

# Internship and Cooperative Education Programs

## WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is any short-term, supervised work experience usually related to a student's major field, for which you may or may not earn academic credit. The work can be full-time or part-time, on- or off-campus, paid or unpaid.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship enables you to be more competitive in today's job market and allows you to explore career options much like a Co-op, however it is usually shorter in duration. You will increase your network of contacts and learn more about the professional world.

## STEPS TO OBTAINING AN INTERNSHIP

1. Speak with your academic advisor and an advisor in Viterbi Career Services to help you perform an internship search or to determine if you are academically ready for work during the academic year.
2. Attend Career Fairs, Information Sessions and network with family, friends and faculty
3. Search connectSC, Corporate Websites, and Online Industry Job Posting Sites

## WHAT IS A CO-OP?

A Co-op is an opportunity to gain up to a year of paid, career- related work experience that will enhance and expand the engineering educational experience. Co-op is similar to an internship, but it is usually a longer, recurring experience that provides you with more in depth experience. Co-op experiences usually consist of working 30-40 hours during one summer and one adjacent semester, spring or fall. During the "adjacent" spring or fall semester you are enrolled as a student in the designated engineering course, but are not taking a full course load. You may also receive technical elective credit.

## WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER A CO-OP?

Some of the many benefits of a Co-op program include increasing marketability to employers by obtaining a degree AND full-time work experience upon graduation! By participating in a Co-op you will have the opportunity to evaluate potential careers, learn from a mentor in your field and apply knowledge obtained in the classroom to a "real world" work environment. You will maintain full-time student status while working, and receive technical elective credit while getting paid to work full time by an employer.

## CO-OP PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

**Undergraduate Students:** Minimum GPA of 2.6 and 3 semester completed. Your work assignment must be directly related to your engineering major and the opportunity must be on-site working a minimum of 20 hours/week. Approval is given by the Viterbi Career Services Office. F1 Visa Students must complete a Curricular Practical Training Application and visit the Office of International Services located in Student Union 300.

**Graduate Students:** Please meet with the Office of Master's and Profession Programs in OHE 106 for details on ENGR596 and Co-op Requirements. F1 Visa Students must get approval from the Office of Master's and Professional Programs and complete CPT Paperwork.

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## STEPS TO OBTAINING A CO-OP

1. Meet with a Viterbi Career Services Advisor (RTH 218) to begin co-op paperwork
2. Meet with an Academic Advisor to plan your schedule, ensure course sequencing, and discuss graduation date
3. Secure a Co-op Position by working with a Viterbi Career Advisor and attending Career Fairs and Information Sessions
4. Register for Co-op Course with a Viterbi Career Services Advisor or the Office of Master's and Professional Programs

## COOPERATIVE EDUCATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### **What will happen to my financial aid, housing and health insurance status during Co-op?**

Viterbi Career Services will work with you and your advisors so you are still considered a full-time student while participating in Co-op— not affecting your current financial aid or health insurance status. Although you are not eligible to receive scholarships and financial aid when you co-op, they are put on hold for the semester co-op until you return to campus for classes.

### **At which companies are co-op students allowed to work?**

You may work at any company that will hire you on as a co-op, as long as the experience is technical enough to warrant getting academic credit. The experience should be related to your chosen field of study.

### **How does a student receive credit for Co-op?**

The student must complete the necessary paperwork and complete a ten page technical report by the end of the term in which they are registered. To receive technical elective credit the technical report must be approved by a faculty member. This is coordinated by Viterbi Career Services for undergraduate students and Master's and Professional Programs for graduate students.

### **How long does Co-op push back graduation?**

A Co-op typically pushes back graduation just one semester later than anticipated. Keep in mind, these benefits of co-op: gaining a year of full-time work experience, earning a great salary, increasing your options for full-time employment, and positioning yourself for a higher starting salary after graduation.

### **Do I have to register for the ENGR395 Co-op class?**

Only students who have found a co-op position that meets the outlined requirements may register for the co-op course. By registering for the class, you maintain full-time student status. Some companies will reimburse students for co-op registration fees.