



ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Career Resource Center

Guide to Cooperative Education & Internships

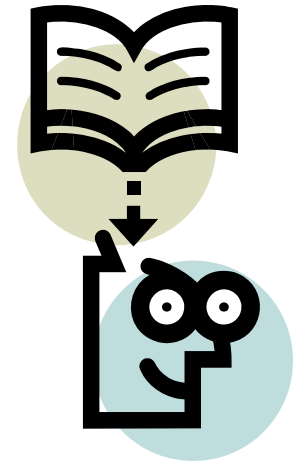
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Essex County College
Career Resource Center



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Essex County College ***Career Resource Center***

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Cooperative education (co-op) is an optional educational program that combines academic study with hands-on, career-related work experience. Qualified students may apply for the co-op program and earn academic credit while on approved employment experiences that are directly related to their majors. Internships are similar to co-ops. Though an internship may or may not provide monetary compensation while giving a quality hands-on experience in the student's field of study, they do not offer college credit and thus does not require a faculty advisor. Students enrolled in a co-op experience for credit are supervised by their employers and advised by faculty members. Jobs may be either full or part-time, and credits earned vary with the number of hours worked. While the majority of these work experiences are paid, some co-op positions do not offer monetary compensation. Students should note however, that all positions are screened by the *Career Resource Center* and Career Officer to ensure that they offer quality academic learning experiences.

Applicants to the co-op program may receive assistance from the Career Center in searching for a position or may request that an independently secured position be evaluated by the Career Officer for approval. Students attending Essex County College (ECC) may elect to participate in the co-op program provided they meet academic standards and are enrolled in a degree or certificate program in which cooperative education is an approved course.

The co-op program at ECC has a "rolling admission" schedule which allows a twelve to fifteen week co-op semester to begin at any time that a student is selected for a position or a currently employed student receives approval to earn co-op credit for his or her position. Students beginning their co-op assignments after normal registration deadlines will be allowed to register for their co-op courses at the beginning of the next scheduled registration period.

Students who are successfully admitted to the co-op program are awarded one credit for 80 hours of approved work experience and satisfactory completion of additional co-op course requirements. **The maximum number of credits granted for cooperative education experience is eight in a degree program and four in a certificate program.** While students have a choice of earning co-op credit on a full or part-time basis, a student may not enroll for more than three credit hours of cooperative education during any semester in which the student is enrolled for twelve or more other credits. A student who is not enrolled for any other courses may earn a maximum of six co-op credits during the Fall or Spring Semester or three credits during each of the summer sessions.

Students enrolled in their first co-op courses are required to participate in a Co-op Orientation Seminar prior to starting their co-op assignments. The Orientation Seminar which is offered by

the Career Center covers policies and procedures for participating in the co-op program, as well as expectations of the student employee in the workplace.

Our cooperative education program offers students the opportunity to graduate with solid work experience in their fields of study and perhaps even a job offer. Although students are typically paid the standard wage rate for the jobs they hold, cooperative education should not be confused with vocational training or employment simply to defray the costs of a college education. With cooperative education the emphasis is on the learning that may be accomplished and its transferability to future professional settings rather than on preparation for any specific job or single economic consideration.

If you are interested in obtaining a cooperative education position or would like to have a current job or self-developed position evaluated for cooperative education credit, please contact the *Career Resource Center* at (973) 877-3350.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

By integrating formalized study and supervised employment students gain academic, professional, and personal development benefits. Cooperative education offers students the opportunity to:

- obtain better direction for academic studies
- enrich academic courses
- earn academic credit towards graduation
- combine theoretical and experiential learning
- gain exposure to specialized facilities and equipment
- increase interpersonal skills
- develop confidence, maturity and responsibility
- clarify career goals
- test career choices
- gain professional experience in chosen career fields
- gain a competitive edge over students without relevant work experience
- develop career research, resume writing and interviewing skills
- earn income towards educational costs
- increase the likelihood of higher starting salaries after graduation
- bridge the gap between college and the work world

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the co-op program, candidates must meet the following criteria at the time of application:

- ✓ Completed 24 or more credits including English 101 with a letter grade of C or better. Certificate candidates must complete half the number of required credits for their certificate programs.
- ✓ Have a minimum of 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA)
- ✓ Be enrolled in an approved cooperative education curriculum
- ✓ Have successfully completed specific courses pre-selected by their departments
- ✓ Be approved by the *Career Resource Center*

Co-op students must maintain a 2.0 GPA while participating in the program. Students who fail to maintain the minimum GPA during their first co-op experience may be denied acceptance for a second course, even if the first co-op was successfully completed.

APPROVED PROGRAMS

Students who are participating in the following degree programs and who meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for the co-op program:

Division of Biology & Chemistry

- Biology, Pre-Medicine (A.S.)
- Bio Technology (A.A.S.)
- Bio Technology (Certificate)
- Chemistry (A.S.)
- Chemical Technology (A.A.S.)
- Environmental Science (A.A.S.)

Division of Business

- Accounting (A.A.S.)
- Accounting (A.S.)
- Business Administration (A.A.S.)
- Business Administration (A.S.)
- Business Administration: Hospitality Management Option (A.A.S.)
- Business Administration: Office Systems Technology and Mgmt Option (A.A.S.)
- Business Administration: Financial Services Option (A.A.S.)
- Business Career Development (Certificate)
- Information Systems Office Operations (Certificate)
- Internet – Web Page Design Specialist (Certificate)

Division of Business – cont'd

- Legal Assistant Studies (A.S.)
- Legal Assistant (Certificate)
- Legal Nurse (Certificate)
- Legal Specialist (Certificate)
- Microcomputer Systems Applications (A.A.S.)
- Office Assistant Program (Certificate)
- Word Processing Program (Certificate)

Division of Engineering Technologies & Computer Science

- Applied Computer Science (A.S.)
- Architectural Technology (A.A.S.)
- Civil Construction Engineering Technology: Land Surveying Option (A.A.S.)
- Computer-Aided Design technology (Certificate)
- Computer Information Systems (A.S.)
- Computer Science (A.S.)
- Electronic Engineering Technology (A.A.S.)
- Energy Utility Technology (A.A.S.)
- Engineering (A.S.)
- Internetworking Technology (Certificate)
- Manufacturing Engineering Technology (A.A.S.)
- Manufacturing Engineering Technology: Mechanical Engineering Technology Option (A.A.S.)
- Network Technology (Certificate)

Division of Humanities

- Art (A.A.)
- Digital Media & Electronic Publishing (Certificate)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)
- Liberal Arts: Communications Option (A.A.)
- Liberal Arts: Journalism Option (A.A.)
- Liberal Arts: Spanish Language Option (A.A.)
- Music (A.A.)

Division of Mathematics & Physics

- Mathematics (A.S.)

Division of Social Sciences

- Criminal Justice (A.S.)
- Physical Education (A.S.)
- Social Science (A.S.)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Because of the complexity of laws governing immigration and the various compliance issues that must be met to preserve immigration status, international students are **required** to meet with the International Student Advisor (*located in the Office of Enrollment Services*) to be cleared for participation in the co-op program. This presumes that all other eligibility requirements of the program are met. Once this is done and the student is successful in securing Work Authorization, he or she may schedule an appointment to meet with the Career Officer to initiate the co-op process.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

The number of credits earned on a part-time basis can range from one to four depending on the number of hours worked. A student on full-time co-op may earn six credits for a total of 480 hours of employment. Credits will be awarded based on the following schedule:

Credit Hours	Clock Hours Per Week	Total Work Hours
1	6-7	80-90
2	11-14	160-165
3	16-20	240-300
4	22-27	320-330

Students who elect to participate in co-op will receive a letter grade upon completion of their work assignments and other co-op course requirements. Grades will be awarded by the Co-op Faculty Advisor based on work performance, evaluation by a work Supervisor and quality of performance on other course assignments. Cooperative education courses generally take the place of free electives in a student's curriculum.

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Part-time and full-time co-op options are available to students throughout the year, contingent upon job requirements and employment needs. Co-op employment lasts from 12 to 15 weeks to ensure that the student receives an in-depth work experience.

Students should review the co-op options available to them carefully to determine the best fit for their academic curricula. Any student, who is planning on participating in co-op, should meet with a Co-op Faculty Advisor to discuss their academic plans. Students may elect one of the following cooperative education models:

- **Full-time co-op employment** - Under this option, students typically work on a full time schedule ranging from 35 to 40 hours per week for a total of 480 hours. Students register

for six co-op credits if this option is taken during the Fall or Spring semesters. During the shorter summer semesters, the student has the option of registering for either three credits (Summer I **or** Summer II) or six credits (Summer I **and** Summer II).

- **Part-time co-op employment** – Students on part-time cooperative education assignments may work anywhere from 6 to 27 hours per week for a total of 320 hours. The number of credits earned ranges from one to four, depending on the number of hours worked.

Co-op Employment Options

Part-time	6-27 hours per week	Minimum 12 weeks	Total hours = 80-330 per co-op semester	1- 4 credits
Full-time	35 – 40 hours per week	Minimum 12 weeks (except Summer sessions)	Total hours = 480 per co-op semester	6 credits

TRANSFERABILITY

Cooperative education courses are taken as free electives in a student’s curriculum and are often transferable to four-year colleges and universities that offer cooperative education as an option. Students interested in transferring to four-year colleges, should consult Transfer & Articulation Services located in the Career Resource Center for advice on the transferability of co-op credits.

If you would like more information about the Essex County College Cooperative Education Program & Internships, please contact:

Essex County College
Career Resource Center
 Mega Structure 1st Floor, RED AREA
 303 University Avenue
 Newark, NJ 07102-1798

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GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION

Employers play a crucial role in the cooperative education process by arranging responsible positions that provide value to the organization as well as practical learning opportunities for students. Students are committed to spending a 12 to 15-week term working on an agreed upon assignments on a full- or part-time basis. The employer will inform the *Career Resource Center* of the availability of any position for co-op. Students will contact the employer, and candidates will be selected for the interview process. Final selections are made by the employer who agrees (where applicable) to pay the students the standard wage for the jobs they hold and follow the same regulations as for regular employees.

Benefits to employers include:

- savings in training and recruitment costs
- the opportunity to evaluate potential employees without long-term commitment
- a year-round flow of qualified talent that may be used for seasonal needs, research studies, and special projects
- the opportunity to evaluate potential employees without long-term commitment
- motivation of professional staff towards continuous learning

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS

Employers and work supervisors are encouraged to read the Guide to Cooperative Education & Internships to gain a clear understanding of the cooperative education program in its entirety. This document may be downloaded from our website at:

<http://www.essex.edu/crc>

Essex County College welcomes any employer who is interested in participating in the cooperative education program provided the following guidelines are met:

- ❑ The job must provide meaningful work experiences related to the student's major and/or career objective.
- ❑ The employer commits to the terms outlined in the Cooperative Education Agreement and Student Learning Agreement forms.
- ❑ If paid employment, the employer agrees to pay students the standard hourly wage for the job they are performing.

- ❑ Feedback is provided to the Career Center about the interviews performed and of any hiring decisions.
- ❑ The position is secure for the full term as outlined in the Student Learning Agreement.
- ❑ Hours are arranged on either a part-time or full-time schedule for the total number of hours agreed upon in the Student Learning Agreement.
- ❑ The employer agrees to provide supervision for the work assignment and evaluations of the student's performance on the job.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISORS

The supervision of the student should be ongoing, consistent, and positive. Supervisors should be aware of the three-part developmental goals around which the student's Learning Objectives are formed:

- 1) To expand and improve the academic preparation of the student
- 2) To expand and improve the student's understanding of functional elements in the workplace, such as the importance of teamwork, conforming to regulations, and the interrelationships among various departments and personnel
- 3) To provide valuable and productive service to the employer

The role of the Supervisor is an important one and the person assigned this role should be properly oriented to the cooperative education program. During the assignment period, the Supervisor will be contacted by the Co-op Faculty Advisor and site visits would be arranged. The Supervisor must agree to do the following:

- ❑ Submit an evaluation of the student's performance in the middle and at the end of the assignment period.
- ❑ Permit at least one agreed upon site visit by the Faculty Advisor and representative of the Career Resource Center.
- ❑ Provide the student with guidance about expectations, and information as to company's rules and regulations.
- ❑ Contact the Director of Career Development in the any situation where the scope of local supervision is exceeded.

The Agreement

By employing a student through the Essex County College *Career Resource Center*, the employer agrees in principle and practice on the conditions outlined in the Cooperative Education Handbook. The employer, the student, and the Cooperative Education faculty and staff agree to work together to achieve the desired benefits for all parties in the relationship.

Essex County College's Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of Essex County College not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, marital status, affect ional or sexual orientation, disability, gender, or liability for military service. This policy applies to all terms, conditions, and privileges of student enrollment, staff employment, and vocational opportunities.

Further, the College conforms to all federal and state statutes, orders, regulations, guidelines, and amendments concerning equal opportunities. New Jersey Law Against Discrimination; Title VI & VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990.

ECC has an obligation to ensure that our Non-Discrimination Policy is applied to students participating in our Cooperative Education Program. We therefore request that all students referred to your company be judged and treated in a nondiscriminatory basis. Participation in our Cooperative Education Program is predicated upon full compliance with this policy.

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Frequently Asked Questions by Employers

How long is a co-op semester?

To ensure that they receive in depth work experiences, students are required to work anywhere from 12 to 15 weeks. The number of work hours vary with the number of credits earned.

What types of responsibilities must I provide the student?

Employers should provide work experiences that present opportunities for significant learning. Co-op students are expected to apply knowledge gained from classroom experience as well as to develop new skills. Each co-op assignment will have Learning Objectives that are developed jointly by the Faculty Advisor and the student and agreed upon by the employer.

Whom do I contact with any questions or concerns?

If you should have any questions or concerns about the co-op program or about a particular student you may contact the Faculty Advisor whose information is listed in the Student Learning Agreement or contact the *Career Resource Center* at (973) 877-3350.

Will there be any opportunity for input into the cooperative education program?

Employers are invited to attend annual meetings which consist of Career Center staff and faculty members from each department. Employers may also contact Faculty Advisors and/or the *Career Resource Center* with any questions or concerns. Employers may also make comments on the student evaluation forms.

May I change a student's job description, hours or placement?

Students have the opportunity to make revisions to their Learning Objectives within the first four weeks of the employment start date. If the proposed changes are likely to result in more than minor revisions to the Learning Objectives or if they are likely to occur outside the four-week window, the employer should contact the Faculty Advisor and/or the Director of Career Development.

What are my obligations as part of the Cooperative Education Program?

The requirements are to develop a job description, provide a valid learning experience, sign and commit to the Cooperative Education Agreement and the Student Learning Agreement, provide appropriate training and supervision, and evaluate student work during the cooperative education placement.

How do I post a cooperative education or internship position?

Employers may send a typed job description with number of weekly hours, contact name, and salary (if paid position) to the *Career Resource Center* by mail, fax, or electronic mail. Once received, the information is transferred to a Co-op Job Information Form or Internship Information Form and posted in the Career Resource Center through *eRecruiting*. Resumes of students who meet the criteria for that position are referred to the employer through the Career Resource Center's eRecruiting database. The employer will receive access to the online portal to search for qualified students pursuing cooperative education or internship experiences. If interested, the employer will then contact the student or the Career Officer in the Career Center to schedule an interview. Employers are expected to provide feedback about the interview or of any hiring decision to the *Career Resource Center*.

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