The Employer Cooperative Education Handbook

Fayetteville, Arkansas
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INTRODUCTION

Dear Employer,

Welcome to the Employer Cooperative Education Handbook! This handbook is intended to demystify many of your co-op questions: What is a co-op? How do I find students to participate? What is a fair wage to pay co-op students? And more!

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 very few understand what a co-op is. Because universities and employers tend to use the terms interchangeably and/or have differing definitions, the difference between the two can become confusing. Below is the University of Arkansas’ College of Engineering’s definition of a co-op and of an internship. Be aware that students, faculty, and staff will not necessarily use the same terms. You should feel free to call it whichever feels more appropriate 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. If you are still unsure of which category your experience is in after reading these definitions, feel free 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 student 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.

- Develop high visibility with students, faculty, and staff.
- Help educate the next generation of engineers.
- Evaluate potential permanent hires through hiring temporary students and evaluating on-the-job performance.
- Identify high-achieving, talented students early.
- Provide assistance to your organization by having students support senior-level engineers with short-term and long-term projects.
- Reduce recruiting and training costs of hiring permanent employees.
- Infuse creative energy and up-to-date engineering education into your organization.
- Experience immediate productivity from new permanent hires that were co-op/intern hires first.
- Benefit from higher retention rates and higher job acceptance rates.
- Find students to contribute to a diverse employee base.
- Influence curriculum development to meet industry needs.

AVAILABLE MAJORS

The University of Arkansas College Of Engineering offers 9 majors:

- Biological Engineering
- Biomedical Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science
- Computer Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Industrial Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
# Average Salaries (2015-2016 Academic Year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Co-op Wages (hourly)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
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<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>18.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>17.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLICATION PROCESS

Cooperative 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

ELIGIBILITY FORM: The coop course coordinator will receive an email asking to confirm your eligibility for course.

FORM IS 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 urging 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
**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION:** A full-time or part-time, experiential education program in which students participate in professional, paid work related to their major.

**Benefits of Participation:**
- High visibility
- ID high achieving students early
- Reduce recruiting and training costs
- Infuse creativity and up-to-date engineering methods into your organization
- Evaluate potential hires through experiences

**ACADEMIC CREDIT:** Some co-ops and internships are eligible to receive academic credit. For students who participate in these programs and who enroll in the co-op class, extra paperwork is required.

**Available Majors:**
- Biological Engineering
- Biomedical Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science
- Computer Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Industrial Engineering

**Contact:**
Kelsey Lavigne  
Career Services Specialist  
klavigne@uark.edu  
(479) 575-3198

**When You Decide to Participate in the Co-op/Internship Program at the University of Arkansas**
- Write position description
- Determine supervisor
- Identify and recruit top candidates
  - Post to Razorback Career Link
  - Sign up for the STEM Fair
  - Host information sessions
- Contact Kelsey Lavigne, Career Services Specialist for the College of Engineering (klavigne@uark.edu) to get on Engineering Career ListServ or to set up on-campus interviews
- Read Employer Cooperative Education and Internship Guide

**When You Have Hired Your Student**
- Follow your organization’s protocol for on-boarding a new employee
- Follow prompts of online Co-op/Internship Class enrollment system (if enrolled in co-op/internship class)
  - Review student-written learning objectives
  - Fill out Job Placement Form
  - Fill out Employer Role Agreement Form

**When the Student Has Started the Co-op/Internship (if enrolled in co-op/internship class)**
- Follow Employer Role Agreement

**When the Student Has Completed the Co-op/Internship (if enrolled in co-op/internship class)**
- Complete Employer Evaluation Form
STUDENT 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 toward 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 STUDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE IN A CO-OP

Students may co-op 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.
STUDENT 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>YES</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>

HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR CO-OP

The College of Engineering has multiple ways of promoting your co-op or internship to students. Below we look at each method.

**Razorback Career Link:** Razorback Career Link (RCL) is the University of Arkansas’s online job database system. Employers are encouraged to post their co-op, internship, or full-time job positions in the system for students to look at and apply for. When our ListServ emails go out, all positions that are highlighted must be posted in RCL by the employer. (See next item for more information.)

**ListServ Emails:** Every Tuesday and Friday, our Director of Employer Relations, Brian Henderson, sends out an email to students regarding career opportunities. These emails will include times and dates for information sessions, career fairs, and other professional development events, as well as co-op, internship, and job postings if requested.

**Individual Appointments:** Students are encouraged to schedule individual career counseling appointments to help them meet their career goals, both short term and long term. As part of these counseling sessions, career counselors may recommend a specific co-op or internship if they believe the student will be a good fit.

**Information Sessions:** Employers can set up information sessions during the week for students to come by and learn about their organization and the co-ops and internships available at the organization. This is a great opportunity to increase name recognition with students, to promote your co-ops and internships, and to network with students.
**Career Fairs:** The College of Engineering and the Career Development Center host career fairs each semester to connect students and employers. Employers usually find strong candidates to interview for their co-op, internship, and full-time positions.

### FORMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives Form</td>
<td>In this form, you will read the learning objectives that the student has created and discuss any changes that need to be made. Once the changes are made, you will sign this form saying that you agree with the learning objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement Form</td>
<td>In this form, you will confirm that the student is participating in a co-op with your organization and you will provide some details about that experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Evaluation Form</td>
<td>In this form, you will evaluate your student’s work and give professional feedback to help the student improve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ROLES

**Employer Role**

As an employer, you will be asked to sign a role form. 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.

**Student Role**

The student has also been asked to sign a role agreement. 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 coop.
• 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 coop 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.

**MENTORING AND COACHING**

As part of a strong cooperative education program, it is important to provide each student with a mentor or a coach to help them transition into the professional environment and to assist them with questions that they do not feel comfortable asking their supervisor(s). This mentoring will serve as a way to make the student feel valued and to make their experience more positive, resulting in higher retention rates of co-op students.

**COOPERATING WITH SITE VISITS BY UA STAFF/FACULTY**

The University of Arkansas’s College of Engineering will occasionally conduct site visits of companies that are hosting our cooperative education students. Site visits will not be conducted with each company nor will they happen consistently. The College of Engineering will choose companies each semester to learn more about how they conduct their co-op program and to check-in with students. It is likely that your organization will not have staff visit your site. Below you find an explanation of the purpose behind the site visits.
PURPOSE

1. Ensure that each student is having a supportive, educational experience.
2. Ensure that each company is having a positive experience with their intern/coop student.
3. Connect with the company and maintain ties with the University of Arkansas.

CONTACT

If you have questions for faculty members regarding specific content of the cooperative experience, please contact the co-op faculty advisor in the appropriate department. Below is a list of the faculty advisors for each department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Co-op Faculty Advisor</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Engineering</td>
<td>Otto Loewer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ojl@uark.edu">ojl@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>Michelle Kim</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmkim@uark.edu">mmkim@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>Ed Clausen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eclause@uark.edu">eclause@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>Clinton Wood</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cmwood@uark.edu">cmwood@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Engineering</td>
<td>Gordon Beavers</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gordonb@uark.edu">gordonb@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Gordon Beavers</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gordonb@uark.edu">gordonb@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Robert Saunders</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rsaunder@uark.edu">rsaunder@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Engineering - UGRD</td>
<td>Tish Pohl</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lpohl@uark.edu">lpohl@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Engineering - GRAD</td>
<td>Justin Chimka</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jchimka@uark.edu">jchimka@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Rick Couvillion</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rjc@uark.edu">rjc@uark.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
BELL 3158