Ten Easy Steps To Traditional Co-op

(6-8 months in duration: January - August Co-op or May - December Co-op)

1. Completion of this packet is necessary for you to obtain and begin a Co-op. A Traditional Co-op is typically for first year, sophomore and junior undergraduate students only and should be 6-8 months in duration (from January to August or May to December). Seniors may participate in co-op but must have classes to return to after co-op before graduating. Please note: Graduate Students in the Fire Protection Program are eligible to participate in the Co-op program through the Career Development Center. All other graduate students interested in Co-op experiences must work with their academic departments.

2. Be sure that the Personal and Academic Profiles in your Job Finder account are complete in order to search for positions. Be sure that in your Academic Profile, you have selected “Applying for Co-op January thru August” or “Applying for Co-op May thru December” or “Academic Year Internship.” When you run your job search, select “Co-op” for Position Type. You may also consider opportunities not listed in Job Finder.

3. If you need assistance with resume writing, cover letters, searching for Co-op jobs or interviewing, be sure to check the workshops offered by the CDC or schedule an appointment with a staff member for assistance through your Job Finder account (under the Calendar tab, then under the Counseling Appointment tab).

4. Talk with your Faculty Advisor to lay out a plan for including Co-op in your academic program. You will need to fill out the “Academic Planning Worksheet” in this packet for all terms. You will need the signature of your Faculty Advisor on the Co-op Registration Form.

5. It is necessary for you to read the Terms of Understanding in this packet so you understand Co-op. Also, the following paperwork should be completed, signed and returned to the CDC once a formal Co-op position has been offered to you in writing:

Co-op Paperwork to be completed (in this packet):

- Academic Planning Worksheet for Prospective Co-op Students: (completed with Faculty Advisor)
- Traditional Co-op Registration Form: (completed and signed by you and your Faculty Advisor)
Traditional Co-operative Education Program (Co-op)

- Traditional Co-op Waiver Form: (for late registration or if you wish to do coursework during Co-op)

Additional Paperwork needed:

a) Copy of job description (must be related to major if you are an international student)

b) Copy of job offer letter (must include start date, end date and hourly wage)

6. If you have any other job offers that are pending, you should immediately decline them after officially accepting another offer. Politely let them know you have accepted another position so other students may benefit. The CDC can help you with communicating this; if you need assistance or would like to role-play the scenario please make an appointment with a CDC Staff Member. Employers will appreciate your professionalism. Please refer to the CDC website for our policy regarding expectations with regards to student conduct when accepting a job offer.

7. Cancel scheduled interviews with any additional companies.

8. The CDC will review the paperwork, and a staff member will sign off on your paperwork. Then the Career Development Center will forward copies of your paperwork to the Registrar, Financial Aid, and your faculty advisor (and International House, if you are an international student applying for a Traditional Co-op).

9. Your files will be maintained at the CDC. You may now start on the date agreed upon with your employer.

10. Enjoy your experience, and don’t forget to add this Co-op to your resume! The CDC can help you with this as well through a resume critique by appointment or during walk-in hours.

Terms Of Understanding

Please read the information contained in this tipsheet to ensure that you are familiar with how the Co-op program works.

Traditional Co-op

This is a full time long-term internship where first year, sophomore and junior undergraduate students can work between 6-8 months at a company. The academic status of students on Co-op is suspended over a summer and two terms while the student works full time at a Co-op.

The CDC Provides Many Resources for Finding Co-op Jobs

Nearly all students seeking Co-op positions are successful but students should register for courses and fill out all paperwork as if they were returning to school just in case they don’t find a Co-op position. Students are encouraged to search for Co-op opportunities in Job Finder and Career Shift, as well as in any other job search resources. Students may make an appointment with CDC staff members through Job Finder to learn how to search for Co-op positions.

The CDC recommends that students begin searching in late August and into the fall for January - August Co-ops and to begin in late January/early February for a May - December Co-op. All Co-op employment must be approved by the CDC in advance of the work period. It must be a professional job at least 6-8 months long and at least 30 hours per week. Co-ops for international students must be related to their major. For non-international students, it is recommended that the Co-op relates to their major; otherwise students may want to have a conversation with a CDC staff member about their choice to pursue a Co-op outside their major area of study.
Terms of Understanding Among Employer, University and Student

Obtaining a Co-op position is a competitive process just like any other job search. Students apply for positions and then employers may interview candidates whom they feel are most qualified. Companies offering internships may offer jobs to those students, who, after personal interviews and other evaluations, have been found to have qualifications compatible with the interests of the company. Students may interview with prospective employers and to make a choice among employment offers received.

It is very important to the success of the Co-op process that students are responsive to correspondence from the CDC. Messages, especially those concerning job interviews, should be handled with the utmost promptness. Upon receiving the necessary information, the student should contact the employer immediately.

Professional Behavior Expectations

While seeking a Co-op position, the student is expected to act in a professional manner. Failure to behave professionally in dealing with the CDC staff and prospective employers may result in the student being prohibited from participating in a Co-op. Examples of unprofessional behavior include: unexcused failure to show up for an interview either on campus or at the company, inappropriate comments during an interview, and failure to respond in a timely fashion to calls, mailings and emails related to the placement process from prospective employers or CDC staff.

While on Co-op, students are expected to abide by WPI Student Judicial Policies and Procedures. In particular, the issues addressed in the Academic Honesty Policy section apply to a student’s performance while working as a Co-op. Any Co-op student who is accused of violating the principles of academic honesty will be subject to the procedures outlined in the Campus Planner and Resource Guide.

Duration Of Agreement

Once a Co-op offer is made and the student has accepted it, both student and employer are expected to continue their association for the duration of the student’s scheduled assignment. If the student’s performance on the assignment is unsatisfactory, or when experience indicates that a significant mismatch has occurred, the employer or student may contact the CDC to discuss options.

Once a student has accepted a position, the student cannot continue to interview and must notify the CDC immediately.

Termination of a Co-op either by the student without approval of the CDC or by the employer due to the student’s unsatisfactory job performance, should be communicated to the CDC right away.

If a student is laid off during a Co-op internship, the student may attempt to find another job. Co-op employment is a temporary arrangement. The student is not eligible for unemployment compensation at the conclusion of the Co-op period. The student has no right to expect or demand continued employment beyond the agreed upon termination date. However, this does not preclude the employer from making a separate offer of temporary or permanent employment beyond that date.

Change In Education Plans

Any student contemplating a change in major or transfer from WPI to another university should immediately consult both the CDC and the employer as to the effect of such a change on further participation in the Co-op.
Tuition And Academic Credit

No tuition is charged during the terms spent in Co-op. Credit is not granted for Co-ops, which may not substitute nor qualify for courses or either MQP or IQP degree requirements. Also, students on Co-op are not permitted to work on and receive academic credit for any degree requirement (other than project credit), unless they have completed the Student Waiver Form and received permission to do so from their Faculty Advisor and project advisor if completing project requirements during co-op.

Disability Disclosure And Support

Many students with disabilities who have successfully adapted to WPI’s academic environment find themselves facing new challenges in their first Co-op assignment. Because of this, students with disabilities are encouraged to meet with a staff member from the Office of Disability Services and/or a CDC staff member during the placement process to discuss how to best self-advocate. Whether or not to reveal a disability and what kind of accommodation the employer may be asked to make can be discussed in a confidential manner. If the student prefers not to reveal his/her disability to the employer, the staff members can help the student identify personal strategies to ensure success on the job.

Attention: Undergraduate Seniors & First Year Graduate Students

Undergraduate senior students who are going to graduate school and first year international graduate students may be able to pursue a Co-op in rare instances. Please consult with your Faculty Advisor to determine if Co-op is an option with your field of study.

Information On Job Finder

Any student interested in participating in Co-op must be registered with the CDC by using Job Finder software and uploading a resume. In some cases employers will be given access to students’ resumes through our Resume Books. Job Finder will also be used in the on-campus recruiting process at the CDC. Many job listings are posted in Job Finder, along with other resources. Please make an appointment with a CDC staff member through Job Finder for assistance with finding Co-op opportunities.

Financial Aid Impact of Co-Op Participation at WPI

Participants in Cooperative Education Programs gain real-world, hands-on experience in the job market. Co-op participants are considered active, full-time students. However, during the time of Co-op participation, the student is ineligible for any federal, state, or institutional financial aid as no WPI tuition is charged during Co-op. Although Co-op participation may delay graduation, students typically do not pay more to attend WPI. The period of Co-op does not count toward the student’s 16 terms of maximum institutional financial aid.

Undergraduates

Fall Co-Op – May to December Co-op (summer + A & B Terms):

• Ineligible for aid for E, A, & B Terms during Co-op participation
• Eligible for aid for C & D Terms only of the academic year upon return to WPI
• File FAFSA by April 15 and submit completed WPI Upper Class Application for upcoming year by the Friday following spring break
• Aid eligibility upon return to WPI in the spring following Co-op, for Terms C & D:

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Student may have full-year eligibility for Stafford Loans upon return to WPI for spring semester since no Stafford Loans were awarded for the fall semester.

Students should report their actual earnings from Co-op on the upcoming academic year’s FAFSA. However, during the next full academic year enrollment, financial aid directors will exercise professional judgment to remove the student’s one-time excessive income earned from Co-op and replace it with an average of the student’s previous standard calendar years’ earnings to determine the adjusted Expected Family Contribution.

**Graduate Students**

During the time of Co-op participation, the student is ineligible for any federal, state, or institutional financial aid as no WPI tuition is charged during Co-op. Standard financial aid application requirements and deadlines apply for graduate students participating in Co-ops upon their return to WPI. No special handling in terms of income reporting for financial aid purposes is required as graduate students are ineligible for any need-based aid from the Office of Financial Aid or from Federal Student Aid.

If a graduate student does happen to enroll in coursework at WPI during Co-op and is seeking loan funding, the student’s Department must certify that enrollment for the semester is at least half-time. Then, the maximum amount of Federal Direct Loans eligibility a graduate student may borrow while enrolled at least half-time and participating in Co-op would be the cost of tuition and fees being charged by WPI for the loan period.

Fire Protection Engineering is a master’s program that requires internship or Co-op participation.

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# Academic Planning Worksheet for Prospective Traditional Co-op Students

This form must be entirely filled out and verified by your faculty advisor in order to be considered complete.

Name: __________________________________________________________________________________________

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I, ______________________________________ (faculty advisor’s name) have reviewed and agree to the above academic plan for ______________________________________ (student’s name).

Faculty Advisor Signature: ______________________________
Traditional Co-op Registration Form

Please complete the following form and return to the Career Development Center with your Academic Planning-Worksheet for Prospective Traditional Co-op students, job description, and job offer letter.

**Student Information:**
Name: ____________________________  Student ID#  __________________________
Current Address ___________________________________  School Address (circle one):  Yes  No
City ______________________  State ________  Zip Code ________  Email Address  ________________________
Cell Phone ____________________________  WPI Box # ___________________  Grad Date  ________________________
Major ______________________________________  Degree (circle one):               BS               MS               PhD
Faculty Advisor  _______________________________________________________________________________
Citizenship:  U.S.           _______     P.R.           _______     F-1           _______     J-1           _______     Other  ___________

**Employer/Job Information:**
Organization  _______________________________________________________________________________
Address  _____________________________________________________________________________________
City ________________________________________  State ____________________ Zip  ____________________
Website Address ___________________________  Supervisor’s Email Address  ____________________________
Supervisor’s Name __________________________________________  Phone  ____________________________
Co-op Start Date ________________  Co-op End Date ________________  Wage $ _________________  per hour
Co-op Terms Away:  ___________ A-Term  ___________ B-Term  ___________ C-Term  ___________ D-Term

**Faculty Advisor:**
As this student’s Faculty Advisor, I confirm that I have reviewed the job description and academic plan and agree that the duties described in the job are related to the student’s major area of study.

_____________________________________________     ______________________________________________
Faculty Advisor’s Signature                                                                                  Date

**Student:**
I have read the Terms of Understanding and agree to comply with them and fulfill the obligation of my Summer Co-Op assignment. I authorize the CDC and employer to exchange information about me and will notify the CDC of any changes or problems that occur. I agree that the duties of the job are related to my major area of study, and that my participation in Summer Co-op will not interfere with any project work.

_____________________________________________     ______________________________________________
Student’s Signature                                                                                         Date

**Employer:**
As this student’s supervisor, I confirm that this student is employed with my organization. (an e-mail from the the students supervisor to cdc@wpi.edu can substitute a signature.)

_____________________________________________     ______________________________________________
Employer’s Signature                                                                                      Date

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (for CDC Use Only): CDC Approval**

_____________________________________________     ______________________________     _____________________________
CDC Staff Member                                                Signature                                                             Date
Student Waiver Form for Traditional Co-op
(for Exceptions to Terms of Understanding)

Please complete, and submit, this form only if you need to apply for exceptions to the Terms of Understanding.

Instructions:
1. Complete items #1 and #2 below
2. Discuss the reason for the Waiver with your Faculty Advisor and obtain the recommendation and any documentation deemed supportive by the Faculty Advisor for #3.
3. Submit completed Waiver with packet to the Career Development Center
4. Waiver will be reviewed for extenuating circumstances and documentation supporting an exception. The CDC will contact the student to inform him or her on the decision on the Waiver.

Student Name: ________________________________________________________________________________
Cell Phone: _____________________________________  Email: ________________________________________

1. Reason for Waiver:
   _____ Late registration (registering late for Co-op period)
   _____ Waive Academic Suspension (permits student to conduct course or project work while on Co-op)
   _____ Other: ________________________________________________________________________________

2. Please provide a detailed reason for requesting a Waiver. Make sure to indicate the number of credits you wish to take:
   I request that _________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________     ______________________________________________
Student’s Signature                                                                                         Date

3. Faculty Advisor:
   Recommended Action: Approved ____________  Denied ____________  Date ________
   Comments: ___________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
Faculty Advisor Signature _______________________________________________________________________

4. Project Advisor (IQP, MQP, etc.)
   Recommended Action: Approved ____________  Denied ____________  Date ________
   Comments: ___________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
Project Advisor Signature________________________________________________________________________

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (for CDC Use Only)

Waiver Results: Approved ____________  Denied ____________  Waivered ____________  Other ____________
Comments: ___________________________________________________________________________________
Deadline to complete:

_____________________________________________     ______________________________________________
CDC Staff Member                                                      Title                                                        Date Reviewed