

UNDERGRADUATE



2024 - 2025

## Undergraduate Student Handbook

Office of Experiential Learning  
and Professional Engagement

[engineering.pitt.edu/coop](https://engineering.pitt.edu/coop)



University of  
**Pittsburgh**

Swanson School  
of Engineering

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## Experiential Learning & Professional Engagement Staff

Anyone of the ELPE staff can assist any student, but see breakdown below for specialized services/assistance:

Chris Ann Frankovic, Director, Co-op & Internships  
[caf54@pitt.edu](mailto:caf54@pitt.edu), 412-624-9883  
(Assists COE, EE, IE, Engr. Science, ME, MSE)

Tyler Kimmel, Engineering & Professional Development Consultant  
[tjk58@pitt.edu](mailto:tjk58@pitt.edu), 412-383-0501  
(Assists BIOE, ChemE, CE, Environmental)

Valerie Kerr, Graduate Engineering & Professional Development Consultant  
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(Assists Graduate Level MS and PhD students)

Nora Dougherty, Global & Engineering Professional Development Consultant  
[ncd37@pitt.edu](mailto:ncd37@pitt.edu), 412-648-7722  
(Assists any students interested in Global co-ops/internships, and BioE, ME)

Kristie Westerlund, ELPE Administrator  
[kmw257@pitt.edu](mailto:kmw257@pitt.edu), 412-624-9826

Office Location: 152 Benedum Hall (first floor)  
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. M-F  
<https://www.engineering.pitt.edu/coop/>

Log into SSOE Select to schedule an appointment or stop by for walk-in advising  
[https://engineering-pitt-csm.symplcity.com/students/?signin\\_tab=0](https://engineering-pitt-csm.symplcity.com/students/?signin_tab=0)

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## Continued Covid-19 Information for Students

First, the University of Pittsburgh and Swanson School of Engineering cares for your safety during these unprecedented times. No student should feel uncomfortable or unsafe going to work. If such a situation would occur for you, please contact us so that we can communicate any uncertainties to your employer. We know the companies will do everything they can do to ensure your safety; however, if you as an individual are uncomfortable, it is your right to leave the site and Co-op rotation. Please contact our offices with any concerns concerning the coronavirus and the unsettling times it has caused.

We recommend compliance with CDC guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance-list.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>  
Be aware that your safety at work and beyond work hours can help keep you and others healthy

**Welcome to**



The Swanson School of Engineering's Office of Experiential Learning and Professional Engagement provides resources to help students in their personal and professional development. The goal of the ELPE office is to connect engineering undergraduates with alumni, employers, global/domestic experiences, and other resources within SSOE.

In the **Co-op and Internship division of ELPE**, our advising philosophy for engineering students is to consider both types of positions (Co-ops and Internships) while networking with employers to see which opportunities are best for you. Positions can also incorporate global experiences.

It is important to read this handbook to understand what student services are available through the ELPE office, how to get started working with the Co-op and Internship Division, as well as resume, cover letter, and interviewing resources. Understanding what the Co-op program entails, knowing the difference between co-ops and internships but being flexible with both types of opportunities will give you more options to consider. A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section regarding the Co-op program is also available, and finally information on what happens after you accept a co-op or an internship is listed.

Students can visit the ELPE Co-op and Internship Division office located on the first floor of Benedum Hall, behind the orange front desk in the lobby. You can contact staff directly or sign up for an appointment via SSOE Select (see below). Walk-In advising as well as scheduled appointments are available with our team. We are also able to set up virtual meetings in teams or zoom. We are here to advise on resume writing, interviewing skills, job development and to answer any questions that you might have about co-op or internships.

The ELPE office utilizes SSOE SELECT as a career management platform for Co-op and Internship (domestic and global) postings, research opportunities, and employer information. Go to [https://engineering-pitt-csm.symlicity.com/students/?signin\\_tab=0](https://engineering-pitt-csm.symlicity.com/students/?signin_tab=0) to get started. You can complete your profile, review the Experiential Learning agreement, upload your resume (we suggest making sure someone has reviewed your resume to ensure you are marketing yourself the best way possible), and start applying to positions.

We look forward to working with you!

Gain professional external experience outside of SSOE; the Co-op and Internship division of ELPE can help you with two main types of positions:

Co-op	Internship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeframe: Can be two 6-month rotations or three 4-month alternating rotations</li> <li>• Gain 3 credits towards an elective, once all rotations are complete</li> <li>• Most Second year students can start either in the Spring semester (alternating), Summer (alternating) or work July-December</li> <li>• Third year students can start in the fall (alternating) or work Jan-June</li> <li>• Work longer, get more involved in work projects and responsibilities</li> <li>• Graduate with a year's worth of work experience and one less class to take</li> <li>• You can stay with the same employer for all of your rotations or work at 2 different employers</li> <li>• You can also incorporate a rotation of research to complete the program instead of all rotations being in industry</li> <li>• Pay Co-op and part-time University fees while on a rotation, while earning credit, Co-op certification, and an honor cord at graduation</li> <li>• Be a part of an Academic Program within SSOE</li> <li>• All positions are full time and paid</li> <li>• Does push graduation date back by a semester or possibly two</li> <li>• The 6-month rotations provide a 2-month time frame in the summer to possibly incorporate a short study abroad, classes, or just a break before returning to studies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeframe: 10-12 weeks</li> <li>• Normally summer only</li> <li>• No credit earned</li> <li>• No direct affiliation with SSOE</li> <li>• Can return summers or work at different employers</li> <li>• Normally does not delay graduation (if that is a concern)</li> <li>• Should still be paid opportunities</li> </ul>

**Please note**

**The Cooperative Education Program requires that you complete co-op work rotations at a company/facility which is most likely external to the University of Pittsburgh, and such company/facility will or may require a Criminal Background Check, an ACT 33/34 Clearance (if applicable) and perhaps a drug screen to determine whether you are qualified to work at the company/facility in question. Additionally, to become employed at the company/facility, many states will inquire as to whether the applicant has been convicted of a misdemeanor, a felony, or a felonious or illegal act associated with alcohol and/or substance abuse. This can also relate to internship hires as well.**

## Copy of the Experiential Learning Agreement:

Students will agree to this when they start using SSOE SELECT. Any questions can be directed to the ELPE staff.

1. I understand that Co-op is an academic program in which I can gain experience, compensation, and academic credit. To gain academic credit and complete the Co-op program, participation consists of 2 six-month rotations for undergraduate engineering students, or 3 alternating work rotations in-between semesters of classes. Engineering Co-op students will register for the Co-op course and gain 1.5 credits each six-month rotation or register for the co-op course and gain 1 credit per alternating rotations. Students will register and pay the fees for any co-op they obtain through the ELPE office.
2. International students (whether graduate or undergraduate) should speak with their OIS representative and understand the CPT application process in addition to the Co-op program requirements.
3. If I remain with my Co-op employer, I will be considered a Co-op. I understand that I *do not* have the option of changing my status from Co-op to Intern to avoid paying the Co-op fee.
4. I understand that while I am on a Co-op, I will adhere to SSOE's Academic Integrity policy, as well as professional behavior and ethics.
5. If I accept an internship with assistance from the ELPE office, I understand I am still representing Pitt SSOE and will remain professional and adhere to the moral code of conduct even though I am not gaining academic credit.
6. I understand that once I verbally accept or sign my offer letter, I have made a commitment to that opportunity, and I will not continue to interview for other positions. Reneging on an offer may cause dismissal or suspension from all ELPE services. Apprise the Co-op/Intern Division of all offers and the staff can assist you with your decision-making process.
7. The philosophy of Co-op is to usually remain with the same employer for all work assignments with the idea to progress in projects and work responsibilities. Returning for additional rotations is dependent upon both the student and employer's satisfaction. Students do have the ability to work 2 different types of six-month rotations, but communication must be timely between the student, employer, and the ELPE office. Students on the traditional alternating schedule can switch employers once after working 1 or 2 rotations with an employer. *I understand that I must tell my employer in a timely manner that I am not returning before the ELPE office can assist me with another placement.*
8. I understand that if I decide to only complete 1 six-month Co-op rotation, I do not gain all 3 credits toward an elective, but still must register and pay the fees for that one rotation. Same in the event you are on the alternating rotation schedule and do not complete all 3 rotations.
9. I understand that all Co-op students must submit an approved Co-op schedule from the departmental faculty Co-op advisor. If it is necessary to make any changes to your rotations, please contact the ELPE office ASAP. The employer, faculty advisor, and Co-op office all need to approve the changes. This is to ensure classes are offered when needed and you stay on track to graduate.
10. I understand and agree that upon accepting a co-op or internship position, I will complete my work assignments in full as far as I am able. It is important to read the handbook, plus it provides sample resumes, interviewing tips, as well as detailed information about the Co-op program and internship assistance. I have read the student handbook and agree with ELPE Co-op and internship policies and practices.



11. I agree to register for the appropriate class offering prior to beginning a co-op work period and to pay the appropriate University fees to maintain my student status. Additionally, I agree to complete evaluations and notify the office of any problems during the co-op term. Your evaluations must be turned in a timely manner, grades cannot be changed after a year.
12. I hereby authorize, pursuant to Section 438(b) 4(b) of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Co-op/Intern Division of ELPE to obtain and to release on my behalf to actual and prospective employers such information contained in my academic records as necessary to aid such employers in assessing my potential and eligibility for co-op and/or internship positions. I understand that it can be normal policy of the Co-op program to furnish grades of participating students each semester to their co-op employer.
13. I have a responsibility to report any co-op or internship offers to the ELPE office.
14. When participating in a Global Co-op, Internship or Research opportunity, I understand that I am also held to the Study Abroad Student Code as detailed by the Global Experiences Office. This will be reviewed with you as part of the selection process for these experiences.
15. I understand the Co-op/Internship Division of ELPE reserves the right to remove applicants who demonstrate a pattern of non-responsiveness, or unprofessionalism to staff or an employer.

## Resources as You Start the Recruiting Process

The next few pages will give you examples of resumes, cover letters, a thank you note, accepting an offer, declining an offer example, and interviewing tips, etc.

We advise all students to make sure they have their resume reviewed by an ELPE staff member, main career services, or other professionals to ensure your resume or cover letter is appropriate and marketing yourself the best way possible. The resume is the first piece in the recruiting process that you need.

Check out [SSOE's ELPE Co-op & Internship](#) intranet for additional resources.

Other resources:

### RESUMES:

Resume Builder – go to SSOE Select and click the button with your initials in the top menu > My Documents > Resume Builder. Templates and styles are provided for easier resume creation and prep.

### INTERVIEWING:

Mock Interviews – take advantage of the mock interview events each fall sponsored by the ELPE office, as well as mock interviews throughout the semester.

There is also a mock interview module in SSOE Select to practice, record a video, and submit for review and feedback. Go to the Resources tab to get started.



<https://Pitt.biginterview.com> - create an account with your Pitt email address and be able to video yourself responding to certain questions. You can forward your recording to get critiqued or review on your own.

General tips for interviews: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOyloKG7ES4>

One-way-video interview: <https://canvas.pitt.edu/courses/70800/pages/the-interview-process>

#### ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

Filling out Online Applications: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmN5LS75P\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmN5LS75P_c)

Create a LinkedIn account: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x86MigYsjwM>

#### CO-OP/INTERN POSTINGS:

ELPE's SSOE SELECT:

<https://engineering-pitt-csm.symplicity.com/students>

Career Service's Handshake:

<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cdpa/>



## Student Resume #1

1 Main Road, Pittsburgh PA 15127  
(555) 555-5555 – std1@pitt.edu

### OBJECTIVE

Pursue my life-long ambition of becoming a Civil Engineer by obtaining a co-op opportunity in the field for summer 2021.

### EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh

B.S. Civil Engineering

GPA 2.74/4.00

Current Coursework (Sophomore Year 2018-2019)

- Engineering Economic Analysis
- Introduction to Geology

.....Column Break.....

- Mechanics of Materials
- Materials of Construction

Freshman Engineering Conference

Pittsburgh, PA

*Steel-Free Bridge Construction with Fiber-Reinforced Polymer* April

2018 Persuasive verbal presentation to industry experts and peer group

Materials included a PowerPoint deck and prize-winning poster

### CERTIFICATIONS/SKILLS

Auto CAD, Autodesk Inventor, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, JAVA, JavaScript, C, Mat lab, Minitab, Microsoft Visual Studio, UNIX

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Secor Corporation, Facilities Management Canonsburg, PA

- Forty hour per week full-time position May-Aug 2019 & 2020
- Small-scale project management responsibilities as Field Manager
- Entrusted to operate and train junior staff members
- Duties included construction, building upkeep, painting, and landscaping
- Was cognizant of and in adherence with all safety regulations

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

ASCE Board Member - Membership Chair Elect (2018), ASCE Steel Bridge Competition Member, Panther Hurling Club Co-founder, Intramural softball 2019 (short-stop), Intramural basketball 2019 (team captain)

### HONORS/AWARDS

Freshman Engineering Conference Section's "Best Poster Award 2019", Four-time Bethel Park High School Athletic Highest Honors Scholar Award (Basketball, Baseball), Mon-Yough Science Fair First Place Award – Engineering Division, High School GPA: 4.32

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

Peters Creek Baptist Church / World Servants - three consecutive summer Mission Trips to Philippi, West Virginia involving charitable projects benefiting impoverished residents (concrete work, siding, construction)

## Resume 2

1 Main Street, Monessen, PA 15062  
[abc22@pitt.edu](mailto:abc22@pitt.edu) • 555-555-5555

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an engineering cooperative education position for the summer or fall term of 2021

### EDUCATION:

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA  
Swanson School of Engineering; Major: Chemical Engineering  
• Pursuing an Environmental Engineering Minor  
GPA: 3.794

*Expected Graduation:* December 2026

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

BK Simon Family Scholarship	September 2017
Twelfth Annual 2018 Freshman Engineering Conference: Session A5, Mechanical Engineering Best Paper Award	April 2018
Dean's List, University of Pittsburgh	December 2017, April 2018
Monessen High School Valedictorian	June 2017
Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award, Monessen Senior High	2017
WTAE: Clearview Student-Athlete of the Week, Monessen Senior High School	2017
Rensselaer Award for Excellence in Mathematics, Monessen Senior High School	2016

### COMPUTER SKILLS:

Proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint  
Coding languages: UNIX, HTML, JavaScript, MATLAB, and C  
Experience with Image Editing Software, such as Poster Artist, and GIMP

### LEADERSHIP/STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Service Co-Chair	September 2017-Present
Pitt Outdoors Club, Member	September 2017-Present
Engineering Student Council, National Chair	September 2017-Present
• Participated in national conventions through NAESC	
• Helped establish BOSS (Beginning Of Swanson School) first-year organization	
Lions Club International, Member	June 2017-Present
Pitt Engineering Exponents, Member	February 2017-Present
Freshman Engineering Student Council, President	September 2017-April 2018
• Sponsored freshman-tailored events	
• Encouraged first-year involvement with the Swanson School of Engineering	
National Honor Society, President	March 2015-May 2016
• Maintained and motivated all NHS members for volunteer and academic projects	
• Organized Relay for Life teams for the American Cancer Society	
Student Council, Treasurer	October 2014-May 2016
• Managed our high school class's funds and budget	
MHS Varsity Soccer Team, Captain	August 2014-May 2015

### COMMUNITY SERVICE:

American Cancer Society, (via National Honor Society and Engineering Student Council),	March 2014-April 2017
• Participated in and helped run three Relay for Life teams	
• Fundraised through school sales and town events	
Pitt Make A Difference Day, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA	October 2016
Salvation Army (via Leo Club), Monessen, PA	
May 2015-May 2016	
• Helped organize and sponsor three food drives at local elementary school	
Participated in three "Ring-the-Bell" fundraisers	

### EMPLOYMENT:

La Eda's Family Restaurant & Bar, Dishwasher, Monessen, PA	February 2014 - August 2
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## STUDENT RESUME #3

School Address: 3700 O'Hara Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15261  
Permanent Address: 123 Anywhere Street Columbus, OH 43004

Phone: 555-555-5555  
[Str4@pitt.edu](mailto:Str4@pitt.edu)

### OBJECTIVE

Obtain a challenging Industrial Engineering Co-op. Available September 2024.

### EDUCATION

#### University of Pittsburgh Swanson School of Engineering

Major: Industrial Engineering – 67 credits completed  
3.402 - Cumulative Grade Point Average

*Completed Relevant Coursework:* Probability and Statistics for Engineers I, Productivity Analysis, Engineering Economic Analysis, and Materials Structures and Properties

*Current Relevant Coursework:* Introduction to Information Systems Engineering, Manufacturing Processes and Analysis, Probability and Statistics for Engineers II

#### Pittsburgh Central Catholic High School

2016- 4.3 Cumulative Grade Point Average

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SKILLS

- 2017 Freshman Engineering Conference  
“Environmentally-Friendly Energy: The Use of Molten Salts as Thermal Energy Storage Media in Concentrating Solar Power Plants.” The paper discussed the numerous benefits of implementing molten salts in concentrating solar power plants and provided a detailed description of the salts themselves, how the plants work and the economic costs of implementation and utilization.
  - *Awarded best paper in session*
- Recipient of academic scholarship from the Institute of Supply Chain Management of Pittsburgh
- Experienced in Microsoft Office, MATLAB, SolidWorks, HTML, and some C++

### CLUBS AND VOLUNTEER WORK

- **Society of Women Engineers-** Member September 2017- Present
- **Pitt Make a Difference Day (PMADD)** September 2017, 2018
  - **Supply Chain Management Club-** Member February 2018- Present
- **Humane Society-** Dog Walker April 2018- May 2020

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Ricupero's Landscaping and Construction** June 2019– Present

#### *Landscaper*

- Working on a lawn care crew
- Laboring for other landscaping projects

**Marino Construction Company** June 2017 – Present

#### *Landscaper*

- Responsible for lawn care and other exterior property maintenance

**Student Resume #4**  
**157 Atwood Avenue**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15216**  
**(412) 123-1223 / abc21@pitt.edu**

**Education**

**University of Pittsburgh**, Swanson School of Engineering Pittsburgh, PA Graduation: December 2022

Mechanical Engineering

**GPA: 3.757**

53 credits completed by August 2020

*Relevant Coursework:* Intro to Mechanical Design                      Calculus 3  
   Statics and Mechanics of Materials                      Physics 2  
   Material Structures and Properties                      Linear

*Computer Skills:*        Matlab                      C++                      Solidworks  
   Excel                      HTML                      UNIX

**Research and Related Experience**

**Plus 3 Vietnam Study Abroad Program**

May 2019

- Visited several engineering companies to gain international exposure
- Experienced the Vietnamese culture and business customs

**Freshman Engineering Conference**

April 2018

- “Using Turbochargers and Direct Fuel Injection to Improve Efficiency”
- Researched effectiveness of turbochargers and direct fuel injection systems
- Presented findings at 2017 Freshman Engineering Conference
  - Awarded “Best Paper” in section

**AIU Engineering**

2018– May 2019

- Visited local engineering companies and firms in Pittsburgh

**Extracurricular Activities**

**Engineers Without Borders**, University of Pittsburgh

*Local Project Lead*

December 2019 – Present

- Organize and lead weekly meeting for Local Project
- Oversee the Volunteer Committee and arrange projects and events

*Volunteer Committee Lead*

April 2018 – Present

- Work with a group to plan volunteer events monthly

**First Food and Friends Soup Kitchen**, Pittsburgh, PA

*Volunteer*

March 2014– July 2020

- Helped prepare and serve meals to the homeless

**Seton La-Salle Marching Band**, Pittsburgh, PA

*Drum Major*

August 2018– May 2019

- Organized and conducted band rehearsals and performances

**Honors and Awards**

**Dean’s List**, University of Pittsburgh

December 2019, April 2020

**Outstanding Young Citizenship Award**, Tribune Review

March 2018

**Work Experience**

**Sheetz**, Pittsburgh PA

*Sales Associate*

May 2017 – August 2019

- Responsible for register, preparing/serving food, assisting customers

Sample Cover Letter #1

Student Name  
Address  
Contact Information

August 20, 2020

Dear campus recruiting,

I am interested in applying for the summer 2021 engineering Co-op position with XYZ Company that I learned of through the Cooperative Education Program at the University of Pittsburgh.

I am especially interested in obtaining a position with XYZ Company because of its long history as one of the leaders in the EXAMPLE industry and because of your company's wide international presence. I am currently majoring in MAJOR Engineering at the Swanson School of Engineering (SSOE), and some of the skills I can bring to XYZ Company include communication, an ability to learn quickly, and considerable lab experience.

Since January I have worked at the Radio Frequency and Devices Lab at the University of Pittsburgh where I have gained valuable experience solving complicated real world design problems. One problem involved to design a blood pH RF sensor model using a thermistor. Additional experience includes surface mount soldering of resistors and capacitors to a printed circuit board.

In the spring of my first year, I participated in the Freshman Engineering Conference at the SSOE. I worked on TITLE OF PAPER and (explain research that you did). We presented our paper to many faculty, peers, and people of industry. Our efforts helped us earn the "Best Paper" award in our section.

Over the past summer, I taught myself the fundamentals of object-oriented programming by developing IOS applications for the iPhone. I am currently furthering my knowledge of object-oriented programming in my Intermediate Programming with Java class. My programming background along with my lab experience and communication skills provide me with a solid foundation for a successful Co-op with XYZ Company.

I am interested in coming onsite for an interview with XYZ Company. I look forward to hearing from you soon and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Regards,

Signature

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2

111 ABC Highway  
Pittsburgh, PA 15555

July 1, 2019

Ms. Jane Doe  
Manager, Executive Recruitment  
XYZ Company 400  
Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Ms. Doe,

I am interested in interviewing with XYZ Company during your September 6<sup>th</sup> recruiting visit to the University of Pittsburgh. I am particularly interested in a career with XYZ Company because of your reputation as one of the 10 best executive training programs in your industry. As a candidate, I can offer your company strong interpersonal skills, organizational ability, and retail sales experience.

As a sales associate at Rave, I developed effective selling techniques, resulting in consistently exceeding my store's quotas. Through extensive contact with customers, assisting in merchandising, and performance of daily store operations, I gained valuable experience.

My internship at WJPA Radio and my work-study position at the University of Pittsburgh have provided me with an opportunity to develop oral and written communication skills, as well as experience in researching and analysis of data. These skills have provided me with the background for a successful and productive career at XYZ Company.

I have enclosed a resume for your review and am interested in discussing my qualifications with you further. I will contact your office on August 2<sup>nd</sup> to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Pen written signature)

Joe Retailer

Enclosure



Post-Interview Thank You Note Samples

150 Farmington Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
August 21, 2018

Mr. John Doe  
XYZ Enterprises  
1931 W. Willow  
Drive Chicago, IL  
00178

Dear Mr. Doe,

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the media relations position at XYZ Enterprises. I would like to reiterate my interest in the position and your organization.

The enthusiasm I have felt right along about the possibility of working for you has increased with our meeting. I am more certain than ever that my qualifications and attitude will make the kind of contribution to XYZ Enterprises that you are expecting from your media relations specialist.

I will look forward to hearing your decision regarding my application.

Sincerely,

Clarence Smith

Hi Mrs. XYZ,

I wanted to thank you for your time in coming over and setting up the interview.

It was a great opportunity for me to interact with you and learn about the basic challenges that a global company like ABC Company faces. The fact that you took my inputs and discussed how they could effectively change the operations within ABC Company was a highly valued experience for me.

Thank you for considering me for the co-op and please let me know if there is any additional information that I can provide.

Yours Sincerely,  
Student Name  
Electrical and Computer Engineering Department  
Swanson School of Engineering, University of Pittsburgh

Post-Interview Rejection Letter Sample

150 Farmington Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
August 21, 2018

Mr. John Doe  
XYZ Enterprises  
1931 W. Willow  
Drive Chicago, IL  
00178

Dear Mr. Doe,

Thank you for the offer to begin a co-op with (company name) in/on (the start date agreed upon with the employer). Unfortunately, I am unable to accept this offer. After careful consideration, I have decided that (reason for not accepting the offer), and I have decided to pursue a co-op with a different company.

I appreciate the opportunity I had to interview with you (also thank them for any extension they might have given you in order to make your decision), and I wish you luck in your candidate search. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Clarence Smith

Post-Interview Acceptance Letter Sample

150 Farmington Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
August 21, 2018

Ms. Jane Smith  
XYZ Enterprises  
1931 W. Willow  
Drive Chicago, IL  
00178

Dear Mr. /Ms. /Mrs. or To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the offer to pursue a co-op with (company name) beginning in/on (the start date agreed upon with the employer) and ending (the end date agreed upon) at a rate of (wage agreed upon). It is with great pleasure that I accept this offer. I look forward to working with your company and am confident that I will be a great asset to your team.

I have attached the hiring paperwork to this message (if they have you sign any of these prior to starting the co-op). Thank you again for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Clarence Smith

IMPORTANT!!!

What is an interview?

Typically, an interview is used as a screening process in which you are given the opportunity to learn more about an organization. At the same time, it is the company's opportunity to evaluate you as a prospective employee. The effective interview is the most important aspect of the employment search. In a 20- or 30- minute interview, your personality, educational background, and work experience are appraised. It is usually the most decisive part of your campaign for the job opportunity you want. Initial contacts by letter, resume or application describe one's credentials. The interview demonstrates these credentials.

<p><u>QUALITIES THE INTERVIEWER LOOKS FOR:</u></p> <p><u>Personality</u> Be genuine, self-confident, pleasant, and honest. Be yourself.</p> <p><u>Articulate</u> Express yourself clearly and concisely. Answer questions thoroughly and in a candid manner.</p> <p><u>Alertness</u> Make your answers and questions relevant and intelligent. Develop your questions prior to the interview.</p> <p><u>Enthusiasm</u> Be enthusiastic, optimistic, and show an appropriate amount of interest.</p> <p><u>Maturity</u> Express clear professional goals. Know what you want. Conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing.</p> <p><u>Motivation</u> Show your incentive and willingness through your desire and interest in the job opportunity.</p> <p><u>Compatibility</u> Express, through your behavior, your ability to have a good relationship with others.</p> <p><u>Preparation</u> Know relevant information about the company – location, product, and general knowledge about its business purpose. The more you know, the greater impression you will make on the interviewer.</p> <p><u>POSITIVE INTERVIEW TIPS:</u></p> <p>Some interviewers like to do most of the talking and judge you by your reactions – the understanding and intelligence you show. Other interviewers say little. Their attitude is that it is up to you to sell yourself. In either case, the following tips can be of terrific value to you:</p> <p>Approach the interview with a positive attitude and sincere interest in the company.</p> <p>Pay attention to your appearance. You want to appear professional, so dress conservatively.</p> <p>Arrive a few minutes early for the interview.</p> <p>Allow the interviewer to initiate the conversation.</p>	<p>Be friendly, relaxed; be yourself.</p> <p>Maintain good eye contact.</p> <p>Communicate accomplishments.</p> <p>Do not monopolize the conversation but be an active participant.</p> <p>Be an attentive listener when the interviewer is speaking.</p> <p>Respond to questions with more than a yes or no answer.</p> <p>Show interest through asking well-thought-out questions. Ask some definite questions about the company.</p> <p>Do not try to fill in the silent spots. You may tend to ramble.</p> <p>Display your personality and achievements, initiating as well as responding.</p> <p>Accentuate the positives. Be optimistic. Display self-confidence, ambition, and a competitive attitude. Be sure your good points get across to the interviewer.</p> <p>Emphasize your specific skills and interests.</p> <p><u>QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWER IS LIKELY TO ASK:</u></p> <p>What do you know about our company? <b>(CRITICAL!)</b></p> <p>Why did you decide to interview with our company?</p> <p>Tell me about yourself.</p> <p>What personal qualities do you possess which might distinguish you from other applicants?</p> <p>What are your basic interests and your non-job or school-related achievements?</p> <p>Why did you decide to attend college?</p> <p>How did you choose this school?</p>
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<p>How did you choose this field of study?</p> <p>What have been some of the more important aspects of your education?</p> <p>What courses did you like best? Least? Why?</p> <p>Do you feel you have done the best scholastic work of which you are capable?</p> <p>Which of your college courses were the more difficult? Why?</p> <p>What type of work interests you?</p> <p>Under what kinds of conditions do you work best?</p> <p>What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?</p> <p>What personal factors do you consider most important in evaluating yourself or your success?</p> <p>How do you weigh career priorities such as job security, satisfaction, work hours, salary, and working conditions in evaluating your needs in a job?</p> <p>To date, what have been some of your more important work responsibilities?</p> <p>What have you enjoyed most and liked least about the work you have done?</p> <p>What work satisfaction or achievements have not been realized or at least have not been at the level that you had hoped?</p> <p>Do you have a geographical preference? Why?</p> <p>What consideration have you given to further enhance your performance and personal growth?</p> <p>How do you schedule your time? Set priorities? What are your hobbies?</p> <p>What do you consider to be strengths and weaknesses?</p> <p>What was your most difficult decision in the last six months? What made it difficult?</p> <p>Give some instances in which you anticipated problems or influenced new directions.</p> <p>How do you deal with pressure?</p> <p>Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?</p> <p>Would you prefer a large or small company? Why?</p>	<p>In what school activities have you participated? To what extent?</p> <p>How have your extracurricular activities helped prepare you for the work you have done or influenced your development as a person?</p> <p>Do you think that your extracurricular activities were worth the time you devoted to them? Why?</p> <p>At this point in your life, what would you like to be doing in the near future in terms of your career goals?</p> <p><u>QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWEE IS LIKELY TO ASK:</u></p> <p>What are the opportunities for advancement?</p> <p>Does your company have a practice of promoting on merit and of promoting within?</p> <p>Describe initial assignments in my area of interest.</p> <p>What opportunities will I have for professional development?</p> <p>Does your company encourage and support "continuing education" for its employees?</p> <p>Tell me about the community in which I would be employed.</p> <p>What will I be doing?</p> <p><u>CHECKLIST FOR CO-OP/INTERN INTERVIEWING:</u></p> <p>Dress professionally for the Co-op interview. "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."</p> <p>Do not chew gum, smoke, or use too much perfume or aftershave.</p> <p>Be on time for an interview. Call if an emergency prevents you from being on time.</p> <p>Bring a copy of your resume, a list of at least 3 references, pen and notebook, and list of questions to ask the interviewer.</p> <p>Know something about the company. Websites are the easiest resource, and the ELPE Office may have additional information.</p> <p>Send thank you note to the interviewer noting your interest and how you can contribute to the company.</p>
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### TIPS FOR PHONE INTERVIEWS:

You should prepare for a phone interview just as you would a face-to-face meeting, so research the company, review the position description if you have one, and be ready to highlight achievements from your resume.

- Find a place to take the call that will be quiet and with no interruptions if possible. You can reserve one of the interview suites in the ELPE office if they are available. Contact one of the staff members to do so.
- Schedule the interview to allow yourself enough time. Do not feel pressured into scheduling quickly or trying to fit it in-between classes. Allow enough time in case the interviewer calls a few minutes late or the interview runs longer than expected.
- Keep a copy of your resume in front of you during the call, and you can also keep any notes handy (list of questions you want to ask, etc.)
- Answer by using your name. This will eliminate the need for the caller to ask for you.
- Make sure you speak clearly and slowly. When nervous, it is easy to speak too fast.
- Smile when you are speaking – it helps bring enthusiasm into your voice, especially if you are talking about something you are passionate about.
- Really focus on not using slang – watch the “ums,” “ya knows” as they stand out even more during a phone conversation.
- Be convincing – and make sure you answer the questions directly and strive to show that you are a good fit for the company.
- Say thank you – make sure to communicate you appreciate their time, and if you did not receive an email ask for one. You want to be able to follow up and send a thank you email 24-48 hours after the phone interview.

### TIPS FOR VIDEOCONFERENCING INTERVIEWS

The standard rules of interviewing apply with video/teleconferencing interviews. You can expect the same type of questions and your body language will give the same first impression as in person. The ELPE office offers videoconferencing capability in its interview suite. Please see an ELPE staff member to schedule.

Just some additional things to keep in mind:

- Arrive early and make sure you know how to use the equipment if you are using something else than your laptop or PC. Either way, you want to get set up ahead of time.
- Center yourself in the screen at medium distance. Sitting at the end of a long table might not be close enough.
- You might find a delay in receiving the audio or video, but you should be able to adjust accordingly.
- Still dress professionally. Some students have just dressed professionally with a suit coat, shirt, etc. while just wearing jeans or shorts. If you do that make sure you do not stand up during the interview! Keep shirts and ties conservative and not too busy. For women, too much jewelry or make-up can be distracting as well.
- As with a face-to-face interview, you want to maintain good eye contact and do not talk too much with your hands.
- Be aware that the microphone picks up all the noise in the room. Do not tap your pen or shuffle paper. However, speak naturally as there is no need to shut

# PITT | SWANSON ENGINEERING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM



## Pitt's Co-op Program

Pitt's Co-op Program is an academic program that offers an exciting opportunity allowing you to learn, gain experience, professional development, and financial remuneration!

With the first degrees of "Engineer" awarded in 1846, Pitt was established as the nation's sixth earliest engineering program. Keeping in stride with their "cutting edge," Pitt's Swanson School of Engineering was among the first three established Co-op programs in the country. Although the Depression forced its suspension in the 1930's, cooperative education at the University of Pittsburgh was re-established in 1987. Soon afterward, the university's nationally ranked chemistry and computer science departments were added to the program, as well as students from our regional campuses. The graduate Co-op program was introduced in 2011.

Since 1987, over seven thousand students have benefited from this exceptional program. Although the program is not mandatory, almost half of the undergraduate students in engineering participate.



### What is Co-op?

Co-op provides students with work experience relating directly to their field of study. By alternating work and school terms, the program enables students to complement classroom studies with practical experience, technical knowledge, and financial reward. Co-op is an academic program where students earn credit while working in their field of study. Students can work 3 alternating work rotations, or 2 six-month rotations.

All Co-ops are paid a competitive wage. The average pay range for 2022-2023 was \$3578 monthly for undergraduate students. Please keep in mind that this is an average, and some employers pay more or less than the average.

### Nuts and Bolts of Co-op at Pitt

- Students earn one and a half (1.5) credit for each 6-month term worked or 1 credit for each alternating term worked: upon completion of terms, credits can be used toward departmental graduation requirements.
- Participating departments determine how the credits will be used.
- Students can remain with the same employer while participating in Co-op. It is possible and not difficult to change companies for the second 6-month rotation or remaining alternating rotations, but our philosophy is that by staying with the same company, you will receive more in-depth and challenging assignments. If on the alternating rotation schedule, students can switch employers one time (complete 2 rotations with the same employer).
- We recognize that students might wish to complete another Co-op rotation in a completely different environment, and the following experiences can be included as an additional Co-op rotation:  
Students can:
  1. Complete research at the University of Pittsburgh, including the summer research program sponsored through SSOE
  2. Complete a term of research that is full-time and paid at another university. SSOE Co-op review required.
  3. Complete a relevant full-time internship/Co-op with another company that is willing to complete our Co-op evaluation and pay our students. If the internship is only 10 weeks involving a formal structured summer program, approval will be considered by the Director if acceptable.
  4. Remain with your current Co-op employer for another 6-month rotation of work, or additional 2 rotations.
  5. Complete international work experience that is full-time. SSOE Co-op review required.
- Our positions are with employers who are local, national, and ~~international~~
- Students who complete the Co-op requirements receive a cord and certification on their transcript. **Please note that 87% of students who begin the Co-op program will complete it!**
- Transfer students can and do participate in Co-op.
- The for-credit Co-op course keeps you enrolled with full-time student ~~status~~
- Students do not pay tuition while on a Co-op assignment, but a modest fee.
- Financial aid and scholarships are received during the school terms only, not on a rotation.
- Participation in Co-op will not impact your participation in a study abroad program or other student activities.

### Program Requirements

Students must possess a minimum overall 2.0 GPA and should not be on term probation. If you are in doubt, please check with us or a faculty advisor. Also, required coursework for each department must be completed, as well as a Co-op schedule that is signed by the student and faculty co-op advisor. Some departments require that sophomore year be completed before the first Co-op rotation. If you are in doubt regarding your academic status, see the co-op advisor in your department. A listing of our co-op coordinators is on page 22 of this booklet. Students can begin the program up until the mid-point of junior year and still satisfy the three-term co-op requirement.

### International Students

Before registering with Co-op, international students are required to check with the Office of International Studies (OIS) to determine eligibility to co-op and start date. Their website is <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/> and appointments are made online.

Eligible students accepting a co-op offer must complete the necessary forms for OIS and the Co-op office; additionally, the student must inform both offices of any changes in visa status, work status or work rotations.

### Work Schedules

Students can complete the co-op program by working 2 six-month rotations, or 3 four-month alternating work rotations. Sophomores can start an alternating rotation schedule the spring term of sophomore year, the summer in-between sophomore/junior year, or the fall of Junior year. Note the earliest that a CE/Enviro or IE student can start a co-op is the summer after sophomore year.

Students have a few options of completing two 6-month rotations. While the earliest most departments suggest starting a Co-op is the summer after your second year of studies, sample schedules are available to review from each department. You can obtain them from the ELPE office, or via the SSOE intranet. These sample schedules should be followed, unless there are exceptions requested by the employer or by your faculty advisor. Any changes to your already approved work schedule must be requested in writing to the Co-op office and approved by the Co-op office.

Some employers also offer year-long co-ops, which are better suited for students farther along in their studies. This schedule would also need to be approved by your Co-op faculty advisor.

You should plan to extend your graduation date when participating in Co-op, but remember you are gaining more consecutive experience, and financial gains with competitive wages that can help with living expenses and other costs while being in school.

### University Co-op Certification

SSOE students who participate in the cooperative education program at the University of Pittsburgh must complete a minimum of two 6-month work rotations satisfactorily, 3 alternating terms of co-op satisfactorily, or one consecutive year-long Co-op satisfactorily to receive a certificate of completion, a co-op cord at graduation, and certification on the transcript.

### Co-op Fees

Students who are placed through the efforts of the Co-op office are required to register for the Co-op fee for both 6-month rotations, 3 alternating rotations, (or one consecutive year) of employment. In fairness to the many hundreds of students who participate in our program each year, we cannot negotiate or waive the Co-op fees. Changing your status from Co-op to intern will not preclude you from paying the fee.

Current fees per term for Oakland students are a Co-op fee of \$335 plus pro-rata charges for the activity fee, wellness fee, and computer fee. Students pay the full safety and transportation fee. Students Co-oping more than 75 miles from campus are eligible for waivers of the safety and transportation fee as well as the wellness fee. The Co-op fee is the same for resident and non-resident students.

Standard university tuition rates may be found at [www.ir.pitt.edu/tuition/pghpafirst.php](http://www.ir.pitt.edu/tuition/pghpafirst.php). The Co-op fee maintains full-time status and is not negotiable.

UPJ participants pay the Co-op fee of \$335 as well as UPJ related fees.

Both Oakland and UPJ students earn 1.5 credits for each 6-month rotation, or 1 credit per alternating rotation, so 3 credits total, which count toward departmental graduation requirements. **There is no fee for the credit(s) earned.**

### Specific Employer Interest

If you have an interest in a specific company but are not sure if the ELPE office partners with that employer, ask. If we do not, we can offer to reach out to that company on your behalf. You can also be proactive and apply to companies on your own. Employers will need to be open to the rotation schedules and will agree to submitting an end-of-rotation evaluation.

Reviewing companies in SSOE SELECT will be a great starting point to see who the office partners with, but employer development is happening constantly, so check regularly or speak to an ELPE staff member for information.

## Departmental Co-op Advisors

The Co-op faculty advisor from your department (MEMS, IE, etc.) must approve a Co-op schedule once you have received a position, but we will accept your signed version until that time should you care to submit one. Sample schedules are available through the ELPE office, your department, or posted on the SSOE intranet. It is highly suggested you review them to see what schedule might work best. See the advisor list below for each department.

**If you have any questions regarding whether a Co-op can fit in with your academic schedule, please make an appointment with the Co-op advisor in your department (listed below). Your Co-op advisor is here to assist you with scheduling, advice, and successful completion of program requirements.**

Carsten Stuckenholz	Bioengineering	412-648-9722	<a href="mailto:cstucken@pitt.edu">cstucken@pitt.edu</a>
Suzan Sterk	Bioengineering	412-624-7279	<a href="mailto:bioeugad@pitt.edu">bioeugad@pitt.edu</a>
Taryn Bayles	Chemical Engineering	412-383-9970	<a href="mailto:tbayles@pitt.edu">tbayles@pitt.edu</a>
Steven Sachs	Civil & Environmental Engineering	412-624-7312	<a href="mailto:Sgs15@pitt.edu">Sgs15@pitt.edu</a>
Anna Okuda	Computer Engineering	412-624-8003	<a href="mailto:coeugrad@pitt.edu">coeugrad@pitt.edu</a>
Sam Dickerson	Computer Engineering	412-624-2163	<a href="mailto:dickerson@pitt.edu">dickerson@pitt.edu</a>
Robert Kerestes	Electrical Engineering	412-383-5251	<a href="mailto:rik39@pitt.edu">rik39@pitt.edu</a>
Erin Rhodes	Electrical Engineering	412-624-9120	<a href="mailto:Err88@pitt.edu">Err88@pitt.edu</a>
Paul Ohodnicki	Engineering Science	412-624-8002	<a href="mailto:Pro8@pitt.edu">Pro8@pitt.edu</a>
Karen Bursic	Industrial Engineering	412-624-9837	<a href="mailto:kbursic@pitt.edu">kbursic@pitt.edu</a>
Renee Clark	Industrial Engineering	412-648-5359	<a href="mailto:rmclark@pitt.edu">rmclark@pitt.edu</a>
Markus Chmielus	Materials Science Engineering	412-624-8176	<a href="mailto:chmielus@pitt.edu">chmielus@pitt.edu</a>
Will Slaughter	Mechanical Engineering	412-624-8479	<a href="mailto:wss@pitt.edu">wss@pitt.edu</a>
Heather Manns	Mechanical Engineering	412-624-9780	<a href="mailto:H1m40@pitt.edu">H1m40@pitt.edu</a>
Tony Kerzmann	Mechanical Engineering	412-383-5064	<a href="mailto:TKerzmann@pitt.edu">TKerzmann@pitt.edu</a>

### Co-op/Internship Job Fairs

ELPE hosts a job fair each fall and spring term. It is strongly recommended students attend to meet employers virtually or in person. Students should speak to as many employers as they can during the fair, as well as request interviews. **If you miss the fair, you miss many opportunities.**

Normally a list of companies will be posted and advertised. Make sure you research the companies ahead of time and plan on dressing professionally. Even if the job fairs are virtual, you still need to do both to make a great first impression and maximize your time connecting with employers.

### Commitment and Ethics

Students who apply and then accept a position through the Co-op Program should be aware that it is a commitment. We expect students to honor the commitment to their employer and to the university. This means that we expect students to adhere to the Co-op schedules that are prepared for them by their faculty advisors. Any requests for changes to the Co-op schedule must be in writing to the Co-op director. When considering requests for changes, we will look at the individual as well as the impact on the whole program. Please bring all concerns to someone on our staff.

**Participants are expected to serve as ambassadors of the University of Pittsburgh, working to the best of their abilities, and acting in an ethical manner, both during the interviewing process and work rotations. In a recent employer survey, it was noted that employers highly value ethics in an individual. We have found that it is a rare occurrence for a student to lose a Co-op position due to lack of technical ability. Simply stated, employers look for "A" level effort.**

**During your job search, it is expected that you to respond to any employer inquiries within 24-48 hours. It is expected that you also respond in a timely manner to offers and decision deadlines with employers.**

**The office reserves the right to remove applicants who demonstrate a pattern of non-responsiveness. Because we have so many students wanting to Co-op, our attention must be directed to those who are interested in the Co-op program.**

**Remember to make the most of your opportunity.**

### Success In Co-op or Internship

For some, a Co-op or Internship may be your first professional experience. You will not be expected to know everything engineering-wise, but how you act as a professional will make a significant impact on your success as a Co-op or Intern. Have a positive attitude. One of our employers once noted that he looks for "A" level work. That means:

Have a positive attitude, be willing to work, and anxious to learn.

10 Things that Require Zero Talent:

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Being on Time | Work Ethic      |
| Effort        | Body Language   |
| Energy        | Attitude        |
| Passion       | Being coachable |
| Doing Extra   | Being Prepared  |

You never have a second chance to make a first impression!

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CO-OP**

### ***What is Cooperative Education?***

Cooperative Education is the rotation between school and full-time work assignments that relate directly to your engineering discipline. This program enables students to complement classroom studies with practical experience, technical knowledge, and financial reward.

### ***Do I work full-time or part-time?***

At the University of Pittsburgh, the student works full-time during a 6-month rotation or during any of the three alternating 4-month rotations, and then returns to school for full time study.

### ***How many terms do I work?***

To complete the program requirements and receive certification, engineering students must work a minimum of two six-month rotations, three alternating 4-month rotations, or an approved year-long Co-op. If you remain with your Co-op employer, you are considered a Co-op student. Students who participate in the Program do not have the option of changing their status from Co-op to intern to avoid paying the Co-op fee. Students pay the Co-op fee for each term on a rotation. This maintains your full-time student status while working toward receiving all three Co-op credits.

### ***When Do I Begin?***

Co-oping begins for many students upon completion of the sophomore year. If you opt for the 6-month rotations, work sessions begin the end of June/July, or Junior-level students can still participate midway through the year and start in January. Students who opt for the alternating rotations can start as early the spring of their sophomore year (except for IE or CE/Environmental Majors).

### ***What are the eligibility requirements?***

Students must possess a minimum 2.0 GPA and should not be on term probation. Also, the required coursework for each department must be completed. If you are in doubt regarding your academic status, see the Co-op advisor in your department. (Some Co-op employers will set a higher GPA requirement.)

### ***Is Co-oping mandatory?***

No, Co-oping is an option for any qualified student.

### ***What types of positions are there?***

The Experiential Learning & Professional Engagement office is committed to assuring practical work experience for each student in their field of study. We work with a wide range of companies including public and private, small, and large. We have placed students nationally as well as in the Pittsburgh area. Some students have had international assignments with their Co-op employers.

### ***I am a transfer student; can I co-op?***

Yes! We have successfully placed many transfer students from regional campuses and other colleges and universities. Most transfer students begin at the main campus after the sophomore year and can begin Co-op assignments after one term at the main campus. See your advisor as soon as possible to ascertain your Co-op schedule. Sometimes transfer students will need a schedule that varies from the traditional model to ensure a timely graduation.

### ***What are the primary benefits of the Co-op program?***

Practical experience, technical knowledge, financial remuneration, confidence, assurance, and better understanding of academics are all benefits of the Co-op experience in addition to the academic credits earned by the student. The Co-op experience has also immensely benefited graduating students in their job search. Although many students eventually accept permanent employment with their Co-op employers, many others find that they have multiple offers to select from; many with a higher-than-average starting salary. Students who choose to co-op instead of interning can stay longer with an employer to gain more experience and responsibilities.

### ***How do I know what Co-op opportunities are available?***

Students who are eligible for Co-op will gain access through ELPE's SSOE SELECT and will be able to view Co-op postings and apply. You will be asked to update your profile, accept the terms in the Professional Learning agreement, and submit a resume via the system. We advise students to have their resume approved before uploading in the system, as well as reviewing the sample Co-op schedules, and asking questions about Co-op to an ELPE staff member, or the Departmental Co-op Advisor before applying.

***How long will it take to get a position?***

We cannot guarantee anyone a Co-op position (or internship) or guarantee that you will receive an offer within a specific period. You may be one of those students who interviews for one position, receives an offer from the company, accepts it, and thus completes the interviewing process. Most students find, though, that securing a position is a waiting game. Most offers are tendered toward the end of the term, and many students find themselves deciding between two offers. Keep in mind that it may take more than one term to secure a position. You may want to connect with the ELPE office as early as possible in your college career. It is our experience that if you are interested in only certain industries or certain geographic locations, your job search can become more difficult.

Do not give up! Students sometimes think that because they have not heard from an employer that they are not desirable candidates. That is simply not the case. Employers are extremely busy with varied responsibilities; the Co-op or Internship program is just one area for many of them. Again, most students will receive offers if they apply for a variety of opportunities and work with the Co-op staff.

***Will there be a job fair?***

Yes! The ELPE office hosts two annual job fairs for co-op employers and student applicants during the fall and spring terms of each year. By attending this job fair, you will significantly increase your opportunities of finding a Co-op position. Participating companies will be advertised in SSOE SELECT. Please check with the ELPE office for details on these events. Not all companies attend the job fair. The ELPE office works with many employers and continues job development efforts throughout the term.

***How will I know which companies interest me?***

You should research any company that interests you online. You can use SSOE SELECT. We also have a list of participating companies in the ELPE Co-op/Internship intranet, but please keep in mind that this list changes constantly.

In addition, the ELPE office has information on employers. We may be able to connect you with a current Co-op. We also have salary information on most of our partners. Please ask us for this information if it is important to you!

***What if I do not have the QPA or discipline the company requests? Can I still apply?***

It is important that we follow guidelines established by the employers. However, if you are interested in a company for which you do not meet criteria, please let us know. We can try and contact that company on your behalf. Many employers will agree to consider those candidates, and some have received offers!

***How will I know which companies are interested in me?***

Once the resumes leave our office, one of several things might happen:

- The company schedules an on-campus recruiting visit. You will be notified by email of the interview schedule. We will expect a timely response from you.
- The company contacts you by telephone and discusses the position with you.
- The company offers you a plant trip based either on your resume or telephone interview. (It is imperative that you have your voicemail set up on your phone. Companies will call during business hours when you are often not available. The greeting on your phone needs to be professional. If an employer is offended by a message, they may not continue the interview process).
- The company will usually notify you by telephone or in writing to offer you a position. If the offer is verbal, be sure that you are not committing to it unless you are certain you wish to take the position. You can state that you are 'interested and look forward to receiving the offer letter' if you are not 100% sure. You can also ask when the company needs a firm decision.
- Please note: All offers, and plant visits should be reported to the Co-op office.
- **Do not forget to check your spam. Every now and then an employer's email or offer letter is found there!**

***I have never interviewed with a corporation before. Do you assist us in preparation for an interview?***

Yes. We strongly encourage all students to mock interview with our staff members or someone in the Career Services Office. Additionally, we will host a mock interviewing session during the fall semester that can accommodate 100 students. We have found that most students who utilize this service not only feel more comfortable during the interviewing process, but receive job offers. Co-op employers sometimes offer interviewing skills workshops through Career Services or our ELPE office. Check out our important dates to see if there are any professional development workshops coming up. It is important!

***Is it appropriate to send "Thank You" notes after an interview?***

Yes! Particularly if you are interested in the position. A sample letter can be found in this booklet. It is appropriate to send by email or regular mail. The notes can be handwritten if sent by regular mail.



***If I get an offer, do I have to take it?***

No, you do not. However, it is critical to turn down the position in a professional manner. There may come a day when that same company might be of great interest to you. If they have had an unpleasant experience with you, it is possible that they will not consider you for future employment with them. Be truthful but professional. If you have absolutely no interest in the position, do not take up the interviewer's time by accepting a plant visit.

Here are two examples: we have had students register, interview, and then decline a position by saying that they will have trouble completing coursework if they Co-op. Academic schedules for Co-ops are in place to ensure successful completion of coursework. If you have any questions about your Co-op rotations, please speak with either the ELPE office or your academic advisor. Saying that Pitt does not offer the courses is not true and only serves to hurt other applicants as well as the school.

Another example: After receiving an offer, some students have said that they do not want to move out of town, or that their parents do not want them to move. These are issues that should have been resolved before the student's first interview. We suggest that you be open, but realistic. If you absolutely know you cannot leave Pittsburgh, let your ELPE advisor know. Yes, it will limit you, but it is only impeding the chances of other students who are more interested.

***What if I interview and then decide that Co-oping is not for me?***

The first thing you need to do is notify the ELPE office that you only want to consider internships. We will make certain that your resume is not circulated to any additional companies, to save you the responsibility of explaining your decision to them. Do not continue to interview or go on plant trips. Tell any employers who contact you that you are no longer available but thank them for considering you. You may also want to add that you might re-submit a resume to them during senior year.

***Will I be told if I do not get the position?***

Usually. However, some companies just notify the students they wish to extend the offers for Co-op or Internship employment. If you have not heard from a company you are interested in, ask someone in the ELPE office. We are usually up to date on what is happening with each company.

***Are all positions paid?***

Yes, all positions are paid. The average starting salary is normally between \$18-22 per hour for undergraduate students. All positions are full-time.

***What happens if I have multiple Co-op job offers at once?***

You will have to decide which offer you want to take. You will have to let the other company know that you are declining their offer and thank them for their interest. You can ask the ELPE office for assistance with this and advice on how to handle having one offer on the table while you are still waiting to hear back from another company as well. Keep in mind once you verbally accept an offer, you should no longer be interviewing for that timeframe.

***What if I accept a position with a company but a better offer comes along?***

We ask that you consider any job offer very seriously before accepting or rejecting. If you have an offer but are waiting for an offer from another company, it is perfectly acceptable and in fact a good idea to call them to ascertain your status before making a final decision. We are also available to help you obtain any needed information.

Once you have made your decision, however, we expect you to consider that a commitment to the company. Reneging on job acceptance may cause dismissal or suspension from ELPE services. We recommend that students ask questions and get details regarding the position before accepting. Information can be gained from: 1. Employer  
2. Internet 3. Other Students 4. Professors. 5. ELPE office. Take advantage.

***Do I remain with the same employer for all work assignments?***

Our co-op philosophy is that by completing terms with the same employer, the student receives increasingly challenging work assignments, and is typically performing as an entry-level engineer by the last session. This is dependent upon both the student and employer's satisfaction with the program. We do recognize, though, that some students would like to experience an altogether different opportunity prior to graduation. Here are some different scenarios:

Students can:

Complete a 6-month rotation of full-time research at the University of Pittsburgh or another Institution, which would need to be full-time and paid, then complete your second 6-month rotation in Industry (or vice-versa)

Complete 2 six-month rotations, but with 2 different employers

Complete both of your 6-month rotations with the same employer

Complete one domestic 6-month rotation, and then another 6-month Co-op internationally

Complete 3 alternating rotations with the same employer

Complete one rotation with an employer, but the switch to a new employer to complete 2 rotations (or vice versa work two and then switch to another). Can also incorporate international rotations as well.

Complete 2 alternating rotations in industry, then switch to full-time research for final rotation

Complete a Year-Long consecutive Co-op if approved by your department.

Please review our section on “changing Co-op employers” which is on page 31 of this booklet. We expect our students to continue to follow the approved Co-op schedule even if changing employers. Please note that employers are not required to take back a student whose work performance does not meet their standards. Communication is important with the ELPE office so they are aware of your plans.

***Can I turn a co-op offer into an internship?***

No. You still pay the Co-op fee if you obtain a co-op position through the efforts of this office, regardless of the number of rotations spent with them or when they occur. We will contact the company to be sure of their commitment to our program. There is an academic component to co-op, and employers want to hire you longer than just an internship.

***What if I lose my Co-op position before I complete all terms?***

If you are laid off by the employer for economic reasons, you may re-enter the program and look for another employer for the remaining terms, or you may leave the program with an “S” grade if your evaluations are completed. If you lose your position for poor work performance, you must meet with the ELPE Co-op/Intern Director. A determination will be made regarding any further participation in the program as well as the final Co-op grade. If you are suspended for academic reasons, you must raise your GPA before continuing in the program.

***If I Co-op, can I still get the courses I need to graduate?***

Yes, each student has a Co-op faculty advisor and courses have been scheduled to accommodate the Co-op students. Your advisor will approve a schedule form for you. The schedules are to be completed once you accept a position; however, if you are a transfer student, or a student who is not on track, you will want to submit a copy of that schedule as soon as possible, so that you can let employers know what your work schedule will look like.

It is the student's responsibility to give a signed copy to the Co-op office and their department. You also need to keep a copy for yourself.

***Will I lose financial aid and/or on-campus housing by participating in the Co-op program?***

There are liaisons in both the financial aid and housing offices who will work with you to provide a smooth transition from full-time student to co-op student. Beginning with the FAFSA application for the 2010-11 academic year, Co-op wages reported on a student's IRS return will be subtracted from any other earnings the student might have had for that tax year. This is the same practice that applies to Federal College Work-Study wages. Financial aid is not available to students while they are on co-op assignments; this aid will be available for the terms when students are in class. State funds (PHEAA) might be affected by earnings. You may want to verify your aid eligibility if your schedule has you finishing with 3 consecutive semesters of classes.

Students may live in the dormitories while on a work rotation with a current housing contract. Also, on-campus housing is contingent upon participation in the housing office's lottery system.

We can obtain a reduced meal plan for co-op students if requested. There is not a penalty to break your housing contract if you are moving away for your co-op. The housing office supports co-op and has assisted our students as much as they can.

**What if I accept a job outside of Pittsburgh and need temporary housing during either my school or work rotations?** Accepting a co-op position outside of Pittsburgh is a terrific way to broaden your horizons. It is a fantastic way for you to see what it is like to live in another part of the country or even internationally. Most companies will offer some form of housing assistance for those positions outside of Pittsburgh. Inquire at the ELPE office or ask the company during your interview. When you return to Pitt for classes and need a sublet, you can let us know and we will email your housing needs to current co-ops through SSOE SELECT. Please see the housing section on page 30 of this booklet for additional details. The housing office will allow students to break their contract and will work to make sure that you have a dorm room when you return. They cannot guarantee you the same space but will assist every way they can.

**Are there any Co-op fees?**

Yes, engineering Co-op students will be registered for a one credit course entitled Engineering 1090P (Pittsburgh campus) or 1090J (Johnstown campus) and international Co-op students (working internationally) for Engineering 1092. The fee for this course is \$335 plus the part-time activity fee, wellness fee, and computer fee. The full Safety and Transportation fee also still applied. Students will be registered for this course prior to the commencement of each work term. Note students do not pay the standard university resident or non-resident per-credit charges, the Co-op substitutes instead. University tuition charges can be found at [www.ir.pitt.edu/tuition/pghpafirst.php](http://www.ir.pitt.edu/tuition/pghpafirst.php).

**\*Students working more than 75 miles from campus may be exempted from the wellness fee and the safety and transportation fee.**

**Is there any negotiation with the fee?**

No. If a student uses the services of this office to gain Co-op employment, the fee must be paid for any Co-op rotations.

**Is there any flexibility with the Co-op rotations?**

Although most students will work either the 6-month rotations or alternating 3 rotations, some employers have programs that require deviations from that model, which is usually an extension of the work term. If academic schedules permit, the Co-op office and academic departments will usually grant approval for a change in the rotations under those circumstances. If something comes up during your tenure in our program that interferes with the standard 6-month rotations or alternating 3 rotations, please email the Co-op/Intern Director.

**Can I have a work study position during Co-op work rotations?**

No. Students who are on Co-op rotations are unable to simultaneously hold employment positions as student workers or federal work study positions with the University during that term.

**Will I be drug tested before beginning an assignment?**

You will more than likely be drug tested. Companies have the right to rescind the offer in the event of a positive testing. Also, many companies complete background checks, and can also rescind an offer based on the results of that check.

**Can I participate in a Global Experience as well as Co-op?**

Yes, but it takes planning. When developing your Co-op schedule, the ELPE office has staff that can help you figure out what programs and schedules can work best for you, in addition to your departmental Co-op faculty advisor.

**What if I decide I do not want to complete the Co-op Program?**

If you opt not to complete 2 six-month rotations, all 3 alternating rotations, nor complete a yearlong Co-op, you will not receive the 3 credits toward your elective, or certification on your transcript, and you will not receive the certificate and honor cord at graduation.

**What happens if I have multiple Co-op job offers at once?**

You will have to decide which offer you want to take. You will have to let the other company know that you are declining their offer and thank them for their interest. You can ask the Co-op office for assistance with this and advice on how to handle having one offer on the table while you are still waiting to hear back from another company as well.

## AFTER ACCEPTING A CO-OP POSITION

Congratulations on being accepted as a Co-op Professional! The privilege of participating in this program will enhance your academic career while affording you an opportunity to gain practical work experience and financial reward.

Before beginning your Co-op position, notify the Co-op office of your acceptance. We will have some final paperwork and instructions for you. Please make sure that you have submitted your approved Co-op schedule before coming to the ELPE office to complete the acceptance paperwork.



### Housing Guidelines

Housing Agreements for Engineering and School of Arts and Sciences students participating in Cooperative Education will be implemented through the following procedures:

- All participants with current housing contracts must identify themselves to the ELPE office.
- Students who are on a work assignment during the fall or spring terms who wish to cancel their housing contract for that term will require a memo from the ELPE office requesting the cancellation. Please keep in mind that the housing office also has deadline dates, and that we need to abide by those dates as much as possible. Please contact the ELPE office if you need a memo.
- Additionally, fall term co-op program participants must contact Panther Central to request a Housing Agreement for the spring term as soon as you are sure that you will require spring term housing. Please note that the housing office cannot guarantee the same room upon your return.
- Process the Housing Agreement by the due date with a \$325 housing deposit.
- If you are out on co-op in the spring and plan to live on campus the following academic year, you must meet all applicable deadlines to maintain any applicable housing guarantee through Panther Central.

This means that you will still need to pay your housing deposit, sign your contract, and submit your application **by February 1st** to continue to be guaranteed housing for the next year. Please contact Panther Central with any questions.

- Students who wish to remain in the dorms during a work rotation may do so, but all students must be registered for classes to stay in the residence halls. The co-op course satisfies this requirement.
- Co-op students who have on-campus housing and are out on a co-op work rotation can request exemption from purchasing a full meal plan but will still be required to purchase a modified reduced meal plan which is comparable to a commuter meal plan.

The Housing office address is: Panther Central / Litchfield Towers Lobby / 3990 Fifth Avenue / Pittsburgh, PA 15213, Phone: (412) 648-1100

### Additional Helpful Housing Hints

- \*Co-op employers are not obligated to provide housing for students, although many will assist in relocation.
- \*During interviews and when inquiring about opportunities with an employer, ask them if they offer any assistance for housing. If the position is in Pittsburgh, they might not offer anything for local students.
- \*Ask employers if they have recommendations for finding housing if they do not provide it.

\*Ask ELPE office if other students have or are currently co-oping at the company where you are going to work. We might be able to contact these students and see how they found housing or connect you with them.

\*If you know of friends or classmates who have been on a co-op, ask them how they found their housing.

\*Use Facebook, Rentjungle.com (this website also provides a 360° street view of area), Craigslist, Apartments.com, and Oodle.com to find housing near the employer. Please remember to be cautious about potential scams!

\*Contact the Co-op offices at colleges and/or universities near your employer to see if they have any recommendations.

\*If you are co-oping in summer - Contact the housing offices at colleges and/or universities near your employer to see if they allow summer housing for outside students.

\*Try contacting Alumni Office to see if they can reach out to/connect you with alumni who now live around the area of interest.

\* Ask employers if they have employees who will rent out rooms to co-ops.

\*Ask to connect with a current co-op at the company who may be from another school, if possible.

### Wellness Fee

Local co-ops less than 75 miles from campus will pay a part-time wellness fee which enables you to visit the Student Health Center, located on the first floor of Nordenberg Hall.

### Cooperative Education Financial Aid Procedures

1. If you receive financial aid, make an appointment with Karen Sciulli in the Financial Aid Office by calling 412-624-4758. You are responsible for contacting Ms. Sciulli every semester that you are out on a work rotation to ensure correct financial aid. Karen's email address is [ksciulli@pitt.edu](mailto:ksciulli@pitt.edu). When preparing financial aid forms, list anticipated registration for fall and spring as full-time. If you know which summer will be full-time academics, and then list that as such too.
2. The School of Engineering will provide the Financial Aid Office with a roster of names of students who will be out on co-op each term.
3. The Financial Aid Office will make every effort to ensure that co-op students receive an annual aid package comparable to other students within specific financial aid program limitations.

The following guidelines apply:

1. Students must have a complete University of Pittsburgh Financial Aid Application on file with the Financial Aid Office by the published deadline each year, April 1 of each year.
2. Students should have a complete state grant application on file with PHEAA or their respective state agency by the agency's published deadline.
3. Students attending classes during the summer term must complete a separate University of Pittsburgh summer Aid Application. The Financial Aid Form and family tax documents need not be filed a second time for the summer term.
4. Students are advised that University requirements for normal academic progress and satisfactory academic standing apply to co-op students. Details are available in the Financial Aid Office.

Students receiving financial aid under the following specific programs should note:

1. **Pell Grant\*** -- Pell Grants are awarded for a 12-month period. Students who are eligible and have a validated SAR on file with the Financial Aid Office can receive a payment for any term for which they enroll based on actual credits of enrollment. No student can receive more than two full-time terms payments per year or the equivalent in part-time payments. Deferrals are available on a Pell Grant by contacting the Financial Aid Office.

**PHEAA Grant** -- PHEAA Grants are typically awarded for the fall and spring terms. Students who are eligible for a PHEAA Grant should advise the Harrisburg agency directly concerning their co-op plans. Students who want to receive the PHEAA Grant for the summer term must file a separate PHEAA application for that time. Summer term payments are made to students at the close of the summer term, in August. Deferrals for pending summer PHEAA Grants are not available and students must make alternate arrangements to pay their invoices for summer.

2. **Stafford Student Loan** -- Stafford Student Loans are available to students during any term of enrollment. Depending on the student's year in school and academic standing, separate complete applications (including parents' 1040, student's 1040, FAF and University Financial Aid Supplement for a Stafford Student Loan) may need to be filed for specific terms of enrollment. Students are advised to discuss their individual eligibility for a Stafford Student Loan with a financial aid counselor. Students who may become liable for repayment of their student loan should contact the Office of the Registrar for certification of enrollment of their lender.
3. **Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Perkins Loan, College Work Study, Provost Scholarship, Chancellors Nominee Scholarship, Impact Grant** -- Awards from any of the above programs will be made to eligible students in equal amounts for any combination of two terms during any academic year. Placement in a specific College Work Study Job is not guaranteed; however, there are employment opportunities available during three terms.
4. **Other miscellaneous grants, scholarships, or loans** -- regulations governing grant, scholarship, and loan programs other than those mentioned above may vary. **Co-op students are urged to discuss the specific details of each of these types of awards they may be receiving in an appointment situation with a financial aid counselor.** Co-op students may need to contact some agencies directly concerning payment of funds during their co-enrollment.

Engineering and University Scholarships:

Email Karen Sciulli at [ksciulli@pitt.edu](mailto:ksciulli@pitt.edu) to have university scholarships applied prior to each academic term.

\*Students are not eligible for financial aid while they are working except for a pro-rated Pell Grant.

#### Class Registration Process

You must be registered for the one credit co-op course, entitled Engineering 1090P (1090J for Johnstown) for either your fall or spring rotation, and you will register for a ½ credit during your 2-month timeframe during the summer, or the full 1 credit during your summer rotation if you are on the alternating schedule. International co-op experiences register for 1092 (working internationally). The student does not pay for the credits but does pay the \$335 Co-op fee plus miscellaneous fees listed in this handbook (the summer co-op fee is \$167.50 during the 6-month rotation). The co-op office will provide permission numbers to participating students to enroll in the co-op course. Permission numbers are required for student self-registration and change every semester. The permission numbers will be sent to you via email before registration opens for the semester. While participating in the co-op program, you are to follow your co-op schedule and will be enrolled in either co-op or full-time classes until graduation.

The credits that you earn from your co-op experience can count toward your departmental graduation requirements if:

- The required number of terms are completed (2 six-month rotations, 3 alternating rotations, or a full year for engineering students)
- A final paper or project that is determined by your co-op faculty advisor is completed
- All evaluations are completed and returned

Many students will receive a letter grade for their co-op experience. You can check with your department to determine how the credits will be utilized and graded.

Sometimes students will work more than the above-mentioned required number of terms. It is not necessary to register for the co-op course for additional terms, however, it is important to remember that if this work session occurs during a fall or spring term, that you might wish to be registered to be considered a student with full-time status. You will earn at the most a three-credit grade for co-op, and if the student registers for additional terms, it will appear on the grade report as an "S"

PLEASE NOTE: If you are add/dropped into the co-op engineering course, you will not receive a second invoice. You can verify the amount you owe by checking your account through [my.pitt.edu](http://my.pitt.edu), or by contacting student accounts



(412-624-7575, 201 Thackeray). You are responsible for settling your invoice by your due date, or you will be assessed a late fee.

While you are on a co-op work assignment, you will register for classes for the following term through your individual departments. The undergrad coordinator will be in touch with you! Students are responsible for registering for their academic classes and responding to departmental emails and notices in a timely manner.

#### Fee Waivers

Students who work more than 75 miles from campus can receive refunds for the wellness and safety and transportation fees. We will email the co-op registrants each term to verify your location. If you do not respond, you may not receive your refund. Be sure to sign up for eRefunds to receive yours.

#### Summer Flat Rate

Students will receive a flat rate of tuition during the summer term if it is to their advantage.

#### Changing Co-op Employers

While some of our students remain with the same company for both 6-month or all three 4-month rotations, other students either wish to change companies, or find themselves needing to find a new employer.

If your assignment at your current employer warrants any concerns (increased responsibilities, change in department, etc.), contact us as soon as possible during the term in order that we can try to remedy the situation. We also have a six-week evaluation in place to circumvent such concerns and are often successful in dealing with any problems the student may have.

If at the completion of the rotation you still want to change companies, you are free to do so.

It is important to discuss your plans for your next rotation (6-month or 4-month alternating) to your employer in a timely manner. Each employer may recruit differently, and it is up to you to communicate professionally and clearly as this is *your* co-op. At the end of term evaluation, ask what the employer's expectations are of you returning, and discuss that timeframe.

Under no circumstances will we work with a student on a "wait and see" premise; in other words, the student cannot hold onto his or her assignment until something better comes along. Resignation letters must be submitted to the ELPE office and the co-op employer within a month of the student leaving the work site. It is easy to change employers the right way. You do not want to risk losing a good recommendation with your previous employer or put yourself in jeopardy with the co-op program.

If things do not work out with your first employer, as earlier stated, students have the option to resign and seek another position. We will assist the students in finding another position with the expectation that they will be adhering to their initial approved co-op schedule and have officially resigned from their co-op employer. If a student decides to deviate from the approved schedule and obtain another opportunity on their own, the co-op office will determine if the offer can be accepted for the subsequent rotations.

In the event of layoff, a student is strongly encouraged to use the ELPE office to find another position to complete program requirements.

### Resigning from Co-op

For those students who want to resign from the program altogether, we will require your resignation within 30- days of you leaving the work site. We have had some unfortunate situations where students have applied for other positions, study abroad, and research, only to tell us and the companies extremely late in the term that they will not be returning, because they wanted to see if the other positions would come through before they resigned. Not only could this impact a positive reference, but it can also leave the employer without a co-op and sometimes very frustrated.

This practice is not professional and satisfactory grades might not be issued as final grades under these circumstances. Please remember this is an academic program, and a three-way partnership.

### Global Experiences

It is possible to participate in both Global Experiences and to co-op; however, this takes planning. When formulating your co-op schedule, it is important to talk to a co-op staff member as well as a Global representative in the ELPE office. Your faculty co-op advisor in your department is also a needed resource to help answer questions and plan out your schedule to include both experiences.

### Student and Work Study Positions during the Co-op

Students who are on co-op rotations are unable to simultaneously hold employment positions as student workers or federal work study positions with the University during that term.

### Changes to Your Co-op Schedule

Co-op encompasses 2 six-month rotations, 3 alternating 4-month rotations, or a year-long consecutive co-op. You are expected to work the approved rotations, and any requests for changes in the schedule must be communicated to the ELPE office first, and approved by the Director, your faculty coordinator, and the company. Just because your employer agrees to the change does not matter. You still need approval from the ELPE office and the faculty advisor. **All requests should be submitted in writing by January 30<sup>th</sup> for the summer term, May 31 for the fall term, and September 30 for spring term.**

**Please understand the rationale behind the scheduled rotations; the school offers courses when needed and we must have the students in the classroom to offer the courses; we have many students awaiting a placement, and by someone remaining in the position, or asking for additional summer work other than those already scheduled, it can hurt those waiting for their chance to participate. For these two reasons we are strict about students changing rotations. If your employer requires the change, please have your company contact us.**

### Academic Major Changes

Placement with an organization is based on several factors, including academic major. Any change in major should have approval of the employer.

### Evaluation of Co-op Assignments and Satisfactory Co-op Grade ("S")

Students are required to complete and submit two evaluation forms to the ELPE office per rotation. The first is emailed 6 weeks into the term and should be completed and returned as soon as possible. If there are any concerns with your assignment, both the ELPE office and faculty coordinator would like to be of assistance. Many issues can be easily resolved, and this six- week evaluation provides us with a mechanism to assist the students in a timely manner. In this review we will ask for your supervisor's email, for the purpose of asking them to submit the end of term review as your rotation completion draws near.

At the beginning of the last month of your work rotation term, you and your manager will receive an email which will give you instructions regarding our online registration process through which you and your manager will submit end-of-term evaluations.

End of term evaluations must be completed each term by both the student and the employer. You cannot receive a satisfactory grade or credit for the rotation without the completion of the forms. We encourage your manager to go over the Employer Evaluation of Student with you. You will be sent a copy of your review by email. Be sure to ask for your employer's review meeting before you leave the work site. It is the student's responsibility to ensure completion of the required evaluations, but we will certainly help when needed.

#### Taking Coursework while on a Co-op Assignment

Students are not encouraged to take coursework in addition to co-op during the first work term unless they have been scheduled to do so by their co-op advisor. If it is necessary for a class to be taken, we do not expect the student to leave work early or reschedule work hours.

Daytime classes are not permitted while a student is on co-op except in an extreme circumstance. \*If the course is at another university, you must have approval beforehand.

#### Part-Time Work

Students are discouraged from working part-time with the co-op employer during academic terms. Students put themselves at academic risk and the practice of juggling part-time work and full-time academics is a practice which is not in the spirit of cooperative education.

#### Best Practices at the Work Site

We strongly discourage the use of *excessive* vacation or personal time while on assignment. Students are expected to work the full work term of 25-26 weeks in a 6-month rotation, and as close to 15 weeks as possible for an alternating rotation.

Work terms are July through December, and January through June for 6-month rotations. A year-long consecutive co-op can start January, May, or September, as does the 3 alternating rotations.

Please let us know if an illness precludes you from completing your assignment. Our employers have been very understanding in these circumstances.

Consider disclosing any disabilities that might help you succeed in the workplace with a special accommodation.

Be certain to check with your employer to discern and *abide* by their *Internet Usage Policy*.

**Be mindful of your phone usage while on the job. Limit texts/messages and personal use.**

#### Supplemental Assistance

Occasionally we have students who wish to accept a position, but the pay is lower than average, or the lack of housing assistance makes it difficult to accept an otherwise wonderful opportunity. Our office may have limited funds to assist students. The grants are not more than \$500, and they are limited in number. Please write to the Co-op/Internship Director if you find yourself in need financially.

## Grading Policies

Listed below are policy updates and clarifications regarding co-op credits and term paper/senior project requirements for each engineering discipline involved in co-op.

Engineering co-op students will be registered for Engineering 1090P or 1090J, international co-op experiences for Engineering 1092, and Computer Science co-op students for Engineering 1093.

Be sure that all evaluations have been completed to receive an "S" grade.

### **Final grades are as follows:**

Students completing the 2 six-month work rotations, 3 alternating four-month rotations, or a year-long consecutive co-op successfully and departmental final project requirements will receive a letter or "S" grade for these three credits. Each engineering department will develop the specific objectives and requirements for the term paper and/or final project. The co-op office does not issue the final grade; your final grade is determined by your co-op faculty advisor. Credits count toward departmental graduation requirements.

In most departments a final project is required to use the credits as either a technical or professional elective.

Students who opt out of the final project but who have successfully completed the co-op work sessions will maintain their "S" grades for co-op and will receive certification.

### **"U" "G" or "NC" grades can be given for the following reasons:**

- Work term not meeting enough weeks of work. The co-op term is 15-weeks in length. That is the expectation for the term. Let us know if your work term will not meet that criterion. We do realize that a study abroad program or an employer program date might interfere, but we would expect a minimum of 12-weeks under these circumstances.
- Unsatisfactory completion of assignment, including poor work performance, missed days, or other unprofessional work practices
- Failure to return for a work rotation without properly and promptly notifying the co-op director and the employer of your resignation. Again, this resignation needs to be received within 30-days of you leaving the most recent work term.
- Not abiding by co-op regulations as detailed in this booklet.

Students who voluntarily leave the co-op program in good standing after one 6-month rotation will retain their "S" grades, but the credits will not count toward departmental graduation requirements until the minimum 2 six-month rotations and the final papers/projects are completed. Good standing also includes a timely resignation as detailed above. Same for any student who only works one or two alternating rotations but does not complete all 3 required rotations.

Students who lose their co-op positions for reasons beyond their control (i.e., strikes, layoffs) can be issued an "S" for the term or terms worked. We can also try and help you find a new position for the remaining term(s) to receive full credit and grade for the co-op experience.

**Please feel free to call our offices if you have questions on any information regarding the term paper or handling of co-op credits. We do understand that sometimes situations arise including sickness, hospitalization, etc., and we are willing to work with students under these circumstances.**

\*Per University policy, "G" grades cannot be changed after one year. If you have a "G" grade from spring to spring for instance, you will then receive an "NG" grade and that grade cannot be changed to an "S."

### Removal from the Co-op Program

Automatic removal or an unsatisfactory grade may result from the following:

- Changing rotations or terms of co-op agreement without approval of co-op office.
- Receiving less than a 2.0 term quality point average for two consecutive school terms.
- Being dismissed by employer for poor work performance, failure of drug testing or other unprofessional work behaviors.
- Resigning from your position without following the proper steps.
- Reneging on a commitment to an employer to take a position with another company without going through the ELPE office.
- Taking an overload of coursework while on co-op.
- For International Students, failing to notify the OIS office and to abide by OIS and university policies

### Co-op Probation

Probation will result if the student fails to maintain a 2.0/4.0 term grade point average.

Cooperative education students receiving less than a 2.0 grade point average for any term, regardless of the overall GPA, will automatically be placed on probation with the Cooperative Engineering Education Program. The student's co-op employer will be notified if a work rotation is immediately following the probation.

**Students need to alert the co-op office immediately upon receiving their grades for the term if they earned below a 2.0 GPA.** Failure to do so can put your co-op in jeopardy.

Students on probation for one term may still participate in the program if they have permission from: The ELPE Office, The Undergraduate Co-op Coordinator, and The Company of employment.

Any student who receives less than a 2.0 for two terms can be dismissed from the Cooperative Education Program. A student on probation who begins a work term may still be dismissed even if they are already at the worksite. Dismissed students forfeit all Cooperative Engineering Education Fees once the add/drop period has ended.

### Layoffs/Strikes

Co-op students will be treated the same as regular employees in the event of layoffs. The student is then encouraged to use the co-op office to find another position to complete the Program requirements.

### Conditions of Employment

Students are responsible for confirming all conditions and dates of employment, keeping in mind that a term is about 15-weeks in length for alternating rotations, and 25-26 weeks for 6-month rotations.

### Legal Requirements

Students must have a social security number and have social security tax deducted from their salaries. Students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents must have approval from the OIS office to co-op.

### Term Paper/Project

To complete the academic requirements of the Cooperative Engineering Education Program, each student must submit a term paper and/or poster presentation to the co-op advisor from their department. The departments decide upon the co-op letter grade or a pass/fail grade.

If submitting a paper, it must be on cooperative engineering education both in general terms and specific terms regarding their own co-op experience. The general section should discuss the student's own work experience including: the educational value of the co-op; the relationship between the job and college; which courses were the most helpful; and the overall value of participating in co-op. The student will then receive a final grade for the cooperative engineering education credits. Please note: Specific details and grading procedures from each department on what the paper should encompass are available on each department's website.

### Co-op Certification

Students completing 2 six-month rotations, 3 alternating 4-month rotations, (or year-long consecutive) in good standing under the co-op Program are eligible for certification upon graduation from the University of Pittsburgh. This certification is noted on the student's transcript. You will also receive an honor cord when graduating.

### Post Graduate Report

We will ask you to complete a post graduate survey. This survey is confidential, but we do ask for salary information so that we can give an average range to our graduates when they are receiving full-time offers. We appreciate the completion of this form. We hope to hear from you over the years!

## Assistance with your Internship Search

Along with your co-op search, you can also consider internships. It makes sense to consider all options to increase your chances of gaining professional experience and growth, even before you graduate!

Keep in mind that a summer internship is not structured like a co-op. You will only work 10-12 weeks during the summer, and there is no for-credit component. Your internship should still be a paid position though.

The ELPE office can also connect you with employers that are hiring for summer internships in addition to co-ops. The same application process applies, you can log into SSOE SELECT, upload a resume, and apply for internships.

Starting the fall of your sophomore year is the ideal time to begin your search (first-year students can too, but some employers may expect you to have some of your core courses already completed). As a first-year student you may want to apply to government organizations that require lengthy clearances that can take 6-8 months.

### Guides to help during your internship search:

- Fall is the time to apply for as many internships as you can. Most companies recruit early and in the fall for upcoming summer needs. Have your resume ready and take advantage of the virtual or on-campus recruiting events to help you network and learn about companies.
- Be open to relocating and open minded with opportunities. Just as a co-op search, if you limit yourself to only one location and just one industry or one type of role, you are taking a chance. Talk to your support systems at home to see what is feasible to consider (do you have access to a car, can you consider moving, etc.)
- We understand the fall term (and spring for that matter), keeps you busy, and classes are a priority, but you need to find the time to check SSOE SELECT, read emails from the ELPE office, and make the time to attend information sessions, recruiting events, etc. to maximize your chances. Treat this as a learning experience to gain information on employers. It will help you figure out what your interests may be.

The ELPE office hosts a job fair each fall and spring term. It is strongly recommended students attend to meet employers in person. Students should speak to as many employers as they can during the fair, as well as request interviews. **If you miss the fair, you miss many opportunities.**

- ELPE staff are on hand to help you during your search. We can follow up with employers, reach out to companies on your behalf, and can answer any questions or concerns you have with your search. The timeframe in finding a position varies for everyone, but if you communicate and work with the ELPE office, hopefully your search process will be an easy experience.
- Utilize resources like mock interviews and have your resume reviewed, there are tools in place within SSOE and the University to make sure you are marketing yourself the best way possible.
- Please report if you obtain and accept an internship to the ELPE office. We track students and can keep updated information. This also strengthens SSOE's relationships with the employers, and your success as a Pitt engineer can also "pave the way" for others by increasing Pitt hires at a company. We have seen this happen a lot over the years.

## TITLE IX

The University of Pittsburgh's Title IX Office is committed to ensuring that students, staff, and faculty are not only provided with all options available to them related to the Title IX process, but also are supported over the course of this process. Title IX prohibits **sexual violence and sexual misconduct** which can affect the educational or campus environment. The University has a responsibility to ensure the safety of our students and campus community.

Whether or not a person chooses to participate in a university investigation, he or she still has the right to interim measures to assist in getting back to class and work. Additionally, anyone coming forward under Title IX will be protected from any form of retaliation related to the matter.

If you have any questions regarding the Title IX process, you can contact the Title IX office directly.

Web site is <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance>

Options for filing complaints and seeking resources, which can be pursued simultaneously:

- File a report with the Title IX office. You can do so via the report form link via the website or [titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu) or 412-648-7860. The Title IX office can provide you with options and resources available both at the University and in the community.
- Filing a report with the University of Pittsburgh Police. They are in the Public Safety Building at 3412 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 or 412-624-2121. The University of Pittsburgh Police investigates all reported and potential criminal activity.
- Filing a report with the Office of Student Conduct. The office is located at 738 William Pitt Union, 3959 Fifth Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 or 412-648-7910. All cases are heard on campus by a Judicial Board to determine if a person is or is not responsible for alleged violations of the Code of Conduct based on the preponderance of evidence standard. This is NOT a criminal investigation.
- Supportive services are offered at the University's Counseling Center. The Counseling Center offers sexual assault services designed to assist students who have experienced sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and harassment. They are located at the Wellness Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Nordenberg Hall, 119 University Place, PA 15260 or 412-648-7930.
- Pittsburgh Action Against Rape is a community resource that offers both supportive and advocacy services to victims of sexual misconduct. PAAR is located at 81 South 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 or 412-431-5665.
- The Women's Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh is a community resource that offers both supportive and advocacy services to victims of domestic violence. You can contact the Women's Shelter at 412-687-8005. Their location is confidential.



## Disability Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both the Co-op office and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.



## Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, see: <http://diversity.pitt.edu/affirmative-action/policies-procedures-and-practices>.

Everyone in the ELPE office strives to help ensure that other members of the program can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or emailing [titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu). Reports can also be filed online: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/make-report/report-form>. You may also choose to report this to a Pitt faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

## Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>. This may include but is not limited to the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating the University Policy.