

Co-op Pre-Enrollment Checklist

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OP) IS...

- An opportunity to explore careers through “hands-on,” paid experience in a professional work environment
- A 2-3 semester commitment available to students with a minimum 2.5 GPA and 30 hours of USC coursework
- Offered throughout the year parallel to or alternating with academic studies:

PARALLEL

- ▶ Work while attending school (20 hrs/wk)
- ▶ Work 3 consecutive *semesters part-time
- ▶ Remain in the Columbia area

ALTERNATING

- ▶ Alternate working and attending school
- ▶ Work minimum of 2 *semesters full-time (40 hrs/wk)
- ▶ Offers opportunity to live in other parts of the country

* *semesters = Spring, Fall or Summer*

BENEFITS OF CO-OP

Participating in the USC Co-op program can lead to:

- Improved academic performance due to “hands-on” application of theories learned in the classroom
- Increased understanding of potential career options
- Increased employment marketability (likelihood of more job offers upon graduation)
- Increased earning potential (likelihood of higher starting salary upon graduation)
- An offer of full-time employment from co-op employer

As a student in the USC Co-op program, you will receive:

- Income earned while participating in co-op
- Full-time student status which will assist you with avoiding complications related to insurance, financial aid, academic advising and housing, even while you are away from campus
- Experience in your chosen field and exposure to a professional work setting
- Official co-op notation on your transcript and a certificate of completion signed by the President and Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Academic Support

Plus, you will already:

- Be enrolled in JobMate for participation in resume referral and on-campus recruiting for full-time jobs
- Have developed resume and interviewing skills for future job searches

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- _____ Explain alternating and parallel formats (**2-3 semester commitment; student cannot co-op during final semester at USC**)
- _____ Explain satisfactory academic standing requirement (**minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA**)
- _____ Explain minimum 30-credit hour requirement
- _____ Discuss JobMate requirements
- _____ Provide student with foreign national *Verification of Work for International Students* form (if applicable)
- _____ Provide student with *Academic Advisor Recommendation for Co-op Applicants* form (if applicable)
- _____ Explain that student must be enrolled in the co-op program to maintain USC student status

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

_____ Discuss Program Manager role

- Verify student eligibility and assist student with co-op search
- Enroll student in co-op and notify Registrar’s office of student’s co-op status
- Facilitate transition to the worksite and support student during co-op process

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

Discuss Student responsibilities

- Complete graduate student and/or international student forms (if applicable)
- Conduct a **self-directed** co-op search using JobMate and alternative job search methods listed below (start looking 3-4 months prior to desired start date).
- Fulfill JobMate requirements:
 - Register in JobMate – **In the Profile section, select “co-op” under “type of position seeking”**
 - Have resume critiqued and approved by Career Center staff
 - Sign JobMate policy form
 - Upload resume into JobMate to establish a full-access account
- Respond appropriately to employer interest (timing, e-mail, phone, conduct, etc.)
- Prepare for interviews (review library resources, participate in mock interviewing, etc.)
- Plan for the interview process (including possible drug testing, travel reimbursement, etc.)
- Send thank you letter to employer following interview
- When made an offer, decline or accept by phone or writing in a timely manner
- Request copy of offer letter and job description from employer
- Upon acceptance of an offer, contact Program Manager immediately to schedule co-op enrollment meeting

Your Program Manager is:

_____ Name

_____ E-mail

My signature verifies that the above information has been discussed with me, AND that I understand that completing the co-op enrollment process is necessary for me to maintain my student status while on co-op.

_____ Student Name (print)

_____ Date

_____ Student University E-mail

_____ Last 4 Digits Student ID Number

_____ Student Phone

_____ Student Signature

_____ College/Major

_____ Staff Signature

RESOURCES FOR FINDING A CO-OP POSITION

Visit the Career Center during on-call hours to discuss these resources with a staff member if needed:

Use the **Developing a Job Search Plan** tip sheet: <http://www.sc.edu/career/tipsheets.html>

Use the **JobMate** database: See <http://www.sc.edu/career/JobMateAccessInstructions.html>

- Search database for co-op listings
- Upload resume so that your resume can be referred to co-op employers
- Sign up for On-Campus Interviews for co-op positions

Search the **Co-op Archive for previous co-op employers**: See <http://www.career.sa.sc.edu/coop/default.asp>

- Contact employers of interest to inquire about current or upcoming co-op opportunities

Use the **Career Center website**: See www.sc.edu/career and click on “Internships and Co-ops” (Note: many companies that offer internships also have co-op programs)

Attend career fairs: Search JobMate’s “Job Fairs & Events” section in advance of fairs to preview a list of attending employers and the positions they are seeking to fill

Use the **Career Center library**: View employer directories to contact companies who hire in your field of interest and inquire about co-op opportunities, and meet with a career counselor for help in locating additional resources

Use **academic departments**: Check with faculty, student services, advisors, and bulletin boards on campus

Network with people you know: Talk to family, friends, classmates, employers, etc. for potential leads

Other _____