



## **Bachelor of Business Administration Cooperative Education FAQ**

NAIT'S Bachelor of Business Administration Cooperative Education (BBA Co-op) program is an excellent addition to your degree. During your program, you will spend three semesters in the workplace applying your learning through paid work terms. Not only will you gain valuable experience, but you will gain greater insights into career options as well as making stronger connections with employers. Co-op students also consistently have higher employment rates and higher salaries than students without the Co-op designation. Nearly a third of all Co-op students have also been offered permanent employment by their employer before they even complete the program. Employers consistently tell us that when they hire, they first look for the Co-op designation.

The BBA Co-op option is available to both domestic and international students in the BBA program who are (1) in good academic standing and (2) have at least 15 credits remaining to be earned in their degree. Students can enrol into the program at any time once they have earned 30 related credits and typically complete their first work term after their second year of study.

### **1. Why should I join the BBA Co-op?**

The addition of the optional Co-op program to your BBA degree is an excellent opportunity to build your network among employers, try out a career, and strengthen your job prospects. Studies show that students who completed co-op programs typically have higher employment rates and salaries than their classmates who did not. Our own evidence suggests that nearly one-third of our students received permanent job offers from their industry hosts before completing their final work term. The BBA Co-op program provides a stronger advantage when establishing a career after your studies.

### **2. What is the general structure of the BBA Co-op program?**

The structure is quite simple: you complete all the requirements for your BBA degree AND you also complete 12 months of full-time work terms. The work terms can be done in 4, 8, or 12-month periods. Students within the BBA Co-op program also choose to graduate with a concentration in either Accounting, Marketing, Management, Human Resource Management, Finance, Entrepreneurship & Innovation or General studies.

In most cases, students complete two years of coursework and then do their first work term (typically in the summer of their second year). Students are then free to alternate work and study terms based on their own needs and opportunities. However, there is a requirement that prevents you from completing your program on a work term. In other words, your final semester MUST be a course-based semester – even if it is just one course.



**3. Will the Co-op program show up on my transcripts and parchment?**

Yes. If you complete all the requirements of the BBA and complete the 12 months of work placement, the Co-op designation will appear on your transcripts and on your parchment.

**4. Will my degree take longer if I do the Co-op program?**

Enrolling in the Co-op option may mean that your degree will take longer to complete. The program is designed to be flexible, so you can complete your work terms or course-based semesters whenever it might best fit you. For example, you are able to enrol in courses during the Spring/Summer semesters so that you can complete the BBA Co-op within nearly the same timeframe as you would in the regular BBA. You could also complete the Co-op work terms during the summer months, but we encourage you to complete at least one work-term during the fall or winter semester since businesses operate differently during these times. This means that the length of your BBA Co-op is really dependent on you.

Here are some examples on how you could structure your program if you are a full-time student:

**Example A: The Long Program Structure**

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring / Summer
1	Courses	Courses	Off
2	Courses	Courses	Off
3	Co-op Work Term	Courses	Off
4	Courses	Co-op Work Term	Off
5	Co-op Work Term	Courses	Off
6	Courses		

**Example B: The Shortest Program Structure**

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring / Summer
1	Courses	Courses	Courses
2	Courses	Courses	Co-op Work Term
3	Courses	Co-op Work Term	Courses
4	Co-op Work Term	Courses	

**Example C: The Typical Program Structure**

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring / Summer
1	Courses	Courses	1 or 2 courses
2	Courses	Courses	Co-op Work Term
3	Courses	Co-op Work Term	1 or 2 courses
4	Co-op Work Term	Courses	1 or 2 courses
5	Courses		



**5. Can I take courses while also doing a work term?**

You are expected to be working full-time during your work term so your focus should be on that commitment. Best practice is to not allow students to take additional courses during their co-op work terms. If it is necessary that you take one evening or distance course during this time, we can explore your options with consideration of your current academic standing. However, a full course load will not be permitted.

**6. What occurs when I am doing a work term? Am I a full-time student?**

Students on work terms are considered full-time students and are still eligible for the associated tax credits (T2202A form).

**7. What are the requirements for entering the BBA Co-op?**

You must already be accepted and enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Administration degree program. You also need: (1) to be in good academic standing, (2) to have earned at least 30 related credits (9 must be earned from NAIT), and (3) to have at least 15 credits remaining in your BBA program to be eligible to transfer into the Co-op option. While other post-secondary institutions put restrictions on GPA on their programs, we have intentionally chosen not to do this. Industry has told us that while GPA may be important for some, it is not their only criteria for hiring employees and some think that proper fit with the company is more important. As a result, they have asked us to keep the requirements as open as possible in order to let industry decide who the most appropriate co-op student is. It is important for students to understand that soft skills like communication, adaptability and problem solving are very important for securing jobs. We encourage you to do well academically in your courses and take advantage of the networking and experiential opportunities.

**8. What are the costs?**

BBA Co-op is the same cost as the BBA program with the exception that you take the three additional co-op courses (COOP3091, COOP3092 and COOP4093). Tuition for COOP courses are set at a different rate than academic-based courses. You can find updated costs for these at the [NAIT Tuition and Fees](#) page.

**9. How do I get a placement?**

Our approach is that students need to compete for placements in the same way that they would compete for jobs once they graduate. This means that we do not select students for position, students must apply and secure the placement for themselves.

We can assist you in this process in two ways. First, we network with companies and encourage them to post positions on [NAIT's Career Connect](#) job board where there is a section named "work integrated learning." These positions are approved by us for co-op work terms. Students then apply and compete to secure a position. *It is very important to frequently check Career Connect and sign up for notifications.* We have in the past had a large number of opportunities close without any applicants. New opportunities are posted each week, so be sure to check it often.



A second option for students is to search and find your own opportunity. If you find and secure a job, you can propose it for the co-op work term. We generally approve a position if it provides meaningful opportunities for students to learn in their field of study. This means a job like a full-time bar server would not be approved.

If you are trying to convince a company to hire you, remember that there are many subsidies available. Two common subsidies are:

- *Mitacs Accelerate*: Company contribute \$7,500 and this is match by Mitacs. All funds go to NAIT who then pays the student \$12,000. Applications are lengthy, but one application can secure funding for multiple students for multiple years. If a company is interested, they can contact [busexperience@nait.ca](mailto:busexperience@nait.ca)
- *Venture for Canada*: Companies can apply directly on their website and secure a \$5,000 matching grant to help cover the costs of a student. Funding is limited.

#### **10. What are the requirements of a placement?**

Each co-op work term is four months in length, but it is possible to do back-to-back placements (most accounting positions are eight months in length). A co-op position must be a full-time position lasting 15 weeks (or a minimum of 525 hours). The start and end times are typically the same as the semester. We expect, but not require, co-op placements to be paid. The typical student makes between \$10,000 – \$15,000 per four-month work term.

We prefer you to gain your work experience with multiple companies so that you can have broad and diverse experiences. However, we will consider placements at one organization in special cases. For example, if you already have a permanent position, we are willing to work with your employer to make the co-op program work for you in your organization.

Generally, we expect the following as you progress through the work terms:

- Work Term 1 (COOP3091): You will gain general awareness and exposure to professional work environments.
- Work Term 2 (COOP3092): You should be in a position aligned with your concentration. You will gain an in-depth understanding of workplace settings.
- Work Term 3 (COOP4093): You will be working in a position aligned with your concentration and will be take on a lead role on a project or plan.

#### **11. What if I cannot find a placement?**

Since our program is open and flexible for all BBA students, it means that a placement is not guaranteed. You will have to demonstrate to an organization the value in hiring you. In all cases, you are also subject to the needs and trends of industry. For example, the demand for marketing students is currently very high whereas there is a lot of competition for accounting positions. This changes from year-to-year.



While NAIT offers many supports, there will be situations where a student cannot find a co-op opportunity. There are several options available. One option is to change your schedule and delay the work term for another semester. During that semester, we would encourage you to reach out to [NAIT's Job and Career Services](#) team, make connections in industry and spend time networking with potential employers.

If you reach a point where the work terms are stopping you from graduating, you can always transfer back into the BBA program without Co-op to graduate.

#### **12. What requirements are there for international students?**

International students are eligible to apply for co-op opportunities. However, we strongly advise you to plan months in advance, as you need to obtain a co-op work permit (this is different from a study permit). A co-op work permit is required before each work term and it may be possible to obtain a co-op work permit for the entire duration of your degree if planned correctly. NAIT provides workshops and assistance to international students who need to obtain a co-op work permit. Contact [internationalcentre@nait.ca](mailto:internationalcentre@nait.ca) for more information.

#### **13. How do I enrol in the BBA Co-op program?**

You first must be in the BBA program. Once you have completed at least 30 related credits, 9 of which must be earned at NAIT you may initiate a transfer into the BBA Co-op program. The process to enrol in the BBA Co-op program is similar to the process of changing your specialization/concentration through the self-service options in your myNAIT portal. [Click here to view the step-by-step walkthrough.](#)

Once you are in the BBA Co-op program, we encourage you to self-enrol in the [BBA Co-op Moodle](#) site so that you can be kept informed of any information and updates.

#### **14. Who do I contact if I want more information?**

There are two different ways to get more information:

- (1) For **general questions** related to the *BBA COOP Program, Program Requirements, Program Planning, and Course Selection*, etc... Contact your **Student Advisor** they will advise you on your program of study and can be reached by email at [businfo@nait.ca](mailto:businfo@nait.ca)
- (2) For **specific questions** related to Co-operative Employment, and Course Outcomes you can email [busexperience@nait.ca](mailto:busexperience@nait.ca). As the program grows, we expect to hire a Co-op Coordinator to help you with the details of the program. For the time being, a small group of people monitor this site and will try their best to answer as quickly as we can.