

Cooperative Education Program FAQ'S

Q: WHAT IS A COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (CO-OP)?

A: A Cooperative Education Program (CO-OP) is a program in which professionally supervised work experience is integrated with academic classroom experience to provide real-world educational training. **UH CO-OP can be part-time or full-time.** CO-OP consists of competitive industry leaders and higher education institutions “cooperating” with one another to provide hands-on work experience to **full-time actively enrolled students** within a degree seeking program, while simultaneously receiving vital assistance from student interns to complete company projects and initiatives, in addition to, using CO-OP as an in-house recruiting tool for future full-time employment of entry-level college students. **UH CO-OP is not offered to recent UH graduates or alumni.**

Q: HOW IS CO-OP DOCUMENTED?

A: CO-OP is a documented internship that appears on a student’s university transcript to verify the educational training received by the employer has been authorized and confirmed as educational training experience within the students’ field of study. Students are required to submit a work report at the end of each CO-OP semester to personally document receiving work experience within their major field of study to receive a grade on the official transcript. **UH CO-OP graded as SATISFACTORY/UNSATISFACTORY only; not for course credit.** **Interning with an employer for course credit is not a CO-OP and must be coordinated between the employer and the college department, NOT the CO-OP Office.**

Q: HOW DOES CO-OP BENEFIT STUDENTS?

A: A CO-OP experience enables students to receive valuable career training and education with pay in the student’s major field of study either part-time or full-time. It also allows students to network, find mentors, discover the diverse nature of their field of study, prepare them for future professional opportunities and make them more competitive when seeking future full-time employment after graduation. **UH CO-OP does not promote unpaid internships.**

Q: WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO CO-OP?

A: Most students participate in CO-OP at the start of their junior year but all student levels are eligible to apply to CO-OP after completing a minimum of two semesters in the United States, including currently enrolled post-baccalaureate, DACA, F-1 international, and graduate students. CO-OP positions are available in most UH college disciplines, especially engineering, business, and natural science and mathematics. Students must be in good academic standing in the college and considered full-time the semester (Long Semester: Fall or Spring) prior to participating in CO-OP.

Q: HOW DOES CO-OP BENEFIT EMPLOYERS?

A: Employers receive qualified and innovative assistance for short and long-term projects from energetic student interns willing to learn for much less pay than a contracted or experienced employee. CO-OP is also an essential recruiting tool when employers wish to hire entry-level full-time college graduates.

Q: IS THERE AN EMPLOYER COST ASSOCIATED WITH CO-OP?

A: With the exception of paying student intern hourly wages for work performed, **there are no costs to employers associated with CO-OP.** Employers determine the rate of pay for all CO-OP interns they hire. Employers may agree to reimburse the \$215.00 CO-OP programming fee charged to CO-OP students but it is not required. When requested by the student in writing, employers who agree to pay the fee, will receive an official invoice from the UH CO-OP Office to directly reimburse the student who has already paid the CO-OP fee through the student university account.

Q: IS THERE EMPLOYER PAPERWORK ASSOCIATED WITH CO-OP?

A: All CO-OP application paperwork is handled by the student and university officials. **A pre-formatted one-page performance evaluation by the student interns’ immediate supervisor is required near the end of each CO-OP semester.** With the exception of an official company offer letter, all paperwork for CO-OP is processed by the CO-OP Office and the UH college department approving the student is eligible to complete a CO-OP work experience each semester.

Q: WHAT DOES AN OFFICIAL CO-OP OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER CONTAIN?

A: The official offer letter must specify the job title, responsibilities, number of hours per week, and the job location on company letterhead. The letter should also state the future start date and ending date (if the ending date is known). An employment offer letter is required **each semester a student works for the employer as a CO-OP intern.**