

Internship or Co-op:

Which program fits your company's needs?

“Internship” is a widely recognized term used for college recruiting that provide excellent professional training and experience for students still enrolled in their academic programs. Lesser known is the Cooperative Education (Co-op) program. Although very similar to Internship programs, there are a few differences that just might be what your company is looking for. The chart below will help you evaluate which program may be the best fit for your company’s recruiting needs.

	Internship	Co-op
Hours/ Pay	Full or part-time, paid or unpaid If unpaid – the internship must meet the Dept. of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act requirements	Full or part-time, <u>always</u> paid Students frequently start at higher salaries and higher levels of responsibility than interns, due to their technical skills
Duration	Usually a one-time work assignment (average of 10-12 week)	Typically <u>at least</u> two or three work terms/semesters (worked as either part-time and/or full-time depending on major and academic schedule)
Work Content	Can be single project based, work duties are typically consistent throughout the duration of experience	Each semester student is out training with employer the experience should be either increasing in complexity, building on previous duties, or a new rotation in a different facet of the field/industry
Major and Course Credit	Positions typically related to students major but can be an area of interest Optional: Course enrollment/credit available either through student’s major or through OICR	Positions must be directly related to students major* Mandatory: Course enrollment is required, credit optional, provided through OICR
Student Eligibility	Undergraduate students (rising Junior/Senior) are typically seeking internships, although younger students may qualify as well	Undergraduate students who are officially accepted into their academic major (Junior/Seniors), minimum GPA of 2.5 Graduate level students are also eligible
Supervision and Training Site	Supervised by someone with expertise in the area the student is working in Training site varies - including virtually, under the right conditions	Supervised by a professional with expertise in the students’ academic/career field. Must have a physical location for student to report to

*** Cooperative Education (Co-op) has two types of programs:**

Pipeline Program: Training that focuses on a specific skill set - exact major match

Bridge Program: Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the position, the student is learning skills on the job that their major does not address. Students major is still relevant, but they work towards developing a “bridge” to other skill sets. (e.g., linking healthcare and IT)

Office of Internships & Career Readiness

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