

# FAQs

## Frequently Asked Questions | Students

### 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.

### How many hours per week do I work Co-Op?

This is full-time work (35-40 hours per week).

### Why should I participate in Co-op?

As the job market becomes more competitive, employers are searching for those students that have both education and experience. Through participation in Co-op, students will have a greater potential for obtaining employment as they enhance academics with skill while developing relationships with employers. During the activity, students can ensure that their goals align with their degree.

### Is participation in Co-op required?

Although Co-op is strongly recommended, it is not mandatory at this time.

### What is the difference between Co-op and Internship?

Co-op is full-time paid employment for 2-3 semesters. An internship is a one semester experience that is part-time and can be paid or unpaid.

### Do I pay tuition during Co-op?

There is no tuition for Co-op. If additional classes are taken during Co-op, tuition is assessed for those classes. There is regular tuition for Internships based upon credit hours.

### Do I get college credit for Co-op?

Although credit hours will not be specified, it will be indicated on the transcript that the Co-op Certificate was awarded if two semesters (or three semesters) are completed.

### Am I still considered a full-time student during Co-op?

Students participating in Co-op are still considered full-time students and will still be eligible for services such as housing. The experience will not interfere with programs such as financial aid.

### Are students participating in Co-op undergraduate or graduate students?

Those participating in Co-op or Internships should be undergraduate students (Juniors or Seniors) at this time.

### What MU CECS programs are eligible for Co-op?

Any CECS program may participate in Co-op.

### How many semesters does Co-op last?

A Co-op requires 2 semesters to receive a Co-op certificate but can be as many as 3 semesters.

### When should I 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.

### What course number is used for registration for Co-op?

The course number for Co-op for engineering is ENGR 350, computer sciences is CS 351, and SFT 350 for safety technology.

### Can I take other classes during Co-op?

Other courses can be taken with approval (preferably on-line classes), but no more than 6 hours are possible during Co-op.

### If I transfer into the CECS program, can I participate in Co-op?

Transfer students from other universities must meet the same requirements in their major's Co-op program as non-transfers and must complete at least one semester of classes before participation in a work experience.

### Do I get paid to participate in a work experience?

All Co-op positions are paid positions.

### How is pay determined?

Pay is established by the employer.

### Can I negotiate my pay?

No. Students may not negotiate their pay for their Co-op positions. Students may choose whether to accept a position.

### Are Co-op positions with the same employer for multiple semesters?

Co-op positions can be with the same employer every semester or they can be with different employers. It is preferred to stay with the same employer.

### Can I do consecutive terms with Co-op?

It is recommended that Co-op semesters be consecutive. If this is a concern, the student should meet with the Co-op Coordinator.

### When should I begin thinking about Co-op?

The Co-op Orientation course should be taken as a Freshmen or Sophomore. The application for Co-op can be completed as a Sophomore, Junior, or Senior.

### What do I need to do to prepare for Co-op?

- Register for Co-op Orientation course
- Prepare a resume/cover letter
- Enroll in Handshake at Office of Career Education
- Participate in Career Fairs/Expos and Employer Events
- Complete application (and possibly request to take other courses during Co-op)

### What is the Co-op Orientation course (ENGR 217)?

The Co-op Orientation course will help the student prepare for the Co-op experience.

- Understanding the Co-op program/requirement
- Identifying job search strategies
- Developing a resume
- Tailoring the cover letter
- LinkedIn/Handshake
- Researching employers
- Enhancing interviewing skills
- Securing Co-op placements

### What is Handshake?

Handshake is an online system to prepare students for employment and assist with a job search. Employers may register positions that are available, and students may respond to jobs of interest through submitting applications and resumes. This program is offered by the Office of Career Education.

### What do I do if I need assistance with a resume or interviewing skills?

The Office of Career Education or the Co-op Coordinator may aid with these topics.

### What are the eligibility requirements to participate with Co-op?

- GPA 2.0
- Academic and Disciplinary Issues Resolved
- No Financial Holds
- Matriculated (established program/major)
- Documentation of Co-op Application with Co-op Coordinator Approval
- Pass Orientation Class
- Must be Sophomore Status or Higher to Apply
- Satisfactory Progress Toward Degree
- Complete any Employment Screenings
- Last Semester Should Not Be Co-op



### **When may I begin a Co-op program?**

Co-Op is intended for Junior or Senior status, but exceptions may be considered.

### **What do I to initiate the Co-op experience?**

There is an application available at <https://www.marshall.edu/cecs/files/CECS-Co-Op-Placement-Form.pdf> that should be completed the semester prior to the Co-op to be submitted to the Co-op Coordinator. A Student Agreement will be signed upon hire.

### **How do I find a Co-op?**

Positions are posted with Handshake through the MU Office of Career Education. A student may also seek a position independently, but it will require approval. The Co-op Coordinator may also assist. It always helps to let people (friends, family, instructors) know that you are seeking a position. Attending Career Fairs/ Expos and Employer sponsored events is also helpful.

### **Am I guaranteed a position for Co-op?**

No. Students are not guaranteed employment. It is the student's responsibility to secure a position, but the Co-op Coordinator and the MU Office of Career Education can help and support.

### **Does my position have to be in the local area?**

No. A Co-op does not have to be in the local area. There may be opportunities in other areas to consider.

### **What do I do about housing if I go to a different location for Co-op?**

Ultimately, accommodations are the responsibility of the student. The employer may choose to assist.

### **Can I still use university housing if I do Co-op in the local area?**

Yes. University housing is available if requirements are met.

### **Am I eligible for student health services during Co-op?**

Yes. Students are eligible to participate with Marshall Health Services. There is a requirement that students must have health insurance to participate in experiential learning. The employer may choose to offer health insurance as a benefit.

### **Can I accept more than one position?**

No. Once a position for Co-op is accepted, students may not continue to seek other positions. In addition, any other employers considering you for employment must be notified. Also, you must provide the Co-op Coordinator with your employment information.

### **Am I considered an employee as with Co-op?**

Yes. Students may receive certain benefits from paid employment.

### **Do I have to meet any pre-employment checks by employer?**

Yes. The Co-op students must meet any necessary pre-employment checks that are required.

### **Will I be eligible for unemployment at the end of my Co-op?**

No. The Co-op will not make a student eligible for unemployment.

### **Will I be eligible for workers' compensation?**

Yes. Any student participating with paid employment should be eligible for workers' compensation.

### **Do I have to pay taxes on my income?**

Yes. Any income that you receive will be taxable.

### **Can I be considered an independent contractor or consultant with a Co-op?**

No. Marshall University does not grant Co-op credit for work performed as a consultant or an independent contractor. Such supervision is inconsistent with consultant/ independent contractor status. Students should receive a W2 form (not a 1099) at the end of the year.

### **What happens if I am called for military service?**

Men and women called to active duty in the armed services of the United States are granted full refund of fees, but no credit, if the call comes before the end of the first three fourths of the semester or term, and full credit, but no refund of fees, is granted if the call comes thereafter as per MU policy. Please contact the Co-op Coordinator with this occurrence.

### **Are international students eligible for Co-op?**

International students are eligible for Co-op if no federal restrictions prevent participation.

### **What do I do if I am having problems with my Co-op experience?**

Contact the Co-op Coordinator if you have any problems with your experience.

### **What work schedule will I follow?**

My employer will determine my work schedule, but I must meet the minimum requirements. Co-op must work a minimum of 35-40 hours per week.

### **What happens if I do not complete my Co-op?**

The Co-op Coordinator must be contacted immediately if there is any reason that the assignment will not be completed. There could be a lay off because of an economic situation or a termination for performance issues. Changing employers may be considered (but not guaranteed) depending on the situation.

### **How are excused absences determined?**

MU policies have specific guidelines regarding attendance issues. The employer will contact the Co-op Coordinator for any absences that exceed 3 total days.

### **Can I do a Co-op after I graduate?**

No. All work must be completed the semester before graduation.

### **What reports am I required to complete during Co-op?**

- Work Experience Goals (due within 10 days of approval)
- Work Report (due the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month)
- Student Evaluation Report (due the Wednesday of finals week)
- Employer Evaluation Report (completed by Employer Partner but signed by the student; due the Wednesday of finals week)

### **How will my employer evaluate me?**

A performance evaluation will be completed by the Employer Partner, reviewed with you, and signed prior to submitting the report 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Huntington WV 25703. He can be reached at (304) 696-3561 or through email at [drown12@marshall.edu](mailto:drown12@marshall.edu).



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