



Ready Reference C-4 Cooperative Education

Cooperative Education (Co-Op) is an optional academic program within the College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology. Co-ops are designed to expand students' classroom learning through paid experiences in a supervised work setting in their area of interest. This reference is designed to introduce you to the basics of cooperative education, as well as to inform you on how to pursue a cooperative experience.

What is a Co-Op?

Cooperative education is full-time work experience during your college career. A normal Co-Op lasts for three terms with the same employer. These full-time work terms are alternated with semesters on-campus. During the work terms, you earn college credit while earning a salary and gaining valuable experience.

What are the Benefits?

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- Competitive edge for obtaining a career upon graduation and a potentially higher more competitive starting salary
- A year's worth of engineering experience under the supervision of another engineer
- An established relationship with a company, which could potentially lead to full-time employment
- Development of skills such as job search techniques, resume writing, an interviewing that will be required upon graduation
- Professional development, including such soft skills such as time management etiquette, technical writing, and communication that will assist you in becoming a successful engineer
- An opportunity for a break from the routine of classes while reinforcing academic knowledge



What are the Disadvantages?

- Delays graduation up to one year
- Potential costs of relocation, housing, etc.
- Disruption of campus and social activities

Getting Started

To be eligible for co-op, the following qualifications must be met:

- Have a minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA
- Completed 60 credit hours in courses related to your major

Steps

1. Obtain and complete the Co-op application forms from the Career Services Coordinator. Submit the completed forms to the CEAT Career Services office. Co-op application forms include:

- *Cooperative Education Student Registration Form*
- *Work/Study Plan* (signed by Co-op Faculty Advisor for your major)
- *Co-op Student Agreement & Release of Information Form*

2. Meet with the CEAT Career Services Coordinator to complete the OSU HIRE System subscription process.

Choosing a Co-op

- Talk to the CEAT Career Services Coordinator
- Research potential co-op companies
- Use your OSU HIRE System account for on-campus interviewing.

Frequently Asked Questions

What will I be paid?

The employer determines Co-op salaries. Co-op students reported salaries ranging from \$1100 to \$5000 per month for 2009-2013, with an average of over \$3100. Many employers also provide benefits to Co-op students that would be available to you if you accepted full-time employment with them upon graduation. These benefits might include vacation time, paid leave, etc.

Am I guaranteed a co-op job?

No, the CEAT and OSU Career Services offices only provide resources and referrals. An offer depends upon your qualifications, openness to geographic locations, interviewing skills and overall enthusiasm.

Where will I work on my Co-op?

Students may Co-op anywhere; however, most OSU Co-ops are employed in Oklahoma, Texas, and the southwestern region of the United States.

Can I find my own Co-op job?

Yes! In addition to using Career Services resources, you are encouraged to explore other options, learn about different companies, and use your own contacts to find a Co-op position. The job must be pre-professional, related to your major, full-time and paid. You must still coordinate your co-op through the CEAT Career Services Coordinator.

Will a Co-op job help me get a permanent job when I graduate?

According to statistics from the National Commission for Cooperative Education, about 80% of Co-op students receive an offer of permanent employment from their Co-op employer. Additionally, entry-level salaries upon graduation are 6%-9% higher for students with Co-op experience. Co-ops also assist you in your full-time job search because you will have better knowledge of job opportunities, as well as the networking skills necessary to meet future potential employers.

What is the difference between Co-op and an internship?

Cooperative Education

- ✓ Always paid
- ✓ Multiple terms
- ✓ Always related to major
- ✓ Agreement for at least one year of work experience
- ✓ Academic credit received
- ✓ Maintain full-time student status

Internships

- ✓ Always paid
- ✓ One term, usually summer
- ✓ May or may not be related to major
- ✓ No commitment for future experience
- ✓ Usually no academic credit received
- ✓ Not considered full-time student status

Here is a sample schedule that will guide you in setting up your work/study plan. However, this is not your only option – please see your faculty advisor for assistance.

Sample Schedule

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	Campus	Campus	Off
2	Campus	Campus	Campus or Off
3	Campus	Work Term 1	Work Term 2
4	Campus	Campus	Work Term 3
5	Campus		