

Credit Approvable Unpaid Co-op Employment Opportunities (Revised Spring 2012)

Overview

The underlying principle in all cases at uWaterloo, which is inherent in accreditation through the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE), is that students must receive some substantive remuneration for their co-op work. Pay remuneration is the norm and should be in the form of traditional wages or salary at, or exceeding, regional government required minimums. Nevertheless, there are special situations listed below where jobs are unpaid and for which co-op students will be given work term credit. A situation in which students in paid and unpaid co-op jobs work side-by-side is not acceptable; this situation may not exist in the same employing organization, and the unpaid jobs will not be approved.

In addition, students arranging their own co-op jobs may encounter rare or unusual circumstances beyond the special situations listed below that may warrant an exceptional decision to approve an unpaid job opportunity for work term credit. Students seeking such an exceptional decision shall include details within the Job Information Form and must consult with their assigned student advisor or with a career advisor.

Credit Approvable Unpaid Opportunities

1. Unpaid co-op positions will be approved for numbered, secular charities that do not have a history or practice of paying co-op students.
2. Special arrangements are required for unpaid opportunities with NGOs, not-for-profits, and humanitarian organizations. Please consult with your assigned student advisor or with a career advisor in advance of accepting a position with an NGO, not-for-profit, or humanitarian organization.
3. Unpaid co-op positions will be approved in clinical and medical settings where it is not the practice to pay students in co-op or intern positions. However, unpaid clinical or medical co-op positions must have detailed job descriptions from the employer specifying both full time work hours and accountabilities (volunteering with no employer-specified commitments of time, duties, supervision and student performance evaluation is not equivalent to unpaid co-op employment and will not be approved). Note that the University of Waterloo (Waterloo) will not assume liability for students in clinical and medical settings where the employer does not provide liability coverage for student employees.
4. Unpaid research positions with Waterloo faculty members will be approved after all reasonable efforts to find paid employment have failed and the minimum duration requirement is not likely to be met. Normally this means that the approval and acceptance of unpaid research jobs on campus cannot occur until the start of the term within which the student wishes to work. Special arrangements are required for all non-Waterloo unpaid research opportunities. Please consult with your assigned student advisor or with a career advisor regarding non-Waterloo unpaid research co-op jobs.
5. Verifiable jobs in international locations where it has been demonstrated that not paying students is the prevailing market and/or cultural norm will be approved, otherwise:
 - a) Rate of pay shall be commensurate with the local market conditions.
 - b) Multinationals that pay in other locations must provide compensation regardless of local practices that support non-payment of co-op students, and rate of pay may be commensurate with the local market conditions.

NOTE: A “Verifiable job” in an international setting is one where all employer business and contact information including the immediate student supervisor along with a detailed job descriptions from the employer specifying both full time work hours and accountabilities is available to Co-operative Education & Career Action (CECA) before the start of employment.

6. Special arrangements are required for unpaid opportunities with start-ups, new ventures, or financially struggling employers. Please consult with your assigned student advisor or with a career advisor regarding unpaid opportunities with start-ups, new ventures, or financially struggling employers.
7. Students will receive credit without pay for a work term during which they engage in their own entrepreneurial ventures under the auspices of a Waterloo initiative or program (e.g., VeloCity, CBET).
8. Unpaid co-op positions will be approved for formally documented special initiatives or programs, including competitive teams sponsored by and/or endorsed by a Waterloo faculty (e.g., Midnight Sun Team). Students are limited to one such work term during their co-op program.
9. Unpaid co-op positions will be approved for formally documented educational programs or opportunities that have been developed in advance of hiring and in conjunction with CECA to provide an experiential alternative to traditional co-op jobs (e.g. India Training Program; Waterloo Residence Don Program; BETS): Students are limited to one such work term during their co-op program.
10. Unpaid co-op positions will be approved for special research and administrative positions arranged between an Waterloo faculty or staff member and a student with demonstrated exceptional or special needs as defined by the Office of Persons with Disabilities.

From time-to-time special, Waterloo may announce limited and time-boxed moratoriums on paying co-op students by its faculties or academic support units. Such moratoriums will be driven by exceptional and unusual circumstances, such as may exist in times of economic strife, pandemic or other disaster conditions; or, in more limited fashion, during downturns in selected industry sectors. Such moratoriums must be endorsed by the Co-operative Education Council. During such moratoriums, unpaid co-op positions will still meet faculty relevance and CAFCE job quality and creditworthiness criteria.