



Cooperative Education Program

Student Guide



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COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

One of the most dynamic concepts in post-secondary education today is Cooperative Education. Though there are many variations of this program, Cooperative Education is basically an arrangement of combining study and work leading to the Baccalaureate Degree. The Cooperative Education student intersperses on-campus academic preparation with off-campus actual job experience. To implement Cooperative Education, a partnership is formed between the employer, University and the student. This partnership provides many benefits for all parties involved.

STUDENT BENEFITS

- Add relevance to their education
- Earn an income that will help defray tuition cost
- Able to receive academic credit
- Gain practical work experience in a job related to their major
- Work with professionals in their career field
- Discover if their career choice matches their interest and abilities
- Find the transition from college to a work environment easier after graduation

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

- Ability to recruit qualified and talented students for their organizations
- Select students directly by reviewing resumes and applications and interviewing candidates
- Observe and evaluate prospective employees at work to ensure perfect employment fit for the organization and the student
- Flexibility in scheduling work
- Opportunity to interact with faculty to aid them in their efforts to prepare the next generation of future workers

UNIVERSITY BENEFITS

- Faculty are able to interact with professionals from their respective fields
- Able to learn from professionals employment trends and skills students will need to be competitive in the global market
- Assist with increasing placement rates of graduates

PARALLEL AND ALTERNATING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

There are two types of Cooperative Education programs at Bowie State University that students can participate in.

- **Parallel Co-Op** is like a part-time job. The student goes to school full-time and works each semester.
- **Alternating Co-Op** is when the student alternates semesters between full-time work and full-time study.

During the academic semester, a student hired in a parallel co-op assignment (part-time) can work a maximum of 20 hours per week. Students hired in an alternating co-op assignment (full-time) can work 40 hours per week. Students are encouraged to meet with their site supervisor to determine their work schedule. The duration of your co-op assignment is based upon the dates indicated on the position description. Students must notify the Program Coordinator and their faculty advisor and/or department chair if the employer is willing to permit you to continue your co-op assignment another semester. After receiving clearance to continue your co-op assignment, meet with your site supervisor to discuss your work and class schedules. Keep in mind that your work schedule may vary semester from semester because of your classes.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order for students to be eligible to receive academic credits for their co-op experience, they must:

- Have completed a minimum of 24 credit hours of college.
- Be a sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student with a minimum cumulative 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Transfer students must have a minimum of 24 credits.
- Students must have a job that is related to their academic discipline and must be performing substantive work.

Students **must** register to receive cooperative education credits. The Program Coordinator will assist students with the registration process once all pertinent documents have been submitted to the Career Development Center (CDC) office. Our Cooperative Education Program does assess a program fee for students in order for them to participate in the program in addition to earning credit. All fees are set by the university. These fees are used to offset program operation costs.

SECURING A COOPERATIVE EDUCATION POSITION

A cooperative education position must be within your academic major whereby you are working on substantive projects (non-clerical) and utilizing classroom knowledge and skills in the work place. Students interested in participating in the program are encouraged to visit the Career Development Center to meet with the Co-op Coordinator and to attend a cooperative education orientation session. We cannot guarantee that you'll be hired in a co-op position because it's a competitive process. However, we'll assist you in your efforts to search for a co-op position.

To begin the process, create a resume so that a counselor in the CDC can critique it. There are several ways that students can have their resumes critiqued:

- Create and upload your resume onto **Bulldogs4Hire**, the CDC's online job posting system,
- Email your resume and a job announcement you're interested in applying for to careerdevelopment@bowiestate.edu, or
- Schedule an appointment with a counselor (bring a copy of the job announcement with you).

We also encourage you to participate in our Resume Writing and Job Search workshops scheduled each semester. You will learn firsthand how to create a resume that effectively reflects your skills and abilities and learn key strategies in searching for jobs. The CDC workshop schedule can be found on our website.

The CDC has several online resources to assist you with searching for cooperative education opportunities. These resources are accessible via the CDC website. Those resources are:

- Internships USA
- Current Jobs for Graduates
- Internships.com



- *Bulldogs4Hire*

Bulldogs4Hire is our free job posting system. This system will allow you to

- Create job search agents
- Receive program announcements
- Register for on campus interviews and events
- Access millions of entry-level job opportunities in Fortune 500 companies and other high-profile employers

To create an account, log onto <http://bowiestate-csm.symplicity.com/students> and click **Register**. Complete all of the sections on the Student Registration form and click **Submit**.

An email will be sent to the email you provided asking you to verify the validity of your email address. Upon clicking the link provided in the email, you will receive a pop-up message indicating that your email has been confirmed.

Within 24 business hours, the Career Development Center will approve your registration. You will then receive a Welcome email indicating that your account has been activated. The email will also provide for you a username and a link for you to create a password. Please write down your username and password and keep it in a safe place. The Career Development Center does not have access to your password and will not be able to assist you if you forget it.

We also encourage your participation in our career fairs and in employer information tables. These programs afford you the opportunity to interface with employers from the government (federal and state/local government agencies), non-profit and the private sector.

You will be able to meet and learn about employment opportunities within their organizations and how to apply for those positions and to meet their key personnel. Notify the Co-op Coordinator when you have been offered a co-op position. The Co-op Coordinator will discuss with you the next steps to apply to the Cooperative Education Program.

Students already employed **may** be able to earn cooperative education credits provided that their duties involve working on substantive projects relevant to his/her academic major. Students provide a copy of their position description to the Program Coordinator to review their duties to ensure they meet the tenets of the program. Students are encouraged to speak with their academic department to ensure that they can earn co-op credits for their work experience; and, then they must speak with their supervisor to ensure their willingness to participate in our program before completing the application process for the program.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. Students must pick up the Cooperative Education Program application from the Career Development Center or download it from our website. In addition, students must bring a copy of their position description to the Co-op Coordinator for review first. The Co-op Coordinator needs to ensure that a student is hired in a position whereby he/she is working on substantive work projects while employed.

2. Students must meet with their faculty advisor and/or department chair to discuss receiving academic credit for their work experience once the Co-op Coordinator determines that the student's job meets the above requirements. In order for the faculty advisor and/or department chair to make a decision, students **MUST** bring the following documents with them to the initial meeting:

- Copy of their unofficial transcript
- Copy of their job description
- Cooperative Education Learning Contract
- Cooperative Education Request for Credit form

3. Once your faculty advisor and/or department chair has determined that academic credit can be earned, they should indicate on the Learning Contract learning objectives and evaluative methods. This form and the Cooperative Education Request for Credit form must be completed and signed. The Learning Contract requires the signature of the Department Chair in addition to the signature of the faculty advisor. Your faculty advisor and/or department chair will indicate on the Cooperative Education Request for Credit form the amount of credits (6 or 12) that a student can earn and how those credits can be used (general electives or non-required elective course in the students major).

5. Students must register for the applicable cooperative education credits as indicated by their faculty advisor and/or department chair.

HOW TO RECEIVE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION CREDITS

Students interested in receiving cooperative education credits must register for the Cooperative Education course. Students will only be granted permission to register for the Cooperative Education Course **after** their entire co-op application materials have been submitted to the Program Coordinator in the Career Development Center. This will ensure that all pertinent program documentation has been received by the program coordinator. Students who do not submit all application materials will not be granted permission to register nor will be considered an official co-op student.

Students will only be able to register **once** to receive 6 credits for their work experience (COOP 398). Students permitted to register to receive 12 credits for their work experience should register for the COOP 198 course first. If students are permitted to earn 12 credits the next semester then they should register for the COOP 298 course. Each academic department has a cooperative education course in which students may enroll. However, the academic departments must make the course available for students to enroll in each semester. Graduate students are able to earn zero to three credits for their work experience and should enroll in the cooperative education courses indicated below.

Undergraduate Cooperative Education Courses:

COOP 398 (6 credits)
COOP 198 (12 credits)
COOP 298 (12 credits)

Graduate Cooperative Education Courses:

IDIS 700 (0 credits)
IDIS 701 (3 credits)
IDIS 702 (3 credits)

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION ORIENTATION

It is **mandatory** for students enrolled in the cooperative education course to attend an orientation session. Two (2) orientation sessions are scheduled each semester. Students are only required to attend one of those sessions. An afternoon and evening session are conducted in order to accommodate student work schedules. Students will be notified of the orientation dates. However, the dates can be found on the Career Development Center's events calendar on its website.

COMPENSATION

Compensation for your co-op or internship position is solely at the discretion of the organization. Employers usually provide an hourly rate. We advise employers to review the wage guidelines stipulated by the Department of Labor and to fairly compensate students for their work.

BENEFITS

Our Cooperative Education Program is a learning base program wherein you utilize academic knowledge in a work setting which doesn't allow for students to be eligible to receive health, vacation and other employment benefits. However, if you've been approved to use your current job as a co-op, you may be eligible to receive such benefits (speak with your Human Resources department). During your employer orientation session, health, vacation, and other employment benefits that you might be eligible to receive will be discussed.

WORK SCHEDULE

You are responsible for meeting with your supervisor to discuss your work schedule. Employers expect you to work a determined amount of hours per week. Some employers may require students to produce their unofficial transcript and class schedule to ensure that a student is still in good academic standing and enrolled in school in order to remain in compliance with the rules and regulations set forth by them. Discuss with your supervisor any amendments to your schedule especially during mid-term and final examination periods. Meet with your supervisor to discuss how you can make up any work hours to ensure that your assigned projects are completed in a timely manner.

WORK SITE VISITS

A site visit to meet with the supervisor will be arranged by a representative from the CDC. The visits are scheduled with the student's site supervisor. Information is obtained about the student's work performance, skill competencies needed to be successful in the world of work and to resolve any issues and/or concerns that might arise.

WORK REPORTS

Students are required to write a report (3 or more pages in length) on their co-op experience. Students **must** give copies of their reports to their faculty advisor and/or department chair. Original reports are submitted to the Co-op Coordinator. In this report, you will address questions pertaining to on the job projects you worked on, classroom knowledge you acquired to aid you in completion of projects, skills you acquired and/or strengthened, how your co-op experience solidified your career goals, and your overall experience as a participant in the Cooperative Education Program. We strongly encourage students to keep a journal wherein you can note the varying projects you will be working on and any professional development or enrichment activities you participated in during your co-op assignment.

EVALUATION AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION GRADES

Site supervisors complete an evaluation on students. We encourage supervisors to discuss their evaluations with you. In addition, students must complete an evaluation on their co-op site. The information you provide on your site evaluation is invaluable to us. It will aid us in determining if this is a good site for future BSU students or to aid us in assisting the employer with strengthening their employment program for students. Both evaluations are submitted to the Co-op Coordinator along with your work reports. Employers will have their own evaluation process in place which should be discussed with you during their orientation session or during a meeting with your supervisor.

Students enrolled in the cooperative education course receive only a Pass or Fail grade. No Mid-Term grades are given only Final grades are submitted. Students receive a Pass for the final grade if they submit their report and evaluations complete other assignments as indicated by the Co-op Coordinator by the indicated deadline, and have received a satisfactory evaluation on their work performance. An Incomplete grade is given to students who for an unforeseen reason are unable to complete their co-op assignment and need an extension to submit their report and evaluations.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It's important for you to keep in mind that while on your co-op assignment **YOU** are representing yourself and BSU. You the student are the face of the university. Your exemplary work performance will not only aid you in your efforts to secure employment upon graduation, but will further aid our efforts in securing co-op work sites for future BSU students. Failure to meet work deadlines, produce quality work or to comply with employer rules and regulations may result in your termination from your co-op work site.

In addition to maintaining your eligibility status and be registered in the applicable co-op credit course, students **must**:

- Submit all pertinent program application documents (Learning Contract, Cooperative Education Credit Request form, etc.) **prior** to receiving permission to register for the course
- Participate in mandatory orientation sessions conducted by the Co-op Coordinator and employer
- Report to work on time and comply with all rules and regulations set forth by the host employer
- Dress professionally and maintain professional decorum at all times
- Comply with all project deadlines as indicated by the supervisor
- Notify Program Coordinator of changes in personal contact information, assigned department and/or site supervisor, problems or concerns about work site
- Write and submit report on your co-op experience
- Submit evaluations (Supervisor and work site) to the Co-op Coordinator

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assist employer with their recruitment needs
- Review position announcement to ensure duties are in line with the tenets of the Cooperative Education Program
- Ensure learning objectives and evaluative methods are developed for students and are indicated on the Learning Contract
- Conduct pre-scheduled site visits to meet with the student's supervisor
- Maintain contact with the student and employer throughout the duration of his/her co-op assignment

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review the learning objectives to ensure they are amenable to them and to ensure that the Learning Contract has been signed
- Ensure that a supervisor has been identified and is aware of their participation in the Cooperative Education Program
- Conduct an orientation session for students so that they are aware of rules and regulations set forth by the organization
- Evaluate the student/s periodically to discuss work performance and additional skills needed for the student/s to be successful in that role and/or prospective field
- Permit a representative from the CDC to schedule a site visit with the student's supervisor
- Submit a final evaluation on the student/s
- Contact the Program Coordinator to discuss any problems or concerns with the student's performance or possibility of termination

APPENDIX

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LEARNING CONTRACT

Date _____

Student ID No. _____

Name _____
Last First Middle Initial

Training Period _____

Training Assignment _____

See attached position description

Employer _____

Supervisor Name _____ Title _____

Phone# _____ Email _____

Student Schedule: Days _____

Hours _____

Co-Op Credits in Major Yes No Free Elective Yes No

Learning objectives should be formulated by the student's faculty advisor. Objectives should be specific, measurable, personal, within the student's ability to accomplish, and in accordance with the curriculum. New learning objectives should be established for each semester co-op experience.

Learning Objectives

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Use additional pages if necessary)

Training Assignment Evaluation

The student will demonstrate that he/she has achieved the objectives identified above by:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

(Use additional pages if necessary)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Student Signature _____ | Date _____ |
| Faculty Advisor Signature _____ | Date _____ |
| Department Chair Signature _____ | Date _____ |
| Co-Op Coordinator Signature _____ | Date _____ |
| Employer Signature _____ | Date _____ |

Date completed _____ Semester applied _____



MEMORANDUM

To: Department Chair and/or Faculty Advisor
From: Rosetta Price, Coordinator
Subject: Cooperative Education Request for Credit

_____ has requested information and applied for a
Cooperative Education position with:

Company / Agency Name: _____

Department: _____

Address: _____

The position begins on _____ and the job description is as follows:

Please sign the bottom of this memo indicating the number of credits to be received and your approval for _____ to Co-Op with _____ in the above capacity. If this request is rejected, please indicate your reason(s). Thank you.

Department Name: _____

Request Approved Number of credits to be awarded _____

Request Rejected
Reason (s) for rejection _____

Faculty Advisor and/or Department Chair (Signature)

(date)