

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION GUIDEBOOK FOR EMPLOYERS



For more information, contact:

- **Academic Advisor**
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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. A typical 2-credit summer Co-op requires **no less than 324 hours**. Most 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 Co-op 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 either by releasing permanent staff members for other duties or by meeting employment needs 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 online job link (<https://ndscs.joinhandshake.com/login>).
2. The college actively solicits the participation of an employer or the employer reaches out to the Career Services Office or program area.
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 students have many options and are looking for competitive wages. We do not select students for your positions. We believe it is the employer's 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 the Cooperative Education Training Plan (which is found in this booklet on pages 8 and 9).
3. Complete the Employer's Evaluation form and conduct an exit interview with the Co-op student (the evaluation form is found on page 10-11 and will be emailed to the supervisor for electronic completion). The exit interview should be a short meeting, either in person or over the phone, letting the student know what they did correctly and what they 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 cost of the Co-op, 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. Payment can be made through the student's CampusConnection account or through the Business Affairs. (NDSCS.BusinessAffairsOffice@ndscs.edu - 701-671-2135)

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. **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.
2. **Parallel Schedule**- The student registers for Cooperative Education and attends school on a part-time basis, working between 10 and 20 hours per week.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF THE CO-OP POSITION

To ensure that a student who participates in the Cooperative Education program has relevant learning experience, each 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 integrate academic learning and on-the-job training. For example, students are provided company instructions and applications using 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.

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

The Career Services Office at North Dakota State College of Science is located in Old Main. The address is 800 6th Street North, Wahpeton, ND 58076; the telephone numbers are (701) 671-3000 (local) and (800) 342- 4325 ext. 3-3000 (long distance). When working with employers, the Career Services Office is responsible for the following:

1. Counseling students on the proper techniques for filling out applications, writing cover letters, resumes, and interviewing skills.
2. Informing students and faculty of career opportunities.

The Division Dean's or Associate Deans office is responsible for the following:

1. Serving as institutional liaison with employers.
2. Conducting on-going evaluation of the program.
3. Grading Cooperative Education students once completed.

The Program Co-op Advisor 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 the liaison between students and the employer during the placement.
3. Working with the employer and/or student to resolve any problems associated with the work experience.
4. Evaluating student learning during the co-op. This includes a site or virtual visit.

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. The student's advisor or department will set this up.

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
- Administrative 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.

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 our annual Career Fair. To view the most current career fair date check out our website (www.ndscs.edu/careerfairs).

Directions on posting a job online:

- Go to www.NDSCS.edu/jobposting
- Sign in or create a company and individual profile, if you haven't already
- Fill in the appropriate job information

REQUIRED FORMS

Cooperative Education Agreement:

The first form an employer will see is the agreement. This form serves as a contract between 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 Division Dean's office. The student must submit this form prior to the Co-op beginning.

Cooperative Education Training Plan:

This form must be completed to guarantee the work performed by the Co-op student is beneficial to his/her education. This is a **required** form and will be kept on file at the NDSCS Division Deans and Department Advisor's Services office. This form must be submitted by the student prior to the Co-op beginning.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure all forms are completed and on file with the Career Services office **before** the student begins the Cooperative Education Experience. This Agreement is non-binding for all three parties involved.

Employer Evaluation:

The Employer Evaluation is the final step of correspondence between the business and the Career Services 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 not have a direct influence on the grade given to the Co-op student. A link to this form will be e-mailed to the employer towards the end of the student's Co-op experience to be completed electronically. It is encouraged to review the information on the form with the student so they can learn the most from this experience. The questions on this form are subject to change.

Forms are updated annually.



Cooperative Education Agreement

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

(Name of Employer)
for _____
(Name of Student)
Address of Employer _____
Street address City, State Zip Code
Name of Supervisor _____
Telephone Number _____ E-mail Address _____

The **EMPLOYER** agrees to provide 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 **EMPLOYER** also has the option to pay for the student's credits for the Co-op. 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 _____ number of months from _____ (date) through _____ (date). At the end of this period, this agreement shall terminate.

Would the Employer agree to pay for the student's credits (please circle one): Yes or No
Approx cost – \$183.79 - \$215.01 (plus fees) per credit hour

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 **NDSCS DIRECTOR** will assist the employer and offer guidance and counseling when necessary.

The **EMPLOYER** agrees to provide an equal opportunity for all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or status with regard to marriage or public assistance, And 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	Date
Employer/ Supervisor Signature	Date
NDSCS Faculty/Advisor Signature	Date
NDSCS Division Deans Office Signature	Date

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 Employer

 Name of Cooperative Education Student

Duties/Tasks

(Please note: not all lines need to be used; additional duties can be listed on the back)

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

 Student Signature

 Date

 Employer/Supervisor Signature

 Date

 NDSCS Faculty/Advisor Signature

 Date

 NDSCS Division Deans Office Signature

 Date

Cooperative Education Employer Evaluation

This is an example of the survey that will be emailed near the end of the cooperative work experience.

During the last week of the Cooperative Education experience, please complete this evaluation. The evaluation will become a permanent part of the students file. This appraisal will aid the Director 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
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	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?

