Cooperative Education: A Partnership that Works

Co-op at Northeastern

Cooperative education, also known as co-op, is an educational model that allows students to alternate periods of academic study with six-month periods of paid, full-time employment related to the student’s major or interests.

By integrating rigorous programs in the liberal arts and professional studies with challenging workplace experiences, Northeastern’s co-op program has grown into the largest and most successful in the world, involving more than 7,000 students and 2,200 co-op locations.

The Benefits

With nearly one hundred years of experience connecting students and employers, Northeastern has developed a system that allows you to bring talented and productive students into your workplace with ease and efficiency.

This partnership offers you:

- Exposure to developing talent and a pipeline to potential employees.
- A simple, cost-effective way to meet human resource needs. Students are paid a salary, but do not require expensive benefits, such as health insurance.
- Six-month co-op periods, so students spend time working, not just training.
- The chance to create a flexible work environment that frees current employees to take on special projects or "hard to get to" tasks while co-op students take on recurring work.
- The enthusiasm, fresh perspective, and energy of talented young people eager to learn.

How to Participate: It’s easy.

- Contact one of the co-op group leaders listed below
- Submit a job description for the co-op position(s) you want to fill.
- Review résumés of potential students referred by your co-op coordinator.
- Interview students and make your final selections.

Northeastern University was ranked number one for co-ops and internships by U.S. News & World Report.
What You Provide

Your organization makes the hiring decisions and provides the student with training to perform the job. As with any employee, you would meet with the student to set goals, track performance, and complete an evaluation at the end of the work period.

Co-op Length and Timing

The co-op cycle runs in two 6-month terms providing you with year-round coverage. The terms take place from January through June and from July through December. Students work full-time for your organization during their co-op placement.

Student Salaries: It’s cost-effective

Students are paid a salary commensurate with their skill level, the demands of the position, and the local economy, but there are no benefit requirements such as health care. Since co-op salaries vary greatly by profession, please contact your co-op coordinator for sample salary ranges. Students are hired as employees, not as independent contractors, freelancers, or consultants.

Co-op Faculty and Staff: It’s a partnership

Co-op faculty coordinators oversee specific majors, and as an employer, you are assigned a designated co-op faculty member. The coordinators support you and ensure that the co-op experience benefits both your organization and the student. Your coordinator provides a wide range of expertise helping define the responsibilities of a co-op job, referring appropriate students, answering questions, and solving problems.

How Students Benefit

Co-op brings classroom theory to life. Through real-world experience, students have the opportunity to apply what they have learned, test the waters in different workplace settings, and develop a network of professional contacts. Students return to the classroom with increased maturity, new capabilities, and practical knowledge to apply to their continued studies.

"The caliber of people that we have seen from Northeastern has been incredible. These students have a work ethic and energy that is infectious. We treat them like we would any regular full-time employee, and we expect them to perform as we would a regular employee. More often than not the co-op students exceed our expectations."

-Ken McLaughlin, operations manager, Manulife Financial