Co-operative Education Information

A CO-OP PROVIDES PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE:
You will have the opportunity to gain relevant work experience related to your field of study prior to graduation from UWM.

PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO AFFIRM CAREER CHOICE AND GAIN AN ORIENTATION TO THE WORLD OF WORK:
The co-op program provides a solid foundation for your career planning and career guidance in the following ways:

- It is an excellent opportunity to test your interests and abilities in connection with real jobs.
- You will gain firsthand career information and guidance in your co-op environment.
- You will discover your strong and weak points through co-op employment.

GIVES REALITY AND PURPOSE TO LEARNING AND INCREASES YOUR MOTIVATION:
Combining your classroom and lab work with real-world experience will enhance your studies, giving them greater meaning. This clearly can lead to an increase in your motivation to learn.

DEVELOPS GREATER HUMAN UNDERSTANDING:
Developing greater understanding of other people and learning varied techniques of human relations will occur through your personal contact with your fellow workers and peers. Plus, during a co-op, you will face opportunities to make ethical decisions, which will enable you to develop your moral integrity.

ACCELERATES MATURATION:
Through your association with professional people in your everyday work, you will improve your interpersonal skills, test your judgment and develop your maturity. You will tackle responsibilities and learn to work efficiently under pressure. Your successes provide you with a higher degree of self-confidence on future tasks. On the whole, industrial experience for co-op students broadens their outlook and aids them in their social development toward that of the professional persons they hope to become.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS:
Cooperative education provides students with regular income-producing jobs. It could assist you in paying part of your college expenses (tuition, books, rent, etc.), which makes higher education more affordable. For most, it also provides a head start in salary and positions after graduation.

PROVIDES USEFUL EMPLOYMENT CONTACTS:
Co-ops provide an opportunity to begin your network of professional contacts that can be of great assistance as you seek permanent positions. In fact, on average, over 60% of co-ops are offered full-time jobs from their co-op companies before graduation. Your contacts can also serve as excellent references that will support your aptitude and potential.
LASTING BENEFITS:
Your confidence will be higher in your first position than students who do not have a co-op and co-op graduates report a greater degree of satisfaction with their jobs than non-co-ops after five years in the work force.
Program Details

After attending EAS 200 or the Co-op Information Session, you are eligible to participate in the CEAS Co-op Program. Major-specific requirements include: (Note: Companies may have varying additional minimal requirements.)

Computer Science Major: minimum completion of CS 152
Engineering Majors: typically at the end of your sophomore year, completion of Physics, Calculus, Statics and Dynamics
All Majors: you must be in good academic standing with the university to participate.

After the required registration steps have been completed, you will begin applying for co-op positions. The Co-op Coordinator will also submit resumes on your behalf to companies with co-op positions available. Employers then conduct interviews to select the most qualified candidates to fill the positions.

Once placed in the program, you will alternate periods of full-time study with periods of full-time employment. (Minimum of 40 hours a week between 6 am and 6 pm). While company needs and student course schedules determine the specific arrangement, most students integrate three to four sessions of work into their schedules. After three work terms have been successfully completed, you will have earned three credits, which may be substituted for an elective.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You should start looking for a co-op position 1 to 2 semesters before you want to start co-oping. All of your coursework may not be completed during the interview process, but should be before you start your first work term.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURES**
In addition to meeting the prerequisites listed, you will need to:

1. Attend a Co-op and Internship Program Orientation.
2. Schedule an appointment with the Co-op Coordinator to review your resume, discuss your educational plans and register for eRecruiting. Your appointment includes an eRecruiting orientation. eRecruiting is an on-line job and resume bank. It allows you to search for opportunities and apply to them on-line and allows employers to view your resume and contact you regarding their interest in interviewing you.
3. Complete the Statement of Ethical Conduct for Cooperative Education Students.
4. Complete your eRecruiting profile.
5. Make final corrections to your resume and upload it into eRecruiting.
6. Submit your resume to companies seeking co-ops. Remember, your resume will also be submitted to companies whose requirements you meet and who meet your preferences. Also, specific arrangements can be made through the Co-op Office, i.e. location, environment, etc.
7. After submitting your resume, companies will either contact you directly or through the Co-op Office to arrange interviews. If the company is coming on campus to interview, you will be contacted by the Co-op Office to set up a time to interview.
CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ACCEPTED A CO-OP, NOW WHAT?

After accepting your co-op position and becoming an actively placed participant in the UWM CEAS Co-op Program you are required:

1. To notify the Co-op Office promptly after accepting a co-op position and unpublishing your resume on eRecruiting for the length of your co-op.
2. To attend the Off-to-Work Orientation session.
3. To return to work each term as agreed upon by you, the employer and the Co-op Coordinator, unless the employer is unable to re-hire you because of budget cuts or unless the employer finds your on the job performance unacceptable.
4. To perform professional work indicative of the class level completed.
5. To follow company policies related to personnel, safety, health, security, and non-disclosure of confidential/proprietary information.
6. To provide your own housing unless the employer supplies accommodations.
7. To maintain good academic standing at UWM.

Also:

- You are expected to remain with the SAME employer throughout ALL scheduled work terms.
- To receive academic credit for co-op work experience, a minimum of 3 work terms, totaling 46 or more weeks of employment, must be completed.
- Full-time student status must be maintained each work term by registering in a 1-credit class, "Co-op Work Term" DURING the time of your employment.
- A three to five page report detailing the work experience is required after completion of each work term.
The Financial Statement

COMPENSATION
Co-op salaries are determined by employers in a number of ways. Two factors most commonly considered are the work experience and the academic classification of the student. A widely used method for calculating a fair salary is to pay the co-op a percentage of the amount of a baccalaureate engineer in that discipline. It is interesting to note that during the last work term most employers find that a co-op student performs nearly at the level of their baccalaureate engineers.

Providing a comprehensive benefit package to a co-op is not an employer requirement for participation in the program. However, many organizations do offer a variety of benefits including health insurance, holiday pay, vacation leave, and full or partial reimbursement of travel expenses.

Past starting wages for co-op students have been between $9 and $14 per hour.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
As a special type of employee with the cooperating employer, and while working on a voluntary, accepted, prearranged, alternating work/school schedule for credits, the Co-op student does NOT earn unemployment compensation under Wisconsin statutes. In addition, federal laws exclude "employment of the individual in a full-time program taken for credit (at a higher educational institution) if such service is an integral part of such program" as service which earns unemployment compensation rights.

FINANCIAL AID, SCHOLARSHIPS, INSURANCE AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
While you are co-oping, you are registered for 1 credit, which maintains full-time student status. It is still important to discuss your co-op with your Financial Aid Advisor. When you are co-oping, you do not use up the ‘grace’ period on your loan so you will not need to start paying student loans back. On the other hand, students do not typically receive financial aid, grants, loans or scholarships, while they are co-oping. If you accept the money without notifying financial aid, you may be placed on Financial Aid probation.

Scholarships - Check with the source that is funding the scholarship. They can typically suspend your aid while you are co-oping and re-establish it when you are back taking classes full-time.

Health and Auto Insurance - Because UWM recognizes you as a full-time student, so do insurance agencies. The Co-op Office may need to send a letter to your insurance company to explain the situation. Please let the office know as soon as possible if you would like a letter sent.

Extra-curricular Activities - Activities, such as athletics, are something to take into consideration when planning your co-op rotation. It is easiest to be enrolled with full-time classes during your sports season and it is essential that you check with the Athletic Department regarding NCAA guidelines and co-oping.

It is your responsibility to check into the specifics in each area to learn how they may affect you. If you need a letter of explanation, please talk with the Co-op Office.

DURING AND AFTER EACH CO-OP TERM (IMPORTANT!)
Required Paperwork:

1. Co-op papers are due the last day of final exams at the end of your co-op term, but can be turned in as early as the last week of your co-op session. It is important to note that your co-op work term will show up as an "incomplete" until you have submitted your co-op paper and the Co-op Coordinator has changed the grade to "Complete." Having an incomplete on your transcript will delay your financial aid. To keep the process running smoothly you are encouraged to get your paper in early. **ALL CO-OP PAPERS MUST BE READ AND SIGNED BY YOUR SUPERVISOR STATING THAT THEY DO NOT CONTAIN ANY COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.**
   
   NOTE: The Co-op Coordinator will discuss alternatives to writing the Co-op Paper for students in their second and third co-op terms.

2. At the end of the session you need to complete a brief Co-op Survey Form that is to be turned in with your co-op paper.

3. You also need to give your co-op supervisor a UWM Co-op Participant Feedback Form. Your supervisor needs to complete it and spend a few moments reviewing his or her comments with you. If the company has its own in-house form, you can substitute it.

**GENERAL REGULATIONS**

1. It is understood by all parties concerned that no binding contract exists and that either I, or the employer, can terminate the cooperative employment arrangement at any time. However, it is assumed that both parties will abide by a "good faith" agreement and fulfill their commitments for the duration of the scheduled work experience.

2. The company is not obligated to offer employment to me upon graduation nor am I obligated to accept employment with the company should an offer be extended.

3. I understand that by entering the Co-op Program, I am considered to be a regular student at the university and must abide by all the applicable university regulations.

4. I will obtain final approval of the work-study calendar from the Co-op Coordinator, although the company may determine the starting time for the co-op.

**INDUSTRY, STUDENT, UNIVERSITY - A TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT**

A successful co-op program is based upon strict adherence to an implied agreement among the three parties involved, namely the university, the participating company and the co-op student. Each party stands to gain benefits and consequently each bears responsibilities to help assure that these benefits are not jeopardized by moving away from time-proven principles.

The University accepts administrative responsibility for the program, including close supervision of each co-op student’s program and the requirements set by the company.

The participating company provides its co-op students with meaningful and progressively more responsible experiences in "real-world" engineering activities and actively supervises work assignments.
As the co-op student, you agree to adhere to the rules necessary to operate a smooth functioning cooperative venture. Primarily, while on a work assignment, you are a special type of employee of the company and must accept the responsibility of adhering to company rules and policies in a professional manner. Also, even while at work, you are considered to enjoy full-time student status by the university and are entitled to all implied privileges of non-co-op students. Co-op work terms are formal segments of the college's curriculum, which count toward a technical elective.
What Students Say

"I think that any engineering student that isn’t in the co-op program is missing the boat. The experience that I’m getting will be invaluable to me in the future. Nothing can get you ready for the real world like actually working in the real world. Experience in your field—any experience—will give an engineering student the advantage over another student without it. That is why the co-op program is so great. It allows students with very little experience the opportunity to work side by side with veteran engineers and get valuable experience before graduation. All engineering students should seriously consider it."

Mechanical Engineering Co-op Student

"Co-op students provide an advantage to their employer because they have already experienced the work environment. They know what is expected of them and have a much shorter learning curve."

Matthew C. Halferty, Human Resources Supervisor
Eaton Corporation/Cutler-Hammer Power & Control Systems

"The benefit of being a part of this Co-op program cannot be described my mere words alone. It has boosted my confidence, my grades, my social skills and my outlook on life. Each semester, every piece of being an engineer becomes a little clearer, each problem has a few more solutions and the opportunities within the field stretch out even further. I only hope by contributions can cover even a fraction of what I have been given"

Electrical Engineering/Computer Science Co-op

"Somewhere along the line, students need to be taught more about the professional world that they are going to have to become a part of. It is beneficial to develop and identify specific competencies and this is best done through working experience. This is where a co-op job can speak volumes."

Computer Science Co-op Student

"The greatest thing about this co-op experience, although, was the fact that I also got to deal with the whole company in general. My boss made me feel like I was actually part of the company allowing me to attend all business meetings dealing with the company's progress, among other things I dealt with purchasing, receiving, and shipping groups to accomplish this and there is just no way for me to learn all this in school. In general I get to see how the whole business works and runs first hand."

Mechanical Engineering Co-op Student

"Kohler Company initiated its co-op program back in 1980, with the objective of providing qualified engineering students the opportunity to perform meaningful and practical work in their chosen field while they are completing the requirements for their baccalaureate degree. Moreover, this program has enhanced the image of Kohler Co. on various campuses, improved our recruitment efforts, and provided us with a valuable source of trained and qualified candidates for future full-time employment."
Bob Maki, Human Resources/College Relations Coordinator
Kohler Company

"I look back at the schoolwork I've done and the co-op terms I've completed. More and more, I'm seeing that the work experience here has given me something that I could never have received at the university-it's given me a chance to apply my problem solving skills, regardless of what sort of problem it is, because the principle is the same. And it's truly one of the best feelings knowing that my work has made a significant improvement in our system reliability."

Electrical Engineering Co-op Student

"I feel as though my experience at [...] is priceless and can only be gained through actual product design and customer feedback. There is no way that any of these things could be learned in a classroom. I look forward to my next semester at UW-Milwaukee where I will be taking classes that I feel will be greatly beneficial to power tool design."

Electrical Engineering Co-op Student
Report Guidelines

In order to receive credit for work terms, you must turn in a paper summarizing your co-op work experiences. The paper needs to be a minimum of 3 pages and not longer than 6 pages (not including the cover page). It should be double-spaced.

Topics to cover in the report include:

Title Page:
Name
Major
Employer Name
Work Term, (i.e., session 1, 2, or 3) Start and End Dates of Term

Introduction: Your introduction should provide background information to orient the reader including such information as an overview of the company, your division, and what topics you are going to cover in the body of your paper.

Body of the Paper:
This is the bulk of your paper and should report and discuss your overall co-op experience. Topics to choose from are:

- A description of the job tasks you performed.
- Special projects you worked on.
- Engineering or computer science skills you developed.
- How the experience related to your coursework.
- Personal observations regarding the work environment, both positive and/or negative aspects.
- Discuss non-technical skills (presentation, communication, working in a team, etc.) that you developed or feel you need to continue to work on.

___________________________________ ________________
Signature Date

Deadline:
Your co-op credit will be reported as incomplete until the Co-op Coordinator has read your report and submitted the grade change. If you have financial aid, scholarships, are a student athlete, etc., in which you may be affected by having an incomplete on your record, you are encouraged to submit your co-op paper as soon as possible.

NOTE: Failure to meet any of the above requirements may result in a continued incomplete on your record.
Please be sure to keep a copy of your report for your personal use. You may want to use it in future job interviews, or use it for reference later on. The copy you submit will remain on file at the UWM CEAS Career Services Office.