The Student Alternating Cooperative Education Handbook

Fayetteville, Arkansas
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INTRODUCTION

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Student Alternating Cooperative Education Handbook! This handbook is intended to demystify many of your co-op questions: What is a co-op? How do I find one? Are there scholarships? What about housing? And more!

This handbook is meant to be for students who are participating in full-time co-op experiences. If your experience is part-time, please refer to the Student Parallel Cooperative Education Handbook instead.

This is the first handbook the College of Engineering has created for the cooperative education program. If you find anything to be missing or unclear, please let us know. It is our hope that this handbook will be able to answer all routine questions regarding your co-op experience. Your feedback can ensure that happens.

Good luck with your co-op, and don’t hesitate to let us help you!

Sincerely,

Kelsey Lavigne
Career Services Specialist
College of Engineering

DEFINITION

Nearly everyone knows what an internship is, but less understand what a co-op is. Because universities and employers tend to use the terms interchangeably or have differing definitions, the difference between the two can become confusing. Below is the College of Engineering’s definition of a co-op and of an internship. Be aware that employers will not necessarily use the same terms, and even faculty members may use different terms. You should feel free to call it whichever feels more appropriate on your resume and in discussion, but when you are filling out paperwork for the College of Engineering, it is important to know which category your experience falls under for class registration purposes. If you are still unsure of which category your experience is in after reading these definitions, feel free to contact Kelsey Lavigne at klavigne@uark.edu or 479-575-3198.

Cooperative Education Definition:

Cooperative Education, or a co-op, is a full-time or part-time, experiential program in which students participate in professional, paid work related to their major and away from the university. The College of Engineering recognizes two types of co-op: alternating and parallel.

Alternating Cooperative Education Definition: An alternating co-op is a full-time experiential program in which students participate in professional, paid work related to
their major and away from the university. Students may only enroll in one class (3 hours) during their co-op.

**Parallel Cooperative Education Definition:** A parallel co-op is a part-time experiential program in which students participate in professional, paid work related to their major and away from the university.

**Internship Definition:**
An internship is a full-time or part-time, experiential program in which students participate in professional work that is related to their major and away from the university. Internships are non-credit bearing.

**PROGRAM ADVANTAGES**
There are many advantages to you for participating in a cooperative education experience. Below is a list of some of the benefits. This list is far from exhaustive.

- Integrate classroom theory with real-world practice
- Confirm career choices and discover specializations
- Increase employment opportunities at graduation
- Gain valuable work experience to help you in your job search
- Make money while enrolled as a full-time student to cover educational expenses
- Develop personal traits, including maturity, discipline, responsibility, and confidence
- Build a strong network of professionals
- Develop professional skills, including presentation skills, writing skills, technical skills, teamwork skills
- Increase your odds of receiving higher grades upon your return
- Receive offers for potentially higher starting salaries than other students
- Maintain full-time student status while working
- Learn job search skills
- Develop professional interests to help choose senior-level electives
- Potentially gain experience that will count toward an engineering license
- Lessen your adjustment from an academic to professional life

**AVERAGE SALARIES (2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Co-op Wages (hourly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Engineering</td>
<td>19.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>10.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>19.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Program</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>15.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Engineering</td>
<td>21.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>19.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>21.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>15.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>19.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CO-OP AND INTERNSHIP CHECK LIST

ONCE YOU DECIDE TO FIND A CO-OP/INTERNSHIP
☐ Prepare your resume
☐ Learn how to write a cover letter
☐ Begin honing your interview skills
☐ Identify what you want from your experience
   ☐ Conduct employer research
   ☐ Speak with faculty members
   ☐ Conduct informational interviews

ONCE YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED WHAT YOU WANT FROM YOUR CO-OP/INTERNSHIP
☐ Use Razorback Career Link to identify opportunities
☐ Attend the STEM fair
☐ Network
☐ Use online resources to identify other opportunities
☐ Continue to hone interview skills
☐ Schedule an appointment with the Career Services Specialist for additional help

ONCE YOU HAVE FOUND A CO-OP/INTERNSHIP
☐ Register for the co-op/ internship course (if applicable)
☐ Contact the Financial Aid Office regarding your financial aid (co-op or away internship only)
☐ Arrange housing needs (co-op or away internship only)
   ☐ Notify proper authorities that you will no longer be needing housing in Fayetteville
   ☐ Secure housing in co-op location

ONCE YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR THE CO-OP/INTERNSHIP CLASS (IF APPLICABLE)
☐ Complete the Learning Objectives Assignment Part 1
☐ Complete the Learning Objectives Assignment Part 2
☐ Sign the Student Agreement Form
☐ Check ISIS to confirm co-op class registration. If you do not see this class within 10 business days, please contact Kelsey Lavigne, Career Services Specialist for the College of Engineering, at klavigne@uark.edu.

ONCE YOUR REGISTRATION IS COMPLETE
☐ Register for the Arkansas Based Technology Scholarship (if eligible)
☐ Read “Success on the Job” handout

ONCE YOU HAVE STARTED YOUR CO-OP/INTERNSHIP
☐ Demonstrate a strong and professional work ethic
☐ Complete homework assignments in a timely manner (if enrolled in class)
☐ Register for classes for the next semester
☐ Cooperate with a site-visit by a College of Engineering staff member (if needed)
☐ Meet with a faculty advisor regarding your academic schedule (if needed)

ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR CO-OP/INTERNSHIP
☐ Complete Employer Evaluation Form (if enrolled in class)
☐ Update your resume
APPLICATION PROCESS

Experiential Education Course Registration Process

STUDENTS REGISTER ONLINE

**JOB PLACEMENT FORM:** The employer will receive an email containing the Job Placement Form.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES PART 1:** The student will receive an email with the Learning Objectives Assignment.

FORMS ARE SUBMITTED

**FACULTY APPROVAL FORM:** The faculty advisor will receive an email containing the Faculty Approval Form.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES PART 2:** The student will receive an email informing them to schedule a meeting with their faculty advisor.

FORMS ARE SUBMITTED

**COE DEAN'S OFFICE ENROLL:** The Dean's office will receive an email asking them to enroll the student in the course.

**STUDENT EMAIL:** The student will receive an email telling them to confirm their enrollment in ISIS.

QUESTIONS? Contact Kelsey Lavigne
klavigne@uark.edu 479-575-3198
ELIGIBILITY

Undergraduate Students:
- Must have completed 30 hours towards engineering degree
- Must have a minimum of 2.25 cumulative GPA
- Students participating in a full-time co-op must have 12 hours of course work remaining in their major upon return to campus

Graduate Students
- Must have completed 6 hours towards engineering degree
- Must have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA
- Students participating in a full-time co-op must have 3 hours of course work remaining (not thesis, dissertation, or research)
- Must have approval of the Departmental Graduate Advisor prior to interviewing for co-op positions

Transfer Students
- Must have completed one semester of full-time study in the College of Engineering
- Must meet all other co-op requirements

F-1 Students
- Must have completed nine months of study in the United States
- Must meet all other co-op requirements

WHEN TO PARTICIPATE IN A CO-OP

Students may participate in alternating co-ops for only one semester (Spring/Fall) at a time. If a student wishes to co-op for both Spring and Fall semesters, s/he must receive prior written approval from their Departmental Co-op Representative. Students are allowed to co-op for one summer and one semester back to back (Spring and Summer OR Summer and Fall). Students who are away from campus for 2 semesters in one year are eligible for only one semester away the following year. No more than 3 co-op semesters in a 24 month period. Exceptions to this rule must be approved in advance by a student’s Departmental Co-op Representative.
**CO-OP COURSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Additive Elective</th>
<th>Tech Elective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FEES**

There is a $25 fee (subject to change) associated with enrolling in the co-op course, GNEG 3801/5801/3811/5811. This fee ensures that you are classified as a full-time student. This will allow you to remain on your parent’s health insurance (if applicable) and to defer any student loans you may have. Registration in the co-op course also provides an official record of your co-op experience on your academic transcript.

**CO-OP AND INTERNSHIP SEARCH RESOURCES**

You are responsible for finding your own co-op or internship opportunity. However, that doesn’t mean we aren’t going to help you! Below are some resources to help you locate some opportunities. Some are great for searching locally; others are great at looking outside of the state. Peruse these and determine which resources you like the best. If you need any help or if you are not finding success, please schedule an appointment with Kelsey Lavigne. To do this, you can email klavigne@uark.edu, call (479) 575-3198, or go click [here](#) to request an appointment.

**Razorback Career Link:** This online job database system is only available to University of Arkansas students and alumni.

**STEM Fair:** The STEM Fair typically has 130-140 organizations present, and all of them are looking for UA students. Although not every organization is looking for a co-op or internship student, many are! This is a prime place to search for a position.
**Indeed.com:** This website is a web-crawler, which means it scours the internet looking for jobs, co-ops, and/or internships that fit your description. It is the Google of job/co-op/internship searching.

**Simply Hired:** This website is also a web-crawler.

**Going Global:** This website is useful for students who are looking for international co-ops or internships or for international students who are interested in seeing which companies typically hire international students.

**Networking:** A majority of jobs (some say up to 80%) are never posted to the internet or printed in a newspaper. Instead, they are filled internally or through networking. Develop and use your network to identify possible co-op or internship opportunities. Unsure of how to do this? Schedule an appointment [here](#).

**A-Z Job Links:** This website, powered by the Career Development Center, lists every major available at the U of A. Click on the major, and it will direct you to job board sites that are specific to that field. These job board sites often include co-op and internship opportunities in addition to full-time jobs.

**Recommended Job Search Links:** This website, powered by the Career Development Center, lists general job searching websites. Although they are not industry specific, many of these sites provide more thorough search results than the A-Z job links.

**Information Sessions:** Many employers will come to campus and host an information session about their organizations. This is a great time for you to learn about them, what opportunities they have for you, and to network with their representative(s).

**Professional Association Sites:** Professional associations almost always have job boards and/or a section for students. Check out the professional association(s) for your major and see what options exist. (Scroll to the bottom of each major to see the professional associations list.)

**Read Engineering Careers Listserv:** Each week, you receive an email from Brian Henderson about career-related topics. This frequently includes co-op or internship postings, as well as advertisements for information sessions on campus.

## HOMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives Form</td>
<td>In this form, you will develop three strong learning objectives with an action plan for each objective at the start of your co-op.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Work Report Form</td>
<td>In this form, you will answer questions that will help you reflect on your experience as a co-op student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Role Agreement Form</td>
<td>In this form, you will read over a description of the expectations of a student during a co-op. You will sign a statement at the bottom agreeing to uphold these expectations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to completing these assignments, you are also responsible for ensuring that your employer and faculty co-op advisor submit their forms in a timely manner. Your employer will fill out the Employer Role Agreement Form, the Job Placement Form, and the Employer Evaluation. Your faculty co-op advisor will fill out the Co-op Faculty Approval Form.

**ROLES**

**Student Role**

As a student, you will sign the Student Role Agreement Form. Below are the terms of that agreement.

I, the student, agree to:

- Complete the co-op as outlined by my employer and myself.
- Conform to the company’s policies and rules completely.
- Enroll in only one course during my co-op.
- Remain working with my employer in the event of a suspension or withdrawal from the College of Engineering.
- Complete all of my homework assignments associated with my co-op experience in a timely manner.
- Perform all work in an ethical manner, including being productive during the work day, asking questions as needed, and alerting supervisors to safety concerns.
- Complete additional tasks as assigned by my Faculty Co-op Advisor or the Career Services Specialist.
- Speak with financial aid regarding my individual financial aid package and how my co-op would affect my financial aid disbursement.
- Accept or decline a company’s offer within the time frame requested.
- Notify my Faculty Co-op Advisor or the Career Services Specialist if problems arise with my co-op experience.

**Employer Role**

The employer has also been asked to sign a role agreement. Below are the terms of that agreement.

I, the employer, agree to:

- Complete all forms needed by the College of Engineering.
- Notify the Career Services Specialist if problems arise with the co-op experience.
- Provide the student with meaningful learning experiences related to his/her academic program or career field.
- Give feedback to the student to enable him/her to learn.
- Ensure that the student will be treated as an employee during their tenure with my company.
- Consider students on an equal opportunity basis.
- Pay a fair wage for a student’s experience and education.
- Provide supervision to the student.
• Cooperate with site-visits by College of Engineering staff during student appointments.
• Develop a co-op description.
• Arrange for the student to have a designated work space.
• Hire the student for a minimum of 10 weeks.
• Properly train the student for the work tasks and conditions.
• Notify the Career Services Specialist of staffing changes that will directly impact the student’s experience (i.e. supervisor).
• Provide diversified assignments for the student to experience a variety of skills.
• Allow the student to write about his/her experience at your organization with a moderate level of detail.
• Support and enforce the academic standards required to participate in the program as defined by the College of Engineering.
HOW TO SUCCEED ON THE INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP

**DO...**
- Dress appropriately.
- Act confident.
- Listen and ask questions.
- Focus on and achieve small wins.
- Say thank you.
- Arrive early and leave late.
- Smile and be professional.
- Set realistic goals.
- Maintain an expanded network.
- Communicate regularly with your manager.
- Evaluate your progress.
- Solicit feedback periodically.
- Approach every task with enthusiasm.
- Offer to help others.
- Seek out potential mentors.
- Affiliate with positive people.
- Be a team player.
- Devise a professional development plan.
- Get the job done well and on-time.
- Learn the organization’s formal and informal structure, policies, and products.
- Develop an understanding of the politics of your office/company.
- Accept criticism without becoming defensive.
- Work within the system.
- Engage with your co-workers.
- Prepare before you start—learn about the company.
- Be flexible.
- Take initiative.
- Follow-up with people and projects.

**DON’T...**
- Don’t be the expert.
- Don’t be negative.
- Don’t gossip.
- Do not miss work time unless absolutely necessary.
- Avoid continual checks of your phone and social media.
- Don’t undervalue subordinates.
- Avoid the “I’m new” excuse.
- Avoid drama.
HOUSING

On-Campus Housing: Students who plan to live on campus for fall semester but not for spring semester need to fill out their housing enrollment forms as if living in the residence halls for the entire academic year. This includes paying the full amount of application fees. As the fall semester approaches an end, students should ask the front desk of their residence hall for the “Statement of Non-Enrollment” form. On this form, the student will indicate that s/he is leaving for a co-op. This paperwork will be turned into the front desk.

Students who plan to live on campus for spring semester but not for fall semester need to fill out a “Spring Only Housing Contract”, available through University Housing. This form is typically available starting November 1st. Students will pay all associated fees and return the form to University Housing.

For more questions regarding on-campus housing, please visit the University Housing website at housing.uark.edu, email University Housing at housing@uark.edu or call University Housing at (479) 575-3951.

Off-Campus Housing: Students who plan to live off-campus during either semester and who have questions about their leases should talk to the leasing office for their apartment/home and/or speak with the Off-Campus Connections Office for advice. To contact the Off-Campus Connections Office, please visit their website at occ.uark.edu, email them at occ@uark.edu, or call them at (479) 575-7351.

FINANCIAL AID

If you are receiving financial aid, you will need to defer your financial aid payments during your co-op. Below are the recommended steps for accomplishing this:

1) Create a comprehensive list of your scholarships and loans, including contact information for each agency.
2) Call each agency and inform them of your co-op and your need to defer your financial aid for the semester. Inquire about any consequences of this deferment.
3) Meet with the Office of Financial Aid to confirm that you have contacted all necessary agencies and that nothing else needs to be done for your financial aid.

It is important to ask each agency what you will need to do to receive your scholarships and loans again. Some agencies may automatically disperse your scholarships and loans again after your semester is over, while others may require you to call a second time to inform them of your desire to receive them.

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are two scholarships available to students who participate in a cooperative education experience. Both of these scholarships require you to be enrolled in the cooperative education course. Below you can read about each scholarship opportunity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Eligibility Requirements</th>
<th>Frequency of award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas-Based Technology Scholarship</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Co-op must be located in Arkansas</td>
<td>Available 2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter Stone Award</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>Student must have completed 3 or more co-ops/internships</td>
<td>One time award</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both of these scholarships are managed by the Career Services Specialist for the College of Engineering, Kelsey Lavigne. If you have questions about these scholarships, please contact her at klavigne@uark.edu or (479) 575-3198, or schedule an appointment here.

**CONTACT**

If you have any questions concerning the co-op handbook or the co-op program in general, please contact Kelsey Lavigne. Additionally, if you have any suggestions for the handbook or program, please contact Kelsey Lavigne.

Kelsey Lavigne  
Career Services Specialist  
College of Engineering  
klavigne@uark.edu  
(479) 575-3198  
BEHEL 3158  
Appointment Scheduler