



## Cooperative Education FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **1. What is Cooperative Education?**

Cooperative Education (Co-Op) is a unique academic program combining academic learning with professional work experience in a field related to a student's education and career goals. It is designed to:

- provide practical work experience that will complement theories learned in the classroom;
- prepare the student for employment after graduation by learning workplace skills;
- allow the student to begin working in their field of study;
- help the student fulfill credit requirements for graduation while assisting with the transition from an academic environment into the professional world;
- work in a position, with an employer, who may ultimately provide permanent, full-time employment
- and provide and/or enhance job skills, problem solving abilities, creativity, or self improvement in a current job situation.

### **2. Who can participate in the Co-Op program?**

Any student who meets the eligibly criteria listed below may participate in the Co-Op program:

- be currently enrolled in an associate's degree program at Roane State
- have completed 12 semester hours of coursework in the major/field in which you will be working
- be in good academic standing
- submit an Application for Cooperative Education/Internship to the Placement Coordinator at RSCC

### **3. What do I need to do to enroll into a Co-Op course?**

Since you must be approved before enrolling into a Co-Op course, the first step is to contact the Placement Coordinator at Roane State. Her office is located in the Dunbar building in the Student Services Suite. She will provide you all the materials you need and will help you determine if this opportunity is right for you.

### **4. Will I get paid to work in a Co-Op position?**

If the company brings you on as an "employee", you will be on their payroll and be paid. While some students with experience earn a significant amount of money on Co-Op, the skill development and chance to learn practical applications of your

classroom studies are the primary reasons for participating. Therefore, your co-op position may not be a paid experience as you are there for academic credit. Paid versus unpaid should be worked out between student and employer.

**5. Will Roane State find me a job in order to participate in the Co-Op program?**

The Placement Coordinator (located in the Student Services in the Dunbar building) maintains a list of employers who are looking for part-time employees and will assist you in applying for applicable jobs. She will also assist you with developing an effective resume as well as provide helpful interviewing tips to help you secure a position. However, a job is not guaranteed. Many of our Co-Op participants are able to apply the knowledge learned in the classroom to their current jobs situations.

**6. What are my responsibilities as a student to earn college credit in the Co-Op program?**

With the help of the employer and program advisor, each student will determine a special project or other activities in which he/she will work on throughout the identified semester. This project will have identifiable learning objectives that will demonstrate skill building, problem solving, creativity, and self-improvement. At the end of the semester, a final report of the experience will be submitted as well as other documentation required for obtaining credit for the course.

**7. Why should I want to participate in a Co-Op job instead of just finding my own job during college?**

Co-Op differs from other student jobs because Co-Op positions are approved by the College as relevant to your career goals and provides new learning opportunities for growth. In addition, it identifies for the employer, interested persons seeking employment in the chosen field and/or provides the current employee the opportunity to enhance the current job experience. Often, Co-Op graduates are in a stronger position for obtaining a job in their field after they graduate because they have the kind of prior related experience sought by employers.

**8. What do I have to turn in to my program advisor to get a grade for the course?**

There are several forms required prior to being approved for a Co-Op position as well as forms and a report due after the experience. A packet of the material you need is available to you from either the Placement Coordinator or the Roane State web site. [www.roanestate.edu](http://www.roanestate.edu) keyword: placement

**9. How many Co-Op classes may I take?**

Roane State has four opportunities for a student to gain elective credit as a Cooperative Education student: COE 101, COE 102, COE 201, and COE 202. Each of these 3-credit hour classes represent a sequential learning experience that takes place in real employment situations. A student may take one of these classes each semester, if desired. Before enrolling, however, the student must be approved by the Placement Coordinator as well as the academic division of the student's major, and the employer in industry, business, or government.

**10. How many hours must I work to remain in the Co-Op program?**

A minimum of 10 hours of actual work experience per week or 150 hours throughout the identified semester is required to receive credit. Time sheets will be submitted at the end of the semester.

**11. Do I get a grade or credit for the Co-Op work experience? Who will evaluate my work at the end of the semester?**

You will earn 3-semester credit hours for the successful completion of one of the COE courses. Depending on your program of study, the credit will count as elective credit toward your degree. The overall work experience will be jointly evaluated by a faculty member for the appropriate academic division and the employer.