

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How Does Co-op Work?

Co-op is a formal program that integrates your studies with technical, off-campus work experience—and it's an exciting way to learn about potential career paths before you finish your degree! Undergraduate students who elect this program will work two terms (one semester and one summer). Most students choose consecutive terms such as spring-summer (January through August) or summer-fall (June to December). You may also alternate the terms if you cannot do back-to-back assignments. Finally, you can add additional co-op terms later in your academic program (typically summers or a semester with advisor approval).

Students typically are not employed consecutive semesters, except in some academic majors such as Chemical Engineering, where it may be necessary. Permission to work consecutive terms should be obtained from a counselor in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD).

When do students typically go out on Co-op?

Some students go on co-op early in their academic program because they are unsure of their career plans and hope to experience will aid in future decision making. Other students choose to co-op after completing more courses, because they can take on additional challenges at work. The most popular time for students to co-op is the junior year. In any case, discuss your plans early—at least a year in advance—with your academic advisor and review “Co-op Information by Major” on the CCPD website.

Are there requirements for the Co-op Program?

- A minimum 2.0 GPA and good academic standing
- Complete the first year of studies before applying or have at least one semester of study (12 credits) remaining before graduation
- Attend a “Co-op Briefing” after accepting a position; register on Joblink
- Write a 3-5 page “work report” at conclusion of co-op term(s), if multiple co-ops are completed, you are only required to write one report.
- Attend a “Co-op Debriefing” upon returning to campus; register on Joblink
- Note: You are only required to attend one briefing/debriefing, regardless of how many times you co-op.

How do I apply?

Activate your account on Joblink, post your resume, and indicate the terms that you are applying for the program in the “Academic” section of your Profile. This will enable you to participate in on-campus recruiting activities and to submit resumes.

How will I find a job?

Most applicants find their job through the co-op program or one of the career fairs. However, you may also search for a job on your own. If you pursue a job on your own, the position should be cleared with the CCPD before accepting the position. If you are having difficulty finding job leads, see the Co-op Director.

Do I have to pay tuition while on Co-op?

No. You only pay tuition if you take classes while on co-op. You will also maintain your status as a full-time student while working.

Can I get academic credit for Co-op?

In general, credit is not given for co-op, except in Electrical & Computer Systems Engineering, Management, Chemistry and EMAC/Communications (certain conditions must be met; see the Co-op Guide for full details). If eligible, please talk with your advisor before going on co-op to arrange for academic credit. Some students have also been able to use co-op as the basis for an independent study course.

What do I do about medical insurance while on Co-op?

If you live within 25 miles of campus, you will automatically be charged the Student Health Center fee and may use the Health Center as though you were taking classes. If you are more than 25 miles from the college, the Health Center fee is not charged, and you will not have access to the Center. Also, in terms of major medical insurance, you have the option of taking the insurance through your family or signing up for the Student Accident and Sickness Insurance policy (this must be done by September 15 each year!).

What do I do about housing and transportation while I am on Co-op?

Although you are ultimately responsible for finding housing and transportation, your co-op employer may assist you in the housing search. During your co-op interviews, it is appropriate to ask if the employer offers assistance in finding housing and if you will need a car as transportation to work. A career counselor will also be happy to provide advice on securing housing.

Could Co-op affect my Financial Aid?

Financial aid is a major concern for students. Potentially any aid except merit awards could be impacted. For example, earnings in 2012 would affect 2013-2014 aid. There is no guarantee your co-op earnings will not impact your financial aid package. Please see the Co-op Guide for more detailed information.

May I walk with my class during May Commencement ceremonies if I graduate in December because of Co-op?

Undergraduate students who have participated in the Co-op program and are in good academic standing, with no more than 12 credit hours remaining towards completion of their degree(s), can petition the Office of the Registrar for permission to participate in the commencement exercises, but will not receive their diploma.

Other Questions? Talk to a Counselor in The Center!

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