

Cooperative Education Work Experience Course Requirements and Report Format

For Additive/Zero Credit Courses

Cooperative Education Definition and Philosophy

Cooperative education is a well-known educational strategy that integrates classroom studies with learning through hands-on work experiences in a field related to the student's academic major and career goals. Cooperative education is an experiential learning process with specific education goals that include critical thinking, knowledge, communication, personal and professional growth, and career preparation. The learning model is embedded within the cooperative education course requirements.

The goal of this process is to ensure that students integrate, not simply participate in, the academic and experiential learning processes. Integration will have varying outcomes based upon the individual student, the work assignment, and the Faculty Co-op Advisor's requirements.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Completion and submission of the Cooperative Education Learning Agreement, no later than two weeks after starting the co-op assignment;
2. Coordination of an on-site visit by the work place supervisor and Faculty Co-op Advisor and within the time periods indicated on the course syllabus.
3. Completion and submission of a Cooperative Education Work and Learning Report as described herein;
4. An oral presentation of your Cooperative Education Work and Learning Report at your department's co-op final seminar. For the oral presentation assume that only an overhead is available. Do not assume that other equipment is available unless you make prior arrangements with your advisor;
5. Progress made toward the completion of your NJIT Career Portfolio; and
6. Additional requirements as added by Faculty Co-op Advisors.

The Cooperative Education Learning Agreement

Purpose: The Cooperative Education Learning Agreement is an agreement between the student, employer, Faculty Co-op Advisor, and the Division of Career Development Services. The Learning Agreement provides the framework for creating a successful work experience. Student and employer information, the cooperative education work description, the preliminary work report project outline, and an acknowledgement of the defined roles for each of the cooperative education participants are to be listed on the Learning Agreement.

The Cooperative Education Work and Learning Report

Purpose: The Cooperative Education Work and Learning Report is a document that describes the student's accomplishments and demonstrates what was learned through participation in the program. It is an opportunity for the student to express in writing the nature of the work experience performed and the learning attained from performing specific tasks while working in a professional environment. It should contain information that best demonstrates the progress and achievements as outlined in the Learning Agreement. Students must be able to state what they have learned, why it is important, and what they plan to do with the knowledge. The report process provides the student with the opportunity to identify and reflect upon the work experience across several learning areas. The report also provides the Faculty Co-op Advisor and co-op staff with a method to evaluate the knowledge gained by students.

1. **TITLE PAGE**

An unnumbered title page in the following format:

Cooperative Education Work and Learning Report

Report Title

Author's Name

E-mail address

Major

Employer

Supervisor's Name

Supervisor's Telephone Number

Faculty Co-op Advisor

Date Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for:

Cooperative Education Work Experience

Course Number: _____ - _____

2. **ABSTRACT**

The abstract should provide a concise summary of the main points of the report so that the reader will know what is of major importance. It should contain no more than 250 words, single-spaced. The following information should be included:

A. Heading

- Title of report
- Author's name and major
- Employer's name and location (city and state)

B. Body

- Introductory sentence stating the project's specific objectives
- Brief statement of methods used, if appropriate
- Summary of results
- Dates of co-op education assignment

Sample Abstract

DATABASE, WEB SITE, AND SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.

Conroy, Justine. Computer Science.
Hebron Computers Inc., Morristown, NJ

The author's cooperative education assignment involved assisting in the design and implementation of a database, and development of web pages for the web site and various functional modules. Specific duties included the study of available literature on portfolio management and performance measurement criteria to develop block level designs of the various components. The author developed a performance measurement tool to verify the functionality and accuracy of the given performance measurement criteria. Various web pages were designed, the tool was implemented, and the author's work helped the process of determining the business strategy of the company.

September 5 to December 15, 2009

3. **COOPERATIVE EDUCATION JOB DESCRIPTION** (approximately 1 page)

Provide the job title and an outline of the major areas of responsibility. Describe the supervisor's expectations for your assignment. List the specific tasks that were performed during the assignment.

Sample Job Description:

Co-op Job Title: Occupational Safety and Health Assistant

The major responsibility of this assignment was an analysis of the organization's policies and procedures for complying with OSHA regulations. Additional responsibilities included assisting the training manager with developing appropriate "Right-to-Know" programs for our employees and completing environmental audits and reports.

I was expected to produce a revised compliance manual for use in designing and development in-house training programs for our employees. Additional expectations included that I work independently and be able to identify the most current information for inclusion in our manuals and programs.

Specific job tasks included:

1. Researching various sources of information through printed and electronic media;
2. Reviewing the organization's current policies and procedures for managing compliance issues;
3. Determining deficiencies in the organization's current policies and/or practices;
4. Drafting new policies in accordance with current federal and state laws and regulations, and OSHA standards;
5. Conducting various audits to determine the current level of compliance and training activity;
6. Preparing a comprehensive listing of information needed in the production of new manuals and training programs; and
7. Assisting the training manager in developing training programs.

4. **ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW** (approximately 1 page)

Provide a brief description of the organization in which you are employed. Do not write a history of the company. Rather, describe the organization in terms of its current operational functions. Include information about the mission, the product lines or services, the goals and objectives for the company, and how the department in which you work supports the overall mission of the organization.

In a larger company your major concentration should be your department's mission, i.e. for what is your department supervisor responsible within the company? If you are in a small company, on which part of the product are you working and how does it fit in with the company's final product?

5. **COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROJECT REPORT** (approximately 3-5 pages)

Write a report that gives a detailed description of the projects in which you were involved. Include:

- Problem description: a succinct description of the problem you are trying to solve. Include whether you were working alone or as part of a team. If part of a team, how many people were on the team and what part did you play on the team?
- Research methods: Where did you look for the solution to the problem? Books, Internet search, discussions with colleagues? Were you sent to a training course for a particular technology? How did the training relate to the solution?
- Experiments or techniques: Did you create prototypes? If so, what did they reveal? What experiments did you perform? (Include, if possible, results of these experiments as an appendix.)
- Discussion: You gathered information in the steps above. How did this influence your results and conclusion? Did you formally present this information within the company? Include the report as an appendix, if possible.
- Results: Was the problem solution acceptable? Why or why not?
- Conclusions: What conclusion did you reach? If you created documents or forms for reports, include them as an appendix.
- Recommendations: Provide suggestions on how your experience could have been more valuable.

6. **COOPERATIVE EDUCATION LEARNING OBJECTIVES** (approximately 2 pages)

Doing a job and learning from a job are different phenomena. The performance of a task has great learning potential but is not necessarily learning itself. Learning from work can be enhanced through understanding that learning is an added dimension. By clearly defining expectations of what can be learned, you will enhance your co-op work experience.

Provide a listing of the learning objectives that were developed when beginning this assignment and any learning objectives that were added during the course of your

assignment. A list of learning objectives should include general and specific knowledge and skill sets for which you intend to become competent as a result of working in a professional environment.

Learning objectives should include activities where outcomes produce gains in critical thinking, technical or general knowledge, communication, personal and professional growth, and career preparation. It is not necessary that the objectives with which you started before beginning your co-op experience match exactly those when you finished your co-op assignment.

7. **WORK EXPERIENCE ANALYSIS** (approximately 2 pages)

The purpose of this section is to put the co-op experience into perspective and provide other NJIT students with an in-depth picture of co-op employment opportunities. The items below are general guidelines and may be used as an outline for this section of your report. Not all are necessarily applicable to each work experience. This section is intended to be open-ended to provide maximum freedom of expression.

- a. Provide a brief description of the organization (kind of business or service, products, history, how the author's department fits into the organization, physical facilities, locations, number of employees, etc.).
- b. Job satisfaction. Was the work satisfying? Did it meet your expectations? How did it change as the work progressed? Explain.
- c. Relevance of work experience. Were your work assignments related to your field of study? How? Did the work experience help you find a special area of interest within your academic field? Did it eliminate an area of interest? How did it impact your educational goals?
- d. Which concepts and skills learned in the classroom did you find useful in your co-op experience?
- e. Responsibility. What kind of responsibility did you have while on your assignment? Did you work as a member of a team? Did you feel part of the total team effort? What was your contribution to solving the problem given to the team? Give examples.
- f. Describe any reference material you had to read, learn, and interpret in your work assignment.
- g. Briefly describe the use of technology in a project in which you were involved. Did you acquire any new computer tools/software during your assignment? If so, what were they?

- h. Give an example of an oral or written presentation you made on the job and what communication tools you used.
- i. Living arrangements. If you lived away from home, where did you live (apartment, residence hall, etc.)? Was it satisfactory? What was the approximate total of monthly living expenses? Did your employer provide help in finding housing and/or defraying expenses?
- j. Social and cultural opportunities. How did you spend your free time? What opportunities did you have to meet others in your age group?
- k. Co-op contrast/comparison. How was this co-op experience similar to or different from any previous experience? Include similarities or differences in type of employer, kind of work, level of responsibility, employer's expectations, work environment, and any other relevant factors.

REPORT EVALUATION

The following procedures will be followed in evaluating the Cooperative Education Work and Learning Report:

- The report is due on the date of your department's final seminar;
- You are required to submit two copies of the report, one to your Faculty Co-op Advisor and one to the Division of Career Development Services;
- The Faculty Co-op Advisor will evaluate the report, assign the appropriate grade; and
- Reports will be evaluated on the basis of quality, including format, organization, inclusion of required sections, ability to express facts and opinions, and grammar. If, in the judgment of the Faculty Co-op Advisor, the report should be rewritten, you will be notified.