



## **Cooperative Education for Supply Chain Management Whitman School of Management**

### **Co-op Handbook**

#### **Introduction**

The Cooperative Education Program at Whitman is designed for University students who have initiative, a “can do” attitude, and an understanding of the value of real world experience! You are choosing to work in business and industry for a 6 month period in a professional position related to your academic major.

The decision to pursue a Co-op is a very important one for most students and it pays off many times over throughout your academic and professional career. In recent years, the trend in business and industry is to hire entry-level employees from the pool of students who have worked a Co-op with the company. Remember, that for a company, a Co-op experience is comparable to a 6-month interview. By the end of the Co-op, company personnel will be familiar with your personality, your work habits and your strengths and weaknesses as a young professional. If you do a good job while on Co-op, you may leave with an invitation to work for the company as a full-time employee upon graduation. In fact, sponsoring companies offer their Co-op students a full time position approximately 70 percent of the time. A Co-op is an excellent way to get your first job without having to go through the tedious interview process experienced by most students during their senior year.

#### **Academic Information (How co-op affects your studies)**

The key to setting yourself up for a successful Co-op experience is working closely with your academic advisor. They will be advising you about how best to make up the work, signing the Co-op administrative forms and helping you pre-select your courses to prepare you for your return to the University. If you work closely with them, preparing to go “Co-op” will be easy!

## G.P.A.

All students interested in a Co-op opportunity must be in good academic standing, carrying a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Eligible students must have completed their freshman year and should plan on completing their last semester at Syracuse University.

## Co-op Timeframe

All prospective Co-op students need to meet with their academic advisor or the academic advising office to determine where a Co-op assignment might best “fit” your academic schedule. For example, a student may need a certain class(s) to graduate only to discover that the class they need is only offered during the Co-op. In general, a Co-op can be done at anytime (fall or spring semester), as long as permission is received from your academic advisor. However, for some students doing a Co-op during certain months of the year is easier than others.

Most Co-ops will be six months in duration. To coincide with the academic calendar at the Whitman School we recommend to sponsoring companies that Co-ops begin at one of two times during the year. One Co-op block of time begins in January and runs until the end of June. The other Co-op block runs from July to the end of December.

Students should be aware that if they decide to accept a Co-op position that this will likely delay their original planned graduation date by one semester. Effectively a student will remain at Syracuse University for four and a half years instead of four. But that should not be a significant issue for most because taking a Co-op does not result in any additional expenses or hardship for the student. The Co-op student can still to walk at their original planned graduation ceremony knowing that they will need to return the following fall semester to finish their course work. Or, the Co-op student can decide to attend graduation ceremonies the May after course work is completed.

## Financial Aid

In order to receive financial aid from Syracuse University students must maintain at least **half time** status or full time status. Full time status for undergraduates means students carry no less than 12 credit hours in any given semester. Half time status is when a student carries 6 or more credits but less than 12 credits in a given semester. **Half time status is different from part time status.** Part time status is carrying less than 6 credits per semester.

Financial aid is calculated using a Cost of Attendance formula. Anything less than 12 credit hours will result in a pro-rated Cost of Attendance. If a student were taking 6 credit hours or half time status, then their financial aid would be pro-rated to half of what they would have normally received as a full time student. For example, say a student normally receives \$10,000 in financial aid from Syracuse University. As a half time student the student would receive \$5,000. Students with half time status are still eligible to defer their existing student loans. When the student returns to full time status financial aid is recalculated based on their new Cost of Attendance. So students

do not lose any financial aid by taking a Co-op.

Co-ops are paid positions. Frequently students receive compensation close to what would normally be paid if they were employed as a regular employee. This compensation is used to offset living expenses during the Co-op. This does create one potential hardship for the Co-op student. Since this is a paid position the student's income will now be included in the total family income that is used to calculate financial aid. It is hoped however, the Co-op student will be able to save some money from their Co-op experience to help offset any loss in financial aid due to income earned during the Co-op.

### **Taking courses while on Co-op**

Any student interested in taking courses at another college or university during their Co-op assignment must meet with his/her advisor prior to enrolling. These course(s) should not interfere in any way with the work experience. There may also be a possibility of taking an on-line SU course via the iMBA program. Since the iMBA program is for graduate students undergrads will need to obtain permission from the graduate office to enroll in an iMBA course. Students should remember though, that their first priority is to their Co-op. Your Co-op is a real job. Your employer expects the Co-op intern to be on time for work every day and have assignments completed on time like any other full time employee. Students should only consider taking a course if they are certain that the course will not interfere with their Co-op.

### **Academic credit**

Academic credit is not granted for the Co-op Program itself. However, students can petition for **Work Experience Credit** and **Independent Study Credit**. Each petition represents 3 credits. Combined they account for the 6 credits which can be used to maintain half time status. Students wishing to pursue this possibility must contact their academic department as soon as the job assignment is known, prior to the onset of the work experience. Students will need to identify a faculty sponsor to sponsor their work experience and independent study. Together, the student and faculty sponsor will complete both the Work Experience credit and Petition for Independent Study forms and submit them through the Whitman undergraduate office. The faculty sponsor will assign a grade to each upon completion of the Co-op.

### **Insurance**

Students accepting a Co-op experience should check with their parents on health insurance. Some insurance carriers do not provide health coverage for part time or half time students. If by accepting a Co-op a student loses health insurance on their

parent's plan then health insurance can be purchased through the Syracuse University Health Center for approximately \$188 per month. Health insurance is typically purchased on an annual basis based on the fiscal year of the institution. The fiscal year for Syracuse University goes from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 31<sup>st</sup>. This means if a student accepts a Co-op from January – June and needs to purchase health insurance then they would only need to purchase 6 months of health insurance. If, however, a student begins a Co-op in July and the student needs to purchase health insurance the student will have to sign a contract to purchase health insurance for one year, even though they may only need it for 6 months. Fortunately, there are circumstances that permit the student to cancel their insurance at the end of the Co-op in December. If there is a change in the student's status, such as becoming a full time student and being added to their parents insurance this qualifies as a condition of cancellation. Effectively, the student only purchases 6 months of insurance.

## **Making up the work**

As previously mentioned, participating in a Co-op will likely push back the student's planned graduation date by a semester. However, depending upon a student's standing (ie. accumulated credit hours) and when the student participated in the Co-op it may be possible for the student to graduate on time. Some options for keeping to the original planned graduation date include; attending summer school, and/or taking more than 15 credit hours per semester during the academic year. Normal student tuition pays for 19 credits per semester. Students typically take 15 credit hours but they are entitled to 19. This is one additional class per semester. It is quite possible that a student can accumulate enough credit hours over the course of their academic career that the Co-op does not interfere with their normally planned graduation date.

With that said, no where is it written that a student must graduate in 4 years. Companies are increasingly pushing for Co-ops rather than summer internships. As such, more and more universities are designing their programs to accommodate Co-ops. The majority of these programs are now 4 ½ years rather than the traditional 4 years.

## **Co-op Process Procedures**

### **Step 1**

Participating in the Co-op Process is relatively easy to do. We provide assistance in preparing your resume and cover letter, provide tips about your job search and ensure that the student fully understands the finer points of the Co-op process. Throughout the semester we will ask you to attend programs on writing a resume, interviewing skills, and how to do a successful job search. If you are serious about doing a Co-op, the Whitman Career Center is ready to help you accomplish your goal of finding a Co-op position. Follow these steps and you will be on your way to going "Co-op":

- Stop by the Whitman Career Center to learn more about Co-op programs.
- Post your resume by using Orangelink. You will need to stop by the Whitman Career Center to open your account. Please fill out the registration part of the

software and post your resume (after it has been critiqued), on your account. This account will enable you to sign up for interviews through the on-campus recruiting program and also participate in the resume referral service.

- Meet with a Career Center counselor to discuss your plans and review your academic schedule. It is suggested that you do this before you meet with your academic advisor.
- Meet with your academic advisor and complete the **Co-op Plan form**. This meeting will help you decide the best time for you to go Co-op.
- Attend all meetings and workshops regarding the Co-op.

## **Step 2 - Finding a Co-op job Using on-campus recruiting**

Each semester there will be companies coming to campus to recruit specifically for Co-op students. These companies will be posted in Orangelink.

Remember that some companies will require potential Co-op students to attend an Information Session before their scheduled interviews. These "Info" sessions will be advertised prior to the company visit.

### **Using your own resources**

Syracuse University is not the only source of Co-op opportunities. There are many different ways you can search for a Co-op job on your own. In fact, even if you plan to participate in on-campus recruiting, it would also be wise to do your own job search. The steps to getting started are simple.

First, prepare a draft of your resume and cover letter and bring them in the Whitman Career Center to have them critiqued. If you have no idea how to write a resume or cover letter, be sure to attend one of the programs designed to teach students these skills. Second, identify prospective companies by using the Whitman Career Center to find prospective Co-op opportunities. Try not to rely exclusively on hardcopy or on-line ads for your Co-op job search. Instead, look for companies that interest you and write to them inquiring about a possible Co-op. After sending your initial letter and resume, remember to follow-up on your interest and application.

### **Applying to companies that do not interview on campus**

Some companies interested in hiring Co-op's are not able to interview on campus. These jobs will be posted on Orangelink. Also, throughout the year, the Whitman Career Center office will be sending resumes out upon request, to companies that contact our office, and companies will also be able to access them directly off the Web database using Orangelink. It is critical that students keep their resumes updated at all times. Companies may also request transcripts and/or company applications. This may result in the student being contacted for telephone interviews or invited to make on-site visits to the facility.

## **Step 3 - Accepting a Co-op job offer & deciding when to work**

A student accepts a Co-op position by signing a Work Agreement Form, and submitting it to the Whitman Career Center office after accepting an offer. A student is not officially

considered a part of the Co-op process until this form is completed. After the form is filled out, the student must obtain signatures from their academic advisor or department chair, and staff member from the Whitman Career Center office. Once an offer has been accepted, the student should not take any additional interviews, as this is considered an official commitment to that company.

Please remember that it is also the student's responsibility to decline subsequent offers made by other companies, in writing as soon as possible. Once an offer is made, it is important for students to be prepared to make commitments as rapidly as possible. If the initial student does not accept the offer, an alternate may be offered the position.

#### **Step 4 - Evaluation and your job performance**

Remember that a very important part of your Co-op experience is building relationships with professionals in the company. You will need their support and written recommendation to help you make the next step in your career. Before the Co-op ends, make sure your supervisor does a formal oral and written evaluation of your work and ask (if appropriate) if you can use them as a professional reference. Prior to the end of your co-op, the Whitman Career Center office will have sent your supervisor our Initial and Final Evaluation forms which we encourage them to use in reviewing your work. However, if they prefer to use their company's administrative forms, request that they send a copy to the Whitman Career Center office. We will then add the evaluation to your folder.

The SU Co-op program is an "at will" program and can be cancelled at any time by the student or employer.



**Consent to Disclose Third Parties Information Contained in Records**

Furthermore, I hereby authorize the staff of the Career Center to disclose the information contained in its files to all prospective employers for the purpose of assisting me in securing co-op employment. I also give permission to the staff of the Career Center to advise my parents of my participation in the program, the policies, the procedures and regulations.

I understand that in order to revoke this authorization, I must do so in writing and that such a revocation shall not apply to information from records which have already been disclosed to third parties prior to the date of revocation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name (please print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Number**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Street Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Home Phone Number**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Zip**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Campus Phone Number**

**I agree and consent to the above statement:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Assumption of Risk, Release, and Agreement Not to Sue**

In consideration of the Whitman School of Management accepting me into the Cooperative Education Program, I hereby assume all risks of injury which I understand are inherent in any work experience. I further release the Whitman School of Management and its employees, trustees, and representatives from, and agree not to sue them for, any injury I may suffer while participating in the Program whether caused by their act or omission. I further understand that I may not be covered by the company's insurance policy or program while I am participating in the Cooperative Education Program, and I shall be responsible for procuring and maintaining any and all health, liability, and other similar insurance which I may desire.

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**Name (please print)**

**Student Number**

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**Street Address**

**Home Phone Number**

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**City**

**State**

**Zip**

**Campus Phone Number**

**I agree and consent to the above statement:**

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**Signature**

**Date**