



CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION CERTIFICATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Co-operative Education Program

Algoma University, SH 206

Sault Ste. Marie Campus

Tel: 705.949.2301, ext. 4214

Email: coop@algonau.ca

algonau.ca/academics/co-operative-education

Algoma
UNIVERSITY

Dear Student,

I would like to welcome you to the Co-operative Education Program at Algoma University; it is a program based on a three-way partnership between Algoma University, co-op employers, and you — the co-op student!

Co-operative education provides you with an opportunity to explore various careers in a variety of work environments, providing you with insight into the skills and attitude necessary for success in the workplace.

Your co-operative education work placements will enable you to develop a network of contacts in the workplace which can prove invaluable upon graduation, while the co-operative education career skills course will provide you with job search strategies and interview experience.

This handbook serves as a reference to compliment your mandatory career skills course (COOP 0101). Please read this handbook in its entirety and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Please note that the Algoma U Academic Calendar supersedes all information found in this manual.

Once again, welcome to the Co-operative Education Program. I look forward to assisting you in your career development.

Sincerely,

Cindi

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Co-op, and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator
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Introduction

Co-operative education is an optional program, providing students with an academic experience integrated with paid employment experience. To obtain the Co-operative Education Certificate at convocation, co-op students must complete COOP 0101 and three work term placements.

All co-op placements must:

- provide a meaningful and productive work experience;
- provide paid work experience
- be monitored by the Algoma University Co-op Department;
- provide directed, supervised, and evaluated work experience by the employer;
- integrate students into the workplace environment in a fashion similar to that of other employees;
- be of significant duration – the minimum term of employment for an eligible position is ten weeks, but 16 weeks is the typical work placement length;
- be based on a 35-40 hour work week; and
- meet the accreditation guidelines established by the Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning (CEWIL)

Co-op Department: Contact Information

The co-op Department is located in SH 206 at the SSM Campus. Cindi Elgie, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator may be contacted at coop@algonau.ca or at 705-949-2301 ext. 4214.

Why Choose Co-op?

There are many benefits to be gained through co-operative education:

- paid work experience
- meaningful work experience
- contact with potential employers
- develop competencies and improve skill-set

What is the Role of the Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator?

The Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator acts as a liaison between employers and co-op students. The CWILC works closely with employers and students to develop suitable placements, ensuring the objectives of the co-op program are met:

- Facilitates employer/student contact;
- Ensures fair and equitable treatment of students and employers through the process;
- Assists employers through all aspects of the co-op process;
- Monitors the placements, ensuring both the employers' and students' needs are being met;
- Discusses career goals with students and helps them develop these goals; and
- Instructs the mandatory career skills course (COOP 0101) for all co-op students.

Please note: the CCEL cannot guarantee a co-op work term placement for any student.

Degree Programs Offering Co-op Opportunities

Algoma University's Co-operative Education Certificate is offered concurrently with all disciplines with the exception of Bachelor of Social Work and Community, Economic and Social Development programs. However, Traditionally most placements have been in the areas of computer science, information technology, business administration, and accounting. A growing field of interest is biology and various Bachelor of Arts programs. Work term placements are never guaranteed. Even if you meet the co-op admission requirements, you are never guaranteed a work term placement. Although the Co-op Office liaises with employers to generate work term postings, work term placements are always employer and market-driven; therefore, some semesters will have more positions than there are applicants and other semesters there will be more applicants than there are positions.

Admission to Co-operative Education Certificate Program

The Co-operative Education Certificate program is optional and requirements are in addition to the academic requirements for the student's degree program. Students may withdraw from the co-op program at any time and continue their studies in the usual manner without affecting their standing in their degree program. To be eligible for a co-op work term placement, students must:

- Maintain an overall average of 70%;
- Successfully complete COOP 0101;
- Register as a full-time student (9-15 credits per term) in any two out of the last four consecutive academic terms;
- All international students must adhere to the requirements of their study permit and have a CO-OP Work Permit;
- Complete 30 credits in a degree program at Algoma University (students transferring into second year from another institution must complete at least 15 credits at Algoma University); and
- Students must be living in the country they are completing their co-op placement in (unless discussed and verified with the Co-op Department).

Please note: In certain circumstances concurrent enrolment in COOP 0101 will be granted. This requires prior permission via the CWILC.

Academic Requirements

To graduate with the Co-operative Education Certificate, students must successfully complete their degree program, pass COOP 0101 and successfully complete three work term placements. An acceptable Work Term Reflection Report must be received for each work term to determine whether a student may continue on to subsequent placements. See list of co-op courses on next page.

Co-operative Education Certificate Courses

Students will be required to complete the following co-op courses to obtain the Co-operative Education Certificate:

- COOP 0101 (career skills course)
- COOP 0201 (first four-month work term placement)
- COOP 0202 (second four-month work term placement)
- COOP 0301 (third four-month work term placement)

Co-operative Education Fees

Co-op courses are charged at the rate for their credit weighting. The Introductory Career Skills course, COOP 0101, is counted as 1 “co-op credit” and is charged at a rate = to 1 credit Canadian Fees. Each work term placement (COOP 0201 – COOP0302) is also counted as 1 “co-op credit” and is charged at a rate = to 1 credit Canadian Fees.

International students do not pay international fees for co-op credits. All co-op credits are based on the Canadian Fee Schedule found in the Academic Calendar.

Co-operative Education Graduation Requirements

In order to receive a certificate acknowledging completion of the Co-operative Education program upon graduation, students must complete three work terms (including three Work Term Reflection Reports). To graduate from the Co-operative Education program you must identify yourself as a co-op student on your “Request for Graduation Form.”

Work Term Options

Students may pursue an 8-12 month work term placement rather than the traditional four-month work term placement at the discretion of the employer and the CWILC. An eight-month work term will be considered equivalent to two four-month work term placements and a twelve-month work term will be considered equivalent to three four-month work term placements. For registration purposes, students must enrol each semester in the necessary COOP course. For example, if a student's first placement was an eight-month work term placement beginning in September, the student would enrol in COOP0201 for the fall term and COOP0202 for the winter term.

Academic Calendar Regulations

The Academic Calendar of Algoma University contains the official regulations of the Co-operative Education Certificate program as approved by Senate, and updates to those rules may be made at any time and printed in the subsequent annual edition of the Calendar.

Every attempt has been made to make this manual consistent with the Academic Calendar; however, changes in regulations may not be reflected in immediate updates of the manual. If you are in doubt, please consult with the Co-op and Career Services Advisor. Content in the Academic Calendar overrides information provided in this manual.

Please contact the financial aid office to determine how co-op may affect your OSAP funding. Email fao@algonau.ca or phone (705) 949-2301 ext.4219

Work Term Cycle

Co-op students will alternate work and study terms, with the possibility of completing their first work term in the spring term of their first year of studies. Please note, enrolment in the co-op program does not guarantee a work term placement.

There are three work-term cycles, each coinciding with the academic term: September – December, January – April, and May – August.

Co-op students are encouraged to complete 12 months of co-op work placements during one calendar year. This helps to keep a student on track to graduate without missing required courses that may be on a “rolling roster” (that is not offered every semester or every year). Students are advised to discuss their co-op placements with their academic advisor to ensure they are choosing their work terms at the best possible time.

Please note: *students opting to complete the co-op program will normally delay graduation by one or two semesters in order to accommodate work placement terms.*

Co-op Work Terms: What Is Required and How Am I Evaluated?

To graduate with a Co-operative Education Certificate, students must pass COOP0101 and successfully complete three work term placements in addition to completing a degree program. At the beginning of each work term you must submit the required paper work (ie. work term objectives, work contact information, and co-op offer letter) to the Co-op Office. Students must also pay tuition for the appropriate work term course code (ie. COOP0201). **You must contact coop@algonau.ca immediately once you are hired so that the Co-op Office can provide you with the necessary co-op paper work.** Mid-way through your work term placement, you will receive a site visit from the Co-op Office. This site visit allows the CWILC to speak directly with you and your supervisor to ensure that both of your expectations are being met and that the co-op term is going well.

At the end of each work term, you must submit a Work Term Reflection Report. Failing to submit an acceptable report may result in failure of your work term placement. If you receive a failing grade on the Work Term Reflection Report, you will be given one opportunity to make the necessary changes to obtain a passing grade. Additionally, your co-op employer will be required to submit an evaluation form to provide feedback on your performance during their work term placement. Students will be assigned a "pass" or "fail" on their work term based on the site visit, the work term reflection report, and the employer evaluation.

What is the Length of Each Work Term Placement(s)?

The exact start and end dates of each work term vary from term to term according to the employer's needs. For a variety of reasons, employers may be unable to hire a student for the full four-month (16-week) period. Following CEWIL guidelines, Algoma U's Co-operative Education Department may approve a work term placement if the position in question is at least 10 weeks of full-time work (usually defined as a 35-hour work week).

Can a Co-op Student Work for One Employer for More than One Work Term?

Students must commit to a minimum of two work term placements with each employer unless the employer requests only one work term assignment. Most work terms are four months in duration; however, students may work in up to three consecutive terms (total of 12 months). This follows much more closely with the internship programs being adopted by many employers.

Job Posting Information

All co-op positions are posted on the Student Portal under Job Opportunities.

Can I Find My Own Placement?

Yes. Often, students may have a place of employment in mind for completing a work term placement. Students may arrange their own co-op position with final approval of the Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator. You must get approval from the CWILC PRIOR to beginning work in order to receive recognition for a co-op work term. Students securing their own employment who wish to have it recognized as a co-op credit must register and pay tuition for the co-op work term. This fee is not a placement fee; rather, it is an administrative fee used to help off-set the administrative costs associated with running a co-operative education program.

Students Returning to Previous Employers

The CWILC will attempt to obtain confirmation from employers regarding their intentions to re-hire students, and students will be advised accordingly. Students who have just completed the first work term with the employer are committed to return for a second term if requested by the employer. Each student must inform the Co-op Office by the end of the second month of the academic term whether he/she intends to return to the previous employer. Students who have indicated an intention to return will not be permitted to apply for other posted positions.

Students who have not submitted an acceptable Work Term Reflection Report from the previous term will not usually be permitted to commit to a return.

Students returning to a placement should sign the appropriate work term forms by the end of their current work term. These students may also be required to sign additional paper work/contracts given to them by their employer.

Applying for a Co-op Job Posting

When applying for a posted co-op position, you must submit your application (resume + cover letter) to:

Cindi Elgie, Co-op Work Integrated Learning Coordinator at coop@algomau.ca, unless otherwise stated.

Contacting the Employer Before Applying to a Position

DO NOT contact the employer directly without first discussing it with the Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator.

The Application Process

Whether you are applying for a position posted on the Student Portal, or are applying directly on a website, please follow all application instructions.

International students must have a co-op work permit to apply for positions. Unless agreed upon in advance, students must reside in the country they wish to work once the position commences.

The Selection Process

Positions posted on the Student Portal by the co-op office will be screened to ensure students meet all requirements. The employer will determine who receives an interview.

The Interview

An employer will contact you directly to arrange for an interview. If you receive two job offers, please reach out to the co-op office. We are here to help you make the best decision regarding which position to accept.

Notifying Successful Candidates

An employer will contact the successful candidate and notify them of what steps must be taken to begin a co-op position with their company.

After the Hire

Once you have been given an official offer, please email the Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator at coop@algonau.ca with the news. You will be given access to documents to complete. The documents are time sensitive. The Co-op Office will register you for your co-op work term placement.

See the below list for appropriate work term codes:

- COOP 0201: 1st Work Term
- COOP 0202: 2nd Work Term
- COOP 0301: 3rd Work Term
- COOP 0302: 4th Work Term (if you choose to do an additional placement)

Co-operative Education Fees

There are two fees associated with co-operative education: tuition fees for COOP 0101 and Work Term fees.

COOP 0101: Career Skills Course

The fee for COOP 0101 is equivalent to the cost of a one-credit academic course. Refund policy for withdrawals is the same as those for academic course withdrawals.

Work Term Fee

Each work term requires the payment of a work term fee. The fee for each work term is equivalent to the cost of a one-credit academic course. All work term placements are subject to this fee to cover administrative costs — no exceptions.

Registration for an Academic Course During a Work Term

During the work term, students are expected to concentrate on work not study. Students may enrol in 6 credits during the work term as long as the course is not scheduled during your scheduled working hours. Students should discuss their intent to register for courses during the work term with the CWILC

Out of Town Placements

Students accepting positions away from home are responsible for their own transportation and expenses during the work term. Some employers will pay reasonable moving expenses, but you should not expect such reimbursement unless arranged in advance.

I encourage you to contact the housing office at the colleges or universities located in the city where you will be working. They often offer reasonably priced accommodation to co-op students. This prevents you from incur costs associated with signing an apartment lease or furnishing an apartment.

Site Visits

The Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator is responsible for helping to ensure (1) the work term is a positive and educational experience for the student; and (2) the employer is obtaining the maximum benefit from hiring a co-op student.

Site visits are organized mid-way through the work term. The CWILC will contact employers to organize a site visit.

A Typical Site Visit Could be Arranged as Follows:

- 15 minutes with the student to discuss learning objectives, work placement satisfaction, the work term report, and determine whether there are any work-related issues that need to be addressed with the employer (i.e. underutilization of the student, poor working conditions, need for additional guidance);
- 20 minutes with the co-op student's supervisor to discuss job responsibilities, establish relevance to program of study, and obtain confidential feedback on the student. At this time, you can also discuss the university's curriculum, the administration of the program, and the identification of any future possibilities for collaboration.

What if I Encounter a Problem with my Employer?

Should you have any concerns regarding a particular employer or encounter any unusual, unsafe, or uncomfortable circumstances (e.g. sexual harassment, discrimination, unsafe work environment, etc.) please contact the CWILC immediately at (705) 949-2301 ext. 4214 or email coop@algomau.ca. If it's an emergency, please call (705) 206-6548. Please see the "Student Rights" document in the appendix.

Work Term Reflection Report

Each co-op work term placement requires students to submit an original Work Term Reflection Report. Work Term Reflection Reports must be completed by the deadline. Students failing to submit an appropriate Work Term Reflection will not receive credit for their co-op work term. Please see the appendix for more details on this Work Term Reflection Report.

You cannot submit the same Work Term Reflection twice. Each work term requires an original Work Term Reflection. Submitting the same Work Term Reflection more than once constitutes academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Work Term Evaluations

Employers must complete a Work Term Evaluation Form for each co-op work term placement. Employers must reflect on how well a co-op student performed. Students will have the opportunity to review this evaluation form with their employer as well as provide their own feedback.

How Am I Graded?

To receive a passing grade on your work term a student must:

- Complete all paper work requested from co-op office (ie. work term objectives, employer info, salary info, etc.);
- Complete a full work term (min. 10 weeks in duration) with the recommendation of a passing mark from an employer; and
- Submit an appropriate Work Term Reflection Paper.

Failed Work Term

Under some circumstances a failure of a work term will be entered into your Co-op Record. Failure of a work term usually means you will be required to withdraw from the co-op program. Failure of a work term could result from, but is not limited to, any one of the following:

- failure to report to the employer
- leaving job before end of term without permission
- dismissal from employment with cause
- unsatisfactory performance evaluation
- failure to return to employer for second term if requested
- failure to submit acceptable Work Term Reflection Report
- failure to submit required documentation to co-op office
- failure to meet commitments to Co-operative Education

Consequences of a Failed Work Term

Under most circumstances, the failure of a work term will result in required withdrawal from the Co-operative Education Program. Students may be allowed to continue, at the discretion of the CCEL and Registrar, but the failed work term will be included on the Co-operative Education Student Record, which is available to potential co-op employers.

Appeals

The failure of a work term is a serious consequence. The entry of “failed work term” on the Co-operative Education Student Record may be appealed through normal university appeal channels. As with appeals of academic course marks, students should attempt to resolve matters through discussion with the CWILC before initiating appeals.

APPENDIX

Student's Rights as an Employee

In general, co-op students are treated exactly like any other employee as far as legal requirements for work conditions are concerned. The following information is very brief and can only provide general guidelines. If you have further questions, you will have to contact the Co-op Office at coop@algonau.ca.

Medical Benefits

For most students, medical coverage will not change. If in doubt about additional coverage, particularly if you are over 21, consult your insurance policy (or your parents) for clarification or with AUSU for your student health plan.

Unemployment Insurance

You may work long enough to qualify for Employment Insurance benefits. Check with the local HRDC Canada Employment Office if you would like clarification on regulations.

Worker's Compensation

Like all other employees, you are covered by an employer's worker's compensation as soon as you begin employment. Contact the local Worker's Compensation Board for additional information. Worker's compensation covers only work related injuries.

Vacation Pay

Employers are not legally required to provide vacation pay to co-op students (with some exceptions) but most do add 4% to your salary in lieu of vacation time. Any requests for time off work, either for medical or personal reasons, should be discussed with your supervisor well in advance.

Health and Safety Legislation

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that employers ensure a safe working environment. This includes providing and ensuring the use of any appropriate safety equipment. If you fail to wear safety equipment you are putting the employer in contravention of the law. Always comply with your employer's safety regulations and always inform the appropriate person of any accident that may occur. Visit www.wsib.on.ca for detailed information.

Human Rights Code

Every employee is legally entitled to freedom from discrimination and sexual harassment. The Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination or harassment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offence, marital status, family status, or handicap. In addition, the Code prohibits any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence, humiliation or reasonably be perceived as placing conditions of a sexual nature on employment or opportunity. Your employer should make available to employees a written policy on sexual harassment.

If you feel you are being harassed, make it clear to the harasser that the behaviour is not welcome in a polite but firm manner. Contact the Co-op Office immediately if you are being harassed at coop@algonau.ca to discuss further actions you should consider taking. For further information on Human Rights, go to the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) website.

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are targets for performance, stated in such a way that you can determine your own success at achieving them. In a work environment learning objectives provide a way for you to set realistic targets for self-improvement. The result is that you gain skills and the employer is more satisfied with your performance.

Why Bother with Learning Objectives?

Focus for Better Learning

There are many things that you might learn on your work term, some of which are directly related to the job and some of which are more personal. Having to determine objectives forces you to decide what is really important to you, allowing you to focus your attention during the work term.

Motivational Effects

Most people work better and gain more satisfaction from work when they feel like they are making progress. Properly constructed learning objectives, which include measures for determining progress, allow you to give yourself feedback on a regular basis.

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How to Write Learning Objectives

Write Them Down

Writing learning objectives forces you to state them clearly. Look at your objectives periodically to see if they are still relevant to you.

Keep Them Simple

Keep your objectives simple. Objectives that are impossible to reach are meaningless.

Keep the List Small

You will do much better with a small list of meaningful objectives than with a huge list. Large numbers diminish the importance of individual items.

Make Objectives Reasonable and Challenging

If you set a learning objective that is out of reach, there is no motivation to strive for it because you are doomed for failure. The trick is to find objectives that you can achieve if you really try hard.

State Objectives in a Positive Fashion

Stating an objective makes you focus on it. Rather than focusing on weaknesses, emphasize the development of your strengths.

Choose Objectives that can be Measured Precisely

After you state your objectives, make sure that you have a means of evaluating them. The measurement is your way of evaluating your performance.

Sample Work Term Objectives

Personal Objective:

To participate in some sort of fitness program; record progress in a daily planner at least three times/week.

Work Objective:

To be 15 minutes early for work each day; record number of late days per week in a daily planner.

Work Term Reflection Report Guidelines

Introduction

All co-operative education students are required to submit a Work Term Reflection Report at the end of each co-op work term. This report must be polished and professional (typed, double spaced). Students failing to submit an appropriate Work Term Reflection will not receive credit for their co-op work term.

Purpose of Work Term Reflection

- 1) Facilitates an understanding of the employer's organization and work environment.
- 2) Assists in the development of a student's communication skills.
- 3) Assists in developing learning objectives for subsequent work terms.
- 4) Allows a student to reflect upon what he or she has learned during the work term.

Guidelines adapted by CEWIL's *Co-Operative Education Manual: A Guide to Planning and Implementing Co-Operative Education Programs in Post-Secondary Institutions*. <https://www.cewilcanada.ca/>