

# Faculty Advisor Guide





## Contents

Linking Theory with Practice.....	2
UBC Faculty of Forestry Co-op Program .....	2
Welcome .....	2
Vision .....	2
Objectives .....	2
History .....	3
Co-op Faculty Advisors .....	3
Co-op is... ..	3
Students.....	4
Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
The Work Term .....	7
Contacts .....	9

Help UBC Forestry co-op students gain a career related work experience and benefit from their enthusiasm, motivation, and professionalism.

*Linking theory with practice!*

## UBC Faculty of Forestry Co-op Program

### Welcome

Thank you for participating in the professional development of our students by volunteering to be a Faculty Advisor. This guide is designed to prepare faculty members for their role as an integral part of the Co-op Program.

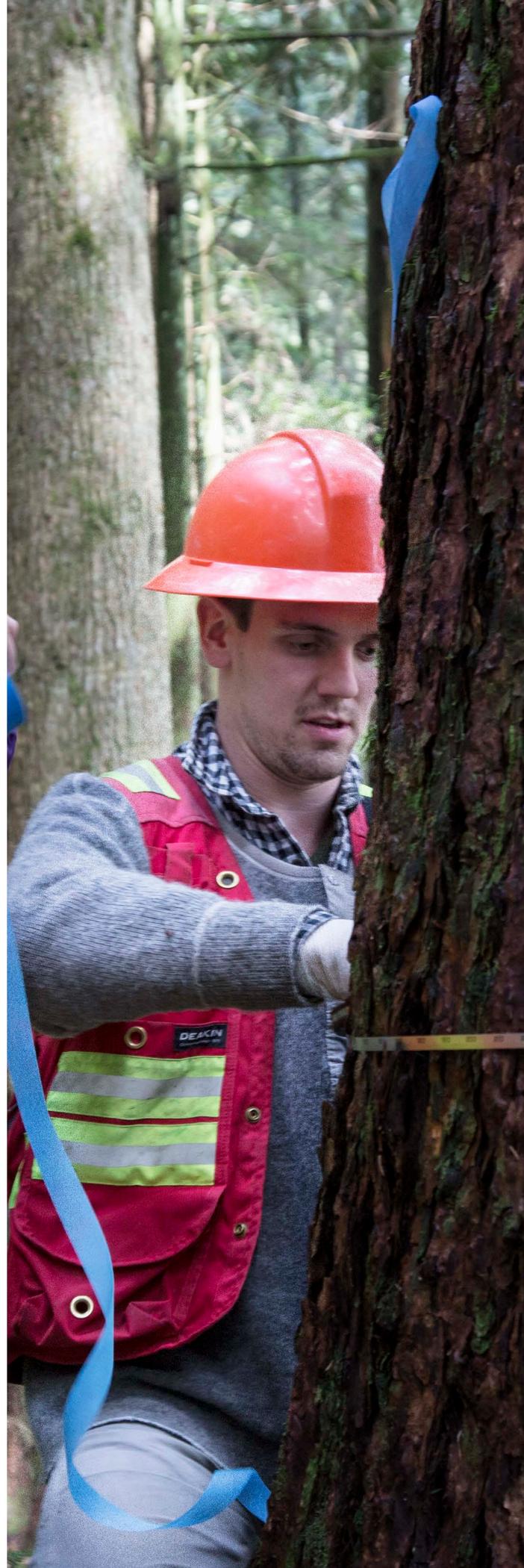
### Vision

The UBC Faculty of Forestry Co-op Program provides an academic option grounded in our commitment to “an exceptional learning environment that fosters global citizenship, advances a civil and sustainable society, and supports outstanding research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada and the world”. Co-op facilitates work-integrated learning in addition to career and personal development through student participation in paid and degree-related employment. Learning outcomes include development of communication skills and integration of classroom theory with workplace practice.

### Objectives

The UBC Faculty of Forestry Co-op Program is comprised of a dedicated group of students, as well as employers, Faculty Advisors, staff and administrators who are committed to:

- The personal and professional development of students
- Creating partnerships with employers, communities, faculty and professional organizations
- Bridging academic learning with practical experience



## History

Founded in 1996, the Faculty of Forestry Co-op Program serves students, employers and faculty members through the deployment of a structured work-integrated learning program. Co-operative education programs were first introduced to Canada in 1957 at the University of Waterloo. Currently we have co-op options in each of the five bachelor degrees offered in the Faculty of Forestry.

## Co-op is...

### Partnership

- The Co-op Program is a three-way partnership between employers, students and UBC

### Work experience

- Each student contributes an average of 600 hours per four month work term to employers

### Professional development

- Students are embedded in workplaces around the world and are supervised by professionals in their field of study

### Learning program

- Students benefit from workshops designed to prepare them for the workplace by developing their resume, cover letter, networking and communication skills

### A 12 to 20 month adventure

- The Co-op Program consists of 3 to 5 work terms during which students will work with industry professionals, complete assignments and, in some cases, travel the world

### Paid

- Co-op students are paid a competitive wage which averaged \$3,123.12 per month in 2016



# Students

## Profile

The Co-op Program is an elective option for students in any of the five undergraduate degree programs at the Faculty of Forestry:

- Forestry
- Forest Sciences
- Natural Resources Conservation
- Urban Forestry
- Wood Products Processing

All co-op students will have completed at least the first two years of their degree program and a series of co-op workshops before going on their first work term. While most students do not have much work experience at the outset, they are all eager to learn and experience new work environments. By the time they graduate, most co-op students will have developed a resume that is comparable to someone who has been working for two years post-graduation.

## Availability

Co-op students are available to work 4, 8 or 12 month terms (sometimes longer with approval from the Co-op Coordinator) beginning in January, May, and September of each year.

## Selection

Students undergo a rigorous selection and training process 8 months prior to their first work term. Students must demonstrate that they can conduct themselves professionally, are committed to working five work terms (three in the case of 3+2 or transfer students) and possess the communication skills required to perform in the workplace. In addition, students must attend a safety workshop facilitated by WorkSafeBC.

## Behavioural Standards

Given the nature of the program and the demands of professional life in the workplace, all students are required to meet strict behavioural standards established by both the Co-op Program and the employers. For a more detailed account of these standards, consult the Co-op Terms and Conditions. Failure to comply with these behavioral standards may result in penalties ranging from a warning to a failing grade on their work term and expulsion from the Co-op Program, depending on the severity of the infraction.



# Roles and Responsibilities

## Faculty Advisor Responsibilities

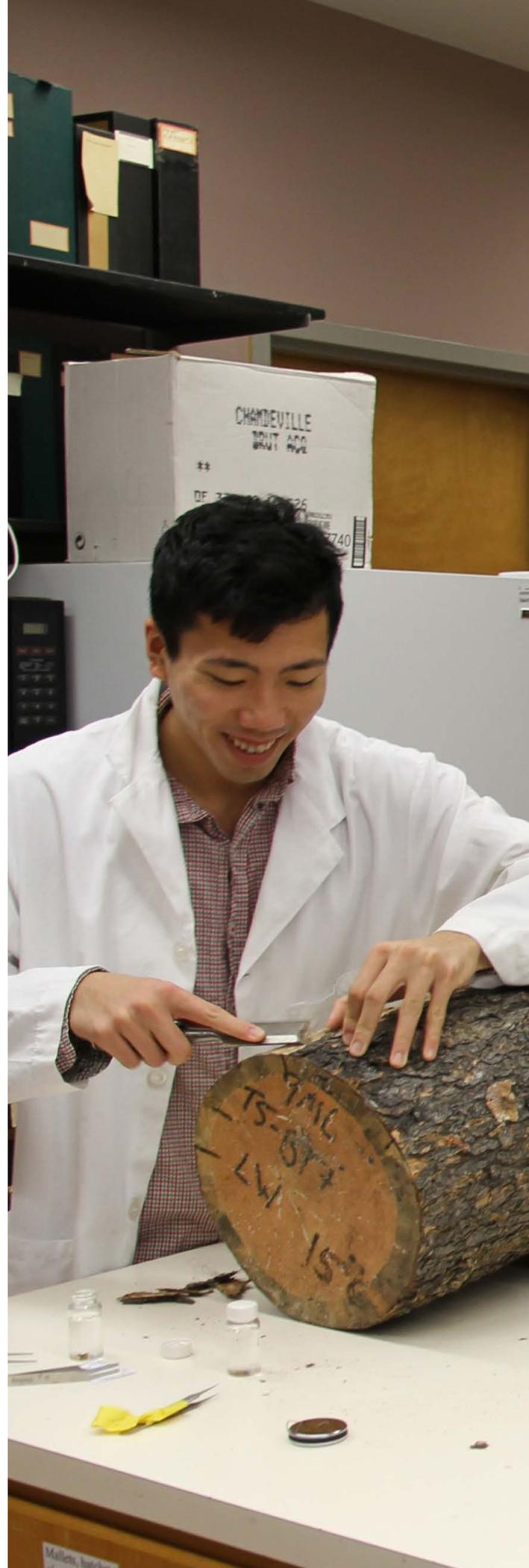
Faculty advisors assist in developing a positive relationship between the co-op student(s), the employer partner and the Co-op Coordinator. Faculty advisors are encouraged to celebrate student accomplishments and troubleshoot issues that might arise during the co-op work term, and to share ideas and advice with the Co-op Coordinator when needed. **It is incumbent upon the student to initiate many of the following activities.**

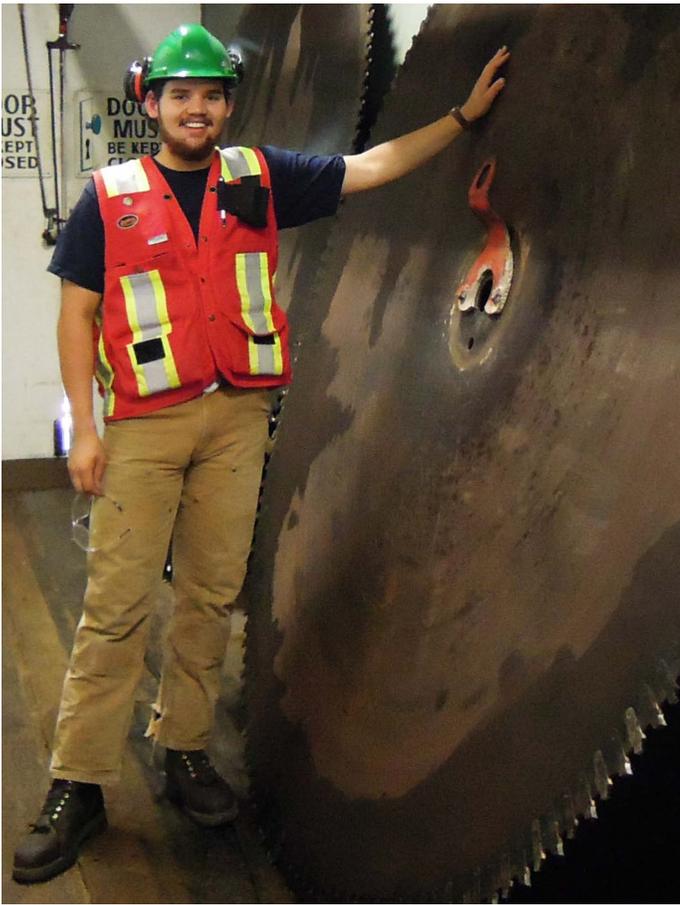
As a faculty advisor you will:

- Provide technical and professional guidance to students upon request throughout the duration the 4 month work term (when students remain at the same workplace for two or more consecutive 4 month work terms, faculty advisors will remain paired with the same student when possible)
- Approve topics for the student's written and oral work term assignments (please note students will be required to submit a new assignment for each 4 month work term, even when remaining with the same employer for 8 or 12 months)
- Evaluate the student's written work term assignment and provide a pass or fail grade along with detailed feedback to the Co-op Coordinator within 30 days of receiving the assignment (students will be given an opportunity to resubmit a revised assignment based on the faculty advisor's feedback before a final grade is assigned – students who receive an "F" on their assignment will fail the co-op work term and the corresponding co-op course on their transcript)
- Celebrate the accomplishments of the co-op student(s)
- Act as a liaison between UBC and industry; discuss UBC's academic program and industry needs with employers
- Provide guidance upon student's request about co-op related technical or procedural questions that the student may have while on a co-op work term
- Mentor co-op students upon request who may be struggling to form a relationship with their employer partners: suggest conflict-resolution strategies
- Report any work term issues (student performance, safety concerns, supervision, etc.) to the Co-op Coordinator before advising any course of action to the student and/or employer
- Promote the Co-op Program to students and employers, and identify future work term placements when possible

Faculty advisors are not reimbursed for travel expenses, therefore the co-op office does not require or expect faculty advisors to visit co-op students at the worksite. However, faculty advisors are welcome to meet with co-op students virtually using software like Skype upon the students' request.

Please Note: Faculty advisors are encouraged to show their support for their co-op students' achievements by attending the bi-annual co-op presentations nights held in September and January of each year.





- Submit a Final Co-op Evaluation form of the student's performance; employers are encouraged to discuss this evaluation with the student
- If the student's assignment is confidential, the employer must submit a grade using the Assignment Evaluation form

### Student Responsibilities

Co-op students act as ambassadors for the Faculty of Forestry and the University of British Columbia, and are therefore expected to maintain the highest standards of excellence and professional conduct.

Students will:

- Initiate and maintain contact with their faculty advisor
- Accept feedback and suggestions for improvement from supervisors, faculty advisors, and/or their Co-op Coordinator in a positive manner
- Honour the acceptance of a co-op work term by reporting to work on the scheduled date and fulfil the terms of employment to the best of their abilities
- Respect the policies, procedures, confidentiality and proprietary information of their employers
- Conform to all the conditions and rules that apply to the workplace
- Keep the Co-op Coordinator informed of changes to their address, telephone, e-mail, and work term information
- Arrange a site visit for their supervisor with their Coordinator
- Consult their Co-op Coordinator immediately if any problems arise during the work term
- Complete a work term assignment for each 4 month term
- Discuss the assignment's topic and issues of confidentiality with their work supervisor and faculty advisor prior to beginning the assignment
- Complete and submit all items listed on the [Work Term Checklist](#) and meet with the Co-op Coordinator to discuss their co-op experience when they return to campus

### Role of the Co-op Coordinator

Co-op Coordinators are the liaison between employers, faculty advisors, and students, and are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the program are being met.

The Co-op Coordinator:

- Selects and prepares students for the recruitment cycle and work assignment
- Deals with any problems that arise, from the student's, the employer's, or the faculty advisor's perspective
- Conducts midpoint check-ins to assist in the evaluation of the student and employer
- Acts as a resource to students, employers, and faculty advisors during the work terms
- Works with employers, students and faculty advisors in monitoring and evaluating the students
- Reviews the success of each work placement at its completion

### Employer Responsibilities

Employers provide challenging, career-related work experience. Students will be paid, supervised, and evaluated as regular employees by the employer.

#### Employers will:

- Provide an orientation, including an overview of your organization, physical layout, relevant personnel, safety practices, and the duties and tasks expected of the student
- Advise the student on confidentiality issues and ensure that they sign any required non-disclosure agreements prior to commencing work
- Provide the student with a supervisor who will oversee his/her work and discuss expectations for the work term and, on a regular basis, and give the students honest and detailed feedback about the quality of his/her work and performance
- Provide the student with a functional workspace, equipment and supplies necessary to complete their duties
- Provide guidance for the student's Learning Objectives
- Engage the student with productive and challenging work
- Participate in site visits and any follow-up measures required by the Co-op Coordinator
- Provide guidance for the student's work term assignment and, if necessary, advise the student about issues of confidentiality
- Submit an Assignment Release form to the Co-op Coordinator to confirm that the student's assignment does not contain confidential material

# The Work Term

## Duration

Work terms are normally 4 months in length, beginning on the first day of the academic term and ending on the last. The employer and student may wish to arrange other starting and ending dates. However, to qualify as a co-op work term, students must be employed full-time for a minimum of 420 hours within a 4-month period (January – April, May – August, or September – December).

Work terms can be extended to 8 or 12 months (or longer). If a student's work term is extended, he/she should be given increased responsibilities. An updated offer letter should also be forwarded to the Co-op Coordinator.

## Expectations

Co-op students expect to be treated like any other employee within the company and should have a challenging job experience. As a faculty advisor you are looking for students to do their job well, and with a high level of enthusiasm and initiative.

To ensure expectations between yourself and the student(s) are clearly understood, we suggest that students touch base with you before the commencement of their work term.

Typically, students will appreciate the perspective you can offer as a faculty advisor and may feel more comfortable asking you questions rather than always approaching their work supervisor with issues pertaining to their transition to the workplace. Also, students should be informed of any limitations surrounding your schedule as well as how much lead time you would prefer before the students decides on an assignment topic. This will help the students appreciate that your time is valuable and ensure that they plan ahead for their co-op requirements.

Assist the student(s) to integrate into the workplace and provide constructive feedback and support on their progress

when applicable. This will ensure that students have greater chance of meeting employer expectations and have another source of information when trying to transition to working in a professional environment.

Faculty advisors should also keep in mind the student's learning curve is usually 1 to 3 weeks. Students will need time to adapt to the company culture, policies, procedures, and basically finding their way around the work site.

## Evaluation

Work terms are part of the co-op academic requirements and are graded as either "Pass" or "Fail"; the grade is recorded on the student's transcript. Co-op students' grades are based on:

- The work supervisor's Final Co-op Evaluation form
- The faculty advisor's evaluation of the student's work term assignment, and
- The midpoint check-in review with their Co-op Coordinator

In order to receive a passing grade for the co-op work term students must obtain satisfactory evaluations in all of the above. Students must also successfully complete and submit of all items listed on the Work Term Checklist before a passing grade will be assigned.

## Site Visits

Mid-way into the work term, students and supervisors check-in with their Co-op Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to arrange these "site visits". The purpose of the visit is to:

- Evaluate the educational merit of the work placement, and to ensure that proper supervision and a safe work environment are provided
- Review student's work performance
- Ensure the student has a suitable topic for his/her work term assignment

Depending on the location and travel expenses, students and employers may not necessarily be visited in person. If this is the case, the check-in will be conducted by telephone, via Skype or via email.



## Co-op Assignments

As part of their academic requirements, students must complete a co-op assignment for each 4-month work term. Depending upon what stage of the Co-op Program they are in, the assignment will be a Poster, a Written Report, an Oral Presentation, and/or another assignment approved by their Co-op Coordinator. The goal of these assignments is for students to demonstrate the learning that has taken place during the work term and for students to develop their communication skills.

Students should discuss selection of the assignment topic with their faculty advisor and with their employer to ensure that it does not contain confidential material. Students are required to review their assignment with their supervisor prior to submitting it to their Co-op Coordinator.

Although the work term assignment is based on their work term, students are required to complete it on their own time. Students should not be working on their report during company time.

## Faculty Advisor Checklist

We recognize that faculty advisors are busy. Our goal is to make the process of working with a co-op student as easy as possible. To this end, we have created a checklist:

Before the work term begins:

- **The student is responsible for establishing contact with the faculty advisor**
- The faculty advisor will set expectations with the student about when they would like to begin discussing the work term assignment topic

Halfway through the work term:

- Students should have decided on a work term assignment topic with input from their faculty advisor

At the end of the work term:

- Review the student(s) assignment(s), due on the 15th of the last month of each work term, and submit a grade along with detailed feedback to the Co-op Coordinator using the Faculty Advisor Assignment Evaluation form
- Re-evaluate the assignment if the student has been given an opportunity to incorporate the faculty advisor's feedback
- Attend your students' Co-op Presentation Nights held in September and January of each year

## Troubleshooting

Any issues of concern should be directed to the appropriate Co-op Coordinator who will help to facilitate a resolution and provide support.



## Keep in touch!

Get monthly updates from our co-op students and co-op employers around the world by signing up for the [Co-op TreeRings Newsletter](#).



You can also see daily posts from students on co-op work terms by following the Forestry Co-op Instagram page [@forestrycoop](#).

To see where students are working during the current work term, consult the [interactive co-op work term map](#).

## Contacts



Forestry, Forest Sciences, Natural Resources Conservation, & Urban Forestry programs:

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