

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION GUIDEBOOK FOR EMPLOYERS

NORTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
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COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OP)

Cooperative Education at the North Dakota State College of Science is an enhancement to the student's curriculum that can become a valuable part of the student's college education. It provides students the opportunity to apply their classroom learning in the work environment and, in some cases, may open the door to full-time employment upon graduation.

Cooperative Education is a paid work experience program for our college students. Co-op students work as regular part-time or full-time employees, earning academic credit for knowledge & skills acquired on the job. Students can earn from one to five credits; credits are based on the number of hours worked with a minimum of **162 hours** at a work-site required for one semester credit. The maximum number of credits that can be earned in Cooperative Education is five credits. A typical 2 credit summer Co-op requires **no less than 324 hours**. Some students will work more than 324 hours, but they must work at least this many.

The Cooperative Education program affords the employer and the college the unique opportunity to work together to provide students with relevant learning activities and quality education.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION FOR THE EMPLOYER

- The NDSCS Co-op program provides employers with an excellent source of temporary and possibly permanent personnel. It can be used as a screening tool for potential permanent employees after graduation without the risks often associated with hiring someone "off the street."
- Co-op students can relieve some of the burden from your senior-level personnel, providing relief in times of heavy workload.
- Employers have access to a self-sustaining pool of highly motivated, pre-professional employees bringing fresh ideas and perspectives to the job. Employers have an opportunity to become partners in the education process and help train tomorrow's work force.
- Hiring Cooperative Education students may serve as a recruiting tool beyond the Co-op experiences. This is an opportunity for employers to build their reputation among NDSCS community of graduates, making their business a sought after place of employment.

- There are economic advantages to hiring Co-op students. Employers can save money by either releasing permanent staff members for other duties or by meeting employment needed on special projects.
- Co-op students hired permanently after graduation have shown a reduced turnover rate compared to employees who were not Co-op students.

HOW AN EMPLOYER BECOMES INVOLVED

Most employers become involved with the Cooperative Education program in one of the following ways:

1. An employer submits a job listing to the NDSCS Cooperative Education Office either over the phone, via email or at our online job link.
2. The college actively solicits the participation of an employer through the Cooperative Education Office.
3. A student identifies a potential employer.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

To make participation in the program easy for you the employer, the Cooperative Education program places minimal demand on the business. We do not make salary requirements, but remember that student's have many options and are looking for competitive wages. We do not select students for your positions. We believe it is the employers right to choose, but we can work with you if you have special requirements.

You, the employer, **MUST:**

1. Provide supervised work related to the student's major or career goals.
2. Complete the Cooperative Education Agreement and Training Plan (which is found in this booklet in the back).
3. Complete the Employer's Evaluation form and conduct an exit interview with the Co-op student (the evaluation form is found in the back of this booklet and the exit interview should be a short meeting, either in person or over the phone, letting the student know what he/she did correctly and what he/she can improve on).

4. Provide the student with enough hours to meet minimum requirements for credit. (Remember a typical 2 credit Co-op requires no less than 324 hours).

If an employer has the resources and would like to help the student with the Co-op fee, we encourage them to do so; however, this is not a requirement and is at the discretion of each employer who participates in the Cooperative Education program. The Co-op fee for the 2007-08 school year is \$122.00 per credit. A typical 2 credit summer Co-op will run a total cost of \$242.00

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Employers are required to carry worker's compensation for the student. The student is not eligible for unemployment after they complete their Co-op experience; therefore, the Unemployment Tax does not have to be paid on the student.

SCHEDULING PLANS

While the types of Cooperative Education placement may vary, the overall objective is to provide career related work experience, as a part of the student's education.

Depending upon the student's program along with student and employer preference, the following options are available.

1. **Parallel Schedule**- The student registers for Cooperative Education and attends school on a part-time basis, working between 10 and 20 hours per week.
2. **Alternating Schedule**- The student registers for Cooperative Education, works full-time for one semester and/or summer, and returns to NDSCS as a full-time student the next semester.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF THE CO-OP PROGRAM AT THE COLLEGE

The Cooperative Education Office at North Dakota State College of Science is located in Haverty Hall, Room 105/106. The address is 800 6th Street North, Wahpeton, ND 58076; the telephone number is (701) 671-2995 (local) and 1 (800) 342-4325 ext. 3-2995 (long distant). The Cooperative Education Coordinator is Kerri Kava. When working with employers, the Coordinator is responsible for the following:

1. Locating & developing work positions and assisting students with the development of jobs they have found themselves.
2. Serving as institutional liaison with employers.
3. Recruiting students for the Cooperative Education program.
4. Informing prospective employers who host students for the Cooperative Education program.
5. Receiving and compiling student applications and resumes.
6. Counseling students on the proper techniques for filling out applications, writing cover letters, resumes and interviewing skills.
7. Serving as liaison between faculty and the employer during the placement.
8. Maintaining contact with the employer and the student during the work experience.
9. Working with the employer and/or student to resolve any problems associated with the work experience.
10. Informing students and faculty of career opportunities.
11. Advising, training and coordinating site visitation assignments for faculty
12. Conducting on-going evaluation of the program.
13. Grading Cooperative Education students once completed.

The Co-op Coordinator is your link to NDSCS. If you have questions or problems with the student, do not hesitate to call the Coordinator.

During the Co-op experience, an NDSCS faculty member from a designated academic department will perform a Site-Visit depending on geographic restrictions. This is to interview employers and gauge the overall experience. This will not be set up by the Coordinator, but rather through the student's advisor or department.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF THE CO-OP POSITION

To ensure that a student who participates in the Cooperative Education program has a relevant learning experience, each individual Co-op job must meet the approval of the appropriate department chairperson and/or faculty members. The acceptability of each work experience will be judged on the following criteria:

1. The work must be directly related to the student's field of study.
2. The work must be academically useful.
3. The work experience must provide for the integration of academic learning and on-the-job training. For example, students are provided company instructions and applications through the use of service manuals. Students also attend training seminars and service schools.
4. The type of work should challenge the student's initiative and creativity.
5. The work assignment should increase in complexity and responsibility, and not be merely routine.
6. The employer or a staff member must supervise the student or provide a supervisor for the student.

PROVIDING GUIDANCE FOR A CO-OP STUDENT

During the work experience, a Co-op student will be considered an employee and subject to the same rules and regulations as other employees. The student should be advised of these rules and regulations and all other policies governing working conditions, hours of work, holidays and other matters concerning employment. It is expected that the student will conform explicitly to the employer's rules, regulations and policies. Failure to do so should subject the student to the same disciplinary and corrective procedures as any other employee.

As with any new employee, taking some time to orient them to their new work environment, peers, company policy and goals will help create a welcoming environment. The following are some areas we suggest you cover with your Co-op student.

Administration

- Work hours, breaks, lunch
- Overtime expectations
- Time off request procedures
- Staff meetings
- Safety procedures
- Secretarial support—who does what
- Information resources
- Facilities—restrooms, parking, cafeteria, keys, supplies, meeting rooms, recreation

Business

- Your business, products/services, customers
- Unit's mission, goals, objectives, etc.
- How a Co-op student's work relates to goals and makes a meaningful contribution
- Roles of other team members

Performance

- Define initial expectations and job duties for your Co-op student through the Cooperative Education Training Plan
- Provide informal feedback frequently about specific behaviors (positives and opportunities for improvement)
- Conduct an informal mid-term review, concentrating on positives and areas for improvement
- Complete the Employer's Evaluation Form and conduct an exit interview with the Co-op student, simply letting the student know what he/she did correctly and what he/she can improve on.

REQUIRED FORMS

Training Agreement: The first form an employer will see is the Training Agreement. This form serves as a contract among the Employer, Student and NDSCS. It will outline dates of employment and approximate wages. This is a **required** form and will be kept on file at the NDSCS Cooperative Education office. It is the goal of the Cooperative Education Office to have this form completed and on file before the student reaches the job-site. This Agreement is non-binding for all three parties involved.

Training Outline: The next form is a Training Outline. This form records a detailed description of what the Co-op student will be working on while at the job-site. It is used as a guideline for maintaining relevance between academics and work related tasks.

Employer Evaluation: The Employer Evaluation is the final step of correspondence between the business and the Co-op Office for a particular student. The purpose of the Employer Evaluation is to give a final review for the student's work performance. The results of this evaluation will have a direct influence on the grade given to the Co-op student. This form will be mailed to the employer towards the end of the student's Co-op experience. Please review the completed form with the student. (It can also be found in the back of this Guidebook).

How to post a job online with NDSCS

To find the student that best suits your company, post a job on our website or attend one of our Career Fairs. To view the most current career fair dates check out our website.

Directions on posting a job online:

- Go to the NDSCS web site: www.ndscs.edu
- Click under the "I'm looking for information on" heading
- Scroll down and click on "Career Services"
- Click on "Employer Information"
- Click on "Posting a job online"

Under "Employer Information" you can also view the Career Fair dates, the most current NDSCS placement report, a campus map and news about NDSCS.



North Dakota State College of Science

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Cooperative Education Agreement

This document establishes an agreement between North Dakota State College of Science

and _____
(Name of Business)

for _____
(Name of Student)

Address of Business _____

Telephone Number _____

Supervisor _____

The **EMPLOYER** agrees to give the student a variety of work experiences as outlined in the Cooperative Education Training Plan. The EMPLOYER agrees to pay the student a wage/salary of _____. The SUPERVISOR will have adequate time to supervise the student and will report any difficulties to the coordinator. The Cooperative Education experience will extend for approximately _____(months) from _____ (date) through _____ (date). At the end of this period, this agreement shall terminate.

The **STUDENT** agrees to perform the work experiences assigned by the employer according to the company policies and regulations as they apply to regular employees. The student will also maintain high moral standards and uphold the standards of the business, especially confidentiality and honesty. The student further agrees to report to work punctually, regularly, and will notify the employer or supervisor if he/she is unable to be present. The student will accomplish the goals as outlined in the Cooperative Education Training Plan. At the end of the work experience the student will return to NDSCS to complete their education.

The **COORDINATOR** will assist the employer and offer guidance and counseling when necessary. The COORDINATOR and Faculty advisor will have regular contact with the student.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED that should this working agreement become unsatisfactory for any party, it can be dissolved by notifying the coordinator and allowing him/her sufficient time to make arrangements for termination.

Student Signature

Supervisor Signature

NDSCS Department Signature

Date

NDSCS Coordinator Signature

Date

Please make a copy for you and the Cooperative Education student and send the original copy to:

Kerri Kava
Cooperative Education Office
NDSCS Haverty Hall 105/106
800 6th Street North
Wahpeton, ND 58076

North Dakota State College of Science

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Cooperative Education Training Plan

This training plan must be completed to guarantee the work performed by the Cooperative Education student is beneficial to his/her education. Please list the duties and tasks the student will be expected to perform.

Name of Business

Name of Cooperative Education Student

Duties/Tasks

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 16. _____ |

Student Signature

Supervisor Signature

NDSCS Department Signature

Date

NDSCS Coordinator Signature

Date

Please make a copy for you and the Cooperative Education student and send the original copy to:
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Employer Evaluation

During the last week of the Cooperative Education experience, please complete this evaluation, review it with the student during the exit interview and return it to the Coordinator. Please give a copy to the student. The evaluation will become a permanent part of the students file. This appraisal will aid the coordinator in determining a grade for the Cooperative Education student's experience.

Name of Student _____ Date _____
 Supervisor _____ Semester _____
 Business Name and Location _____

Please use this Key to assign a score to the following areas of work performance:

5	Consistently Exceeds Expectations
4	Occasionally Exceeds Expectations
3	Meets Expectations
2	Occasionally Meets Expectations
1	Seldom Meets Expectations

Dependability

Regular Attendance 5 4 3 2 1
 Punctual for work, meetings, appointments, etc. 5 4 3 2 1
 Completes projects by specific deadlines 5 4 3 2 1
 Consistently produces quality work (accurate/complete) 5 4 3 2 1

Attitude

Willing to learn 5 4 3 2 1
 Demonstrates Initiative 5 4 3 2 1
 Attempts to understand goals of the organization 5 4 3 2 1
 Accepts & makes constructive use of suggestions 5 4 3 2 1
 Is adaptable to changing circumstances/objective 5 4 3 2 1
 Is courteous & friendly 5 4 3 2 1

Relations

Works effectively with supervisor 5 4 3 2 1
 Works effectively with co-workers 5 4 3 2 1
 Works effectively with the public/customers 5 4 3 2 1
 Demonstrates effective oral communication skills 5 4 3 2 1

Self-Management

Conducts self professionally (manners & appearance)	5	4	3	2	1
Manages time and resources efficiently	5	4	3	2	1
Makes informed decisions	5	4	3	2	1
Able to work without supervision, see things to do	5	4	3	2	1
Seeks further assistance/information when appropriate	5	4	3	2	1

Learning

Demonstrates skills needed for assigned tasks	5	4	3	2	1
Applies classroom knowledge to the job	5	4	3	2	1
Understands company expectations	5	4	3	2	1
Catches on fast, follows detailed instructions	5	4	3	2	1

Overall Performance

Please rate the student's overall performance

5	4	3	2	1
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1. What are the student's strengths? _____

2. What skills, knowledge and personal attributes does the student have which will help him/her to be competent in his/her chosen field?

3. In what areas could the student improve? What suggestions do you have regarding how he/she might make those improvements?

4. Please make any additional comments regarding the student's performance and development and/or your company's experience with the Co-op program.

5. Do you have any suggestions for ways to improve the process of Cooperative Education?

Supervisor's Signature

Date

Student's Signature

Date