

**CURRICULUM PROCEDURES REFERENCE MANUAL**

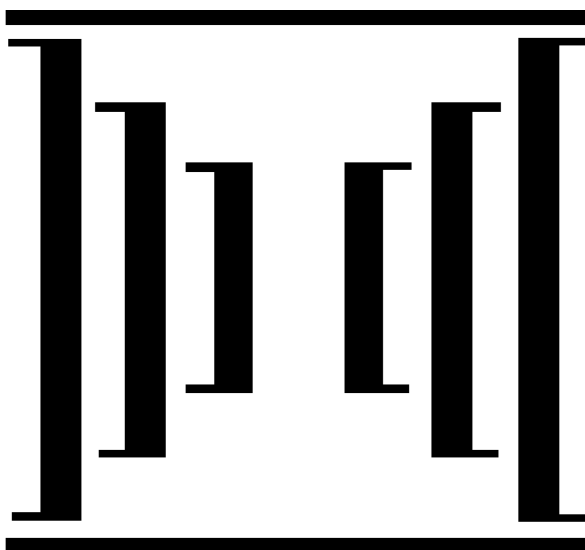
**SECTION 20**

**Cooperative Education  
(Work Experience)**

Revised March 15, 2004

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*North Carolina Community College System*



**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION  
(WORK EXPERIENCE)**

**PROCEDURES**

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## SECTION 20

### COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (WORK EXPERIENCE)

March 15, 2004

#### INTRODUCTION

The procedures provided in this section detail Cooperative Education (Work Experience) policies for the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). Throughout this document the term "**co-op**" will refer to cooperative education and work experience. These procedures are not the North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC), but reflect the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges and the NCCCS procedures and expectations concerning co-op programs, the purpose of co-op in a curriculum program, and the support needed for offering a high quality co-op program for students. These procedures are specifically applicable where co-op courses result in a community college receiving budget/FTE.

The policies concerning co-op are included for reference purposes as a quick resource to those planning or currently implementing co-op programs. Co-op programs are referred to in the NCAC and in the curriculum standards as "work experience." Co-op is intended to be work experience employment where the student gains actual experiences performing the tasks of an employee and, in most cases, receives remuneration for the work performed.

The co-op component is an integral part of an education program interwoven with the academic component so that each reinforces the other. While there are many benefits for students in a co-op program such as financial rewards, the primary purpose is to reinforce theoretical knowledge with work experience.

**NOTE: The procedures identified in this document set the minimum requirements for co-op programs. Colleges may establish more restrictive criteria.**

#### EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Co-op is an educational plan that integrates classroom learning with supervised work experience in an employment situation directly related to the education program of a student. Generally, students alternate study and work periods or work part-time while enrolled in college. The primary objective is to provide the student with the best possible preparation for employment. Co-op constitutes a regular and essential element in the educational process with a minimum amount of related job experience and a minimum standard of performance required for completion. The essential criterion of a cooperative education program is for the work experience component to be considered an integral part of the total educational process. Co-op is often diversified in order to provide a broad range of involvement within each chosen area of interest. The co-op experience should increase in responsibility as the student advances through the curriculum, thus paralleling closely a student's progress through the academic phase of education.

A successful co-op program is the result of cooperative efforts between the employer, the college, and the student. Work experience becomes cooperative education when there is cooperation between a college, an employer, and a student concerning work activities that correlate with learning activities.

Co-op is a viable and, in many programs, a necessary component of the education program. While many consider it academic, others consider co-op to be more similar to clinical practice or internship and its "weight" in the education program is much the same. Additional benefits while a student is progressing through the educational program include financial remuneration and, potentially, early job placement.

In the NCCCS, co-op is emphasized as part of technology programs. Co-op can also be beneficial to college transfer and continuing education programs. As co-op enhances the educational process by bringing the worlds of theory and application together, it helps students clarify, test, and validate career goals. Students learn the important links between academic learning and what is expected in the workplace.

Employers benefit from co-op as well. It allows employers to tap into a source of capable, productive, and cost effective employees. It allows them to introduce students to company work ethics and requirements, as well as unique education and training needs. The employer gains a competitive edge in having a strong role in planning and structuring the education program of future full-time or part-time employees.

The fundamental reason for the success of co-op is very clear. **Everyone wins - students, employers, and colleges benefit from co-op experiences.** The State Board of Community Colleges and the NCCCS have adopted policies and procedures to ensure that co-op is a viable part of any curriculum where work experience will enhance the education process of a student.

#### **CO-OP REGULATIONS IN THE NORTH CAROLINA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

It is the responsibility of colleges to develop and implement local procedures to ensure compliance with Title 23 of the North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC). The following excerpts from the NCAC may be useful when starting a new, or revising, an existing co-op program.

1. 1A.0101(1)(e) Definitions,

"Credit of one semester hour is awarded for 160 hours of "work experience" such as cooperative education, practicums, or internships. Work experience involves the development of job skills by providing the student with employment that is directly related to, and coordinated with, the educational program. Student activities in work experience planned and coordinated by a college representative, and the employer is responsible for the control and supervision of the student on the job."

2. 2D.0323(f)(1) Student Membership Hours,

"Student membership hours for student work experience and clinical practice shall not generate budget/FTE without prior approval by the System Office of such activities through the appropriate curriculum standard."

3. 2E.0204(3)(d) Criteria for Curriculum Standards,

Criteria for Curriculum Standards allows for work experience in certain associate in applied science degree programs. Work experience is not appropriate in the Associate in General Education (AGE).

4. 2E.0204(b)(ii) states, in pertinent part, "...Work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, or internships, may be included up to a maximum of one (1) semester hour of credit for career exploration." However, this credit may not transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions.

5. 2E.0204(3)(a)(ii)(D) Co-op Hours in an Associate of Applied Science Degree, "Work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, or internships may be included in an associate in applied science degree curriculum program up to a maximum of eight semester hours of credit."

6. 2E.0204(3)(e)(ii)(C) Co-op Hours in a Diploma, "Work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, or internships, may be included in a diploma curriculum program up to a maximum of eight semester hours of credit."

**NOTE: The NCAC is currently undergoing a change that will reduce the number of credit hours from eight (8) semester credit hours to four (4) for a Diploma. This change is expected to be effective Fall Semester 2004.**

7. 2E.0204(3)(f)(ii)(C) Co-op Hours in a Certificate, "Work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, or internships, may be included in a certificate program up to a maximum of two (2) semester hours of credit."

8. 2D.0323(f)(2) Earning Budget/FTE for Co-op, "Work experience for curriculum courses shall earn budget/FTE at the 100 percent rate of assigned work experience hours and shall not exceed a maximum of 320 membership hours per student per semester."

NOTE: In April 1995, the State Board of Community Colleges adopted the semester system which established that credit of one semester hour is awarded for each 16 hours of "class work." Class work is lecture and other classroom instruction that is supervised by an instructor. Sixteen (16) classroom hours will equal one (1) semester hour of credit (SHC).

NOTE: Students can receive one (1) semester hour credit for 160 hours of work experience or two (2) semester hour credits for 320 hours of work experience. If students work 480 contact hours (3 SHC) or 640 contact hours (4 SHC), only 320 hours can be reported for budget/FTE. (Reference 23 NCAC 1A.0101.)

NOTE: Cooperative Education (COE) courses found in the Common Course Library (CCL) have a 10 to 1 credit ratio. The course descriptions for COE courses should be used for all work experiences.

## **CRITERIA FOR CO-OP**

Students must meet certain criteria before a college may award credit for a co-op experience and receive budget/FTE. Important criteria for the college, employer, and students to follow are detailed below.

### **CREDITABLE EMPLOYEE**

A co-op student must possess the skills to be a creditable employee. A student must have the skills and ability to perform the job assigned. For this reason, colleges shall set minimum criteria for each student seeking academic credit for a co-op experience while they learn the requisite skills of a job. The faculty should approve a student for the co-op program. Documentation should be placed in the student's co-op folder.

### **AGE REQUIREMENT**

Minimum age to participate in co-op is seventeen (17) years of age, subject to the rules and regulations of the North Carolina Department of Labor Youth Employment Laws, and the United States Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act. The faculty coordinator or co-op director (the person approving the work site) shall place a copy of the Youth Employment Certificate in the appropriate student's co-op folder.

**EXCEPTION:** A Youth Employment Certificate is not needed for a federal co-op employment position.

**NOTE:** Reference 23 NCAC 02C.0301, Student Admission To Colleges,  
(a) Each college shall maintain an open-door admission policy to all applicants who are high school graduates or who are at least 18 years of age. Student admission processing and placement determination shall be performed by the officials of each college. Admission requirements for an emancipated minor shall be the same as for an applicant 18 years of age or older. Provisions with respect to admission of minors are set forth in Rule .0305 of this Section.

### **Hazardous/Detrimental Occupations Not Permitted For Youth Under Age 18 Who Are Working for a Non-government Employer**

- a. Manufacturing or storing explosives
- b. Motor vehicle driving (limited exemption) and outside helper
- c. Logging and sawmilling
- d. Power-driven woodworking machines
- e. Power-driven metal forming, punching, shearing
- f. Mining
- g. Slaughtering, meat packing, processing or rendering
- h. Power-driven bakery machines
- i. Power-driven paper products machines
- j. Manufacturing of brick or tile
- k. Power-driven circular saws, band saws, or guillotine shears
- l. Wrecking, demolition and shipbreaking operations
- m. Roofing operations
- n. Excavation operations
- o. Welding, brazing and torch cutting

- p. Any process where quartz or any other form of silicon dioxide or asbestos silicate are present in powdered form
- q. Any work involving exposure to lead or any of its compounds in any form
- r. Any work involving exposure to benzene or any benzene compound which is volatile or can penetrate the skin
- s. Occupations in canneries, seafood, or poultry processing which involve cutting or slicing machines, freezing or packaging activities
- t. Any work which involves the risk of falling a distance of 10 feet or more, including ladders and scaffolds
- u. Any work as an electrician or electrician's helper
- v. Any work in confined spaces
- w. Occupations requiring the use of respirators

### **CURRICULUM PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS**

A student must be enrolled in a curriculum program to participate in a cooperative work experience activity. A curriculum student cannot be "tuition exempted." Students eligible for a tuition waiver shall be coded T90970 (Huskins Bill Students) or T90980 (Concurrent Enrolled Students).

Students in the following academic codes **may not** participate in co-op:

- Huskins Bill Student (T90970)
- Concurrent Enrollment Student (T90980)
- Special Credit Student (T90990)
- Associate in General Education Student (A10300)
- Cosmetology Student (A55140)
- "Gifted and Mature" Student (under 16 years old)

NOTE: A cosmetology student who has completed 1200 hours of cosmetology coursework, taken and passed the Cosmetology Apprenticeship Exam, and received their license may return to work an additional 300 hours through a co-op work experience.

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGE**

The grade point average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of semester hours attempted, including courses passed and courses failed. A minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA is required; however, a college may require a higher GPA, or employers may set requirements exceeding a 2.0 GPA. A student must maintain a 2.0 GPA throughout co-op and should be reviewed each semester.

NOTE: Colleges should be flexible in GPA policies so that individual extenuating circumstances can be handled. Students may be allowed to enter co-op before they have earned a GPA, with the understanding of a minimum requirement upon completion of their first semester. Students may be allowed to take a co-op class while on academic probation. For instance, a returning student may have provided a proven new commitment when old grades are not acceptable.

NOTE: Students enrolled in an alternating program should complete a portion of their academic (classroom) program prior to beginning co-op. The student must also complete co-op prior to the completion of academic requirements.

NOTE: An additional college requirement may include the completion of a portion of the program of study prior to the co-op experience. Colleges have the flexibility to set a minimum number of semesters to be completed, require a minimum number of credit hours, or a minimum percentage of the curriculum credit requirements to be completed prior to the co-op experience. Minimum requirements may also include prerequisite classes. The college must have such a policy in writing and apply it consistently to all co-op students.

### **COMPLETION OF SEMESTER HOURS OF CREDIT**

A minimum of **nine semester hours credit (9 SHC)** must be completed within the appropriate program of study before a student can be eligible to receive co-op credit. A minimum of 3 SHC must come from the core within the major.

NOTE: After students have completed 9 SHC within a program of study, they may enroll in a co-op class without being required to take any other courses during the same semester/term; unless otherwise specified by the college.

NOTE: The deviation to the standard co-op procedure which states "students do not begin their program of study with co-op" may be waived by the System Office (Academic and Student Services Division). A waiver request must be submitted in writing with a detailed justification for the deviation.

### **INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

There are several types of insurance coverage that co-op students should be aware of before accepting any co-op work position:

#### **1. Accident Insurance**

The student is highly encouraged to be covered by adequate health and accident insurance during a co-op work experience. Co-op students are highly encouraged to purchase their personal "accident" insurance either through the college or through an individual policy. This insurance should cover the co-op student en route as well as on the work site. The co-op student may be required to provide the name of the insurance company and policy number on the "Placed Student Information Worksheet" (see Attachment 4) prior to beginning the co-op activity, if not automatically covered by the college student insurance policy. This information should be placed in the student's co-op file.

#### **2. Workman's Compensation Insurance**

The employer is required to provide "workman's compensation" coverage at the place of employment for the co-op student (for either paid or non-paid positions) during the entire length of the co-op activity. North Carolina law requires all employers to provide this coverage if employing three (3) or more employees. The Cooperative Education Agreement (see Attachment 5 or 6) must include this requirement for all employers.

NOTE: Students placed in an early childhood environment may have the Workman's Compensation coverage waived if the student holds a non-paid position.

#### **3. Unemployment Insurance**

By action of the federal government and the North Carolina General Assembly, co-op students may not apply for unemployment insurance based upon co-op employment. Therefore, unemployment insurance premiums shall not be paid on co-op students working in the state.

NOTE: Reference the General Statutes of NC, 1974 Cumulative Supplement, Chapter 96-8, Section G, No. 16 and the ratification of HB247, on April 2, 1985, Section 1.G.S. 96-8(6) k.14.

#### **4. Additional Insurance Information**

- a. Community college attorneys have suggested that colleges provide, as a benefit to co-op students, coverage under college policy of professional liability insurance. A college may require co-op students to obtain professional liability insurance from the college (in addition to accident insurance). Typically, this requirement is for early childhood, human services, and nursing curriculums.
- b. An employer may provide health and accident insurance for co-op students as a benefit of employment.
- c. If an individual is a full-time co-op student (alternating co-op plan) and is considered by the college to be a full-time student, the individual may be eligible to remain covered by a parent's health and accident insurance, as well as any social security to which the individual may be entitled.
- d. An employer may require a co-op student enrolled in an Early Childhood Program be covered by a "Child Abuse and Neglect" insurance policy. If so, the provision of this insurance becomes the responsibility of the employer.

**NOTE: All co-op students should check with the college to determine if they are covered under the medical and accident insurance plan of the college. If the college does not have an accident plan, it is recommended that the student purchase a private policy. If students are required to purchase accident medical insurance, the co-op director should coordinate with the insurance agent to determine the level of coverage while the student is on co-op work assignment.**

**Some insurance plans cover the student while on the job and others only cover students enroute to and from the co-op employment site. Some community colleges require co-op students in specific curriculum programs to take out professional liability insurance. Liability insurance is strongly recommended for nursing, criminal justice, and early childhood students. Many liability insurance plans include a "child abuse and neglect" statement covering the student and the community college instructor. Some employers provide health and accident insurance to co-op students.**

#### **ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR CO-OP**

Academic credit for co-op may be earned and awarded as follows:

AAS	8 SHC
Diploma	8 SHC
Certificate	2 SHC
College Transfer (AA, AS, AFA)	1 SHC

**NOTE: The NCAC is currently undergoing a change that will reduce the number of credit hours from eight (8) semester credit hours to four (4) for a Diploma. This change is expected to be effective Fall Semester 2004.**

## **STUDENT ORIENTATION FOR CO-OP**

Before any student begins a co-op work assignment, the college must conduct an orientation. During the orientation, the following information must be provided:

- a. Explanation of the purpose of co-op.
- b. Explanation of the co-op enrollment process.
- c. Requirements to successfully complete co-op.
- d. Understanding the world of work.
- e. Explore student interests and abilities and how they affect job performance.
- f. Benefits of work experience in securing employment upon graduation.
- g. Importance of earning good grades and how they affect the ability to secure employment.
- h. Specific policies regarding sexual harassment and discrimination.
- i. Other college policies, as appropriate.

Other topics may be added by the college. The determination of topics should be made based on an assessment of each student and their individual needs. Documentation of the orientation with the student's signature should be placed in the student's co-op folder.

## **CO-OP APPLICATION AND AGREEMENTS**

It is the responsibility of the college to ensure that students meet requirements to enroll in co-op (i.e., GPA, minimum credits) as well as meet the requirements of the employer. Students must complete a Co-op Application (see Attachment 3) to participate in the co-op program. This application should include all information that confirms eligibility, including curriculum area, number of credits earned, GPA, etc. A current **Transcript** should be attached to the application. The eligibility information should be confirmed by the co-op director (or other designated college representative). Questions on the application must not invade the privacy of the student or discriminate in any manner.

When a student has qualified for a co-op work experience, they are referred to an employer for an interview. When an employer selects a student as an employee, the Co-op Agreement (see Attachment 5 or 6) must then be completed.

An effective co-op program depends on a good working relationship between all parties in the program - student, employer, and college. This relationship is most effective when each party fully understands their respective role, has agreed to all of the conditions of the cooperative education partnership, and complies with the terms of the Co-op Agreement. The Agreement should be such that all parties can uphold the conditions and allow for reasonable changes as well as unforeseen situations that may arise.

Agreements may vary from employer to employer and from one curriculum to another. Employment of a co-op student on a permanent basis may lead a student to terminate their educational program. Agreements may include a statement that the employer will not hire the co-op student on a permanent basis until the student has completed their educational program. However, an employer may employ a co-op student permanently on the condition that the student completes their educational program. These conditions may be part of the Agreement if the college and the employer agree. A copy of the most current **Job Description** must be attached to the Co-op Agreement.

Upon the execution of the Agreement, the employer, the college, and the student, will develop Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs). The MLOs are agreed upon experiences the student will obtain while working (see Attachment 1 and 2).

### **MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (MLOs)**

During the orientation between the employer and the student, there should be agreement on Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs) for the work period. The MLOs should be directly related to the student's classroom studies and enhance the student's creative, problem-solving, and technical skills, as well as personal improvement. The MLOs should be completed the first two (2) weeks of employment.

Each student should be encouraged (with guidance from the faculty coordinator or co-op director and the employer) to develop at least **three (3)** MLOs for each co-op class in which they enroll. Instructions for developing MLOs can be found in Attachment 1. A number of MLO examples can be found in Attachment 2. Complete the Measurable Learning Objectives (Placed With New Employer) Worksheet (see Attachment 8). It must be signed by the student, the employer, and the faculty coordinator (or co-op director).

The minimum number of MLOs that should be completed and evaluated are:

- a. 160 contact hours (1 SHC) - 1 MLO
- b. 320 contact hours (2 SHC) - 2 MLOs
- c. 480 contact hours (3 SHC) - 3 MLOs

If a student receives a co-op opportunity with their current employer, in order to ensure the student is being exposed to new skills in the current workplace, MLOs must be developed to measure development of new skills.

### **CO-OP FOR THE EMPLOYED STUDENT**

A student may already be employed and would like to earn academic credit while working for that same employer. This should be permitted only in limited situations where there are assurances the student's co-op experience will complement the classroom experience, and that the co-op experience will be different from those the student/employee has already experienced. The college should follow all procedures for establishing an existing job as a co-op experience so that position meets all requirements for an effective, co-op learning experience. In this instance the college must:

- a. verify with the employer that the student's work level will increase as his/her skill level increases, and
- b. verify that the requirements of the curriculum are appropriate to the work activity.

These requirements continue as the co-op student takes co-op classes; the MLOs for each experience should be varied and should increase the student's skill level. Complete the Measurable Learning Objectives (Placed With Current Employer) Worksheet (see Attachment 9). It must be signed by the student, the employer, and the faculty coordinator (or co-op director).

### **EVALUATION PROCESS**

The evaluation process must be detailed in the Co-op Agreement since the responsibility for evaluation is shared jointly by the employer (supervisor) and the college (faculty coordinator or

co-op director). The MLOs will be modified and evaluated as necessary to meet the needs of the student and the work requirements of the employer. The evaluation process can be provided to students in a Student Co-op Handbook/Workbook.

Several evaluations are required while a student is enrolled in a co-op class. Evaluations include site visits, MLO assessments, mid-term evaluations, final evaluations, and a grade report.

## **1. On-site Visitation**

The purpose of a site visit is to ensure that the co-op student is obtaining new skills at the co-op work site and is progressing in accordance with the Co-op Agreement at the time the student was originally employed.

The Agreement should detail the number and time of on-site visits and what is to be evaluated. The student should be visited periodically during the work experience in order to assure on-going communication between the student and college; the college and employer; and the student and employer. An examination of the program in which the student is enrolled by the co-op director will determine if the faculty coordinator can sufficiently conduct the site visit or if the faculty coordinator and the co-op director should jointly conduct a site visit. In situations where on-site visits are difficult, other methods such as e-mail, telephone, or proctor may be used, but not encouraged.

The faculty coordinator or the co-op director will schedule the site visit(s) to the co-op work site. Each co-op student will receive **one (1) mandatory site visit** per semester/term for each co-op class in which they enroll. The On-Site Visitation Worksheet (see Attachment 11) should be completed during the visit to the work site. The worksheet should summarize the discussion with the student's supervisor regarding the student's performance to date and any recommended areas for improvement. The faculty coordinator should also meet with the co-op student during the visit or immediately following the visit to discuss the evaluation. The completed report should be placed in the student's co-op folder after being reviewed by the co-op director.

## **2. Mid-Term Evaluation**

A Mid-Term Evaluation Worksheet (see Attachment 12) should be completed near the middle of the semester/term. The student should arrange a meeting with the faculty coordinator or co-op director at the college, not at the work site. This meeting should focus on the MLOs and how the co-op work experience is helping to meet these objectives. If a face-to-face meeting cannot be conducted, then other options are available but not encouraged. The completed worksheet should be placed in the student's co-op folder after being reviewed by the co-op director.

## **3. Employer Evaluation of Student (End of Term)**

An Employer Evaluation of Student (End of Term) Worksheet (see Attachment 13) should be completed by the supervisor at the end of the co-op work experience. The completed evaluation form should be returned to the faculty coordinator for review. After final approval by the co-op director, the worksheet should be placed in the student's co-op folder.

## **4. Student Self-Evaluation**

A Student Self-Evaluation Worksheet (see Attachment 14) should be completed by the co-op student at the end of the co-op work experience. The completed evaluation form should be returned to the faculty coordinator for review. After final approval the worksheet should be placed in the student's co-op folder.

## **5. Grade Report**

A Grade Report Worksheet (see Attachment 15) should be completed by the faculty coordinator at the end of the co-op class. The grade report will include:

- a. Attendance (Total Hours Worked) Assessment
- b. On-site Evaluation Assessment

- c. Mid-term Evaluation Assessment
- d. Assessment of progress toward accomplishing MLOs
- e. Employer End-of-term Assessment
- f. Student Self-evaluation Assessment
- g. Faculty Coordinator Assessment

The completed Grade Report should be placed in the student's co-op folder after being reviewed by the co-op director.

### **STUDENT COMPENSATION**

Optimally, students are paid for co-op experience. Earning a wage enhances the work experience in that the co-op position is valued as part of an organization. All employers must adhere to the Fair Labor Standards Act and Wage/Hour Laws.

Some potential employers may not have resources to pay co-op students. There is no requirement that a co-op student be paid. Non-paid co-op positions are appropriate if the position adheres to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Non-paid co-op positions tend to be "job shadowing" experiences. Often, non-paid opportunities provide more variety in co-op positions while assisting employers, particularly in the non-profit sectors.

### **WORK SITE HOURS/ATTENDANCE**

Monitoring attendance on the job is the responsibility of the employer. The student is an employee, and as such, must adhere to rules and requirements of the employer. The rules may differ from college class attendance policies and from academic requirements in the curriculum. Job start/job end times, number of hours worked, and work schedules are conditions that the student, the employer, and the college should establish and, if there are any adjustments, all parties should concur prior to implementation.

The co-op student must work the minimum hours required by the curriculum but also understand that the employer may require additional hours as a condition of employment. These conditions must be detailed in the Co-op Agreement and consistent within the requirements of the curriculum.

NOTE: Students should not be on a co-op work assignment during the same time that they have registered for curriculum or continuing education classes.

The student must complete the Time/Wage Report (see Attachment 10) each week and secure the supervisor's signature on the report each month. Colleges should be flexible in Time/Wage Report policies so that individual extenuating circumstances can be handled. Situations might occur where the student can only acquire the supervisor's signature once or twice during the co-op work assignment. A copy of the Time/Wage Report (completed to date with signatures) must be submitted to the faculty coordinator when the Mid-Term Evaluation Worksheet is completed.

The completed Time/Wage Report must be submitted to the faculty coordinator at the end of the work assignment. Upon review by the faculty coordinator and the co-op director, the completed report should be placed in the student's co-op folder.

NOTE: The student must inform the college's Financial Aid Office of their co-op employment and

report wages earned during the co-op work experience, if appropriate, due to financial aid requirements.

### **STUDENT TERMINATION FROM CO-OP EMPLOYMENT**

There are situations where termination of employment may occur. Reasons for termination of employment are typically:

- a. The student is dissatisfied with job requirements.
- b. The employer is dissatisfied with student's performance.
- c. There is a change in job and employer needs.

The employer may handle job termination, or the employer may request the college's co-op director or faculty coordinator manage the termination. Co-op Agreements may include how employment terminations will be managed. Continued support of the student is required and, when possible, alternatives provided to continue the learning process. Additional resources may be needed should employment be terminated; therefore, the co-op director must be prepared to refer the student to any resources available.

The Time/Wage Report (completed to date) should be submitted to the faculty coordinator or the co-op director at the time a student is terminated from the co-op work experience. The report should be placed in the student's co-op folder to document the hours worked during the assignment.

### **REPORTING CO-OP HOURS FOR BUDGET FTE**

In co-op activities, the college/student must have a work experience activity set up prior to the co-op class. The college may report student hours either as **membership hours** or **contact hours** if the following criteria are met:

- A student is considered to be in **class membership** when the student meets the following criteria:
- a. Enrolled as evidenced by payment of applicable tuition and fees, or obtained a waiver as allowed for in G.S. 115-D-5(b);
  - b. Attended one or more classes prior to or on the 10 percent point in the class; and,
  - c. Has not withdrawn or dropped the class prior to or on the 10 percent point.

#### **1. Membership Hours**

Students enroll in a co-op class and colleges report the hours the same as any other course. If the college elects to report the co-op hours as membership hours, the student must actually begin the work experience activity. In situations where the student attends a co-op orientation meeting, but never participates in the work experience activity, the college shall not report any hours for budget FTE. Since co-op is a unique course, the college shall ensure that the hours for COE, as listed in the Common Course Library, are required for each student. Otherwise, the student hours in membership shall be reported as contact hours for budget FTE.

#### **2. Contact Hours**

Students may begin/end the Co-op at any time during the semester/term enrolled. Colleges report only hours (contact) that are actually worked.

#### **3. Documentation Required to Report Co-op Hours for Budget FTE**

In all situations, the college must maintain, at a minimum, the following documentation for each

student enrolled in a co-op course:

- a. Co-op Application (includes transcript review, GPA 2.0 or higher, etc)
- b. Co-op Agreement (signed by student, employer, and college)
- c. Job Description (new/old job responsibilities if in present position)
- d. Measurable Learning Objectives (written documentation must support)
- e. Signed Time Records (weekly or monthly basis)
- f. Site Visits by college representatives
- g. Evaluations (student, employer, college)

### **OFFERING OF CO-OP COURSES**

Co-op is usually offered each academic term. The number of terms co-op is available is a college decision and may vary from college to college. Co-op employment opportunities may vary according to an occupation and the economy. While opportunities such as construction may be seasonal, others may be available at any time during the year. Jobs may be available in some occupations only on a full-time basis, mandating an **alternating plan** for some curricula while other occupations may lend themselves more appropriately to part-time employment, thus the **parallel plan**.

Many colleges offer co-op on an “**open entry**” basis, meaning a co-op class is created at any time during the semester. This must occur after regular registration requirements are met. When creating an open entry co-op course, the regular co-op course outline must be followed. Open entry allows students and employers to start co-op at any time, allowing flexibility in the program. The college must report the student hours as contact hours when the open entry option is used.

### **CO-OP REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

The Early Childhood programs require specific criteria for students that are allowed to enroll in co-op classes. The criteria involve on-site visits, family-owned businesses, supervision, skin tests, etc. and are detailed below.

#### **1. On-site Visits**

When conducting an on-site visit to a co-op student's work site, the On-site Visitation Worksheet (see Attachment 11) must be completed with all required signatures. The faculty coordinator's signature is sufficient documentation if the on-site supervisor is not available to sign the On-site Visitation Worksheet at the time of the visit. However, a copy of the On-site Visitation Worksheet must be forwarded to the on-site supervisor for comments. The On-site Visitation Worksheet must reflect employer contact information for any needed follow-up.

The minimum number of on-site visits by the faculty coordinator or co-op director is **one (1) visit** for the Early Childhood co-op experience. In addition, the faculty coordinator is responsible for conducting an initial set-up visit and a mid-term evaluation, which may or may not be completed at the co-op site. Additional on-site and telephone visits may be made at the discretion of the faculty coordinator or co-op director.

## **2. “Family-Owned/Operated” Child Care Facility Supervision**

“Family-owned/operated” early childhood environments may be used by colleges for co-op work experience. This is unique to Early Childhood co-op experiences due to business issues facing students operating early childhood environments who are furthering their education. However, if colleges allow students to complete the required co-op experiences in “family-owned/operated” environments, one of the following supervisory arrangements must be made:

- a. An outside agency may be contracted as the supervising agency (child care resource and referral, partnership for children, etc.). The contracting agency must be required to make regular visits throughout the semester to assess the co-op student's progression toward the measurable learning objectives.
- b. The faculty coordinator or co-op director may assume the role of on-site supervisor and make at least one visit to each work site every other week.

These options would allow a small business owner of a center, or a home, the flexibility to complete requirements for an AAS degree in Early Childhood while continuing to operate their business.

## **3. Previous Work Experience**

Previous work experience prior to a student entering the early childhood associate program of study at the college may **not** be counted toward the hours required for co-op work experience credit.

## **4. Tuberculosis Skin Test and/or Criminal Background Check**

Faculty coordinators must inform potential co-op students of any special requirements by potential employers. However, it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure a student obtains a Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test or Criminal Background Check, if needed for employment. The college is not responsible for verifying employer requirements.

## **5. Placements of Early Childhood Co-op Students**

Co-op placements for early childhood education must be in early childhood environments that have attained at least a "3-Star License", holds a NAEYC Accreditation, or an equivalent quality environment. If a college places a student in an environment that **does not meet** one of the abovementioned standards, the college will be required to present objective criteria which indicates the quality of the placement site (i.e., education level of teachers, ECERS scores, etc.

# **SECTION 20**

## **Cooperative Education (Work Experience)**

### **Attachments**

## **MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (MLO)**

### **What are Measurable Learning Objectives (MLO)?**

Measurable Learning Objectives refers to a set of statements which clearly and precisely describe what a student intends to accomplish during the work experience.

### **Why have Measurable Learning Objectives?**

Cooperative Education is an academic program. Credit is granted not for working but for the learning that occurs as a result of working. Measurable Learning Objectives are the most effective method to assess the extent and value of this type of learning.

### **How to develop and write Measurable Learning Objectives?**

Begin by reviewing the job duties and responsibilities with the supervisor at the work site. Note areas where you can gain or develop new skills, increase your knowledge, or improve your work ethic. It is important that you avoid broad general statements and confine your objectives to those that can be accomplished during a single semester/term.

Typically, an MLO combines four major variables in a single sentence. The variables or components are **ACTIVITY**, **FORECAST**, **TIME FRAME**, and **EVALUATION**. The activity is the desired outcome or expected achievement, the forecast is the proposed level of accomplishment, the time frame is the expected completion date, and the evaluation is the stated method of measurement.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

By the end of the term (TIME FRAME)  
I will design and build a new chair (ACTIVITY)  
that meets company construction specifications (FORECAST)  
as evaluated by my job supervisor (EVALUATION)

An important element in the development of an MLO is the **ACTION WORD**. There are two such action words used in the examples above. The words are "design" and "build". Other action words are demonstrate, describe, develop, draw, discuss, operate, perform, summarized, recognize, etc.

#### **Some important things to remember when preparing MLOs:**

- a. Avoid broad, general objectives; make them specific, measurable and attainable by the end of the semester/term.
- b. Be sure you have the knowledge, skill, time and freedom to accomplish your objectives.
- c. Indicate the level of achievement which you expect to obtain, expressed whenever possible in numerical terms (e.g. increase speed by 15%).

Examples with Poor Objectives

- a. I will become a better sales person.
- b. I will learn how to use computers in a work environment.
- c. I will help wire a structure for light fixtures.

Examples with Acceptable Objectives

- a. By (date), I will increase my sales by 5 percent while keeping complaints at or below their present level as judged by the sales manager.
- b. By (date), I will correctly produce 5 letters using Microsoft Word as evaluated by (supervisor's name).
- c. By the end of the term, I will correctly wire and install a minimum of 10 florescent light fixtures as evaluated by my supervisor.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### **MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (MLO)**

The Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs) should clearly describe what a student plans to accomplish during the co-op work experience. The following examples should help co-op students prepare solid MLOs.

"By the end of the semester, I will perform the duties of a party chief to the satisfaction of my employer."

"By the end of the semester, I will draw maps in accordance with NCGS 47-30 as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester I will perform computations and calculations to reduce field data for surveying jobs as judged by my employer."

"By the end of my co-op term, I will be able to demonstrate proper body mechanics and be able to set up customers on the strength training system in a manner that meets the standards of my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to read, evaluate, and grade student's legal research papers under the supervision of and to the satisfaction of my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will prepare and fill all sections of a divorce pleading that meets office specifications, as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will master the art of speaking with clients on the phone and taking appropriate and complete messages that meet office specifications, as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to interpret the doctor's order forms from patient charts and transfer all necessary information to the medical administration forms for the nurses so they can carry out the orders of the doctor as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to schedule patient consultations per the doctor's request, discharge patients with all necessary medical forms for medications and instructions, and break down the patient's chart book upon discharge to include taking the patient out of the hospital's computer system as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to accurately balance charges and payments for each doctor at the end of the day."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to prepare the correct hospital paperwork for major surgery cases."

"By the end of the semester, I will seek out foundations and other possible sources of funding for a program addressing the needs of the older adult substance abuse population as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will demonstrate knowledge in observing behavior and recording significant observation in descriptive form, this will be evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will demonstrate a working knowledge of the host agency/institution by submitting an outline that includes mission statement, services, fees, and referral sources as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will demonstrate increasing levels of skill in recording and interpreting observations of children in the classroom as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will plan, facilitate, and document an extended learning experience for children as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to demonstrate proper pruning techniques for small trees which meets the standards of the industry as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to perform preventive maintenance on equipment and return equipment back to service as evaluated by my supervisor."

"By the end of the semester, I will be able to work safely and follow safety guidelines set forth by my company as evaluated by my supervisor."

# COOPERATIVE EDUCATION APPLICATION (Example)

(please print or type)

**Date of Initial Application:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of College:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First MI

**Social Security Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Present Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
PO Box / Street  
City State Zip

**Permanent Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
PO Box / Street  
City State Zip

**Curriculum Major:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Faculty Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GPA:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SHC Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Projected Graduation Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*NOTE: Current Transcript must be attached.*

**Placement Geographical Preferences:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested Beginning Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hours Available:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Placement Preferred:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Industrial, Commercial, Governmental Agency, etc)

**Work Experience:** (last position first)

**Employer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Business Name Title

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
PO Box / Street  
City State Zip

**Duties:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Employed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Full-Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Part-Time:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Beginning Date Ending Date Years/Months Years/Months

**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Add "Privacy Act of 1974" statement here.

**PLACED STUDENT INFORMATION WORKSHEET (Example)**

(please print or type)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_**Name of College:** \_\_\_\_\_**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First MI**Social Security Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_**Present Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
PO Box / Street

City State Zip

**Curriculum Major:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Faculty Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_**Beginning Date of Employment:** \_\_\_\_\_**Weekly Work Schedule:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Days Hours**Hourly Rate of Pay:** \_\_\_\_\_**Semester Scheduled For Employment:** \_\_\_\_\_ Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Summer*NOTE: Current Job Description must be attached.***MEDICAL INSURANCE CERTIFICATION**

Students must be covered by adequate health and accident insurance during a co-op work experience. Students who are enrolled in a co-op course must indicate the medical insurance they will be covered by before beginning their work experience each semester. Students who may need insurance should check with their co-op employer to see if insurance is available.

\_\_\_\_\_ (community college) will not be responsible for any accident/injuries which occur as part of employment through the Co-op Program. Students may not file unemployment compensation while employed through the Co-op Program.

**Insurance Information:****Name of Insurance Company:** \_\_\_\_\_**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
PO Box / Street

City State Zip

**Insurance Policy Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employers' Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Salary Per Hour:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **FAX Number:** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions to Co-op Work Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Add "Privacy Act of 1974" statement here.

ATTACHMENT 5  
**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AGREEMENT**  
**(Example 1)**

The following statements constitute the Agreement on which participation in the Cooperative Education Program at \_\_\_\_\_ (community college) is based:

**Placement and Employment Procedures**

\_\_\_\_\_ (community college) and the cooperating employer agree to observe placement procedures and employment practices which conform to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations (including nondiscrimination toward any participant or employee because of race, color, religion, sex, veteran's status, handicap, or national origin).

**College Responsibilities**

1. Assess the student's skills, capacities, and career objective.
2. Refer the student to an employer of interest.
3. Provide consultation and coordination between the student, the employer, and the college.
4. Approve and evaluate the student's Measurable Learning Objectives for each training period.
5. Make arrangements for and conduct on-site visits with the co-op students and their immediate supervisor.
6. Determine a grade for the co-op experience and award college credit based on the student's performance and completion of required reports.

**Employer Responsibilities**

1. Provide a minimum of at least 160 or 320 hours of employment per semester/term depending on course credit assigned.
2. Identify a qualified employee to serve as the immediate supervisor who will assist the student in developing and evaluating the Measurable Learning Objectives that will be related to the student's academic studies.
3. Permit on-site visits by a college representative.
4. Notify the Cooperative Education Office at the college at least one (1) week before any action that might result in the termination or change of employment status of the student.
5. Encourage the student to continue his or her higher education to completion.
6. Compensate co-op student at a level consistent with regular employees in a similar training situation.

7. Provide Workmen's Compensation Liability Insurance for a co-op student during the entire work experience period.
8. Evaluate the student's performance during on-site visits and at the end of the semester/term.
9. Adhere to the Fair Labor Standards Act.
10. Give permission to use employer's name in co-op marketing/promotional materials.
11. Provide the student with a supervised, progressive, and meaningful work experience.
12. Assure a safe and healthy work environment.

**Student Responsibilities**

1. Report punctually and regularly for work.
2. Strive to do the best possible job for the employer.
3. Adhere, at all times, to the employer's work rules and regulations.
4. Notify the employer promptly if unable to work for any reason.
5. Develop Measurable Learning Objectives in conjunction with the immediate supervisor and faculty coordinator during the first two weeks of the work experience.
6. Be covered by adequate accident insurance.
7. Inform the college's Financial Aid Office of their co-op employment and report wages earned during the co-op work experience, if appropriate.

*NOTE: Current Job Description must be attached.*

**Statement of Cooperation**

I fully understand the responsibilities of all parties involved in this Cooperative Education Agreement and shall strive to make this a successful learning experience.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Coordinator Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-op Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ATTACHMENT 6  
**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AGREEMENT**  
**(Example 2)**

Student/Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Curriculum \_\_\_\_\_

COE \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_

I Am Using My Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Is This A Family Operated Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(Supervisor Evaluating Student's Co-op Work Experience Cannot Be Related to Student)

Employer Address \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

In consideration of the mutual benefits of the Cooperative Education Program, the college, the employer and the student agree as follows:

**STUDENT:** Agrees to develop well-planned measurable learning objectives in conjunction with the Faculty Coordinator and the employer in relation to the goals of his/her instructional program. Student also agrees to abide by the college's co-op rules and regulations and the employer and to immediately report to either the Co-op Director or Faculty Coordinator any problems occurring on the job or changes in job duties and responsibilities. Further, the student grants permission for the employer to discuss the student's progress with the Faculty Coordinator. Student also agrees to inform the college's Financial Aid Office of their co-op employment and to report the wages earned during the co-op work experience.

**EMPLOYER:** Agrees to provide the student with a supervised progressive work experience, assist the student in developing measurable learning objectives, provide orientation regarding company rules and regulations as well as inform student of company expectations. The employer further agrees to assure a safe and healthful working environment. Prior to the end of the semester employer will evaluate the student's progress and that time report reflects accurate hours worked. Employer further agrees to provide the student with a supervisor that is not related to the student

**COLLEGE:** Agrees to assign a Faculty Coordinator to assist the student in developing measurable learning objectives and make periodic contact with the employer. Faculty Coordinator will also determine a grade for the completed co-op work experience and award college credit based on the student's job performance and completion of required reports.

*NOTE: Current Job Description must be attached.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Coordinator Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-op Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ATTACHMENT 7  
**RELEASE AGREEMENT (Example)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that I have been accepted for a Cooperative Education work assignment. The work and learn partnership will involve

\_\_\_\_\_ (community college) and

\_\_\_\_\_ (employer). I acknowledge that the college will

assume no financial responsibility in the event of any accident or illness suffered by said student

as a result of the student's educational activities while enrolled in the Cooperative Education

class at \_\_\_\_\_ (community college).

I also understand that I am personally responsible for seeing that arrangements are made

through personal insurance or private funds to cover costs incurred for the medical, surgical, or

emergency treatment of an accident or illness suffered while involved in the co-op partnership

between the college and the employer.

The presence of the student's signature on this form acknowledges that the student

understands the information stated in the release agreement.

This agreement must be signed at the time of the initial enrollment in the Co-op Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-op Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Add "Privacy Act of 1974" statement here.

ATTACHMENT 8  
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION  
**MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET**  
(STUDENT PLACED WITH NEW EMPLOYER ONLY)

The Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs) must clearly describe what you intend to accomplish during your work term. The MLOs must be reviewed by your supervisor (who can suggest modifications) during the first two weeks of the term and approved by your faculty coordinator. At the end of the work term, your supervisor will evaluate how well you accomplished each of the objectives. The suggested number of MLOs to complete is three (3).

MLO 1:

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---

MLO 2:

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---

---

MLO 3:

---

---

---

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ATTACHMENT 9  
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION  
**MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET**  
(STUDENT PLACED WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER ONLY)

**Describe Your Current Job Responsibilities With Your Employer (attach additional pages if necessary):**

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**New Responsibilities During Cooperative Education Placement:**

The Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs) must clearly be based on your new responsibilities that will be accomplished during your work term. They must be reviewed by your supervisor (who can suggest modifications) during the first two weeks of the term and approved by your faculty coordinator. At the end of the work term, your supervisor will evaluate how well you accomplished each of the objectives. The suggested number of MLOs to complete is three (3).

MLO 1:

---

---

MLO 2:

---

---

MLO 3:

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





## TIME/WAGE REPORT (EXAMPLE) page 2 of 2

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Total hrs	Weekly Wages
<b>Monthly Total</b>									

Summary of monthly tasks performed: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the above time report is a true statement of the hours worked this month.

I certify that the above time report is a true statement of the hours worked this month.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Total hrs	Weekly Wages
<b>Monthly Total</b>									

Summary of monthly tasks performed: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the above time report is a true statement of the hours worked this month.

I certify that the above time report is a true statement of the hours worked this month.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## ON-SITE VISITATION WORKSHEET (page 2 of 3)

### II. Interview between co-op student and faculty coordinator:

a. Is your co-op work assignment consistent with the initial job description?

Yes  No (If "no", please explain.) How?

Comments:

b. How are you able to relate your co-op assignment to your class work?

Comments:

c. How are you challenged by your co-op work assignments?

Comments:

d. How do you think this co-op work assignment will help you meet some of your career goals?

Comments:

e. Have you encountered any problems related to your Measurable Learning Objectives?

Yes  No (If "yes", please explain.)

Comments:

f. Rate this co-op work assignment so far.

Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor

If rated "Very Good" or "Very Poor", please explain.

Comments:

---

Student Signature

---

Date

## ON-SITE VISITATION WORKSHEET (page 3 of 3)

### III. Faculty Coordinator Evaluation of Co-op Student's Performance at this time:

If rated "Very Good" or "Very Poor", please explain.

a. Appearance

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

b. Punctuality / Dependability

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

c. Subject knowledge

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

d. Quality of work

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

e. Quantity of work

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

f. Attitude towards work assignments

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

g. Interaction with co-workers

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

h. Interaction with supervisor

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

i. Leadership ability

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good            \_\_\_ Fair            \_\_\_ Poor            \_\_\_ Very Poor

Comments:

---

Faculty Coordinator Signature

Date





g. Attitude towards work assignments

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good      \_\_\_ Fair      \_\_\_ Poor      \_\_\_ Very Poor

h. Interaction with co-workers

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good      \_\_\_ Fair      \_\_\_ Poor      \_\_\_ Very Poor

i. Interaction with supervisor

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good      \_\_\_ Fair      \_\_\_ Poor      \_\_\_ Very Poor

j. Leadership ability

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good      \_\_\_ Fair      \_\_\_ Poor      \_\_\_ Very Poor

k. Potential for future development in this career

\_\_\_ Very Good      \_\_\_ Good      \_\_\_ Fair      \_\_\_ Poor      \_\_\_ Very Poor

**II.** Describe the co-op student's strengths.

**III.** Provide suggestions for improvement in the student's performance.

\_\_\_\_\_

Employer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



4. Identify areas of significant job-related learning not included in the objectives. Use additional pages if required.

5. Describe any significant positive or negative experiences that helped you learn during your co-op work assignment. Use additional pages if required.

6. Explain how your co-op work assignment has helped in your efforts to accomplish your career goals. Use additional pages if required.

7. Describe ways that your supervisor contributed to your learning and professional growth. Use additional pages if required.

8. Describe the training that was available. Use additional pages if required.

9. Describe any feedback from your employer concerning your performance on the job.

10. Would you accept a position with this employer after graduation?

Very Likely     Likely     Uncertain     Not Likely

Please explain:

11. Would you recommend this position for other co-op students?  Yes     No

Please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# **SECTION 20**

## **Cooperative Education (Work Experience)**

### **Appendices**

## STARTING A CO-OP PROGRAM

References: 23 NCAC 1A.0101(1)(e); 23 NCAC 2D.0323(f)(1) and (2); Curriculum Procedures Reference Manual Section 20.

1. Develop an understanding of cooperative education/work experience with the college administration.
2. Survey students to determine level of interest.
3. Survey employers to determine level of interest and support of the program.
4. Review/revise each appropriate curriculum to allow for co-op.
5. Submit revised curriculum that includes co-op to the System Office for approval.
6. Establish a committee to plan and develop a co-op program. Committee membership should include but is not be limited to:
  - a. Chief Academic Officer
  - b. All Division Chairpersons
  - c. Registrar
  - d. Academic Deans
  - e. Business Office Representative
7. Determine if the college will have a centralized or a decentralized program.
8. Determine level of funding to support co-op.
9. Develop policies, guidelines, and procedures.
10. Provide orientation to the program.
11. Develop the forms that will be needed, including co-op application, workbook, handbook, calendar, registration approval, brochures, etc.
12. Appoint faculty coordinators to represent their respective curriculum programs in activities associated with selection, placement, and evaluation of co-op students.
13. Conduct training sessions for faculty coordinators and other college staff.
14. Develop strategies to market the program.
15. Publicize the program internally and externally.
16. Implement a pilot program for one (1) year.

## **TIPS ON POSITIONING CO-OP FOR SUCCESS**

Difficult economic times affecting colleges today have made it necessary to justify academic programs and services. The following tips will assist you in building and maintaining institutional support for cooperative education at your college.

1. Make program indispensable to others by creating allies who are vested in the success of co-op. Develop a positive perception and be recognized as a strategic partner in the educational process.
2. Understanding collaboration and what it means to be cooperative is crucial for success. Be willing to work hard and creatively in response to new initiatives and ideas.
3. Recognize who your new and different constituencies are in order to become the solutions to their challenges. Demonstrate the ability to contribute to others' goals and the willingness to accept new initiatives and challenges.
4. Redefine roles and be willing to reshape operational structure.
5. Solicit necessary support from your college president and other key administrators.
6. Review mission of the co-op program, aligning with college priorities, with attention to the comprehensiveness of the services of the college.
7. Produce and document outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative, which documents the educational value of the co-op program at your college.

## CO-OP PROGRAM MODELS

Co-op programs are generally described as Alternating or Parallel Program models. Both models usually require some academics to be completed prior to beginning the work experience. Either the college or an employer may establish their minimum amount. This academic prerequisite to work may vary by curriculum and by degree. The two models are generally distinguished by the following characteristics:

### **1. Alternating Program**

Students rotate between full-time periods of classroom instruction and full-time periods of co-op. Alternating programs generally allow the student to attend class full-time during the period of classroom instruction and to work full-time with the co-op employer when not in college. Alternating periods may be by the week, month, or academic period depending upon curriculum demands and the flexibility of the job market. Students generally return to the same cooperative employer during consecutive full-time co-op work terms. Generally, a program will require a minimum of two or more alternating work experience terms.

### **2. Parallel Program**

Under this model, students are normally working part-time or full-time and attending classes concurrently. The concurrence may be morning/afternoon, every other workday, classes during the week and work on the weekend, etc. Participating students generally complete a minimum of two consecutive co-op work terms/semesters with the same cooperative employer.

The selection of the co-op program model should be based on the needs of the specific curriculum to assure that co-op will correlate in a timely manner to reinforce the education goals of the curriculum. For some curriculums, job opportunities are available for minimal skill entry where the learning sequence can be programmed to correlate with weekly or daily classroom activities, and these activities can be progressively more difficult. The parallel co-op model may be the choice for these curricula. For curricula where certain basic knowledge and skills are required prior to employment, the alternating model may be best. With either model, it is important to correlate the academic with the practical experiences in a progressive manner to assure learning and to guard against student or employee frustration.

The college may implement the alternating model for a curriculum or group of curriculums and the parallel model for another curriculum. Many curricula are compatible with either model and allow flexibility to meet the varied needs of employers and students. In the final analysis the availability of job opportunities may greatly influence the model used. For a co-op program to be successful, there should be flexibility in the program to accommodate and coordinate jobs with the education program.

## INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Generally the administrative organization for co-op can be categorized as either a centralized or decentralized organization. Each method has its unique advantages and disadvantages. A college should consider these carefully and relate them to how the co-op program will integrate into the total education plan. The basic concepts and advantages of each method are:

1. **Centralized Administration.** In this administrative structure, cooperative education job development, student recruitment and selection, career counseling, employer site visits, and evaluations are conducted by a central staff of co-op professionals. The size of the staff should be determined by the number of individual students placed in co-op. Some suggest that one coordinator may handle up to **30-40** students effectively. However, consideration should be given to the number of placements, distance from campus to visit the student at the work site, and additional duties assigned to the co-op director.

Advantages to a centralized administration are:

- a. The centralized office would provide for high visibility on campus and demonstrate a college's commitment to a co-op education program.
- b. Co-op staff would be more easily accessible to community and students.
- c. The centralized office would provide one primary contact person for employers, department heads, faculty, etc.

2. **Decentralized Administration.** Under this administrative structure, co-op job development, student recruitment and selection, career counseling, employer site visits, and student evaluations are conducted by department chairs and faculty. The advantages of shared responsibilities between a program director and full-time or part-time faculty administration are as follows:

- a. Faculty assistance in student selection may enhance the job matching process.
- b. Faculty members are able to keep abreast of new and changing technologies through participation in employer site visits.
- c. Student recruitment may be enhanced through faculty contact with students in the classroom.
- d. Student learning could be enhanced by faculty integration of cooperative education experiences in the classroom.

**INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT**

Support for the co-op program may be manifested in several ways:

1. There should be a commitment that co-op is an integral part of the education program and process.
2. The college must provide adequate resources to co-op professionals, suitable office facilities with support personnel, and a sufficient budget to support staff training, travel, printing, telephone, etc.
3. There should be a commitment to make adjustments in the educational programs and process when necessary.
4. There should be a commitment by faculty to make adjustments when appropriate.
5. Maintain high quality co-op placements. Satisfied, successful students are excellent ambassadors.
6. Invite administrative officials and board members to visit and observe co-op students on the job.
7. Seek and obtain grants and other funding for cooperative education.
8. A successful co-op program must have the full support of the college's board of trustees, administrative staff, and faculty. Some suggestions for developing support in these areas include asking for support of the co-op program on a continuous basis and maintaining a high profile posture on campus. Some ideas for this high profile includes:
  - a. Publicize co-op in college papers and bulletins.
  - b. Be a part of orientation and other college functions.
  - c. Make special presentations on co-op to college officials.
  - d. Work with the college foundation and public affairs office in marketing co-op.
  - e. Provide survey results, statistics, and favorable employer comments to illustrate the program's success.
  - f. Arrange for special program events such as Cooperative Education Week and Co-op Student of the Year Awards.
9. Faculty input and involvement in the co-op program is the key to co-op success. Some ideas include:
  - a. Ask faculty to assist in the development of measurable learning objectives.
  - b. Solicit faculty assistance in job development.
  - c. Invite faculty to visit students on the job.
  - d. Request faculty to review student performance reports.
  - e. Use faculty to discuss technical aspects of the curriculum with potential employers.
  - f. Coordinate employer and faculty involvement in developing and changing curricula.

10. The college administration should arrange special occasion luncheons or ceremonies recognizing faculty contributions to the co-op program.

The successful co-op programs use advisory committees in the planning and evaluation process.

### **Institutional Advisory Committee**

In the initial stages of the development of a co-op program a college's advisory committee should be established to guide the development of the co-op program. This committee is usually comprised of those persons in the college who have responsibility directly or indirectly related to the cooperative program. The committee membership may include but not be limited to the co-op program director, dean of programs, various department heads, selected faculty members, registrar, counselor, and a business office representative.

### **Employer Advisory Committee**

The primary purpose for this committee is to ensure that the co-op program is meeting the needs of the employment community and that the employment community is meeting the needs of the co-op program. This committee should be comprised of current or prospective co-op employers who have demonstrated an interest in and a commitment to a quality work experience for the student.

### **Curriculum Advisory Committees**

Utilizing members of various curricular advisory committees is an excellent starting point for informing the business community of the co-op program as well as recruiting potential co-op employers. Most colleges charge these committees with the responsibility of providing feedback about the quality and the relevance of the curriculum. Utilizing co-op students in their business environments provides these members with first-hand information.

## ROLE OF THE CO-OP FACULTY COORDINATOR

*NOTE: Although all cooperative education programs function under a common definition and utilize common operational components, substantial differences exist from college to college and from program to program within a college. This attachment describes the faculty coordinator's role in a decentralized model for cooperative education. Therefore, not all procedures will be applicable to all colleges.*

The role and responsibilities of a faculty coordinator involve activities associated with identifying and referring qualified students to the co-op office for placement; assisting students in developing their Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs), conducting on-site employer visits/evaluations, and assisting in assigning end-of-semester grades for co-op.

In a decentralized program, a faculty coordinator will accomplish the following activities each semester:

The faculty coordinator (and job supervisor) will assist his/her co-op students to develop MLOs at the beginning of each co-op work term.

In preparation for a site visit, the co-op staff will prepare the coordinator visitation report forms, attach a copy of the student's MLOs and distribute them to faculty coordinators. Faculty coordinators should review the MLOs developed by the student and employer.

After students have been on their co-op work assignment, the faculty coordinator should contact the job supervisor for an appointment to make an on-site visit/evaluation. Follow-up visits should be timed so that employers have had an opportunity to evaluate students, and students an opportunity to appraise their jobs. Faculty coordinators should be sensitive to the employer's schedule by contacting him/her prior to the expected date of an on-site visit. Since employers evaluate their co-op students at the end of the work period, periodic visits/evaluations by the faculty coordinator are recommended. Also, if there is a problem on the job, these visits will allow time to correct the problem before the end of the semester/term.

There are several basic reasons why the faculty coordinator should make regularly scheduled visits to employers:

- a. To obtain progress reports on each student's job performance.
- b. To obtain firsthand knowledge of the type of jobs in which students are engaged.
- c. To determine that the jobs meet the specific requirements for cooperative work assignments.
- d. To develop new job openings.
- e. To promote good public relations and rapport with employers.
- f. To visit with students on the job to gain insight into their perceptions of the job.
- g. To assist the employer in identifying future learning experiences for students.

After completing an employer visit, the faculty coordinator should prepare an evaluation of the visit along with brief comments on the On-Site Visitation Worksheet. At the end of the work period, the faculty coordinator will meet with the co-op director to review the student's progress

and assign a grade for co-op experience.

Materials that may be used in this evaluation can include:

- a. Coordinator visitation report.
- b. Completed co-op workbook which contains the employer's evaluation of the student's performance, the student's self evaluation, and a summary of hours worked and wages earned, MLOs and percentage completed; and the co-op work agreement (between the employer, student, and college).
- c. Report describing the student's on-the-job activities (required in some but not all programs).
- d. Term paper (required in some but not all programs).

The faculty coordinator and/or co-op director should schedule an end-of-the-semester conference with each co-op student to discuss the student's progress and to plan for future co-op experiences.

### **Faculty Coordinator Job Description**

To be a successful faculty coordinator, one cannot say that he/she must have had a particular training, a certain background of co-op experience or a certain type of personality. There are some personal traits that are common to most successful faculty coordinators. They include:

- a. Relate well in interpersonal situations.
- b. Work independently.
- c. Be student-oriented.
- d. Organize his/her own schedule and work within it.
- e. Communicate effectively with students, employees, and other faculty members.
- f. Be experienced in the career field he/she is serving.
- g. Display a confident and optimistic attitude.
- h. Be willing to tackle and solve problems.
- i. Be free from bias and prejudice.
- j. Be fair, tactful, and diplomatic.
- k. Command personal and professional respect.
- l. Motivate others.
- m. Be sensitive to the needs of students and employers.
- n. Juggle many different situations simultaneously.
- o. Be energetic, innovative, and personable.

## APPENDIX G

### RELATIONSHIP OF CO-OP TO A STUDENT'S CURRICULUM PROGRAM

One of the many benefits of co-op to students is the opportunity to test and evaluate career direction prior to graduation. As a result of their co-op, some students will confirm their career choice while other students will change career direction and, consequently, their college curriculum.

Co-op staff at community colleges work with and refer a heterogeneous group of students. Many of these students are just out of high school and have very little knowledge regarding the many different career options available to them. Most of these students have knowledge only about those career fields in which relatives and/or friends are employed. Historically, the pressure has been on these young students to make a decision now regarding future career plans. The decisions made by these students may affect them for the rest of their lives and are often made with very little background information, knowledge and experience. Cooperative education should help to eliminate some of the confusion experienced by many younger students and give them the opportunity to explore and observe different career fields. Co-op goes beyond simply referring students to a job. Co-op's responsibility is to prepare students to be successful in the world of work.

Often this requires more than just teaching a skill. Students must:

- a. be able to prepare a quality work resume.
- b. have acceptable interviewing skills.
- c. project an image of maturity and professionalism.
- d. have the ability to interact with people (social skills).
- e. be able to manage their time and resources wisely.

Many students will already have the above traits/skills and can be referred to a co-op position immediately. However, other students need to participate in a process to prepare them for a co-op experience. Community colleges offer pre-employment preparation (COE 110, World of Work), as well as ongoing advising during and following the work experience.

A quality co-op program requires not only adequate preparation of students, but it also requires referring students to positions that will provide a challenge and a learning experience. In reviewing the quality of a co-op program, it is suggested that the following questions be answered before placing a student in a position in which academic credit will be awarded:

- a. Will the position provide an opportunity for the student to use knowledge, skills, and training acquired in college classes?
- b. Will the position offer valid learning experiences and can these learning experiences be documented or measured?
- c. Will the work experience relate to the student's career or academic goals?
- d. Does the position require college training?

If the above questions can be answered "Yes", then the position most likely will provide the quality learning experience required in co-op.

**BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION**

Cooperative education has important benefits for the student, the employer, and the college. Some of these benefits are:

**Co-op Benefits to the Student**

By coordinating co-op with the educational program, theory and practice are more closely related; therefore, the student finds that his studies have greater meaning.

Coordination of work and study improves student academic motivation. As the student sees the relationship between the job and the principles he has studied in class, greater interest in academic work develops; therefore, decreasing the tendency to drop out.

The student in the cooperative education program develops confidence, responsibility, and a greater understanding of other people and, therefore, the development and enhancement of interpersonal skills.

Cooperative education courses will provide the student with professional experience prior to graduation and after-graduation employment opportunities.

Cooperative education helps the student adapt to the world of work and gain an understanding of the workplace culture and competencies.

Co-op brings about a greater sense of responsibility, greater dependence upon the student's own judgment and, consequently, a corresponding development of maturity.

A student taking a co-op course may have the advantage to obtain technical knowledge through the use of state-of-the-art equipment not available on the college campus.

Co-op courses provide the student with referral and employment contacts.

Co-op courses provide the student with financial remuneration while pursuing an educational goal.

**Co-op Benefits to the Employer**

A high percentage of co-op students accept permanent employment with their co-op employers upon graduation.

The company is able to contact and screen prospective employees from a select group of students early in their educational careers.

Through continuous rotation of co-op students, one full-time position is filled annually on an alternating basis with two students. This provides employers access to candidates with sought after skills.

Students returning to the campus during their work period will be instrumental in acquainting other students with the company.

The cooperative education program helps employers obtain a pool of potential employees and is a cost effective method for long-term recruitment and retention.

Industry becomes a partner in the total educational program; therefore, industry has an input on quality and relevance of college curriculums.

Co-op employers experience new ideas through contact with these new employees and the representatives of the college that visit their companies.

**Co-op Benefits to the Community College**

Because of the co-op program, the community college is constantly aware of new equipment, new methods, and new personnel requirements and is therefore able to adapt its programs to meet the ever-changing needs of the student, employer, and community.

A college operating a co-op program has an opportunity to expand its service to the community.

Faculty members are in an advantageous position to maintain a closer relationship with business, industry, and the professions; therefore, enriching the curriculum and the college's reputation in the employment community.

The college receives/gains a more realistic view of the businesses they serve.

There is a documented improvement in the rate of employment for graduates with co-op experience.

Co-op provides a wider range of learning opportunities for students.

## MARKETING AND RECRUITING FOR CO-OP

### Marketing Co-op Programs

Nothing is more important for marketing your chance of success than developing a marketing plan and sticking to it.

The marketing plan should be developed to inform and encourage participation of employers, students, college administration, and faculty.

Most importantly is the fact that a marketing plan establishes in writing what you consider your challenge to be and how it will be approached. Establishing a marketing plan should contain the following:

1. Objectives. When establishing co-op objectives, keep three things in mind.
  - a. Spell out the goal. Be as specific as possible about what you intend to accomplish and in what time frame.
  - b. Make them measurable. Objectives should be something about which you can honestly say at the end of the program. "Yes, we achieved them and here is how we can prove it."
  - c. Treat your program as a product.
2. Audiences. Identify the group and individuals to whom you will target your communications.
3. Research. Analyze the plan to ensure the strategic approach employed is sound and the execution of the program has the desired influence on the targeted audience.
4. Strategies. Identify the means through which you achieve your objectives.
5. Message. Express key points you are trying to convey to your audience to accomplish your objectives.
6. Tactics. Move the message from your desk to your audiences (i.e., advertising, direct mail, collateral material (tee-shirts, buttons, and banners), public service announcements, etc.). Success is 5 percent strategy and 95 percent hard work. Tactics are the program elements that put into action all the good ideas that you have established.
7. Evaluation. Did the strategy meet the stated goals?

Marketing strategies currently being used by community colleges in North Carolina are as follows:

### Student Recruitment for Co-op Programs

1. Prepare and distribute promotional/marketing material such as posters, newsletters, brochures, postcards, flyers, banners, tee-shirts, key chains, table tents, bookmarks, business window displays, etc.
2. Prepare featured articles about successful co-op experiences for students in the campus and local newspaper.

3. Conduct "co-op marketing" presentations to selected freshman classes and all the student orientation sessions.
4. Send co-op marketing information to students enrolled in approved co-op curriculums.
5. Recognize a "Co-op Student of the Year" at graduation. Reward each co-op student with a "Certificate of Completion".
6. Other ideas for recruiting include a student co-op handbook, career fair display, web page, and co-op job hotline.

#### **Recruitment Efforts with Employers**

1. Recruitment of members of the various curriculum advisory committees for active co-op employers.
2. Co-op presentation to the Joint Curriculum Advisory Committee Meeting (Co-op students give testimonials).
3. Distribute an Employer Needs Survey to local companies.
4. Include questions related to co-op on the college's graduation survey.
5. Prepare employers packets/portfolio (fact sheet, co-op curriculums, salary survey, brochure, co-op eligibility/requirements).
6. Encourage department heads and co-op faculty coordinators to forward employer requests for student referrals to the co-op office.
7. Request co-op faculty coordinators volunteer for speaking engagements at various professional clubs, trade associations, and community groups (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, etc.)
8. Prepare co-op articles for inclusion in the Chamber of Commerce, Merchants Association newsletters, professional journals, trade journals, etc.
9. Distribute Certificate of Appreciation to companies that offer co-op positions.
10. Establish a co-op advisory committee.
11. Conduct Open House events during National Cooperative Education Week.

### **Recruitment Efforts with the Faculty**

Marketing aimed at college faculty could include all of the strategies listed above as well as the following:

- a. Classroom presentations
- b. Quarterly meetings for co-op faculty
- c. Visit to departmental meetings
- d. Co-op presentation at faculty meetings
- e. Recognition of faculty coordinators
- f. Attendance at co-op final seminar
- g. Co-op presentation at new and part-time faculty orientation
- h. Promotional items (notepads, letterhead)
- i. Summer release or overload salary increase

It is wise to identify several key faculty members who have a sincere interest in student success, who are open to new ideas, and who present themselves well. These individuals can assist in persuading less interested faculty in the many rewards of co-op involvement. Marketing strategies aimed at the faculty could include:

- a. Providing release time from normal class loads to work with co-op students
- b. Providing overload pay (a stipend for each student supervised)
- c. Allowing full-time contract faculty to be released from summer-term classes to assist in job development
- d. Featuring faculty members in the co-op newsletter

### **JOB DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

There are many proven methods for educating the public about hiring students for co-op. An effective public relations program will make job development easier.

One of the most effective ways to acquaint the general public about co-op is to make presentations to large audiences at professional associations, civic clubs, Chamber of Commerce meetings, alumni associations, etc.

It would be advantageous to obtain a roster of members and follow-up with visits to individual job sites or send a letter and brochure to targeted employers. Some hints in the follow-up call to employers are:

- a. Organize your list, schedule and geographic locations
- b. Be polite and brief with the receptionist
- c. Be informative; identify yourself and purpose of the call
- d. Set up an itinerary and allow enough time to travel from one appointment to another
- e. Be prepared to answer questions about co-op programs
- f. Know the curriculum programs offered by the college
- g. General information about the college schedules, etc.
- h. Indicate appreciation of employer time to determine the best method to provide services
- i. During the discussion, listen and understand the needs of the employer
- j. Obtain as much information about the job as possible (qualifications preferred, referral process, work schedule)
- k. Ask for employer input

The co-op representative must be able to clearly present the benefits of the co-op program, rather than discussing the features. Benefit selling states the advantages a prospective employer will gain as a result of his association with the cooperative education program and the community college. This must be carefully stated so that the employer will participate in the co-op partnership. The co-op coordinator must be able to listen and identify the needs of the employer and how the co-op program may be of optimum service.

Strategic planning is essential for locating jobs when they are non-traditional or not advertised. First, define a clear job market that relates to the students' skills, as well as their interests. Know the curriculum programs at your community college. Compile a list of employers in the job target area. Perform research to determine employers' interests, problems, needs, and opportunities. Communicate the information to the person who makes the hiring decision not necessarily the personnel department.

## COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The cooperative education program interfaces with a number of other student work programs such as: internships, community service, college to work, and innovative entrepreneurial programs/student agencies.

### **Internships**

Some internships carry academic credit, and some may be independent from the curriculum, lasting a few months to over a year. Internships are any type of carefully planned and monitored work experience wherein the intern has predetermined learning goals emphasizing the knowledge gained throughout the educational experiences.

### **Service Learning/Community Service**

An especially exciting type of experimental education combines community service with active learning. Those programs are often called “service learning” and provide opportunities for students of all ages showing concern about their neighborhoods and communities.

### **Innovative Entrepreneurial Programs**

Students can be encouraged to explore the possibilities of creating jobs, perhaps developing their own business enterprise utilizing talents, skills, and previous experiences.

Many community colleges offer entrepreneurship and small business (REAL) classes to increase student awareness of opportunities available in entrepreneurship activities.

Students that work closely with the local Employment Security Commission (ESC) office to create a small business has proven to be very successful. Many community colleges have an ESC representative located on campus to provide job information and to assist with counseling students.

**AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL AID FOR CO-OP**

Recently, the National Commission for Cooperative Education requested and received a policy statement iteration from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the manner in which cooperative education student earnings are to be treated in cases where a co-op student is an applicant or a recipient of Federal student financial aid.

The policy of the Department of Education states that in cases where the student is both an applicant or recipient of student financial aid (i.e., applying for or having been awarded aid on the basis of a demonstrated financial need) and a co-op employee, the net co-op earnings (earnings after deductions for related taxes and allowable employment expenses) can be considered as a part of the student's financial aid package. There are no statutory or regulatory provisions which limit, either by a given percentage or a specific dollar amount, the allowable deductions for related taxes or employment expenses. The amount of the deductions is determined by the financial aid administrator and should be related to actual or reasonable expenditure amounts.

It should be noted, however, that when the co-op earnings had not been considered as a part of the financial aid package (i.e., not awarded on the basis of a demonstrated financial need) they were therefore treated strictly as income for financial aid application purposes. An amount equal to 70 percent of the previous calendar year earnings (after taxes) is expected to be available to meet the costs of post-secondary education. However, a post-secondary college's financial aid administrator has the prerogative to deduct other employment expenses of the co-op job not covered by the remaining amount equal to 30 percent of the previous calendar year earnings (after taxes). These adjustments may recognize the co-op student's special circumstances in awarding the financial aid package which is to be applied toward the costs of attending the post-secondary college in which the student is enrolled.

In these selected cases where a co-op student may have special or unique circumstances relative to financial need, the authority to make necessary adjustments is available to the financial aid administrator, who may in these situations utilize "professional judgment" and provide appropriate documentation supporting the decision.

## SPECIAL ISSUES IN CO-OP EDUCATION

### **Co-op Issues Associated With International Students**

In the past several years, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulations for international students to engage in “curricular practical training” – what we refer to as co-op work experience – has changed.

It is advisable for the co-op office to establish procedures, with the college’s International Student Office or the office assigned to working with international students, for international students to engage in co-op work experience. All parties need to become very familiar with the new INS regulations. These can be found in the NAFSA Adviser’s Manual (2003 release) on page 3-147 – 156. Cooperative Education is referred to on page 152. These particular regulations relate to F-1 students. F-1 students must have been enrolled on a full-time basis at an INS approved school for one full academic year before being eligible for co-op. Also, a new I-20 form must be completed by the co-op student before beginning the co-op job. Regulations relating to students with other work visas can be found in the same manual.

When working with international students, the co-op personnel may not ask the type of visa the student holds or their citizenship status. All students, however, may be asked if they are authorized to work in the United States. Moreover, all students referred to a co-op employer must be prepared to prove their identity and their authorization to work by providing their co-op employer with the information necessary to complete INS form I-9. It is illegal for employers to knowingly recruit or hire employees who cannot document their legal authorization to work in the United States.

Co-op program staff must be especially careful to protect the rights of each student to privacy. These are some things to remember:

1. Do not release any student’s transcript without a signed written release.
2. On the college co-op application, do not ask citizenship status, but ask: Eligible to work in the United States. – yes, no.
3. Do not discuss any student with other students.
4. Be careful giving recommendations. Have a signed release of information statement.
5. Parents sometimes call the co-op office asking for information about their son or daughter that may fall under the privacy act. Be tactful, but firm, about not violating the student’s rights.
6. Let employers select whom they wish to hire for co-op. The danger of discrimination may be avoided this way.

### **Veteran's Educational Benefits**

Cooperative Education programs offered by the colleges are approved for training veteran students. Veterans desiring to train using the educational benefits (G.I. Bill) must first establish their eligibility with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). The monthly reimbursement from Veteran Affairs is determined by the course load taken by the students. Cooperative Education experience credit hours have been approved as part of the formula to determine the amount of student reimbursement.

The courses taken by a student under the G.I. Bill, including co-op must be required for graduation in the student's major in order to be considered in the formula for reimbursement from the VA.

### **Legal Issues in Co-op**

There are no particular legal pitfalls to cause concern for a well run co-op program. Co-op students, of course, should be placed with reputable companies and should earn a legal wage from which state and federal taxes and social security are withheld. Co-op program staff should visit each job site to ensure that the co-op student is employed in a safe environment and that on-the-job training is occurring. A college may be held liable for negligence if a student is injured on a job where unsafe conditions exist or if no one from the college has ever visited the job site. Negligence appears to hinge, insofar as the college is concerned, on whether or not the college has done what it said it would do, i.e., visit the students on the job.

Other legal considerations include:

Co-op program coordinators must always be careful to refer students to co-op jobs without regard to race, sex, religion, veteran's status, handicap, or national origin (refer to EEOC Guidelines). Also, the college and the cooperating employer should agree to observe placement procedures and employment practices which conform to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Students selected to interview must meet the minimum criteria for the job.

Sexual, age, ethnic, racial, or disability harassment of student workers is illegal. The employer must insure that regular, full-time employees do not harass student workers. Students should be advised to immediately report any harassment to his/her supervisor or the human resources department. Students must also be advised that harassment of others in the workplace may result in their dismissal from the program.

Further, it is unlawful to discriminate against the handicapped. Employers/colleges may be required to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to enable participation in student employment programs (refer to ADA guidelines).

Unpaid co-op employment will not violate the Fair Labor Standards Act if it is a training program that meets the following criteria:

1. The training is similar to that which would be given in a vocational college.
2. The training is for the benefit of the students.
3. The students do not displace regular employees but work under the close observation of a supervisor.
4. The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of students.
5. The students are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.

6. The employer and the student understand that the student is not entitled to compensation
7. The work is an integral part of the student's course of study and the student will receive credit for the work exercise or it is required for graduation. Also, the student prepares a report on the co-op experience and measurable learning objectives are clearly identified.
8. The student is in a shadowing/learning mode at least 50% or more of the time.

Finally, students should be prepared to handle employer requests for physical examinations, drug and psychological testing, police record checks, and credit and background checks. Usually these activities are conducted at the employer's expense. However, students should be prepared for these and informed of their rights should any of these activities produce negative results.

## EVALUATION OF CO-OP PROGRAMS

Evaluation is only one step in the process of program assessment. Evaluation is useful in determining ways in which a program may be improved, in identifying problems and weaknesses, and in developing program goals and objectives. Evaluation may be accomplished internally (self-evaluation) and/or by an outside consultant. A longitudinal evaluation of graduates every **three to five years** will also provide useful information.

Evaluations involve making judgments regarding performance, effectiveness, and value. The judgments can occasionally be very subjective. Therefore, the reliability of the evaluation process is generally improved if more than one assessor and more than one assessment technique are used to evaluate the program.

Comprehensive evaluation is a necessary element of all educational programs. A well designed evaluation will provide both a qualitative and quantitative basis for rational judgments and forms the essence of program accountability. Accountability requires the following:

- a. Statement of clearly defined and measurable program goals and objectives.
- b. Description of the various strategies that will be used to accomplish program goals.
- c. Evaluation process to assess levels of accomplishments.
- d. Establishment of a monitoring system.
- e. Assignment of management responsibilities to personnel that will monitor the effective usage of resources.

Co-op, like all other academic programs, should be evaluated periodically to determine if there are ways in which the program may be improved. The best test of the value of a program lies in the opinions of those who benefit from it. Since most cooperative education literature emphasizes the value and many benefits of co-op to the student, to the employer, and to the college, an **annual evaluation** is recommended. The annual evaluation should include an assessment of student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, the extent to which program objectives were achieved, and the level of support for the program.

A questionnaire should be developed and mailed each year to co-op students, co-op employers and co-op faculty coordinators. It should be designed to ascertain the value and effectiveness of the co-op program. Students, employers, and faculty coordinators may respond to some of the same questions, while other questions should be specifically directed to a designated group. The value of a questionnaire will depend on the participants being straightforward in their responses. This will require that the questionnaire be handled in a manner to ensure complete confidentiality. Names should not be placed on the questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaire should be analyzed in such a manner to ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

Color-code the questionnaire for the different groups (students, employers and faculty coordinators) to permit ease in identification. Send a cover letter with each questionnaire emphasizing the participants' contribution to the concept of cooperative education. A Certificate of Appreciation to employers is very valuable. Enclose a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope for return mailing. Disseminate the survey results to all college community faculty and staff.

Self-evaluation also involves gathering statistical data relating to the number of students who applied for admission to the program, the number of students placed in co-op positions, the number of employers who participated in the program and a summary of all job development and promotional activities conducted throughout the year. Statistical data and results of the survey questionnaire should be compared with program goals and objectives established for this time period to determine level of accomplishment. The results should also be summarized in an annual report and disseminated to the college community. Based on information contained in the annual report, goals and objectives should be established for the next year.

Evaluation by a consultant will often result in positive benefits for the co-op program. A consultant may be more objective in evaluating the program. The evaluation may have more credibility, and a consultant could address questions and issues that would be difficult to address internally. A rating scale of 0 to 4 may be used for each question to arrive at a numerical score. Some possible questions to include:

1. Is there a college policy regarding cooperative education?
2. For curricula involved in cooperative education, is it an integral part of the education program?
3. Do employers participate in the cooperative education program as advisors, consultants, or resource persons?
4. Is there adequate support from department chairpersons, deans, chief academic officer and the college president?
5. Is there adequate recognition of the educational value of cooperative education (academic credit)?
6. Is there adequate communication between the cooperative education department and the students, faculty, administrators, and employers?
7. Have the college costs for the operation of the co-op program been determined for clerical, professional staff, travel, spaces, and equipment?
8. Does the current budget sufficiently support the operation of a co-op program?
9. Are space facilities adequate?
10. Is the location of the office convenient to students?
11. Is the career reference library adequate?
12. Is there adequate time and funds available for coordinators to have proper contact with employer?
13. Has a realistic load based on the ratio of student/coordinator and student/clerical staff been established in order to determine personnel needed?
14. Is the student handbook adequate for guiding students so as to insure they understand program requirements?
15. Does the professional staff have adequate training, experience, and interest necessary to effectively operate the program?
16. Are the objectives and goals established for the program reasonable?
17. Have the goals and objectives established for the program been accomplished each year?
18. How well do the co-op training positions serve the career objectives of the students?
19. Are employers supportive of the program?
20. Is there an adequate method of collecting and cataloging data on a periodic basis to insure a historical record of the program?
21. Is there adequate membership representation by co-op professionals in the various professional organizations related to Cooperative Education?

22. Consultant's evaluation of the success of the cooperative education program:

It is recognized that the most accurate evaluation of the cooperative education program cannot be made until a college has several years' experience in offering the program. Furthermore, it usually requires **three to five years** after graduation for students to become settled in a career. Therefore, an evaluation five years after students have graduated to determine their level of success in the world of work can be informative.

In summary, evaluation should be a continuous process that has two basic functions: to monitor and to provide feedback. One of the major misconceptions about evaluation stems from the assumption that the act of evaluating means the final assignment of a value. This common misconception has led to misunderstanding, distrust, and fear of the purpose of evaluation. The purpose of evaluation is to provide feedback regarding ways in which a program may be improved and to aid in establishing future program goals and objectives. Evaluation is essential in planning future program directions.

## CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Cooperative education is an integral part of the American educational process. It is essential that those involved in the process be guided by a self-imposed code of ethics that speak of a higher purpose that binds cooperative education participants to a common good that benefits all of its constituents.

The principles outlined below are designed to serve as guidelines for professional conduct by employers, colleges, and students. When these principles are implemented with honesty and integrity, satisfying professional relationships will result.

In addition, it is hoped that adherence to this code of ethics will result in a professional climate which curtails areas of potential abuse by employers, colleges, and students.

Finally, this code of ethics is not all-inclusive but is intended to serve as a framework within which the cooperative education process can function in an equitable manner with the highest degree of integrity and professionalism.

The vital relationships that exist among employer, college and student demand the highest levels of professionalism, and the cooperative education Code of Ethics is a foundation for such professionalism.

The principles outlined in this document are designed to guide professional conduct. Endorsement of these principles will benefit all those involved in this unique process and, if put into practice, will reduce the potential for abuse. These principles are intended to serve as a framework within which professionalism can be promoted.

### **A. Students**

1. Students should honor the policies and procedures of their respective colleges.
2. Students should honor the personnel policies of their employers.
3. Students should present their qualifications and interests as accurately as possible when interviewing for co-op positions.
4. Students should interview and complete employment procedures only if there is a sincere and genuine intention to accept a co-op position if offered.
5. Students should notify the employer of acceptance or rejection of employment offers at the earliest possible time.
6. After accepting an employment offer, students should withdraw from the interviewing process and notify the college or university and other employers with whom offers may be pending.

### **B. Educational Institution Professionals**

1. Cooperative education professionals are responsible for establishing and monitoring practices that ensure fair and accurate representation of the students and the program to employers.
2. Cooperative education professionals should respect student rights covered by state and federal privacy laws.
3. Cooperative education professionals should promote and follow non-discriminatory practices.
4. Co-op professionals should strive to develop new work opportunities for their students rather

than pursuing co-op positions developed by other colleges. The right of the employer to choose employees based upon their credentials should be respected.

### **C. Employer Co-op Professionals**

1. Employer co-op professionals should be responsible for the ethical and legal conduct of their employees throughout the cooperative education experience. They should not ask students to participate in illegal or unethical activities.
2. Employer co-op professionals should respect the legal obligations of cooperative education professionals and request only those services or information that can legally be provided.
3. Employer co-op professionals should not misrepresent positions offered.
4. Employer co-op professionals should honor the policies and procedures of colleges.
5. Employer co-op professionals should consider the long range career plans of the individual student as opposed to the immediate needs of the agency or company when extending offers of full-time employment before the student has completed his or her certificate or degree.
6. Employer co-op professionals should make every effort to honor offers of cooperative education employment once they have been formally extended.

## APPENDIX P

### AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR CO-OP PROGRAMS

On the state level, assistance in planning, expanding, problem solving, and evaluating cooperative education programs is readily available from:

- a. The Programs Section, Academic and Student Services Division, at the North Carolina Community College System Office in Raleigh, North Carolina.
- b. Members of the North Carolina Cooperative Education Association (NCCEA). The association is comprised of members that represent both two- and four- year public and private colleges and universities and employers of co-op students.
- c. The Cooperative Education and Internship Association, Inc. (CEIA) offers professional development assistance to co-op programs through an annual conference, a journal, newsletter, and national academy. This national organization provides information for colleges to begin their initial programs.
- d. Web sites at the individual colleges.