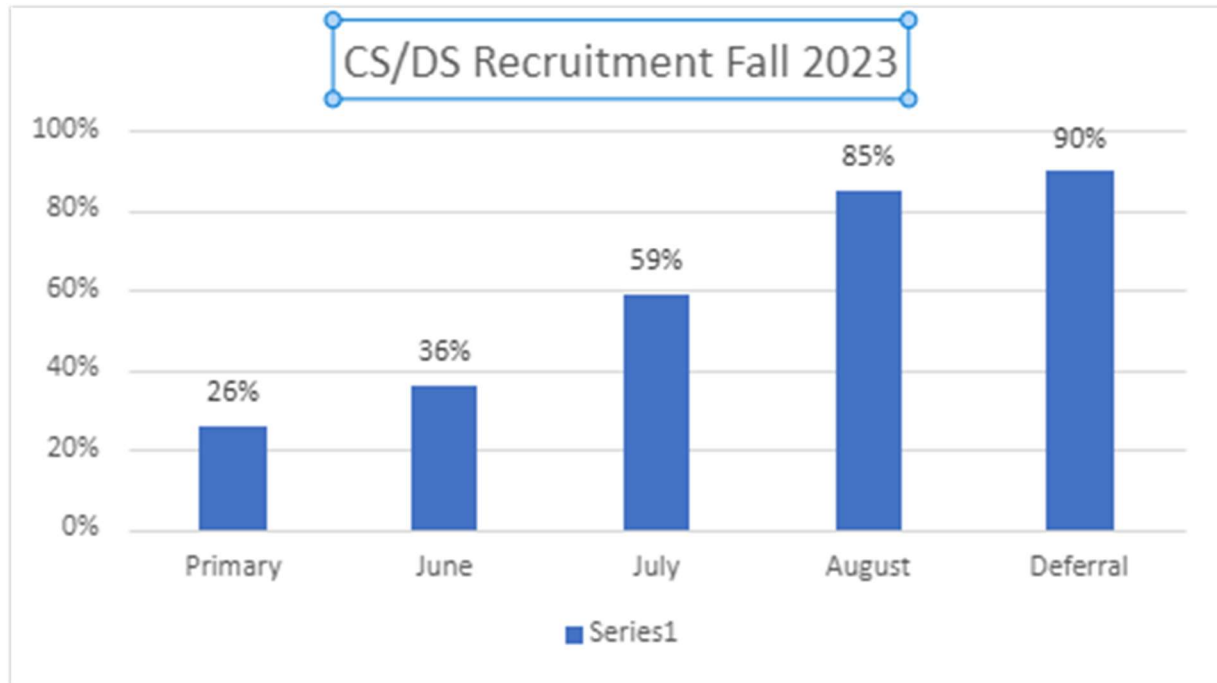
Consult your program/sequence's course outline to view key recruitment dates. Note that if you plan on accepting a position developed from your own personal job search, you must do so before the blackout period (the specific date will be indicated to you) as you are committed to the on campus recruitment process between these dates.

### **Continuous Employment Period:**

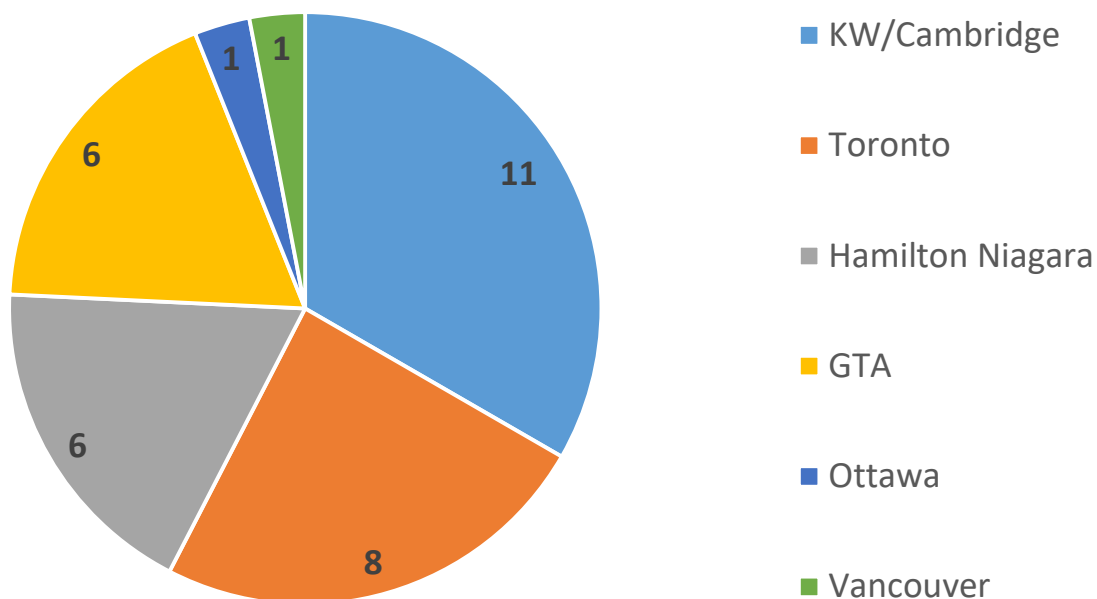
- If you are still seeking employment after the rank match process, you will be expected to continue to apply to positions until you have secured employment and meet specified minimum application numbers.
- You may also apply to positions on your own at the same time as applying to positions through Navigator. If you do find a position on your own, you need to have the job description approved by your co-op coordinator before you may accept it.
- During the continuous recruiting period, employers may choose when and where to conduct interviews (you may be required to travel for interviews).
- Employers will usually have consultants extend job offers directly to candidates; when you receive an offer, we try to provide you with 24 hours to decide whether to accept.
- You may decline two offers in the continuous recruiting period.



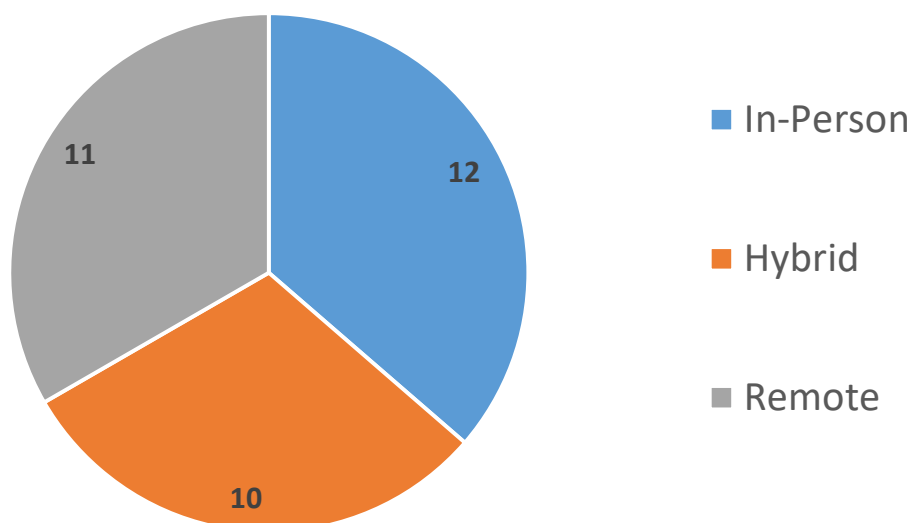
### Recruitment Timeline and Rates for Fall 2023:



Job Locations CS/DS Fall 2023



Job Delivery Type CS/DS Fall 2023



## Section 5: Important Resources

This section will provide you with an overview of the major resources that will help you understand the structure, policies, and procedures of co-op. The main co-op resources include:

### Navigator:

- An online system used by students, employers, and staff.
- View Fundamentals Course tracking, and submit Fundamentals Course Submissions for grading
- Access job postings, upload applications, view interview schedules,
- Instructions for using Navigator and MyLearningSpace will be given during Module 1: Welcome to Co-op, and can be found on MyLearningSpace.

### MyLearningSpace (MyLS):

Students have access to their own sections on MLS (Sequence 1, Sequence 2, BTM and Arts & Science). Go to Table of Contents and click on the appropriate folder where you will see the modules broken down, as well as a folder of general important information. The general information folder contains the Admission Conditions, Fees, Code of Conduct, Class Schedule, and Syllabus. It is expected that these are reviewed and that you seek clarification if needed.

Each Module will have two main components - a class session that you attend, and an assessment that is completed on MLS. To access these assessments, go into the module folder, and the assessment will be linked. You can also search for them in Quizzes and Dropboxes, which will be labelled with the assignment.

- The Co-op Fundamentals tutorials are on MyLS.
- Complete quizzes on MyLS
- Past work term reports if you are looking for more information on a company or need guidance for writing your report.

### Co-op Events calendar:

- Found on Navigator
- Includes information on important events including course modules, deadlines, and employer information sessions and receptions.
- Contains events where you will need to register to attend speaker series events for the fundamentals requirement.

### Co-op Website:

You should become very familiar with the [co-op website](#) as it is an excellent resource available to answer many of your inquiries.

### Co-op admission offer, or admission conditions:

- This is the contract you accepted when confirming admission into co-op (can be found on MLS)

- Outlines important policies that you need to be aware of throughout the program, including your commitment to the program and to employers. It chronicles policies around academics, student participation, work terms, co-op fees, and general rules.
- Refer to this document when questions arise as it may answer the majority of your questions.

Laurier e-mail account:

- Important to check daily – **have it forwarded to your phone**
- We often need to contact you about time-sensitive issues, such as interviews and job offers. Please check your Laurier e-mail for important messages from us while you are on a work term.

## Section 6: Co-op Fees

All co-op students pay an administrative fee in addition to regular tuition. This fee helps the university to recover a portion of the cost of maintaining and promoting the co-op programs. Administrative costs include salaries, travel expenses, telephone charges, promotional materials and other expenses.

The co-op fee is not an employment fee, and is payable whether or not you obtain an approved work term position. All co-op students at Laurier pay a two-term fee before their first work term. For the Waterloo campus, fees are payable through Service Laurier Waterloo located at 202 Regina Street. For the Brantford campus, fees are payable through Service Laurier Brantford, which is located in Grand River Hall.

Each May, the university reviews the fees. When the university increases the fee, the increase first appears in your bill for the fall term.

All co-op fees are:

- Payable at Service Laurier by the fee due date found on your invoice.
- Charged an interest penalty of 1.25% on your outstanding balance after the fee due date
- Assessed on a monthly basis.
- Outlined in the Co-op website under “Fees”.
- Subject to Board of Governors' approval and may change without notice.
- Reviewed annually, with modifications applied to fall term fees.

For more information regarding payment of fees for your discipline, the Laurier Co-op Website and click on the heading for Fees – [www.wlu.ca/co-op/students](http://www.wlu.ca/co-op/students)

## Section 7: Maximizing Your Co-op Success

It is important that you make an effort to distinguish yourself from other candidates. The following strategies will help you maximize your success throughout your time in the co-op program:

Engage in the Fundamentals Modules

The Fundamentals Course workshops are designed to help you polish the skills necessary for securing a job. You will gain key information, so participate, and bring an openness to new ideas.

### Prepare Effective Resumes and Cover Letters

Your resume and cover letter offer an employer the first glimpse of your experience, skills, writing ability and attention to detail. When well-written and tailored to the role, these critical documents can win you interviews.

### Maintain Good Grades

Investment banks and Chartered Accounting firms pay close attention to applicants' grades during the screening process. Although not all employers place a high importance on grades, maintaining a respectable GPA will certainly assist you.

### Stay Flexible

- We urge you to consider applying to a variety of occupations and locations. Restricting yourself to one type of job or location can limit your ability to find employment.
- It's not uncommon for students to apply to many jobs before securing their first work term – restricting yourself to working in one town or region can limit your opportunities.
- Students who relocate to a new city usually find the experience rewarding and maturing.

### Get Involved

Extracurricular activities and volunteer initiatives allow you to build a network and gain additional skills. It's especially useful to participate in an activity that relates to your discipline or career objectives. If you hope to get a marketing job, for example, you might get involved in promoting events for a campus club.

- **Participating on Campus:**
  - Clubs and volunteer position information through [WLUSU](#) and the [Laurier website](#).
- **Volunteering in the Community:**
  - The [Community Service Learning website](#) will connect you to a Laurier program that integrates meaningful community service with classroom instruction.
  - The [Volunteer Action Centre \(VAC\) website](#) will connect you to organizations in the Kitchener-Waterloo area that need volunteers. It provides a search engine that will allow you to identify volunteer opportunities by the type of organization or role in which you are most interested.

### Check Job Postings on Navigator Daily

During the primary recruiting period and the continuous employment period, you should check postings on Navigator at least once each day. Some employers post their jobs for only one day, so check daily to ensure you don't miss any opportunities.

### Conduct a personal job search

- Taking advantage of your own network and contacts will help you identify hidden job opportunities. Make note of the dates when you are able to do your own personal job search during the recruitment process and when you are not allowed to.
- Speak to your co-op consultant if you have any questions about personal job search.

*Enhance Your Computer Skills*

Most employers need staff to be proficient in Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. If your computer skills are weak, take advantage of the workshops offered by [PRISM](#). Ensuring that your computer skills are up to par will make you a more marketable candidate.

To participate in PRISM Resources training sessions, you must opt-in to a per-term membership. Once admitted, the sessions are listed in “Groups” and the sessions labelled for Co-op count towards Speaker Series requirements. Contact PRISM Resources at [support@prismresources.com](mailto:support@prismresources.com) for more information.

*Ask Questions*

If there is something about the co-op process that you are unclear about and you are unable to find the answer on the co-op website, MyLS, Navigator or through the Fundamentals Course, please contact your co-op consultant.