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.

Students approved to participate in the program are required to complete 150 work hours during the semester in which they are enrolled in Co-Op courses.

**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 to include a semester at the university.
- 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 Program Coordinator. 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).

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

- Jobs and Internships by Major
- Career Athletes
- Baltimore College Town
- Federal Jobs
- **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 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 Program 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. Meet with the Program Coordinator to discuss eligibility to participate in the program. Bring your most current unofficial transcript, job description and resume. The Program Coordinator needs to ensure that a student is hired in a position whereby he/she is working on substantive work projects while employed.

2. Meet with faculty advisor and/or department chair to discuss receiving academic credit for your work experience. In order for the faculty advisor and/or department chair to make a decision, you MUST bring the following documents with you to the meeting:
   - Cooperative Education Program Application (available online and in the Career Development Center)
   - Copy of your most current unofficial transcript
   - Copy of your job description

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).

4. Submit all completed documents to the Program Coordinator in the Career Development Center in order to receive academic credits.
   - Completed Cooperative Education Program application
   - Learning Contract
   - Cooperative Education Request for Credit form
   - Employer Information Data Sheet
   - Copy of your job description
   - Copy of your most current unofficial transcript
   - Copy of your resume

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 website on its Co-op & Internship Student page.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Students enrolled in Cooperative Education and Interdisciplinary (internship) courses 201 and 202 are required to attend these sessions. Sessions are scheduled each semester in the evenings in order to accommodate student work schedules. Professional Development Session dates will be posted on the Co-op & Internship Student page located on the Career Development Center’s 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.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to complete career development related course assignments. Students are expected to submit assignments via Blackboard on the dates indicated by the Program Coordinator. A course syllabus, Cooperative Education Course Calendar, and course assignments and project will be uploaded on Blackboard. Hard copies of these documents will be distributed to students during orientation.
EVALUATION AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION GRADES

Students earn either a Pass or Fail grade for this course. Evaluation of students will be based on the total points received on an assignment. Deduction of assignment points will occur for late submittal of assignments.

Students are able to earn a total of 400 points over the course of the semester. Students earning from 400-290 points will receive a Passing grade for the course. Students earning below 290 points will receive a Fail grade for this course. 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 evaluations, course assignments and complete required 150 work hours.

Additionally, Mid Program and Final Program evaluations are completed by site supervisors. We encourage supervisors to discuss their evaluations with you. Also, 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. These evaluations are submitted to the Program Coordinator. Mid Program evaluations are submitted during the mid-term evaluation period. Final Program evaluations are submitted on the specified date as determined by the Program Coordinator.

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 Program 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
- Submit course assignments and evaluations (Supervisor and student) to the Program 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 Mid and Final Program evaluation on the student’s performance
• Contact the Program Coordinator to discuss any problems or concerns with the student’s performance or possibility of termination
APPENDIX
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)