

Co-OP & INTERNSHIPS: “MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING”

Co-op programs and internship programs are experiential learning experiences that are extensions of the classroom, providing for the application of knowledge gained in the classroom.

Not all employers, universities and colleges use the terms separately. Some may see internship and co-op as interchangeable language. Co-Op programs are often viewed as a type of internship program. In this case, student have been referred to as “Co-op” Interns.

Co-Op and internships have:

1. A defined beginning and end
2. A job descriptions with desired qualifications
3. Clearly defined learning objectives and goals, set forth at the beginning of the experience

Universities often develop programs that address co-op and internships jointly or separately, depending on the needs of their student population.

Co-Op and Internships can be identified as having, all or some, of the following characteristics. Depending on the university standards

1. The possibility of the student receiving or not receiving credit (*Tuition fees and course enrollment apply in all instances of credit achievement*)
2. Being paid or unpaid
3. Required GPA for enrollment and participation
4. Educational agreement with Academic departments within the specific universities and colleges
5. Employment during the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters. (*Multiple or alternating term employment takes place under both programs, depending on university and college standards*)

The expectations and requirement for students and employers are the same during co-op and internship experience.

Employers should ensure:

1. The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school
2. The training is for the benefit of the students
3. The student does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision
4. The student is not entitled to employment at the conclusion of his/her experiential learning experience

Students should ensure:

1. The learning objectives and outcomes during the experiential learning experiences are in line with their degree plan and relative course curricula
2. Prior to accepting experiential employment, all prerequisites are met and discussed with appropriate academic staff or other designated university or college staff member (*Very important when undergoing experience for academic credit*)
3. They are able to commit the length of the experience and understand how it may affect the time it takes to complete their degree plan

Given the option of programming at an institution, it is up to the student and employer to decide which model best fits their needs. BUT remember both terms are often interchangeable!

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE..... REALLY?

- ❖ Traditionally last for 3 to 6 months
- ❖ Working terms alternating with school terms
- ❖ May result in an extended degree plan



- ❖ Traditionally last 6- 12 weeks
- ❖ Often during Fall, Spring, Summer semesters
- ❖ May result in an extended degree plan

- ❖ Can be paid or unpaid



- ❖ Can be paid or unpaid

- ❖ Participate in major-related work assignments



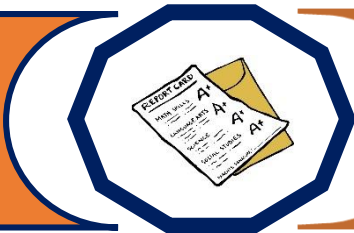
- ❖ Participate in major-related work assignments

- ❖ Can function with or without an educational agreement from the university or college



- ❖ Can function with or without an educational agreement from the university or college

- ❖ Student participate for credit or not for credit



- ❖ Student participate for credit or not for credit

**CO-OP
PROGRAM**

VS

**INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM**