

Honolulu Community College
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION GUIDE

Description of the Cooperative Education/Internship Program

Cooperative Education (Co-op) is a method of instruction which combines classroom/laboratory study with supervised internship work experiences. This planned and progressive, career-related student employment program is the capstone (or exit experience) of the college curriculum. Through these experiences, students can apply what they learn at school on the job, and they are exposed to new skills and knowledge at work. In addition, students also receive academic credit and a grade. Seventy-five hours of work per semester are required for each credit. Guidelines are listed below:

1. The practices and procedures used must provide the student with directed learning experiences in an actual employment situation that is correlated with classroom instruction in college.
2. The primary objective of cooperative education is instruction. The instruction offered must focus upon the student's current level of career development. Since the method of instruction is built around each student's needs and interests, the concept of individualized instruction must be established as a qualifying criterion.
3. Participating students must meet the following criteria:
 - be enrolled in a field of study related to the assigned work.
 - maintain good academic standing in their major courses at the college.
 - be recommended by the program instructor.

Student Eligibility

To enroll in Cooperative Education students must:

- be enrolled in a related program at HCC
- be recommended by the program instructor
- have already completed at least one semester in the Program
- develop an internship placement site with the co-op coordinator
- be able to complete a minimum of 75 hours of related work experience during the semester.
- Maintain positive work habits and an academic record that is always predictive of graduation.

The Co-op Process

Students begin the Cooperative Education (Co-op) course by submitting a Student Co-op Application. The Cooperative Education Coordinator develops suitable training Sites with employers in the community. Occasionally, employers request the college to provide applicants for specific Co-op/Internship openings, but quite often the Coordinator must contact employers for specific programs/students. The employer makes all hiring and employment decisions, but the Cooperative Education process is controlled by the College. Students identify suitable employers and contact them to establish a Co-op training site. Each student will complete the employer's application process by submitting a resume/application and completing an interview. The student and the employer will arrange the college and work schedule each semester. Placement options are determined by the student's interests, needs, abilities, and the opportunities available with cooperating employers.

Students receive instruction in an occupational field related to their academic major through alternating periods of study and periods of related work in a real life setting. The stated objectives will be the basis for evaluating student performance on the job. On-the-job assignments will be varied and in accordance with the work that needs to be done. All work will be performed under actual working conditions, designed to meet employer's requirements.

At the beginning of each semester, the employer, the student and the Co-op Coordinator outline the expectations, conditions and learning objectives for the training site via the Cooperative Education Student Training Agreement. The student will work throughout the semester to accomplish those goals and there will also be assignments that the student is required to submit to the coordinator as part of the Cooperative Education course. The student is also required to keep a Time Sheet which the employer will verify before the student submits it to the Coordinator at the end of the semester. Half way through the 16 week semester, the student will submit Midterm Report to the HCC Co-op Coordinator. Finally, the employer will provide feedback to the student and the coordinator at the end of the semester using the Supervisor's Evaluation of Student Performance form. The student will also provide feedback by submitting the Student Evaluation of Co-op.

Student Learning Outcomes

Participation in Co-op will enable students to:

1. Secure an appropriate Cooperative Education Job Training Position
 - Carry out a career self-assessment
 - Identify potential employers
 - Conduct a job search
 - Apply for a position
 - write a cover letter
 - write a resume
 - interview for a position
2. Perform all duties required at the cooperative education work site according to industry standards
 - demonstrate positive work habits
 - use appropriate work procedures, tools and equipment.
 - Follow all safety procedures
3. Assess personal abilities and skills in relation to job duties
 - Evaluate personal performance according to industry standards
 - Demonstrate willingness to learn
 - Listen to criticism and change behavior

Benefits of Cooperative Education

Co-op Employers have access to bright, well-trained students who are successful at the college and eager to work in their chosen field. Studies show employees who begin as co-ops are likely to remain with the employers longer. Employing co-ops enables employers to work with prospective career employees and base long-term hiring decisions on performance rather than prediction. At graduation, the employers have an inside track to hiring these well-prepared students. They benefit not only from increased productivity, but also savings in training and supervisory costs. Lower training costs often allow for further growth and development, and in some cases, employers can qualify for a Tax Credit. The long term investment of co-op students insures that there will be a supply of entry-level, skilled workers to fill employer needs.

Student Compensation

The student may work on a voluntary basis, may receive hourly wages, or may receive a stipend. Students who receive compensation are considered regular employees and are eligible for all employer benefits including worker's compensation and liability insurance coverage. The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act does impose restrictions on the kind of tasks that unpaid interns or apprentices may legally perform.

- An employer may not derive any "immediate advantage" from using volunteers. If the employer does, then the minimum wage law will apply to the relationship and the employer must pay at least the then-prevailing minimum wage for work performed.
- The volunteer's training may include tasks that will benefit the business, but the primary beneficiary of the training must be the volunteer. In addition, this training must offer a learning experience comparable to that found in a vocational or specialized school program.
- The law provides that unpaid interns or apprentices may not displace a regular employee. Another precaution employers should consider is that volunteers might not be covered by Worker's Compensation. If a volunteer is injured on the job, therefore, the employer may find that it is responsible for the cost of that injury. Therefore, employers interested in participating should check with their Insurance carrier to determine if volunteers or interns are covered.

Academic Credit

Academic excellence is also necessary since instructor approval is required. Students establish performance objectives in conjunction with the work supervisor and the Co-op coordinator, and overall performance is evaluated. One (1) college credit is given for every seventy-five (75) hours of work experience and the student receives a grade for the course.

The Role of the Cooperative Education Coordinator

The primary duty of a Cooperative Education/Internship (Co-op) Coordinator is to enrich student learning through integration of on-the-job experience with classroom and laboratory instruction. This is accomplished when students enroll in a Co-op course. Each Co-op Coordinator is responsible for enrolling seventy-five students per semester. The Co-op process involves the following steps:

- establish work training stations in the community by contacting employers to determine staffing needs/training opportunities, and to provide an orientation to the Co-op process,
- meet with instructors in the programs related to the job duties to identify eligible students,
- refer recommended students to the employer,
- enroll students who are accepted/hired for the position in the appropriate Co-op course,
- follow up through regular meetings with students, instructors and employers to introduce available options, establish performance objectives, and evaluate student performance.
 - Discuss and assess the potential employer's needs.
 - Promote the potential employer's opportunities campus-wide.
 - Refer qualified students who have been recommended by the program instructors.
- Follow up with the employer to insure that participants have a successful co-op experience

Co-op Programs Are Available At Honolulu Community College

Honolulu Community College serves the Pacific Region in areas such as transportation, information technology, education, communications, construction, and public and personal services. The main campus, close to the heart of downtown Honolulu, occupies over twenty acres in the Kalihi-Palama area. The College has facilities near the Honolulu International Airport for the Aeronautics Maintenance and Commercial Aviation programs, the Employment Training Center on Kokea Street, automotive and heavy equipment shops on Kokea street, and the Marine Training Center at Sand Island. Hcc offers Coop Ed Programs in the following programs:

- Administration of Justice
- Aeronautics Maintenance
- Architectural Engineering and CAD
- Auto Body Repair/Painting
- Auto Mechanics
- Carpentry
- Communication Arts
- Computing and Networking
- Cosmetology
- Diesel Mechanics
- Electrical Installation
- Fashion Technology
- Fire & Environmental Emergency Response
- Social Science and Science
- Boat Maintenance and Repair
- Occupational Safety
- Refrigeration/Air Conditioning
- Sheet Metal and Plastics
- Welding

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