

# **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Updated – Fall 2013**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As an applicant to the Cooperative Education Program, you signed an application form in which you agreed to several different items upon your placement in a co-op position. Co-op is an academic program and, as such, requires the following of all its participating students:

## **ACADEMICS**

In order to be eligible for application to the co-op program you must be enrolled as a full-time student at The University of Alabama with a minimum 2.2/4.0 GPA. Prior to beginning a co-op work experience, students must complete at least the freshman year (2 semesters on campus) If you are a transfer student, you must complete one semester at The University of Alabama prior to beginning work.

\*Distance Education students are not eligible for the undergraduate co-op program.

A co-op student placed with an employer must maintain an institutional GPA of 2.0 at The University of Alabama. Should his/her grade average fall below that level, a student will be placed on co-op probation. Students on probation will not be allowed to return to work for their next scheduled co-op work period until their cumulative University of Alabama GPA is at least a 2.0. A student has a maximum of two consecutive semesters in school to meet the grade requirement. Failure to do so during this length of time will result in the student being dropped from the co-op program and their position terminated. A copy of the letter informing the student that they are on co-op probation will be sent to the student's co-op employer.

Copies of your grades are sent to your employer each semester. Many employers have their own grade requirements which are stricter than those of the University Co-op Program; it is your responsibility to know what those requirements are, as well as their consequences.

## **THE ALTERNATION SEQUENCE**

You are expected to follow a confirmed alternating sequence between school and work during your co-op tenure (one spring work term, one summer work term, one fall work term). This alternation schedule/acceptance letter signed by you, your co-op coordinator, and your academic advisor was sent to your employer. You should consult your academic advisor and the appropriate University

catalog in order to best plan your future course work to accommodate your alternation pattern. Each student assumes responsibility for maintaining satisfactory progress toward their degree. This alternation schedule is, in essence, a contract between you, your employer, and The University of Alabama co-op office regarding the semesters you will work. It is the schedule that the employer, as well as the co-op office, expect you to follow. Any changes from this work/school sequence must be approved in advance through the petition process.

## **THE PETITION PROCESS**

If academic circumstances arise and you find it necessary to alter your co-op status and/or alternation schedule, you must complete the **Petition for Change in Co-op Status**. This form ensures that you, your employer, and your co-op coordinator will be aware of any change in plans. Failure to comply with this procedure will be noted in the student's file and may result in the students being dropped from the co-op program. The co-op office will notify you of the results of your petition within 10 days of the deadline. If your petition is approved a revised alternation schedule must be completed. Exceptions are granted for special academic cases involving class sequencing, GPA problems, special academic opportunities/honors (such as study abroad programs) or a major medical concern. Band, SGA, fraternities/sororities, sports involvement and other student activities are student preferences, not requirements, and are not considered acceptable reasons for changing the alternation schedule unless a non-summer work term is replaced with another non-summer work term.

NOTE: The U of A Co-op Program is the sole approving office. Therefore, those arrangements made between students and employers may/or may not be approved.

Students may be dropped from the co-op program in one of two ways:

1. **DROPPED IN GOOD STANDING:** Based upon the approval of the petition process. A student with this status may re-apply for admission as an applicant to the co-op program.
2. **DROPPED:** Based upon either academic or non-academic reasons. A student with this status is not eligible to re-apply to co-op program. Notation of the **DROPPED IN GOOD STANDING** or the **DROPPED** status will be placed in the student's file with copies sent to student's co-op employer.

## **CO-OP CERTIFICATION**

Students who complete the minimum **three** work periods, (52 weeks of full-time employment) will be awarded "Co-op Certification" upon graduation from The University of Alabama. Many employers recognize this certification as an extraordinary achievement and offer higher salaries to

those students completing the co-op program. Some states accept engineering co-op work experience towards professional licensure.

In the case of Transfer students, documented co-op work experience from another accredited institution will be considered on an individual basis. In the event that an Alabama co-op student should transfer to another institution, information about participation in The University of Alabama program may only be provided upon a student's written request.

## **MISCELLANY**

Please remember that you as a co-op student represent one member of the co-op partnership of student, college, and employer. If you have questions or concerns, contact your coordinator at work or the University.

While you are at work, you are registered as a University student and, although you are not earning academic credit, you may be entitled to all other student privileges (including recreation and sports activities and health benefits).

At the completion of each work period, you will participate in an exit interview during which an evaluation of your work is discussed with your employer. The school coordinator will then have a "post-work" interview with you upon your return to campus. This session allows you to evaluate the work experience with the school coordinator and gives the coordinator an opportunity to get a sense of each co-op student's experience. Copies of all co-op evaluation forms are kept in your permanent file and are available to you at your request. Your file will be maintained in the co-op office for a minimum of five years after you graduate.

Co-op students receive regular correspondence from The University of Alabama Cooperative Education Program. This correspondence will include information for your return to campus, including registration and advising materials when appropriate. Please feel free to contact a coordinator at (205) 348-6422 if you have questions.

## **STUDENTS REPORTING TO WORK:**

### **REGISTRATION FOR CO-OP WORK TERM**

Each semester that you are at work, you are required to register with The University of Alabama as a cooperative education student. This procedure, documents your co-op work periods on your transcript. The Co-op Program office will communicate with you regarding the appropriate course number. All undergraduate co-op courses are listed as 12 hours (non-credit bearing) and are \$264

per semester. Students are awarded a Pass/Fail for each work semester, denoted on transcript. Registration and payment are processed through your MyBama account.

Being registered as a University student is essential to maintaining your student status which affects many areas including football tickets, registration, bank loans, financial aid and scholarships to name a few. Additionally, you may elect to pay an activity and health service fee should you choose to utilize those services. With the exception of the co-op fee, these fees are optional.

## **CONTACT WITH THE CO-OP OFFICE**

It is your responsibility to maintain regular contact with the Office of Cooperative Education. While at work, it is important that the co-op office has a record of your address so that correspondence such as registration information, works evaluations, etc. can be sent electronically. Students may access the "Work Address Card" via the Co-op Program website at <http://coop.eng.ua.edu/forms/work-address-card/>. It is critical that all the information on the "Work Address Card" is accurate and kept up-to-date. Should you move while at work, you should update the co-op office with that information.

At the end of each work period, you and your employer will be reminded to access on-line, the evaluation forms to be completed and returned to the co-op office. When you return to school, you are required to visit the Co-op Program office for a post work interview. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD RESULT IN YOUR NOT BEING ABLE TO RETURN TO WORK. During this session the coordinator and student will discuss both evaluations of the work period. You should note that the co-op office sends copies of your work reports to the appropriate academic department so they have a good indication of the work experiences students complete.

## **THE WORK SEMESTER**

During your work semester, you will receive several important packets of information from the co-op office. In addition, during this time you should keep the following points in mind: The first day is critical to your success at work. Much of the day will be devoted to your orientation to your new employer. You will begin learning the "corporate ropes," so to speak. You need to pay careful attention to everything that is said. Information about the company's history, philosophy, policy, and rules will be important to the way you do your job. During the day you should also be given pertinent salary and benefit information, -- the "little things" such as when you will be paid, how often, what deductions will be made, what company benefits, if any, will be made available to you, etc. You will also be requested to fill out the necessary withholding and tax forms. For your own benefit, make sure you fill these out carefully and correctly. If there is no formal orientation session, make sure you get all the necessary information from your co-op supervisor or the company's co-op

coordinator. Should you have questions or concerns while at work, don't hesitate to call the co-op office, 205-348-6422.

*MAKE ALL OF YOUR ACTIONS BRING CREDIT TO THE UA COOPERATIVE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM*

Past accomplishments have demonstrated the merits of cooperative education and as a result an enviable reputation has been established with industry, business, and government. This record makes it possible to place YOU in a cooperative assignment, and YOUR good record ensures placement of future students. YOU are expected to maintain and to enhance the reputation of the Cooperative Education Program.

After the first day of general orientation, you may receive additional orientations. The most important will be the one given by your co-op supervisor. He/she will be the person that will introduce you to the other members of the staff with whom you will work. Your supervisor will also be giving you a more thorough orientation to the work you will be doing. Pay careful attention to the information that your supervisor provides you; it will be invaluable during this work period and throughout your tenure with the company.

### **GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START**

- When working as a newcomer, expect to do some of the less desirable chores.
- Concentrate when you are being given verbal instructions about your work.
- Ask questions until instructions are clear. Follow the instructions carefully.
- After you have learned the work, think twice before asking questions - the answer may be obvious or may come to you. However, do not be afraid to ask sensible questions.
- Learn from whom you are to seek help.
- Be honest about your mistakes. Take the blame when you are responsible for incorrect or defective work and profit by these mistakes.
- Accept help with appreciation. If others tell you facts already known to you, do not kill their kindly impulse by flaunting your knowledge. Listen; you may learn something new.
- Express appreciation for courtesies and considerations shown to you. Do not let those with whom you are working get the impression that you are a complainer. Do not assume an attitude of sophistication to cover your inexperience. Develop a reputation for good judgment. Remain open minded and respect new opinions.
- Determine your lunch time. Do not assume that yours is the same as that of others working near you.
- Make sure you have all necessary personal working equipment.
- Be observant of both people and methods. An employee is valuable not only for the work he/she can perform, but also for knowing why things are done in certain ways.

- Learn the names of the people you are working with. Call them by name in conversation. When you are introduced to someone, write down the name at your earliest opportunity and include some highlights about the individual.
- Appreciate friendly advances of others but be careful not to indulge in gossip or to be drawn into cliques of department politics.
- Preserve a sense of modesty without appearing aloof or "high hat." Help your supervisor by your attitude. Unconsciously you influence the attitudes and general morale of others.
- Speak distinctly and to the point when using the telephone. Do not make personal telephone calls unless absolutely necessary and then be as brief as possible.
- Smoking is not permitted during working hours on most jobs, but if permitted, you should follow the regulations of the firm as to time and place.
- If you encounter your supervisor, take the initiative in saying Good Morning or Good Night.
- Your co-op work period will give you a great opportunity to try out your career choice and to get valuable, practical on-the-job experience. Use each of your work periods as a valuable learning experience to grow professionally.

#### **THINGS THAT YOU ARE NOT TO DO:**

- Don't assume that you know the work because you have mastered your first assignment.
- Don't register impatience if you are not given new work as fast as you are able to handle it.
- Don't expect continuous supervision on the work assigned to you.
- Don't try to hurry until you are sure of yourself.
- Don't steal another person's ideas. If you use them, give appropriate credit.
- Don't attract attention to yourself by eccentric clothes or manner.
- Don't be an unconscious troublemaker among other employees.
- Don't go over your supervisor's head with requests, complaints, or suggestions.
- Don't embarrass your supervisor by appearing idle in front of other workers and in the presence of "higher-ups."

#### **WORK EVALUATIONS AND GRADING**

Near the end of each work period, you and your employer will be sent information to access the on-line evaluation forms to be completed and returned to the co-op office. When you return to school, you are required to visit with your co-op coordinator for a post work interview. FAILURE TO DO

SO COULD RESULT IN YOUR NOT BEING ABLE TO RETURN TO WORK. During this session the coordinator and student will discuss both evaluations of the work period. You should note that the co-op office sends copies of your work reports to the appropriate academic department.

As part of the Co-op work experience you will be assigned a Pass/Fail (P/F) grade on your transcript based on successful completion of your work semester and employer evaluation/input. Students may receive a Failure in Co-op for a number of reasons such as attendance, punctuality, professional conduct, etc.

Note: The Pass/Fail received will have no impact on students GPA but will appear on student's transcript.

## **ADVISING/REGISTRATION**

### **REGISTRATION FOR CO-OP WORK TERM**

Each semester you are at work, you are required to be registered with The University of Alabama as a cooperative education student. This procedure, documents your co-op work periods on your transcript. You must checkout with the Co-op office before going to work to complete this registration process. You must access your co-op class via the University Registration Website "mybama.ua.edu". Being registered as a co-op student is essential to maintaining your full-time student status, which otherwise might affect class registration, bank loans, insurance, financial aid, scholarships, and football tickets to name a few. Additionally, you may elect to pay an activity and health service fee should you choose to utilize those services while at work. With the exception of the co-op fee, these fees are optional.

### **REGISTRATION/ADVISING FOR CLASSES**

Utilize the schedule of classes provided on MyBama, along with Degree Works to plan for your future classes. Academic Departments now conduct "year round" advising. You must make an appointment to meet with your advisor. You may meet in person, by making an appointment first, or via email. Check your departmental website for information specific to your advising requirements.

Note: Co-op students are given priority registration beginning with the semester after your first work period. If you are not going to return for future scheduled work terms as expected, you must complete the **Petition for Change in Co-op Status** process prior to registering for classes the next semester.

## **Scholarships and Financial Aid**

During work semesters, Co-op students do not receive scholarship monies. Scholarships are deferred to the next academic scheduled semester. Multi year awards (Alumni Presidential) will still be awarded for a total of eight academic semesters providing the student continues to meet scholarship requirements. Before reporting to work, co-op students will defer scholarships to the next appropriate semester.

Co-op students receiving “need based” financial aid are responsible for maintaining contact and providing the required information to the office of Student Financial Aid by the stated deadlines. Co-op students receiving financial aid may deduct expenses during the co-op work semesters by completing the Financial Aid and Special Circumstances Application for Income Reduction Form online by going to <http://financialaid.ua.edu/>. This will minimize the impact of your gross co-op salary on your Financial Aid award the next academic year. Co-op students do not normally receive Financial Aid during the Co-op work terms.

## **STUDENTS RETURNING TO SCHOOL**

Once you return to campus you are expected to report to the co-op office to give your current address and telephone number, as well as to conduct a post-work interview with your co-op coordinator. Prior to this meeting you will have completed a “Student Work Report” form and returned it to the co-op office.

During the post-work interview you and your co-op coordinator will review your completed work report, review your employer’s evaluation of your work performance, and confirm your alternation schedule. Should a change in your alternation schedule be necessary, the petition process must be completed.

Remember the post-work interview is designed to enable the co-op staff to assist you and to ensure that your co-op experience is a rewarding one. Some information collected verbally or in writing at the post-work interview will be used to assist future students and employers.