

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions | Employers

What is experiential learning?

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience.

What is Co-Op?

Co-Op is an experiential learning program that allows students the opportunity to apply the academics taught in the classroom to the workplace setting.

What is the difference between Co-op and Internship?

Co-op is full-time paid employment for 2-3 semesters. It is recommended that students have consecutive semesters of work experience. Co-op should not be taken during the final semester before graduation. An Internship is a one semester experience that is part-time and can be paid or unpaid. Tuition is not assessed for Co-op, but it is for Internships.

How many hours per week does a Co-op student work?

A Co-op student works full-time from 35 to 40 hours per week.

Who determines the work schedule?

The work schedule is determined by the employer.

Why should I partner with Marshall University to hire Co-op?

Students are looking to gain experience within the industry to supplement academics. Through this program, employers can give students the opportunity to enter the workforce in a cost-effective way. In addition, upon observing an individual student's abilities, the employer may determine whether the student might be a possible fit for future employment.

What are the fields of the students participating in the program?

Students in the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences may have the



following majors for those students earning an undergraduate degree (should be at least a Junior to participate in Co-op):

- Computer Science
- Computer and Information Security
- Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Biomedical Engineering
- Safety Technology

Are students in the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences required to participate in Co-op?

Co-op is strongly recommended, but not required at this time.

Will a Co-op student take classes during Co-op?

Students can take no more than 6 hours and must have approval by the Employer Partner and Co-op Coordinator. If classes are taken, they should not interfere with the work schedule (preferably on-line courses).

When should the student start Co-op?

Co-op should begin at the beginning of the Summer I term preferably during the Junior year and extend into the Fall or begin in the Spring and extend into Summer I. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.

Are students paid for participation in Co-op?

A Co-op student must be paid by the employer for the full-time position.

How is pay determined?

Pay is determined by the employer and is sometimes competitive within the industry.

Are students considered employees?

Students receiving pay are considered employees. Thus, employers should follow all state and federal requirements including the Fair Labor Standards Act. Students must receive a W-2 at the end of the year and have taxes withheld. Participants with Co-op cannot be considered as independent contractors or consultants. Although benefits may or may not be included, students do need to be included with workers' compensation. Yet, they will not qualify for unemployment benefits as it may be a limited experience. Students may be provided with sick days by the employer, but the expectation is that no more than 3 total days per semester are missed unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Can international students participate in Co-op?

International students are eligible for participation provided they meet the requirements of employment including proof of identity, Social Security number, and any additional information deemed necessary following any federal guidelines.



Who is responsible for liability for the student?

The employer is responsible for liability issues and should have insurance coverage in the amount of \$1 million/\$3 million aggregate.

Is there any Employer Partner agreement or contract necessary for participation?

Yes, all Employer Partners must sign a participation agreement prior to making an offer to a student.

How is health insurance handled?

Any student participating in a work experience must have proof of insurance. As an employer, you may choose to offer health insurance to the student, but it is not required.

Will students participate in employment screenings?

An employer may choose to have screenings such as a physical, drug-test, criminal records check, or other standard requirements for a regular employee.

Does employment have to be near the Marshall University campus?

Employment opportunities do not have to be in the Huntington, West Virginia vicinity. Students may choose to temporarily relocate to fulfill the Co-op experience or eventually decide to accept permanent employment.

Who is responsible for expenses related to relocation?

If a student relocates for Co-op, he/she will have the responsibility for housing or moving expenses. Yet, an employer may elect to assist a student with those needs.

How do I find an interested student for a Co-Op?

Positions may be posted with the Office of Career Education through Handshake, an on-line system for advertising positions in which students may apply. In addition, the Co-op Coordinator for the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences may also help. In addition, there are Career Fairs that are held virtually or on campus. Finally, employers may make

a request to the Co-op Coordinator to offer informational sessions to recruit students (with 30 days prior notice). Once potential applicants are identified, employers will have the opportunity to review resumes and interview for available positions. If there is a successful candidate for a position, an offer can be made by the employer.

Where can interviews take place?

Interviews can be held on campus, at the employment site, or other designated location. Phone or computer interviews are also possible. Alcohol should not be involved during the interview or time of the job offer.

Should an employer request references or recommendations?

It is a good idea to check the references or require a recommendation of a potential employee.

How do I make an offer of employment to a Co-op student?

Although a verbal discussion can be made for employment, offers must be made in writing and can be done through mail or e-mail.

How do I become involved with a Career Fair/Expo?

The MU Office of Career Education or the Co-op Coordinator can assist employers wishing to participate in a Career Fair/Expo. In addition, an Annual Engineering Day is offered in February each year for high school students who are interested in the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences.

What if I hire a student that is called to military service?

If a student is required to participate in military service, they will be released from the program, as necessary.

Can a student participate in Co-op after graduation?

All student work experiences must be completed one semester prior to graduation. A job offer can be made for regular employment following graduation if desired.

What happens if I have difficulty with the performance of a Co-op student?

The Co-op Coordinator should be contacted immediately if there are any concerns with a student.

Can a Co-op student be terminated?

Although a student can be terminated for reasons such as economic conditions or poor performance, every effort will be made for the student to complete the semester of the experience.

How do I evaluate the performance of the Co-op student?

A Final Evaluation must be completed by the Employer Partner upon the completion of the experience and reviewed with the student. This is due to the Co-Op Coordinator no later than the Wednesday of finals week.

Are there other forms that the employer must complete for the Co-Op student?

The employer must sign for permission for a Co-op student to take additional classes and verify the hours were completed through a Work Report form which is due no later than the 1st day of each month to the Co-op Coordinator.

How do I contact the Co-op Coordinator?

The Co-op Coordinator is Tanner Drown. His office is in Room 2103C in the Weisberg Family Engineering Complex at 1628 3rd Avenue, Huntington WV 25703. He can be reached at (304) 696-3561 or through e-mail at drown12@marshall.edu.



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