



Certificate in Co-operative Management

The Certificate in Co-operative Management is designed for co-operative and credit union professionals and delivered by the International Centre for Co-operative Management in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University. It is an online, part-time program comprising five courses designed to be completed in 10 months, one course at a time. Enhance your practical knowledge of the co-operative enterprise model, and explore its relevance and impact. Deepen your knowledge of co-operative history and acquire co-operative and credit union management tools and best practices related to strategy, governance and innovation. Join an international network of passionate co-operative leaders from all types of co-ops in diverse sectors.

Upon completion of this program, you will receive a Certificate in Co-operative Management. Should you decide to continue your studies with our Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions or Graduate Diploma in Co-operative Management, you will receive course credit toward these academic programs for all courses completed in good standing (B grade).

Program Structure

Interactive online courses are delivered using Brightspace using a mix of individual and full-class learning methods. Enjoy flexibility: work on courses from a place of comfort at times that work for your schedule. Within a 2-week module, week 1 involves reviewing lesson notes/recordings, reading, as well as a live session (at least for the start of each course); and week 2 is for online discussions and assignments. While courses are in session, prepare for 8-10 hours/week for readings, viewings, online interactive discussions and assignments. Students take part in a dynamic cohort of co-operative practitioners who enrich each other's learning by sharing lived experiences and intimate knowledge of the co-operative sector.



**Saint Mary's
University**

International Centre
for Co-operative
Management



**Sobey School
of Business**

Saint Mary's University





“Through these courses, I have been given the keys to the co-op village.

The certificate program has ignited significant growth in all areas of my work... (and) has been invaluable to me, both professionally and personally, from the dynamic education and diverse human connections.

I can't recommend the certificate program enough!”

- Certificate Student, 2025

Course Schedule

Primer and Orientation

This component of the program occurs prior to online courses in September. In the months preceding, students are invited to begin reading, familiarizing themselves with the online platform and meeting peers. We schedule two online orientation sessions at the end of July to formally convene the cohort, orient to the online system, learn about library resources and supports, and discuss program themes. During orientation, we will launch the first course so everyone feels ready when courses begin in September. Once accepted into the program, more details on the logistics and details will be provided.

Complete the Following Online Courses

For each course, plan for 8-10 hours/week for 6 weeks

Fall term: September to December

History of the Movement: Students consider the historical evolution of co-operatives, with emphasis on the diversity of co-operative action and the continuing relevance of the co-operative principles and values.

The Enterprise Model: Students examine the co-operative model of enterprise based on the Statement on the Co-operative Identity of the International Co-operative Alliance. Students analyze a values-based business model that is people-centred, democratically governed, and jointly owned and controlled by its members, in various contexts.

Winter term: January to April

Strategic Advantage: Students discuss the co-operative advantage as a values-based, member-owned business. Besides member loyalty built on shared surplus and values alignment, the course explores business models and operational practices fit for leadership in the new economy and rooted in co-operative identity and culture.

Governance: In alignment with the co-operative enterprise model, students examine the nature of co-operative governance and related topics pertaining to member participation and engagement. The course explores various conceptualizations; frameworks; and structures, processes, and dynamics of governance in a wide range of contexts and for all types of co-operatives.

Spring term: May/June

Innovation: Students enhance their understanding of innovation, and emphasize the main principles of responsible, social and inclusive innovation. Students learn to leverage the co-operative difference to enhance innovation.

Application Process

The application deadline is May 31, or until seats are full, to begin online courses in September (with primer and orientation before).

Please send the following items to cme@smu.ca:

- A summary (~1 page) of why you want to enroll in the Certificate in Co-operative Management
- A CV/resume including your contact information and mailing address
- Unofficial transcripts from post-secondary programs that you have completed in part or fully (e.g. undergraduate degree or college diploma)
- A letter of support from someone in your co-operative organization indicating that they allow you to study various aspects of that organization as part of your coursework and that they are aware of your participation in this program. We expect students to use their own co-operative as a "living laboratory" during the courses. Everything shared within courses is subject to confidentiality. You can email cme@smu.ca in order to obtain a sample letter.

Program Cost

\$7,250 CAD, paid in two installments. Fees may be subject to annual changes.

Optional Study Tour

We offer a week-long international co-operative study tours to Mondragon, Spain or Emilia-Romagna, Italy. These immersive study tours provide opportunities for hands-on learning focused on exemplary models of co-operation. Get exposure to co-operative innovations, network with leaders, interrogate problems and witness solutions.

Other Options

- Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions: Part-time, online, 3 years
- Graduate Diploma in Co-operative Management: Part-time, online, 16 months
- Short Courses: 1 day– 1 week
- CanadaDE: Credit union leadership program

"After engaging in education with the Centre, I approach my work from a different perspective... I am much more mindful of opportunities to raise a co-operative perspective, suggest a co-operative solution, and look for ways to differentiate what we can do, individually and as a co-operative, to better understand, grow, and manifest externally our co-operative difference."

"It reinforced the value of having a triple bottom line approach (environmental, social and financial accounting) to our decision-making and encouraged us to think about the long-term implications our decisions have. This is harder and more complex than managing for short-term profit maximization, but so much more rewarding."

-Graduate Survey Respondents

