About this Handbook

This Handbook has been developed to provide a complete overview of Cooperative Education and the policies and procedures that govern it.

Please read this Handbook when you fill out the online application form. It is essential that you are aware of your responsibilities and the regulations that govern your affiliation.
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Educational Philosophy

Cooperative Education is designed to actively engage you in what you are learning. It is based on a philosophy of teaching, learning and assessment that goes beyond reading and listening as the primary routes to effective learning.

By being actively engaged in what you are learning, the teacher-learner relationship is changed. The faculty steps out of the primary authority role as a possessor of knowledge and moves into a facilitator role. Experience becomes the teacher. The emphasis is placed on observation and reflection where faculty and students make meaning out of what is being experienced.

The primary assumption underlying this philosophy of education is that experience, when incorporated as an integral part of the learning process, enhances learning. To turn experience into learning it must be reflected upon and analyzed so that what you learn is made explicit.

You will be required to develop a plan for learning. By diagnosing your learning needs and putting this plan in writing, you and your Co-op faculty advisor will be creating a vehicle for evaluating your learning. This process, we believe, will assist you in developing the skills necessary to become a self-directed learner.

Goals

While you will develop individual learning goals for your co-op semester, Cooperative Education has multiple goals that have influenced many of the required activities. We aim to help students:

- Apply, integrate and evaluate a body of knowledge and methods of inquiry of an academic discipline;
- Develop skills and competencies needed for after graduation employment or entry into graduate school;
- Improve the ability to learn in a self-directed manner; and
- Foster personal growth and maturation.
Introduction

Cooperative Education is a University-wide, credit-bearing, experience-based learning program that provides you with preparation, counseling, academic projects and the opportunity to reflect on what is learned. It’s a great resume builder and a way to test out a career.

Requirements

In order to participate in Cooperative Education, you must meet eligibility requirements as well as any additional academic department requirements that apply. Your previous academic work and other campus activities must demonstrate that you have the ability and desire to benefit from Cooperative Education.

Co-op is an academically-based work experience that expects you to be an active participant in your own learning. While you will benefit from guidance and counseling, you must take the initiative right from the outset. Ultimately, it will be your actions that determine how successful this learning experience is for you.

Undergraduate Eligibility

(Effective, January 2002)

Undergraduate students from all majors may apply for Co-op, provided they have completed (with grades) 30 credits and have a 2.0 grade point average or better. Students who transfer into MSU without a degree must have earned 9 credits (with grades) at MSU prior to enrollment. Students who transfer into MSU with an associate or bachelor's degree do not need to have any credits earned at MSU to participate in Co-op. Some academic departments have additional requirements. To find out whether yours is one of them check the listing for the appropriate departmental Co-op course in the University catalog and the Co-op office.

Visiting Students

Visiting students must obtain "Visiting Student Status" through the Office of Admissions. Our first obligation, however, is to the MSU matriculated students; therefore, you may be put on a waiting list.

Course Credit

You may earn up to 16 credits from a combination of Co-op courses while you are an undergraduate. (See the University catalog for descriptions and credit allocation.)
Student Status

You are considered to be a full-time student when you are enrolled in at least 12 credits.

Graduate Eligibility

Graduate students may enroll in Cooperative Education if participation complements the courses listed in your graduate work program and your academic department has established a co-op course. Co-op credits cannot be substituted for courses listed in the graduate program.

Graduate students who wish to enroll in Co-op must see their graduate advisor. Full and part-time Co-op positions will be selected on the basis of their ability to allow students to reflect the skills, concepts and attitudes imparted by the graduate education experience, with the graduate advisor having the right of final approval.

The Co-op experience may be with your present employer if you undertake new responsibilities that provide opportunities for new learning. Your graduate program advisor will have final approval of any reassignment.

Financial Aid Considerations

- Students must be registered at least half time (6 credits undergraduate, including the co-op credits) in order to receive most types of financial aid
- Federal Title IV programs such as Pell, Stafford Loans, Perkins Loans and FSEOG may be adjusted if you are registered less than full-time
- State grant funding (TAG, EOF, etc.) is based on full-time (12 credits) enrollment
- Enrollment in less than six credits during a semester would place you in "less than half-time status" for loan deferment purposes; this begins your grace period and then repayment of prior loans
- Any salary you earn during a Co-op internship is excluded from income on the subsequent year FAFSA
International Students

Additional considerations apply if you are an international student, depending on your visa status. Tell the Co-op Counselor of your status during your first meeting in order to make sure a Co-op internship satisfies current regulations at the time you apply.

In general, F-1 Students can participate in work experiences that are related to the major area of study or provide experience in a chosen profession. Employment generally is part time while classes are in session and may be full time in certain instances.

This type of employment is divided into: Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training. Co-op qualifies as Curricular Practical Training because it is: a work experience directly related to your program of study; an integral part of your major, listed in the University Catalog; and worthy of academic credit. Evaluations and mentorship are provided and you, the University and the employer execute an agreement (in this case the Learning Agreement) to make sure you receive a meaningful educational experience.

Applications for Curricular Practical Training are available from the Office of International Services, in the Global Education Center, 215 Stone Hall; in addition, completed CPT applications need to be turned in 2 weeks before the employment start date.

You can find our CPT application on the International Services website: http://www.montclair.edu/global-education/international-services/students/forms/ (scroll down to CPT application)

J-1 students may also participate in academic training for which they are compensated for up to 18 months as long as the training is related to their field of study or if the training is a mandatory part of their academic program. The training may be during or after completion of studies. Applications and further information are available from the Office of International Services.

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

In compliance with Montclair State University's 1991 policy, participating employers and professional staff must not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age, disabling conditions or other non-job related criteria. Equal employment opportunity includes, but is not limited to recruitment, hiring, compensation, fringe benefits and other conditions of employment. A copy of the complete policy is available in the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office in College Hall.
Co-op Step By Step

If you want to enroll in Co-op and continue to receive program services, you are required to:

- Watch the Who We Are Presentation at: http://www.montclair.edu/career-services/cooperative-education/start-coop/
- Complete the Co-op Web Application - www.placepro.com;
- Read and accept the Consent and Ethic Agreements;
- Draft your resume on a Microsoft Word Document;
- Make an appointment to see the Career Services Director located within your College to review your resume (contact information below);
- Obtain approval forms from your academic department or Career Services Director should you decide to enroll in a departmental course; and
- Adhere to all program deadlines

Contact Information:

College of the Arts
Greg Costanzo | cartcareers@montclair.edu | 973-655-7495

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Office of Career Development | chsscareer@montclair.edu | 973-655-4228

College of Science and Mathematics
Gennae Hinson | hinsonge@montclair.edu | 973-655-7793

College of Education and Human Services
Linda Flynn | cehscareer@montclair.edu | 973-655-7866

Feliciano School of Business
Diane Freedman | freedmand@montclair.edu | 973-655-6965

Mariah Mayers | mayersm@montclair.edu | 973-655-3200
Interviews and Hiring

Cooperative Education maintains a network of employers in business, laboratories, government and social service agencies that provide work-based learning opportunities for Co-op interns. They develop descriptions for each position and submit screening criteria to help identify students who have the necessary academic courses, background and skills. Only students who meet these criteria are referred for interviews with prospective employers. Employers, not the Career Services Directors, make all the hiring decisions.

The Career Services Director within your school/college will give you permission to search for potential Co-op positions. You will submit your resume and other credentials to the prospective employer, who will decide which of the eligible students it will interview and hire. The Career Services Director reserves the right to limit the number of applicants for an interview.

You will be responsible for keeping all scheduled interview appointments. If you fail to keep an appointment, you will be considered ineligible for the program and will not be scheduled for any further interviews.

If an employer offers you a position, you must make a decision and notify both your Career Services Director and the employer within 48 hours. It is critical that you maintain continuous communication with your Career Services Director during the final quarter of the semester so the counselor will know about your availability for interviews.
Finding Your Own Co-op Internship

Sometimes students locate positions independently and ask to have them approved as a Co-op internship. This is possible. However, the position must be screened and approved by your Career Services Director to make sure it offers you opportunities for new learning. Please note that students may not use current full-time or part-time positions as co-op placements unless it can be demonstrated that responsibilities will increase. The position descriptions submitted by students will be screened and must be approved by the student’s major department and/or faculty advisor.

"Student Developed Position Forms" are available from your Career Services Director. Submit a completed form to your Career Services Director, and if the position is approved, make an appointment with your Director to receive a course call number.

Co-op Registration and Conditions of Enrollment

Once you accept an employment offer, you must obtain a "course call number" from your Career Services Director and then register for the Co-op course during a scheduled registration period.

If you accept employment and wish to receive credit for the Co-op experience, you are required to enroll in a Co-op course. If you do not register for a Co-op course, you will be terminated from the program and your record will be marked "terminated for non-enrollment." At the same time, your Career Services Director will notify your employer that you have been dropped from Co-op and request that you be dismissed from your position. You also will be ineligible to apply for any further services from Cooperative Education.

After You Register

After you accept a position and register for a Co-op course, you will obtain a course call #, a course schedule and additional information from your Career Services Director. You will also meet with your Co-op
You and Your Co-op Faculty Advisor

Because Cooperative Education is an experiential education course, it has both academic and workplace components. You will be assigned to a faculty member who will guide you as you work to integrate classroom theory with workplace practice. Your level of achievement during your internship will be measured by the new learning you demonstrate by your performance as an entry-level professional on the job.

With your Co-op Faculty Advisor, you will develop a document called a Learning Agreement. A Learning Agreement provides the vehicle for making the learning experience a mutual undertaking between you, your Co-op Faculty Advisor, your Employment Supervisor and the University. Once you have signed the Learning Agreement, you are responsible for honoring your commitment.

All academic projects, identified in the Learning Agreement, must be completed in order for you to successfully complete your Co-op course. If you fail to complete them, your Co-op Faculty Advisor will submit a grade that reflects unsatisfactory work.

Once you are on the job, your Co-op Faculty Advisor may visit the work site to meet with you and with your Employment Supervisor. Based on your Employment Supervisor's written and verbal assessments and on your academic projects, your Co-op Faculty Advisor will assign a letter grade at the end of your Co-op term, which will be included on your academic transcript.

Some Co-op Faculty Advisors also require interns to participate in on-campus seminars where they can share experiences, discuss work-related challenges and reflect on their learning along with other students.

Grading

Your Co-op Faculty Advisor determines your grade based on:

• How well you fulfill the terms of your Learning Agreement;
• The quality of the projects you complete;
• Any required seminar participation and;
• The feedback provided by your Work-site Supervisor about your work performance.
Withdrawal from Class

Drop/Withdrawal Policy
Courses dropped through the Final Add/Drop deadline will be removed from the records. Courses withdrawn after the Final Add/Drop deadline through the ninth week of the semester will be recorded as WD’s.

Drop/Withdrawal/Refund Schedule

100% Refund during the first week of the semester for full term courses and prior to the third class meeting for all short term courses and other courses that meet less than full term (courses dropped).

50% Refund during the first third of the semester for full term courses or its equivalent for short term courses and other courses that meet less than full term (courses recorded as WD).

No Refund after the first third through the ninth week of the semester for full term courses (courses recorded as WD). No refund after the first third until the midpoint for courses that meet less than full term (courses recorded as WD).

Additional information can be found at: http://www.montclair.edu/registrar/withdrawal-refund-policy/

Exemptions

Exemptions may be made in extreme cases, i.e., sudden hospitalization, death in family, etc. The Dean of Students will consider these exceptions only when “unforeseeable and uncontrollable circumstances prevail.” Only students who have received a grade lower than C- in a class will be eligible for an exemption and students who receive these exemptions will always receive a WF. No exemptions will be made after one calendar year after the posting of the final grade.
**Incomplete Grades**

Incomplete grades will be granted by faculty members in cases where a student has completed most of the work for a course and extraordinary circumstances preclude him/her from finishing work by the end of a semester of summer session. Incomplete grades will be posted for a period of approximately six weeks after the submission of Final Grades: February 15th for a Fall course, June 30th for a Spring course and October 15th for a Summer course. If work is not completed and a final grade is not posted within that time, the grade will revert to an F. Faculty members will no longer need to submit incomplete contracts, the grade sheet will suffice. Individual faculty members, schools and/or colleges may continue to use the incomplete contract, however, it will not be submitted to the Registrar’s office and the six week period will be the maximum permissible course completion time.

**Written and Oral Assessments**

**From Your Employment Supervisor**

Part of your grade may be based on assessments of your job performance provided by your Employment Supervisor. Midway through the internship, and again near its end, you will ask your Supervisor to complete an Intern Progress Report. It is your responsibility to see that they are completed and mailed back to the University. You will also provide your Supervisor with an Exit Interview form, which will be completed at the end of the semester. This form also must be mailed back to your Career Services Director.
For the most part, you will be governed by the roles, standards and procedures of the employer organization while you are an intern. Some areas, however, fall under policies dictated by the University, the State of New Jersey or the Cooperative Education.

**Health Insurance**

New Jersey law requires all full-time students to have medical insurance, either under their family health plan or an individual plan. Your enrollment at Montclair State University may be terminated if you do not comply.

Although Co-op interns work off-campus, they still are enrolled in an academic course and remain bound by this policy.

**Taxes and Worker's Compensation**

Tax matters can be complex and must always be handled on an individual basis between each student and the Internal Revenue Service. Therefore, you should not consider the information given here to be an official interpretation of your personal tax obligations.

The general rule regarding taxability of salaries paid to Co-op students under Internal Revenue Code Section 61 (1) states in part that "gross income", means all income from whatever source derived. Exceptions to this rule may be scholarships or fellowship grants. In cases where an employer-employee relationships exists, amounts received as wages salaries or other compensation are included in gross income Under IRC Section 61 (a).

In general, then, the compensation that Co-op students receive is fully taxable. The employer is required to deduct Worker’s Compensation, FICA, Federal Withholding Tax and New Jersey State Income Tax from Co-op student’s salaries.

**Unemployment Compensation**

Because students maintain their student status while enrolled in Cooperative Education, the time during an internship does not count toward time accumulated for collecting unemployment benefits.
Harassment

In compliance with Montclair State University's policy harassment based on race, ethnic origin, age, disability or sex constitutes prohibited, unprofessional and unacceptable conduct, whether it is conducted by a member of the employing organization or by you, the student.

If you believe you are being harassed by your Employment Supervisor or any other person at the work site, you should immediately call both your Co-op Faculty Advisor and the Career Services Director within your school/college.

If you are found to practice any form of harassment, you may be referred to the Director of Student Conduct.

Standards of Professional Conduct

You are expected to meet all the standards of professionalism in practice at your employing organization. You must work for the entire semester and report to the job on time and when expected. If you cannot go to work on a day when you are scheduled, advise your employer as soon as possible.

During a Co-op, you are an employee of that company or agency, under the supervision of the organization as you perform your job duties and responsibilities. You should not expect priority treatment. You should not ask for time off from work, regardless of your reason. You are entitled only to company or agency holidays. You are not entitled to University holidays or vacations while you are on the job as an intern.

Problems, Adjustments and Changes during the Internship

The decision to enroll in Cooperative Education means a commitment to stay on the job until the end of the term. If a situation arises that may alter your ability to do so, or if the nature of your responsibilities changes significantly once you are on the job, follow the procedures discussed here.

Any routine questions about your internship and your internship responsibilities should be discussed with your Employment Supervisor first. If there are serious problems, however; you must call your Co-op Faculty Advisor and then call your Career Services Director. Remember, if there are any difficulties, you are responsible for immediately contacting your Co-op Faculty Advisor and your Career Services Director.

If you wish to make a substantial change in your hours, or need a leave of absence, or if there are other significant schedule irregularities, talk to your Career
Services Director first. Such requests must be made through The Career Services office within your School/College.

If there are problems arising from personality conflicts, misunderstandings or other situations that you are unable to handle easily in a routine manner, contact your Co-op Faculty Advisor and your Career Services Director.

Some situations warrant and require an immediate call, including sexual harassment or any form of illegal discrimination. Call immediately if you are assigned to do a job that appears unsafe or hazardous to your health.

If your employer changes your work assignment from that which was specified when you were hired, call your Co-op Faculty Advisor and Career Services Director. Remember; the University approved the position based on a particular job description. If a new job description is unacceptable, you may be withdrawn from the setting.

**If You Are Fired**

If you are fired from a Co-op position after registering for a Co-op course, your Co-op Faculty Advisor and Career Services Director will discuss the decision with your Employment Supervisor. If they decide that no possible alternatives exist, your Co-op Faculty Advisor will follow one of the following paths:

1. Issue a grade of “F”
2. Arrange for you to withdraw from the course
3. Issue a grade of “Incomplete”
4. Each incidence will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and, if possible, an alternate co-op site may be used to fulfill remaining requirements.

If you are fired and receive an "Incomplete" you must find a new position that meets Co-op standards. The position must call for the same length of employment and qualify for the same number of credits as the prior position. Both the Career Services Director and your Co-op Faculty Advisor must approve the position before you are allowed to accept it. Your new employer must agree to assess your progress and to meet all other responsibilities of a Co-op employer.

You will have to develop a new Learning Agreement and have it signed by your Co-op Faculty Advisor and your new Employment Supervisor.
As You Approach Graduation

What you learn from enrolling in an experiential education course can continue to enhance your personal and professional development throughout your life. Use what you have learned as you get ready to leave campus and move on to your first professional position or apply to graduate school. Before you launch your search, reflect on the skills and competencies you acquired.

What job skills do you now have to offer an employer?
What did you learn about the cultural aspects of the workplace?
What did you enjoy?
Did you learn anything about what you would want to avoid in a future job? What did you learn about yourself?
Did you work best alone or as part of a team?
Do you like a large organization or an intimate setting?
Do you prefer tasks that involve writing, conferring, working with your hands, technical tasks?

Articulating the answers to those kinds of questions can help you identify which job will be right for you. Review the values you hold about work, the things that interest you and the skills and competencies that you have developed. Then make an appointment with a career counselor who will confer with you as you write your resume and begin to arrange interviews to launch your career.

Once you are employed, you will find that the ability to continuously reflect on your knowledge and activities will enhance your work life. Conscious reflection will help you confront change, discover new possibilities and directions and guide you toward what you must continue to learn in order to succeed.