

Cooperative (Co-op) Education

The Cooperative Education Program at Santa Clara University integrates classroom work with practical industrial experience. This optional program can provide alternate or parallel periods of college education with periods of training in industry and government. The industrial training is related to your field of study and often is diversified to afford a wide range of experience. The objective of the program is to provide you the opportunity, through this interaction of study and work experience, to enhance your academic knowledge, to further your personal and work experience, and to learn more about working with people.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Engineering major
- Completion of 90 quarter units for undergraduates or 30 units for graduate students
- Minimum GPA of 2.5 for undergraduates or 3.0 for graduate students
- Must be a full-time student the quarter preceding the Co-op assignment
- Must be currently enrolled as a student at SCU and not concurrently working as a Teaching Assistant

F-1 Visa Students

- Must be enrolled as a full-time student for nine consecutive months and currently have F-1 status

FULL-TIME VERSUS PART-TIME

Co-op assignments may be “parallel” or “alternating.” **Parallel positions** combine a part-time work assignment (15 to 29 hours per week) with academic coursework. Parallel part-time positions last a minimum of two quarters or six months and a maximum of four quarters or 12 months. **Alternating positions** are full-time (30 or more hours per week) and last a minimum of one quarter or three months and a maximum of two quarters or six months.

F-1 Visa Students

- Part-time is considered to be no less than 15 and no more than 20 hours per week.
- Full-time is considered to be 21 or more hours per week.
- Graduate students are allowed a maximum of 9 months in full-time co-ops.
- Students must see the International Student Coordinator for unit requirements while engaging in a co-op.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Course 188 for undergraduates or ENGR 288 for graduate students may be taken for one to two units as follows:

One Unit

- One quarter (10 weeks) or three months of full-time co-op.
- Two quarters (20 weeks) or six months of part-time co-op.
- Two quarters (20 weeks) or six months of part-time co-op.

Two Units

- Two quarters or six months of full-time co-op.
- Four quarters or twelve months of part-time co-op.
- One quarter of full-time and two quarters of part-time (i.e. full-time over one summer and two quarters part-time).

Pass/No Pass Credit for these units is given upon satisfactory completion of a Final Report on the co-op assignment.

Units for co-ops do not count toward the completion of a master's degree for graduate students.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

Only paid co-ops will be accepted by the Co-op Program.

Compensation must be in the form of actual monetary wages that are greater than or equal to the current minimum wage in the State of California.

Co-ops involve a 3-way partnership between the student, the employer, and the Co-op Program. When the student has an F-1 Visa, this becomes a 4-way partnership that includes International Student Services. Important decisions affecting a co-op must be made with the full knowledge and agreement of all the parties involved before any changes are made.

Students are expected to complete co-op assignments according to the requirements established by the Co-op Program and stipulated in the employer's offer letter and job duties/responsibilities. International students with an F-1 Visa must also adhere to the rules established for them by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Choosing to terminate prematurely or leave a co-op is not acceptable. Consequences for doing so include:

- A negative grade.
- Forfeiture of any refund on tuition and fees.
- Disqualification of further participation in the Co-op Program.
- Placing one's visa status in jeopardy (for international students).

All fees for the Co-op Program are determined by the Bursar's Office and the School of Engineering.

Unique situations that arise will be subject to interpretation by the Assistant Director for Experiential Education and the School of Engineering.

REGISTRATION FOR A CO-OP

Students who have received an offer letter will need to enroll in the Co-op Program and begin the registration process with Enzie Lagattuta. This process also involves the student obtaining authorization from the chair of his/her academic department and, if he/she is an international student with an F-1 Visa, obtaining authorization from the International Student Advisor at Santa Clara University.

If the co-op has been offered to a student with an F-1 Visa, then it will take five business days for the authorization process to be completed by the International Student Advisor. This means that it will take five business days from the time the student begins the co-op paperwork in the Career Center to the time he/she is able to begin working.

Students must request employers to provide the following information in order to facilitate the co-op registration process in a timely manner:

- An offer letter on official company letterhead, including:
 - The title of the position (including a statement that the position is a co-op).
 - The supervisor's name and contact information.
 - The name of the department in which the student will be working.
 - The hourly wage or salary (all co-ops must be paid).
 - Duration of the co-op assignment (10 weeks - 3 months or 20 weeks - 6 months).
 - The start date and anticipated end date of the co-op assignment.
- A description of the duties and responsibilities of the co-op assignment.
- The student must provide an unofficial copy of his/her transcript.

Undergraduates obtaining co-ops will be registered in the corresponding Co-op Education course for their department (CENG 188, COEN 188, ELEN 188, or MECH 188). All graduate students will be registered for ENGR 288. Co-op registration is completed through the Career Center and not through Student Records.

Students with an F-1 Visa may work only during the dates approved by the Career Center, their department chair, and the International Student Advisors. *Working without authorization is illegal and may jeopardize their F-1 status.*

PAYMENT OF FEES

Graduate students must pay all fees in advance before the Registrar's office will accept registration.

Undergraduates must pay all fees in advance before the Registrar's office will accept registration when: 1) the co-op is for a summer session, or 2) the co-op is for a prior fall, winter, or spring quarter for which the student paid less than the full-time tuition rate.

The late registration fee will be waived for all students.

EXPECTATIONS OF CO-OP SUPERVISORS

Supervision is a critical and essential factor of cooperative education which fosters the successful transition from the classroom to the work environment:

- A supervisor is a senior engineer who has the primary responsibility for a student and who provides mentoring and guidance.
- A supervisor has the knowledge, experience, and expertise to provide teaching and training that is appropriate to the student's academic level and that challenges the student to develop greater skill development.
- A supervisor uses his/her skills to effectively provide leadership and guidance, clarity of expectations, training and development, teaching skills for employability, ongoing monitoring and feedback, and evaluation.
- A supervisor evaluates the student's progress based on specific learning objectives and outcomes.
- A supervisor also evaluates a student in the areas of his/her ability to learn, computation/technical skills, problem solving and creative thinking skills, oral and written communication skills (including delivery of presentations and public speaking), interpersonal and teamwork skills, organizational effectiveness skills (how one fits in with the norms and expectations of the organization), professional and career development skills, and basic work habits (time management, attention to deadlines, etc.).

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYER

Benefits to employers include: access to a pool of technically trained, high achieving students; the opportunity to evaluate candidates for employment within the work environment; a means of cost-effective recruitment, training, and retention of potential employees; and flexible staffing opportunities.

FINANCIAL AID

If you receive financial aid, contact the Financial Aid Office to discuss how your co-op income will affect your financial aid package. Make an appointment with a financial aid advisor prior to starting the co-op assignment. If you take one quarter off to complete a six-month, full-time co-op assignment, and you are receiving financial aid, be sure you contact the Financial Aid Office to let them know you are returning to campus.

HEALTH INSURANCE

If you decide to take one quarter off for a six-month, full-time co-op assignment, you may experience changes in your health insurance coverage. It is your responsibility to find out what changes may occur. Many health care providers will not provide coverage if you are enrolled in less than 12 college units. However, some employers may offer you health insurance for the duration of the co-op assignment. The Cowell Student Health Center may assist you with temporary coverage during your co-op assignment. Contact the Cowell Student Health Center to clarify any questions you may have.

FINAL REPORT

Your Final Report must be submitted to the Assistant Director for Experiential Education three weeks before the final day of your co-op. **YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR REPORT ON TIME TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE.** An acceptable Final Report must be received before arrangements will be made for a new co-op. The report is to be 3 - 5 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. Please follow these guidelines:

The **FIRST HALF** is to be a technical review of your co-op experience. Include a summary of your assignment, what skills you developed, who you worked with, special equipment you used, your accomplishments, projects you completed, additional training you may have received, and how you were supervised.

The **SECOND HALF** is to be a critical reflection upon your experience. This allows the experience to have meaning for your life and enables it to inform and shape your future experiences. The following reflection questions will help you to review, organize, and interpret your experience:

Reflection Questions

- How does this experience compare with similar experiences in your past?
- What have you learned about yourself - your knowledge base, your values, your skills and abilities, your personal qualities, and your career as an engineer?
- What have you learned about the way people interact with one another in the workplace?
- How does what you learned through this experience relate to your coursework?
- What questions did this experience raise for you—about yourself, about others, about social structures and organizational dynamics, about ethical issues and concerns, and about your future educational choices and career direction?
- What did you learn about the way you approach problems and difficult situations?
- How would you describe the value of this experience?
- If you were to repeat the experience, what would you do differently? Why?
- Which engineering courses prepared you the best for this experience? Why?
- What suggestions would you have for others considering a co-op assignment?

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Participation in the Co-op Program is a benefit and may be denied to anyone not meeting requirements or following guidelines.

Individual cases and unique situations are subject to interpretation by the Assistant Director for Experiential Education and the School of Engineering. It is your responsibility to follow all guidelines pertaining to the Cooperative Education Program at Santa Clara University. Failure to do so could affect your grade and result in loss of course units or rejection from the program altogether.

It is your responsibility to complete and keep current all records and information. While on assignment, you are expected to perform your duties and responsibilities in a professional manner as one who represents Santa Clara University. All scheduled work assignments are to be completed in a timely and satisfactory manner.

If you took one quarter off to do a six-month, full-time co-op assignment, you should receive your registration materials as usual for the following quarter. If you do not, make sure you contact the Registrar's Office.

LEAVING THE COMPANY

Please complete the necessary procedures provided for exiting staff by the employer. Remember that the connections you have made during your co-op experience may be references for you in the future.

CO-OP PROGRAM APPOINTMENTS

Engineering students wanting to discuss co-ops are to contact the Assistant Director for Experiential Education, Enzie Lagattuta. Call (408) 554-4420 or e-mail at elagattuta@scu.edu.

SAME DAY APPOINTMENTS

You may also wish to meet with a career counselor to review your resume, discuss job interviewing, or plan your job search. Stop by the Career Center or call (408) 554-4421 any Monday through Friday to sign up for a short appointment that same day.



WAYS TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION AS YOU BEGIN YOUR INTERNSHIP

- Introduce yourself to everyone with a smile and firm handshake (a wimpy handshake indicates a lack of confidence).
 - Express enthusiasm and genuine interest in being a new member of the team.
 - Ask questions in order to develop a solid understanding of the organization. Make it apparent that you care about the organization (think like a long-term employee).
 - Be punctual! It is important your co-workers view you as a dependable worker.
 - Follow all rules and regulations.
 - Dress like a professional. Develop a clear understanding of what is and what is not acceptable attire.
 - Act like a professional. Do NOT gossip and ALWAYS remain positive.
 - Listen to directions and follow them well.
 - Be a problem-solver. Ask for advice and clarification when needed, but when applicable, do your best to solve your own problems before going to someone else.
 - Report your progress to your supervisor. Set aside a time each week to discuss your goals and accomplishments.
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WAYS TO END THE INTERNSHIP ON A POSITIVE NOTE

- Take some time to reflect and think about your accomplishments during this internship, the relationships you have formed, and the skills you have developed.
- Take a personal inventory of what you have learned, how you have used that knowledge to fulfill your responsibilities, and what remains to be done.
- This is a good time to pull out your resume and update it while you are still in the context of your internship and everything is still fresh in your mind.
- Make a list of the professional contacts you've made over the course of the internship and select those whom you would want to serve as future references. Be sure to get their full contact information for use down the road.
- Consider those professionals who have mentored you during your internship. A handwritten thank-you card expressing your gratitude for what you learned from them may be sent after the internship is over. It's a nice touch that will make a lasting impression and serve as a stepping off point for networking.
- Remember those contacts, potential references, and mentors in the future with an e-mail greeting around the holidays and at your personal and professional milestones. This keeps your relationship with them alive and they will appreciate the time you take to stay in touch.
- Prepare for a conversation with your supervisor about the possibility of another internship or a full-time position with the organization. If this meets your career goals, then reaffirm your interest in the organization and explore next steps.
- Your last days on the job are a time for personal satisfaction, honest evaluation, and looking forward. Be sure to end your internship with the grace of a professional.