Nashville State Community College
Cooperative Education Program Guidelines

What is Cooperative Education (Co-op)?
Cooperative Education or co-op is a college program that integrates classroom studies with a paid, real-life work experience in your major-related field.

What are the student benefits to Co-op?
Co-op allows the student the opportunity to gain valuable work experience before graduation. The student earns a paycheck, academic credit and gains work experience all at the same time. It improves job opportunities both with your current co-op employer as well as being able to market yourself with experience when you graduate.

How do I qualify for Co-op?
In order to qualify for the co-op program you must meet the following criteria:
- Must be enrolled in an A.A.S. degree program or technical certificate at NSCC
- Minimum of 2.5 cumulative GPA
- Must have completed at least three courses in your major (this does not include general education requirements such as math, english, social sciences, etc.)
- Must be enrolled in at least one course in your major each semester you apply for co-op

Do I submit a resume for Co-op?
No, you complete a co-op application. We have a co-op application on diskette, which you can pick up, in the Career Employment Center. Once you have completed the application, please bring it back to the Career Employment Center with a copy of your college transcript.

Once I submit an application for Co-op, what happens next?
Once you have submitted a co-op application, a Center employee will review it. Once your co-op application is approved, a file is created. As job opportunities come in, we will send out your application directly to employers seeking co-op students in your major. You will need to stop by the Center every few weeks to check the status of your application.

Is there anything I need to do to keep my application active?
Your co-op application is active for one semester. At the end of each semester, you will need to update your co-op application adding the courses you have completed.

What happens when an employer contacts me regarding a Co-op position?
If an employer is interested in setting up an interview, the employer will contact you directly. You will then schedule an interview to meet with the employer to find out about the co-op position.

What should I do if I am not interested in a particular Co-op job I have been contacted for?
If you are not interested in the particular co-op position, you must return the phone call of the employer and let them know that you are not interested. We ask you to be honest with the employer as to why you are not interested (i.e., unable to work evenings, cannot coordinate school schedule around work schedule, unable to travel, etc..)

It is extremely important for you to contact an employer whether or not you are interested in a position. It reflects a professional attitude of our students and of the Center. If you are contacted by an employer and you do not return their call and our office is notified, you will be ineligible to participate in the co-op program.

After I have been hired on Co-op, what do I need to do?
Once you have accepted a co-op position, you will need to pick up a learning agreement from the Career Employment Center and complete it. You must report to the Center within three days of your hire date in order to complete your final paperwork.

What is a learning agreement?
The learning agreement is the contract between the college, your employer and you. You will complete the learning agreement with your supervisor and write your learning objectives based on what you will learn for the semester. Once you and your supervisor have signed the learning agreement, you will bring it back to the Career Employment Center.

How soon do I have to return the learning agreement to the Career Employment Center?

Your learning agreement needs to be submitted to the Career employment Center within three days of being hired.

How do register for my Co-op class credit?
Once you have submitted your learning agreement to the Center, we will assign you a course number for your co-op class. You will then register for this class in the Center. After registering, you will go directly to the business office to pay for your course.

How many credits will I earn per semester in Co-op?
If you are working part time, below 20 hours a week, you will earn 1.5 credit hours per semester. If you are working 20 hours or above, you will earn 3.0 credit hours per semester.

How much does the Co-op class cost?
Credit hour prices are listed each semester in the schedule. You would multiply either 1.5 credits or 3.0 credits times whatever the current rate per hour is.

During fall and spring semesters, if you are registered full time for 12 credit hours or more, and then register for a co-op class, there is no additional charge. If you are registered below 12 hours, you will pay by the credit hour for your course. During the Summer semester, regardless of the number of hours you register for, you pay by the credit hour.

Does having my co-op application on file guarantee me a position in my field?
Not necessarily. Many factors affect your chances for obtaining a co-op position including job availability, the economy and the available candidates for each position. Your co-op application will be sent out each time a position in your field becomes available. You may be competing with other candidates in the co-op program as well as those from other colleges.

The Career Employment Center provides you the opportunity to be in the pool of candidates provided to the employer. If the employer is interested in scheduling an interview, they will contact you directly.

Once I am hired on Co-op, do I have to continue to take classes each semester?
Yes, in order to be eligible for the co-op program, you must be enrolled in courses related to your major each semester you are on co-op.

How do I earn Academic Credit for the Co-op class?

At the end of the semester you will have two items to submit to receive credit for the co-op program.
- 3-5 page report detailing your learning objectives
- Your employer evaluation completed by your supervisor

Your grade is based on these two items. There are deadlines for submission, so please check with the Career Employment Center for due dates.

How many semesters may I participate in the Co-op program?
It depends on the particular position. Once you have completed one semester on co-op, the opportunity to complete subsequent semesters is determined by the Career Employment Center and the employer. The maximum number of semesters you may participate in the co-op program is four unless approved by the Career Employment Center.

What if I already work in a job related to my field? Can I earn Co-op credit?
If you already work in an area related to your program major, stop by the Career Employment Center to see if Co-op credit is possible for you. We have worked with many employers and students to allow them to earn valuable co-op credit at their current positions.

What happens if I am on Co-op and I graduate?
Once you graduate from Nashville State Tech, you are ineligible for the co-op program. You must be enrolled in a degree program or technical certificate to be eligible for co-op.

What if I am terminated or asked not to return to a co-op position?
If you are terminated from a co-op position, you will no longer be eligible to participate in the cooperative education program. It is important for you to conduct yourself in the co-op position as a professional student/employee who represents both the Career Employment Center as well as the college.

For more information regarding the Co-op Program, please contact:
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