

MA Political Science Co-op Program Guide 2024/2025

Why MA Co-op in Political Science

Program goals:

- to give graduate students well-paid, relevant work experience integrated during the academic program (MA co-op positions pay \$20–\$25/hour depending on the employer and sector—a 14-week work term at 37.5 hours/week at \$25 is \$13,125);
- to ease the transition into the workforce after completion of their degrees; and
- to provide insight and experience into alt-ac careers for graduate students who may choose not to work in academia after graduation.

Co-op programs give students the opportunity to:

- explore various career options and gain substantial career experience to put on their resumes
- enrich academic learning with workplace experience
- develop their professional skills and network
- apply to positions that require students to be in a co-op program (such as federal government jobs)
- finance their degrees with relevant, paid work

What is Co-op?

Co-operative Education is an internationally-recognized and formally accredited learning program in which students have the opportunity to combine work experience with their academic training through pre-employment training, career coaching, and interesting, relevant workplace experiences. The University and employers co-operate to provide students with an opportunity to learn in a workplace setting by alternating practical, paid work experience in various fields of interest with their academic studies.

The Political Science MA Co-op Program offers students the chance to work in a full-time, paid position for 4 months. Students become regular employees in the professional workplace, and are expected to complete assigned work and participate generally in workplace activities with other employees. Co-op students get in-depth exposure to a particular workplace, as well as to a range of tasks related generally to their field of study.

How the Political Science MA Co-op Program Works

Students must have completed 18 academic credits in their MA degree before they will be permitted to pursue a co-op work term. So, rather than writing your thesis in Summer 2025 and finishing your degree that August, you will work full-time in a co-op job during the summer semester, and then write your thesis in Fall 2025, finishing your degree in December.

Students go through a competitive hiring process to secure co-op positions, with support from co-op staff. MA co-op students have access to a database of postings primarily available only to UBC Arts students, choose which positions to apply for, and submit applications via the co-op office. MA students are also supported in seeking their own co-op experiences with employers of their choosing.

For each co-op work term you secure, you will be registered into a MA co-op course that appears on your transcript as a 3-credit non-academic (i.e., credits that do not count towards your degree program) Arts Studies course. **Both domestic and international students** are both eligible to apply and go through the same application process; international students will need to apply for a special co-op work permit that attaches to your study visa and permits you to work full-time during a co-op work term.

Co-op Work Terms

Work terms are a minimum of 420 hours in length. Most employers will hire students for 12–16 weeks. Students in the Political Science MA Co-op Program will normally complete one co-op work term.

Types of Work to Expect

Employers hire UBC Political Science co-op students based on their specialized skills and potential career interests. UBC Political Science MA students can expect to work in areas such as:

- Communications
- Evaluation & needs assessment
- Research & writing
- Project management
- Policy design & analysis

Co-op Coordinators work closely with employers locally, nationally, and internationally, to develop challenging, career-related positions for co-op students in the non-profit, government (federal/ provincial/municipal), and private business sectors. Some employers that have hired senior POLI undergraduate students and Masters of Public Policy and Global Affairs (a similar graduate program at UBC) co-ops include:

Employers who hire both international & domestic students:

- First Nations Health Authority
- Ministry of Citizens' Services
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations
- Vancouver Coastal Health

Employers who hire Canadian Citizens only:

- Crown–Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs Canada
- Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Global Affairs Canada
- National Research Council
- NGO's using federal grants/funding to pay salaries

Typical Wage Structure for UBC Political Science MA Co-op Students

We anticipate that the average MA co-op student wage range will be \$20–25 per hour. Wages can vary greatly depending on the sector. For example, some non-profits pay less than government positions. Wages are based on current labour market realities and are up to the employer to determine.

Program Requirements

- Complete six hours of online synchronous and asynchronous **pre-employment training** on resumes, non-academic cover letters, interview skills, and other aspects of career development, in December 2024 and January 2025 (exact dates for synchronous training are to be determined)
- Complete **a mandatory application review and mock interview** with an Arts Co-op Career Educator
- During each work term, complete **professional development assignments**, participate in a co-op **site visit**, and complete a **work term evaluation** of experience
- For international students: enroll in a special information session on how to apply for a co-op work permit that allows co-op students to work legally in Canada, or the country in which they find work, for each co-op term

UBC Arts Co-op Program

Fees Associated with Co-op (fees are subject to change based on Senate guidelines)

Students are required to pay a one-time Administration and Career Advising fee of \$277.25, due when they are accepted into the Co-op Program, after being approved by the Political Science Graduate Committee. This fee covers the six-hour Graduate Programs co-op pre-employment training facilitated by UBC graduate co-op employers, alumni, and senior students; unlimited access to co-op staff for one-on-one advising; access to UBC Political Science MA co-op resources for their co-op job search and after graduation; and access to all UBC Arts Co-op job postings.

This fee does not guarantee a co-op work term.

While on work terms, MA Poli Sci Co-op students continue to pay their regular graduate tuition and student fees to UBC that allows them to be registered in a 3-credit non-academic Arts Studies co-op course (ASTU 501, 502, or 503) that appears on the student's transcript, keeps their full-time student status with the University, and gives them access to student benefits and resources. A portion of this fee is returned to the Co-op Office and helps to cover the costs of co-op staff to market the program and secure jobs, participate in site visits, and review and evaluate students' co-op learning projects and evaluations at the end of work terms.

This will allow you to be registered in a co-op course, keep your full-time student status with the university, and have access to student benefits and resources, including transit passes. Because your degree program will be longer, you will pay four tuition installments, rather than three; however, if you are able to complete your thesis in fewer than four months, then you may be eligible for a prorated tuition refund as per the UBC Calendar guidelines: <https://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=14,266,774,0>

The fine print:

Note that the numbers and types of jobs posted reflect the job market at the time. As Metro Vancouver is not necessarily a big enough market to offer the range of experiences UBC Arts graduate students want, co-op staff market the program to employers across Canada to ensure an appropriate range of positions for each work term. As a result, students who are able to relocate to take jobs will have more opportunities. The co-op office provides one mandatory conference for UBC Arts graduate co-op students to help them compete for co-op jobs, as well as access to co-op staff for individual career advising appointments, enabling students to develop skills that will be of use during the co-op job search and after graduation.

Employers vet the applications, choose which students they wish to shortlist, and select the candidate they wish to hire after completing interviews. Students should expect to apply for multiple jobs before securing a work term; as a result, participating in the co-op program will require students to put together multiple applications during the search term that they are applying for jobs (the four months prior to when they want to start a co-op work term).

While the Arts Co-op office works to ensure there is an appropriate range and number of co-op jobs to meet the needs of available students, **acceptance into the Co-op Program does not guarantee a co-op position.** Students compete for and secure co-op jobs. Experience shows that the most successful students are those who take advantage of pre-employment training and one-on-one advising with co-op staff, and are open to applying for a wide range of jobs.

Application Procedures and Evaluation

Applications for admission to the Political Science MA Co-op Program for 2024/25 will be due on October 1, at 4pm, 2024. For further details, visit us at <http://www.artscoop.ubc.ca> or contact the Co-op Career Educator, MA Poli Sci, MPPGA & Undergrads, Kerry Ross at kerry.ross@ubc.ca.