



Student Co-op Guide

Undergraduate



Engineering





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Welcome

The Engineering Co-op Program provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable work and experiential learning opportunities before they graduate. Co-op is available to all students in engineering degree options.

This Engineering Student Co-op Handbook is a student's go-to guide for information on how co-op works and the policies and procedures that apply throughout your co-op experiences.

For additional support and information, please **contact your Career Educator** or the Centre **thecentre@mcmaster.ca**.
WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

The Centre

The Centre for Career Growth and Experience (the Centre) team supports students with employment preparation and career readiness, connects students with employers, and provides opportunities for students to gain meaningful experiences.

How to contact us:

- Email: **thecentre@mcmaster.ca**
- Visit: Gerald Hatch Centre for Experiential Learning (JHE H301)
- By appointment: book in **OSCARplus**

Our hours of operation:

Monday - Friday | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

We value our relationships with students, employers and campus colleagues

Code of Conduct – Professional Conduct

The Centre for Career Growth & Experience team applies a people-first approach in the delivery of meaningful student experiences and adheres to values of respect, collaboration, quality, integrity and growth mindset. We value our relationships with students, employers, community partners and campus colleagues which is built upon mutually trusted and respectful interactions. As a McMaster Engineering Co-op Student, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional and ethical manner throughout your participation in the co-op program. Any disrespectful behaviour will be addressed following the principles of the **McMaster University Student Code of Conduct**.

CEWIL Canada

The Faculty of Engineering Co-op Program policies are in alignment with national accreditation standards and expectations set out by **Co-operative Education & Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada**

Co-op Policies

The Faculty of Engineering Co-op Policies guide the operation and delivery of the co-op program and are available on our website – **Engineering Co-op Policies**. Students are expected to follow the rules and processes outlined in these policies. The Faculty of Engineering at McMaster University reserves the right to take appropriate action when students do not meet these expectations or engage in unprofessional conduct during the co-op process. Depending on the circumstances, this may include reduced access to the OSCARplus co-op job board or being placed on probation in the co-op program. For students in programs with optional co-op, non-compliance may result in removal from the co-op program.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. no credit for a component of co-op, no credit for the co-op term, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to **McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy**.

Co-op Supports

Booking Appointments in OSCARplus

Our team is here to help. To book an appointment with your Career Educator, or another member of the Centre team:

1. Login to **OSCARplus**
2. Select 'Engineering'
3. Select 'Appointments'
4. Select 'Book by Appointment Type' *

*There is a list and brief description of appointment types.

Career Resources on Fireball Academy

Visit the **Fireball Academy** to access resources, samples and videos to support the development/strengthening of your resume, job search strategy, interview skills, and more.





Issues While on Co-op

When to Ask for Help

Students should reach out to their **Career Educator** or the Centre (thecentre@mcmaster.ca) with any concerns or questions during their work term. Situations may include, but are not limited to:



Difficult Workplace Relationships



Disciplinary action



Health and safety concerns



Workplace illness or injury



Discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace



Changes to employment (extension, reduction, termination)



Changes to job tasks/responsibilities that deviate from the job description



Not being paid on time or at all



Unsatisfactory evaluation

Co-op Requirements

Pre-Requisite Courses

Expectation: Complete all co-op pre-requisites.

What happens if I don't?

BEng, IBEHS, CompSci and BTech students are required to complete ENGINEER/IBEHS 1EE0.

- Students are ineligible to search for, accept, and register co-op jobs until 1EE0 is completed with a grade of COM.
- Students requesting to complete a co-op pre-requisite course during a co-op will be denied.
- Students will be denied job board access.

BTech Degree Completion Program (DCP) students are required to complete ENGTECH 1ET0.

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- Students are ineligible to search for, accept, and register co-op jobs until 1ET0 is completed with a grade of COM.
 - Students requesting to complete a co-op pre-requisite course during a co-op will be denied.
 - Students will be denied job board access.



Academic Standings

Expectation: Maintain full-time enrollment status

What happens if I don't?

B.Eng, IBEHS, CompSci and BTech 4YR students must be designated as full-time status (minimum 9 units) in the academic term that immediately precedes a work term and must return to full-time status in the academic term that immediately follows a work term. These units must be required for your program. Access your Advisement Report in Mosaic to view earned and outstanding course requirements for your program.

Part-time DCP students must be designated as part-time status (minimum 3 units) in the academic term that immediately precedes a work term and must return to part-time status in the academic term that immediately follows a work term, with a minimum of 9 degree-required units remaining in their degree.

Maintain good academic standing in your engineering program.

B.Eng, CompSci and IBEHS students must maintain a minimum 4.0 cumulative grade point average (CGPA)

BTech students must maintain a minimum 3.5 cumulative grade point average (CGPA)

- Students will be denied the registration of a co-op.

What happens if I don't?

- Students who do not maintain the CGPA for their program will be denied the ability to register a co-op.



Co-op Graduation Requirements

Co-op is **optional** for students in BEng, IBEHS, and Computer Science programs. Students must complete a minimum of 3 approved/registered 4-month co-op work terms (12 months) to earn the co-op designation upon graduation.

Co-op is **mandatory** for all BTech programs. Students in BTech 4YR programs must complete a minimum of 3 approved/registered 4-month co-op work terms (12 months) to graduate.

Students in a BTech Degree Completion Program (DCP) must complete a minimum of 2 approved/registered 4-month co-op work terms (8 months) to graduate. This can be done via transfer credits at the time of enrolment, submitting a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), which awards co-op credit for previous relevant work experience, or by registering co-op work terms during your time as a McMaster Student. A breakdown of these options can be found on our website, as follows: [How co-op works](#) > When can I work? > Bachelor of Technology, Degree Completion Program

Co-op Length & Sequencing

The sequence dictates when a student is eligible to work and can access job postings.

Undergraduate students can register a maximum of 16 months of continuous employment at one time, and a total maximum of 24 months (for 4-year programs) or 28 months (for 5-year programs) of co-op experience within their degree.

Co-op work terms are structured in 4-month blocks, in alignment with McMaster's academic terms, as follows:

- Fall co-op: September – December
- Winter co-op: January – April
- Spring co-op: May – August

A student is able to pursue long-term co-op experiences (8, 12 and 16 months in length) after successful completion of Level 3 of their academic program.

Note: Resequencing co-op work terms could impact future co-op participation, graduation timeline (i.e. extend degree length), OSAP requirements, and study and work permits for international students. Consult with your **Career Educator** to understand these potential impacts.

Expectation: Know when you are eligible to work and comply with those requirements.

What happens if I don't?

Level 1 (first year) students are eligible to participate in a 4-month co-op experience in the Spring term following their first year of study. Level 1 students are not permitted to participate in co-op work term experiences that begin in the Fall or Winter terms during their first year.

Note: DCP students in their first year are considered level 3, so this does not apply.

Level 2 (second year) students are eligible to be re-sequenced to participate in a long-term co-op experience starting in the Spring term following the successful completion of all Level 2 prerequisite academic courses for their program. Students must meet with their **Career Educator** to submit a Co-op Resequencing Request Form. Students must receive approval of their Co-op Resequencing request prior to securing a co-op.

Level 2 students are not permitted to participate in co-op work term experiences that begin in the Fall or Winter terms during their second year.

Level 3 students are eligible to participate in long-term co-op experiences starting in the Spring term following successful completion of Level 3 of their academic program.

BTech 4YR students have a strict academic schedule. Students who do not secure a co-op in the Winter term following 3A will have limited courses available to take. Students are encouraged to connect with their **Career Educator** and their **Academic Advisor** for course planning.

- Requests to register co-ops that will take place in the Fall or Winter term of first year will be denied.
- Requests to register a co-op that starts in Spring term following first year and extends into Fall term (or longer) will be denied.

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- Requests to register a co-op in the Fall or Winter term of second year will be denied.

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- Students may not be able to enroll in enough courses to maintain full-time status.

This could affect:

- Ability to maintain OSAP standing /requirements.
- Ability to maintain work and study permit requirements (applicable to international students).
- Graduation timeline.



Co-op Sequence Exceptions

Students who would like to request approval to change their co-op sequence and/or pursue a long-term co-op experience that falls outside the predetermined sequence for their program should speak with their **Career Educator** before engaging in job search and accepting job opportunities. To view information on co-op sequencing for specific co-op programs please visit "**How Co-op Works**" on our website.

To request a letter from McMaster University that confirms the co-op is a requirement of your study program, please email the Centre for Career Growth & Experience – **thecentre@mcmaster.ca**

Co-op work permits for international students

Expectation: international students must have a valid study permit that states they are allowed to work on campus

To legally work in Canada, international students must have a valid study permit and meet all of the following conditions:

- You have conditions printed on your initial study permit that state you are allowed to work on campus
- You have a letter from your designated learning institute (i.e. McMaster University) that confirms the work placement (i.e. co-op) is a requirement of your study program.
- You're a full-time student at a designated learning institute (i.e. McMaster University).
- Your study program is at least 6 months long, at a post-secondary level, and leads to a degree, diploma or certificate.
- The work placement of your study program totals 50% or less of your study program.

What happens if I don't?

- Students will not be able to register a co-op.

For more information, contact **immigration@mcmaster.ca**.

Requirements for eligible co-op experience

Expectation: co-op positions must meet CEWIL Canada guidelines and criteria

What happens if it doesn't?

A co-op position must:

- Take place in a suitable learning environment related to a student's program of study (engineering and/or technology)
- Consist of productive work for which the student is paid (wages must meet or exceed locally legislated minimums).
- Be full-time hours (minimum 35 hours/week) for a minimum period of 12 consecutive weeks for every 4-month employment term.
- Provide supervision and evaluation of the co-op student by a non-family member.
- Be approved and monitored by the Centre.

Students may not be classified as independent contractors for the company offering a position.

Students wishing to register a co-op that involves running their own business must be mentored through a recognized accelerator or incubator program that provides structured supervision, guidance, and support. Contact your **Career Educator** early in the co-op process to discuss the possibility of entrepreneurial co-op.

Positions that do not meet these criteria will be denied co-op registration and credit.

Positions that involve a student being classified as an independent contractor will be denied.

Students whose entrepreneurial experience is not approved must complete their co-op as an employee of a company or organization.



Co-op Job Search

Employers usually start posting co-op jobs 4-8 months before a start date. Students are advised to start their job search early. Students will gain access to the OSCARplus job board once they have met the following requirements:

- Received a grade of **COM** in the Career Planning and Employment course required for their program;
- Approval of a co-op sequence; and
- Acknowledgement and acceptance of the **Co-op Terms and Conditions** within OSCARplus.

Securing a Co-op

- Co-op work terms are not guaranteed. Students must actively engage in the job search process, and employment depends on successfully securing an offer from an employer.
- Students can access job search support from the Centre and apply for jobs through OSCARplus, networking, career fairs, and job search websites.

Students are advised to start their job search early

Co-op Job Board Access

Expectation: Review and accept co-op terms & conditions

For each eligible job search term, students will be prompted to review and accept the co-op terms and conditions upon their initial access to the OSCARplus job board. Students are encouraged to speak with their **Career Educator** if they have questions about information contained in the co-op terms and conditions.

What happens if I don't?

Students will not receive job board access.

Attending Co-op Job Interviews

Students should check their McMaster email at least once per day while engaged in an active job search.

Expectation: Participate in interviews to which I'm invited

Students are expected to respond via email within 24 hours to all interview invitations from the Centre to either confirm the interview date/time, request an alternative interview date/time, or decline the interview.

Students **may** decline an interview if:

- They have already **received** an offer of employment from another company
- They are no longer interested in pursuing employment with a company (a minimum of 48 hours' notice must be provided)

Students **must** decline an interview if:

- They have already **accepted** an offer of employment from another company
- They are no longer eligible to participate in the co-op program

Students may request an alternative interview date/time:

- If they have an exam/class conflict,
- If they are ill,
- If they have a family/personal emergency,
- For religious observation, or
- If there is some other extenuating circumstance

What happens if I don't?

If a student does not respond to an interview request within a 24-hour period or fails to show up for an interview;

- **First occurrence** – the student will lose access to OSCARplus. The student must meet with their CE.
- **Second occurrence** – the student is placed on probation and job board access is suspended.
- **Third occurrence** – the student may be removed from the co-op program. For mandatory co-op programs, additional consultation with the Associate Dean's office will occur.



Accepting Co-op Job Offers

Expectation: Upon acceptance of a co-op job offer, students are required to end their job search activities and fulfill the agreed-upon employment commitment.

What happens if I renege on an accepted offer?

Once a student has accepted an offer of employment, they are ineligible for additional interviews.

Students are not permitted to renege on an accepted co-op offer. An offer of employment signed by the student or confirmation/acceptance of an offer via email is considered an accepted offer.

If a student is considering reneging for any reason, they are expected to contact their Career Educator before making any decision that impacts the acceptance of their offer.

If a student reneges for any reason that is deemed inappropriate:

- **First occurrence** – OSCARplus work term record is denoted as “declined” and a work term record note stating the reason is recorded on the student’s OSCARplus account. The work term is removed from the student’s Mosaic record. The student is ineligible to register an alternative co-op during the work term in which they reneged. If the student accepts an alternative work experience that is long-term, the co-op in its entirety is ineligible for co-op registration and credit. When a work term is removed, the student loses their full-time status for that term, unless they are able to enroll in a minimum of 9 units of academic credit in place of the co-op work term. **NOTE** for international students – this may affect your study/work permit conditions.
- **Second occurrence** – OSCARplus work term record is denoted as “declined” and a work term record note stating the reason is recorded on the student’s OSCARplus account. The work term is removed from the student’s Mosaic record. The student may be removed from the co-op program and moved to a non-co-op academic plan. In mandatory co-op programs, additional consultation with the Associate Dean’s office will occur.

Co-op Registration

Co-op Registration Requirements

Co-op jobs must be registered with the university (please see **“Requirements for an eligible co-op experience” for co-op eligibility criteria**). An unregistered co-op is not recognized on a student’s transcript and can result in a change to a student’s enrolment status during the terms when the co-op occurs. A change in enrollment status can affect a student’s ability to register subsequent co-op work terms, trigger OSAP repayment, and/or could place an international student in violation of their study permit conditions.



Expectation: Enroll in the co-op program and register all eligible co-op jobs.

Students must be enrolled in the co-op program for their degree and receive a grade of COM in ENGINEER/IBEHS 1EE0: Introduction to Career Planning & Employment.

BTech students are automatically enrolled in co-op.

- BEng, Computer Science, and IBEHS students **who were** admitted to co-op when they received admission to their degree program are automatically enrolled in co-op.
- BEng, Computer Science, and IBEHS students **who were not** admitted to co-op when they received their admission to their degree program may opt-in by completing this form **Co-op Opt-In Form**. Once your co-op status is reflected in Mosaic, contact **thecentre@mcmaster.ca** to update your status in OSCARplus.

What happens if I don't?

Students who are not enrolled in the co-op program are unable to register a co-op work term.



Co-op Registration Process

It is the responsibility of the student to register their work term and access resources to prepare for the work term prior to starting the work experience. Students are responsible for updating their work term information (work email address, supervisor name, etc.) in OSCARplus within one week of their first day.

The Centre will register the entirety of the co-op work experience based on the dates of employment within the employment agreement/contract. A maximum of 16 months of continuous employment can be registered at one time.

Expectation: Complete and submit all necessary forms prior to my employment start date

What happens if I don't?

When a co-op work experience takes place within Canada (domestic) all students are required to register their experience within 10 business days of receiving an official offer letter and no later than the employment start date indicated on their employment contract by completing and submitting the **Domestic Co-op Confirmation Form (CCF)** along with the accompanying documentation outlined in the CCF to **thecentre@mcmaster.ca**.

When a co-op work experience takes place outside Canada (International) all students are required to register their experience within 10 days of receiving your offer and no later than 3 weeks prior to travel by completing and submitting the **International Co-op Confirmation Form (CCF)** along with the accompanying documentation outlined in the CCF to **thecentre@mcmaster.ca**.

In cases where a student is awaiting documentation from an employer to register a co-op, complete the CCF to the best of your ability, indicating that all required documents will be sent as soon as they are received. Contact your **Career Educator** as soon as possible.

Students must meet all the conditions outlined on page 2 of the co-op confirmation form.

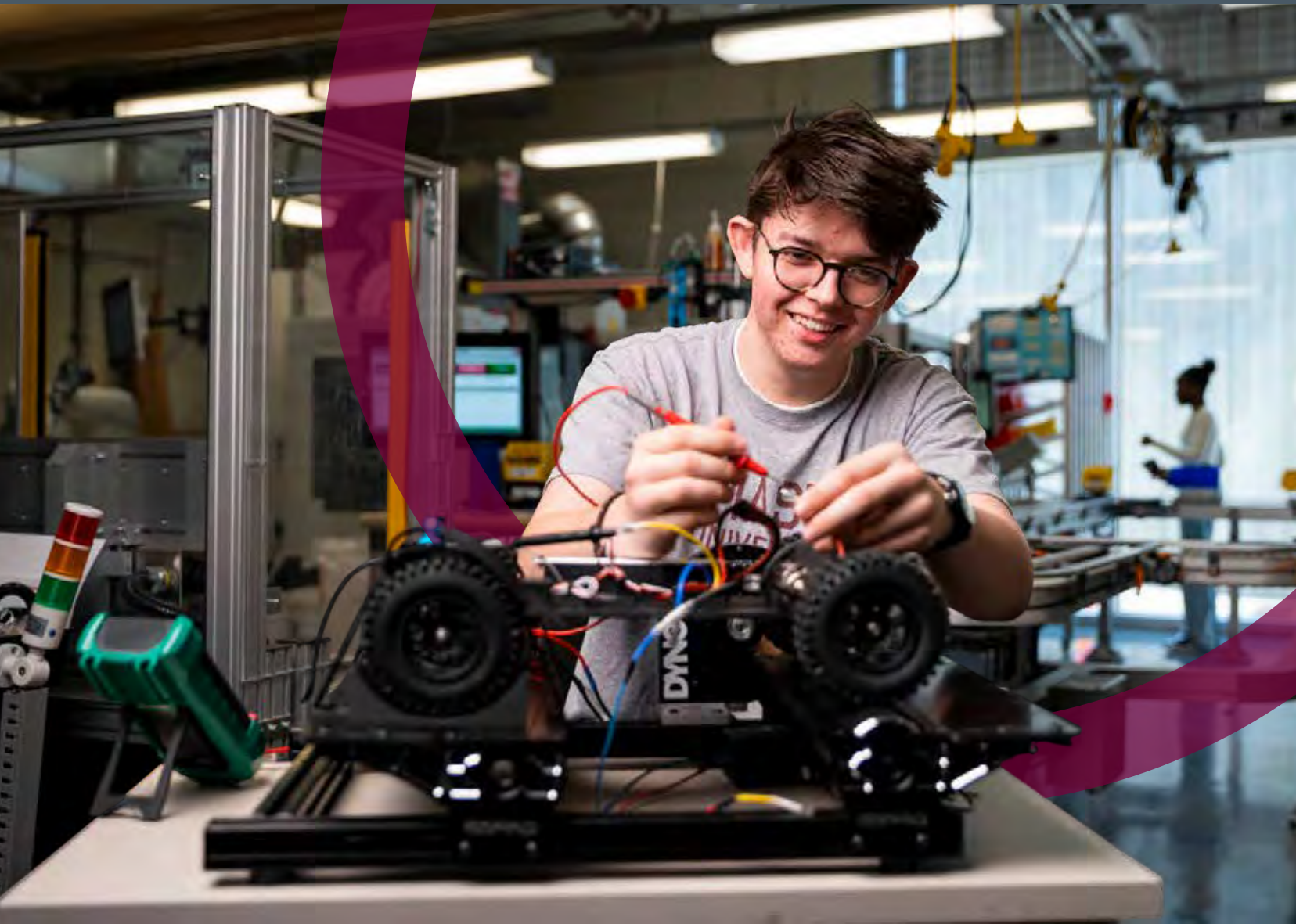
Students are required to log onto **OSCARplus** to input their co-op supervisor's information within 10 days of beginning their co-op.

If a student submits their work term registration documents (i.e. the co-op confirmation form) late (i.e. after employment has commenced), the work term is denied, the co-op is not registered, and the employer is ineligible for financial subsidies. Employers requiring subsidies may cancel co-op contracts.

If the student is registering a long-term co-op (8, 12, or 16 months), the terms that follow the term in which the student submitted their documents late may be registered.

If any co-op conditions are not met, the co-op will not be registered.

Without accurate supervisor information, the Centre cannot send the Employer Term Evaluation.



Co-op Work Term Enrollment

Once a co-op is registered with the Centre, a work term record is created in OSCARplus and the co-op work term course is added to the student's Mosaic record. The Centre also adds future terms to Mosaic (for long-term co-op) as soon as enrollment opens for the applicable terms.

Mosaic will block co-op course enrollment if:

- The student is enrolled in more than one academic course or any Capstone course.
- The student is enrolled in a course that conflicts with the timeslot for the co-op work term course (Monday - Friday; 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.)
- The student has any fees owing to the university or bad credit history.

Co-op Extensions

Expectation: Notify the Centre if your co-op employment has been extended into a new term.

What happens if I don't?

If your work term has been extended into a subsequent term, please notify the Centre (thecentre@mcmaster.ca) within 10 days of being offered/notified of the extension and no later than the first business day of the new academic term. The student must provide something in writing from their employer that confirms the extension and the new employment end date.

If a student changes roles within the same company, a new co-op confirmation form and job description must be submitted prior to the start date of the new contract. If the position meets co-op criteria, it is registered as a new co-op.

If a student submits their work term extension late (i.e. after the first business day of the new term), or not at all, the work term extension will not be registered, and the employer will be ineligible for financial subsidies for the extension period. Employers requiring subsidies may cancel co-op contracts.

If a student submits their documents late (i.e. after the start date of the new contract), or not at all, the co-op will not be registered. Employers requiring subsidies may cancel co-op contracts.

Co-op fees

Expectation: Pay your co-op fees

What happens if I don't?

When a co-op is registered, the applicable **co-op fee** is applied directly to the student's Mosaic account. Students are responsible for timely payment of all McMaster fees.

If a student does not pay their fees on time, a late payment/interest charge or a hold may be applied to the student's Mosaic account. Students should review the **fees and payment information on the Registrar's Office website** and **contact Student Billing** for any questions on late fees, holds, payment plans, fee breakdowns, or international payments.



Expectations While on Co-op

Mcmaster email account

Expectation: Check your McMaster email

Students should ensure they have opted in to emails in OSCARplus (this can be done from your OSCARplus dashboard > “My Account”) and must check their McMaster email regularly while on co-op. Information about the work term, assignments, and deadlines will be communicated via your McMaster email and can only be delivered if you have selected “Email Opt In” on your OSCARplus “My Account”.

If, for any reason, a student does not have access to their McMaster email while on work term, they are expected to notify their **Career Educator** or the Centre (**thecentre@mcmaster.ca**) about alternative options prior to starting their employment.

What happens if I don't?

Students who do not check their McMaster email will miss important communications from the Centre about required assignments and associated deadlines.

Failure to check email will not be considered a valid reason for missing assignment deadlines or requirements.



Mid-point check-in & final term reflections

Expectation: Complete both the mid-point check-in and student term reflection for every 4-month co-op term

What happens if I don't?

Student mid-point check-ins **and** student term reflections are required to receive academic credit for each 4-month co-op experience. Students receive an email to their McMaster email account when the mid-point check-in and term reflection opens. Students are expected to adhere to the following deadlines:

- Winter co-op: mid-point check-in due February 28; final reflection due April 30
- Spring co-op: mid-point check-in due June 30; final reflection due August 31
- Fall co-op: mid-point check-in due October 31; final reflection due December 31

All students who properly complete both the Mid-Point Check-In and the Student Term Reflection by the communicated deadline will receive a grade of COM.

Any student who fails to complete one or both the mid-point check-in and the student term reflection by the communicated deadline will receive a grade of NC.

NC grades may affect OSAP status. For more information regarding OSAP while on co-op, please **contact the Registrar's Office.**

Taking Courses While on Co-op

Expectation: While on co-op, prioritize the employment experience above academic courses.

What happens if I don't?

Co-op work terms cannot be taken concurrently with any program capstone course.

Students may take a maximum of 1 course per term of any unit value (excluding capstone and thesis) while engaged in a registered co-op experience, provided the course does not overlap with their co-op work hours. For the spring term, a student may take 1 spring course and 1 summer course or 1 multi-term (spring/summer) course.

Exception requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and require approval from both the co-op employer/supervisor and applicable academic department.

- **B.Tech AVET, ASET and BIO exception requests**
- **B.Eng, Computer Science, IBEHS exception requests**

Students in the DCP program may enroll in a maximum of 2 courses while on co-op and 3 courses with an approved petition.

Requests to take a capstone course while on co-op will be denied.

Students requesting more than 1 course while on co-op will be denied (with the exception of BTech DCP).

If a student has enrolled in too many courses, students must drop the additional courses before the add/drop date so that their **co-op enrolment** can be completed in Mosaic.

The Centre cannot process the registration of a co-op work term if the student has enrolled in more than 1 course or a course that conflicts with the timeslot (Monday – Friday; 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) of the co-op work term course.

Ending (Resigning from) a Co-op Term Early

Expectation: Complete the full term of the employment contract.

What happens if I don't?

Once a student accepts a co-op job, they are expected to work the full length of the employment contract.

If your contract contains a standard clause that indicates a notice period for resignation, this does not apply to co-op positions or override co-op policy.

If a student resigns from their co-op for any reason that is deemed as inappropriate:

- **First occurrence** – OSCARplus work term record is denoted as “declined” and a work term record note stating the reason is recorded on the student’s OSCARplus account. Student receives a failed work term status on their Mosaic record. The student is ineligible to register an alternative co-op during the work term in which they resigned and the following term. If the student accepts an alternative work experience that is long-term, the co-op in its entirety is ineligible for do-op registration and credit. Student will not be refunded the co-op work term fee.
- **Second occurrence** – OSCARplus work term record is denoted as “declined”, the student receives a failed work term status on their Mosaic record and may be removed from the co-op program and moved to a non-co-op academic plan. In cases where a student is enrolled in a mandatory co-op program, additional consultation with the Associate Dean’s Office will take place. The student will not be refunded the co-op work term fee.

Note: If a student’s employment is terminated for reasons related to unprofessional/inappropriate conduct or poor behaviour/performance, the Centre will review the reasons that led to the termination to ensure a full understanding of the situation before determining a course of action.