

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

About Cooperative Education

What is a Co-Op?

A co-op integrates classroom study with paid, planned, and supervised work experience in the public or private sector.

Benefits of a Co-op

Most co-ops begin at the end of the sophomore year. Students who participate in co-ops can expect the following benefits:

- Establish professional contacts in their chosen career field
- Gain career-related, paid work experience
- Clarify career goals
- Improve job search skills
- Earn an income that can apply to educational costs

How Does a Co-op Work?

At Valparaiso University, students can do co-ops in two ways:

- Full-Time Alternating Program
- Part-Time Parallel Program

The Full-Time Alternating Program intersperses a semester of full-time coursework with a semester of full-time employment. While this option delays graduation, students can continue coursework through various summer school and evening course offerings. This is the only option available to students in the College of Engineering.

The Part-Time Parallel Program allows students to work for a co-op employer while attending classes at Valpo on a full-time basis. This option is available to students of all majors in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration and the College of Nursing. In most instances, this option will not delay graduation.

SETTING UP A CO-OP POSITION

To get started, visit the Career Center, attend a Co-op/Internship Information Session, or contact your Departmental Co-op Coordinator. Scroll down for a list of current Co-op Coordinators.

Academic Credit

Students can receive academic credit through their department. The number of credits for each co-op and the total number of credits that can count towards a major or degree vary with each program (between 0.5 and 3 credit hours). Consult your faculty Co-op Coordinator for specifics about this issue.

Co-op Fees

Students doing co-ops must pay for the number of co-op credits they take (usually 2 credits). They're not eligible for financial aid, even though they are considered full-time students and are able to defer loan repayment. For this reason, co-op students should budget for their tuition costs when planning co-op expenses.

The per-credit cost is the same as the summer school rate. Please check the Registrar's Office website.

Required GPA

This requirement varies by college:

- Arts and Sciences: 2.5/4.0
- Business Administration: 2.0/4.0
- Engineering: 2.4/4.0
- Nursing: 2.0/4.0

Co-op Salary

Co-op salaries vary depending on the employer. Wages are determined by a number of factors, including major, college year, grades, market demand, and the geographic area of employment. Even though co-op students are often well-paid, the primary function of co-ops is to complement classroom instruction and to gain career-related work experience. So keep in mind that these programs aren't intended to replace financial aid packages, although many students are able to supplement their educational experiences through their co-op earnings.

Majors Co-op Employers are Seeking

Engineering, Business, Math and Computer Science, Nursing, and some Arts and Science majors are all attractive to co-op employers. To find out more about opportunities in your major, please visit the Career Center.

Learning about Available Co-op Jobs

Co-op listings are available both in the Career Library and in our online job postings. As you read the available job descriptions, pay close attention to the desired qualifications, application requirements, and work schedule required.

Cooperative Education Coordinators

College of Arts and Sciences

Communication Professor Douglas Kocher

Mathematics and Computer Science Professor Gregory Hume

Physical Sciences Professor Warren Kosman

College of Business Administration

Toni Bickerstaff

College of Engineering

Professor John Steffen

College of Nursing

Dean Janet Brown

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