

**BC ARTS COUNCIL
CO-OP PLACEMENTS PROGRAM
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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For program information please refer to the [PROGRAM GUIDELINES](#)

(Q) What are Co-op and Work-Integrated Learning programs?

(A) Co-operative education is a structured method of combining classroom-based education with practical work experience. A co-operative education experience, commonly known as a "Co-op", provides post-secondary academic credit for structured job experience and provides students with the relevant and practical work experience they need to fulfil the requirements of their academic program.

In addition to Co-op programs, some post-secondary institutions offer Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), which is a model and process of curricular experiential education which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of at least: an academic institution, a host organization, and a student. WIL can occur at the course or program level and includes the development of learning outcomes related to employability, personal agency, and life-long learning.

Applicants must work with a post-secondary Co-op or Work-Integrated Learning Program to recruit students for their job placements. For more information on Co-op and Work-Integrated Learning Programs at publicly funded post-secondary institutions in BC, visit <http://co-op.bc.ca/>

(Q) Does the student have to be currently enrolled in a Co-op program?

(A) Yes. The program is intended for the placement of full-time registered students currently enrolled in a program with Co-op placement or other Work-Integrated Learning programs as an option or requirement.

(Q) Can a student be from any institution in any related program?

(A) All postsecondary programs with eligible Co-op or Work-Integrated Learning options will be considered. Students must be eligible to work in B.C.

(Q) Can organizations hire an international student?

(A) Yes, so long as the student is currently enrolled in a Co-op or WIL program and is eligible to work in Canada.

(Q) Can the start date be anytime after the deadline?

(A) Yes; however, applicants should consider that announcements may not be available until up to sixteen weeks after the application deadline. Without other funding in place, it might be prudent to plan for placements that don't commence until the summer or fall semesters, as institutions may require a commitment from the applicant organization whether or not they have secured this funding.

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(Q) Can an organization submit another application for a subsequent placement if it already has a Co-op student funded through this program?

(A) Yes, but any funding through this program (or through any other BC Arts Council programs) will be conditional on the satisfaction of all reporting requirements on previous grants. Final reports are due 30 days after the project end date.

(Q) What are MERCS and how do I calculate this amount to show in my budget?

(A) Employers are required by law to pay the Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs) for their employees. In BC these costs include Employment Insurance premiums, Canada Pension Plan contributions, vacation pay, Workers' Compensation premiums or equivalent liability insurance (if applicable). For your information, payroll deductions tables can be found on the [CRA website](#). Check with the appropriate provincial authority to ensure that you have the most updated rate information.

(Q) The guidelines state an assistance level of up to \$10,000 per work term up to 16 weeks, with funds allocated to the student's salary. Does this mean the BC Arts Council recommends a minimum hourly rate of \$15.63? Is there an expectation that organizations will cover a portion of the salary?

(A) Applicants are encouraged to investigate the living wage in their area and to consult the co-op or work-integrated learning program from which the student will be hired for guidance in setting appropriate wages/fees.

Applicant organizations may wish to offer a higher salary, in which case the applicant organization should be willing to contribute to those costs or find other funding. Please keep in mind that applicants will also be responsible for the applicable MERCs (Mandatory Employment Related Costs) and benefits, along with any other costs for supplies, travel, professional development and other fees related to the co-op placement.

(Q) Can applicants apply for part-time positions?

(A) Under normal circumstances, the intention is to support full-time placements for up to 16 weeks. Applicant organizations should consult directly with the co-op or WIL program at the institution from which they are hiring the student to confirm the criteria for eligible positions.

(Q) Can students be hired for longer than 16 weeks? Can more than one student be hired at a time?

(A) In some circumstances, an applicant may wish to apply for two consecutive, full-time placements for the same individual and request up to \$20,000 for up to 32 weeks. The requests should be made as part of a single proposal in one application, along with the rationale and feasibility of the expanded placement, which will be considered by the jury. Only one student can be hired at a time.

(Q) Are BC Arts Council client organizations seeking a post-secondary student from a practicum program also eligible to apply?

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(A) Proposals that seek students from unpaid practicum placements are ineligible. The program is intended to provide paid employment for students through registered Co-op or Work-Integrated Learning programs and appropriate internships programs.

(Q) Under what employment status must a co-op student or intern be hired?

(A) An eligible placement must hire the student as an employee, as opposed to offering contract-based freelance work. See <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/rc4110/employee-self-employed.html> for further discussion and definition of employment terms.

Canada Revenue Agency (cra-arc.gc.ca) assesses employment status as follows:

Employment status directly affects a person's entitlement to employment insurance (EI) benefits under the Employment Insurance Act. It can also have an impact on how a worker is treated under other legislation such as the Canada Pension Plan and the Income Tax Act.

The facts of the working relationship as a whole determine the employment status. If the worker is an employee (employer-employee relationship), the payer is considered an employer. Employers are responsible for deducting Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions, EI premiums, and income tax from remuneration or other amounts they pay to their employees. They have to remit these deductions along with their share of CPP contributions and EI premiums to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

(Q) Generally, how will applications be assessed?

(A) Multi-disciplinary committees will focus the assessment on the proposal from the applicant arts and cultural organization to see:

- how the proposed project accords with the organization's mandate and future plans,
- the impact of the proposed project on the organization,
- the impact of the proposed project on the student,
- whether the organization has the capacity to provide an effective work term experience for the student, and
- whether the experience will further the program's goals in creating opportunities for the next generation of arts workers.

The proposal should focus be on how the work term is developed and presented as well as the strength of the case made about the organization's capacity and the benefits accruing to the student. An overarching view of the potential for labour force development would be an added bonus. Please read the guidelines and application form for further information.

**Should you have additional questions about the program please
contact the BC Arts Council at 250.356.1718**