

# COOPERATIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Cooperative and Experiential Education (<https://www.kettering.edu/undergraduate-admissions/co-op>) is the key experiential learning component of Kettering University's academic program. It is best exemplified as a three-way partnership agreement between a student, an employer, and the university. The purpose of the program is three-fold:

1. To provide students with progressively more responsible and productive experiences related to, and consistent with their academic program and professional goals.
2. To provide educational experiences which orientate and integrate students into productive and professional roles within their respective work environments or to prepare them for the next level of their educational pursuits.
3. To develop positive work-related habits, characteristics, and transferable skills which promote professionalism, leadership, ethical behavior, diversity and global awareness.

## Requirements

Cooperative and Experiential Education at Kettering University is based on an alternating full-time schedule. Students alternate 11 week academic terms with 12 week terms of progressively challenging work with an approved employer. Students will also participate in professional development modules designed to integrate academic and work experiences at key points in their progression.

Students who complete their academic requirement in nine (9) full-time terms or more must complete at least five (5) satisfactory work terms. Three (3) of these five (5) must occur after achieving Junior 1 status.

Students who complete their academic requirements in eight (8) full-time terms (minimum of 16 earned credit hours per term) must complete at least four (4) satisfactory work terms. Three (3) of these four (4) must occur after achieving Junior 1 status.

Students transferring to Kettering University with 24 or more earned hours (sophomore status) must complete at least four (4) satisfactory work terms. Three (3) after achieving junior status. The work experience terms must be earned while a Kettering University student.

Students transferring to Kettering University with 56 or more earned hours (junior status), without a baccalaureate degree, must complete at least three (3) satisfactory work terms. The work experience terms must be earned while a Kettering University student.

Students transferring to Kettering University with a baccalaureate degree must complete at least three (3) satisfactory work terms. The work experience terms must be earned while a Kettering University student.

## Academics

Students placed with a co-op employer are expected to be in good academic standing. Many employers have specific grade requirements and it is the student's responsibility to know what those requirements are, as well as any resulting consequences of not meeting them. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 may be in jeopardy of being released from their co-op assignment, from those employers that have a minimum GPA requirement. It is the student's responsibility to submit their grades to their employer, if required. Students with poor academic

performance may be required to complete consecutive academic terms successfully before being allowed to search for employment. Students should consult with their Cooperative Education Manager with questions about this process. Locating positions for students with unsatisfactory academic performance can be challenging. Students who are on academic probation and/or have been released for cause by their employer may forfeit their right to university assistance in finding new co-op employment, until they satisfy the University set requirements.

## The Alternation Sequence

Each student assumes responsibility for maintaining satisfactory progress toward their degree. This includes following an alternating sequence between school and work while they are enrolled (two school terms and two work terms per academic year). This alternation schedule is determined based on the student's section status (A or B section) noted below.

Term	A-section	B-section
Summer: July - September	School	Work
Fall: October - December	Work	School
Winter: January - March	School	Work
Spring: April - June	Work	School

Any changes to this school/work sequence must be approved in advance through the petition process. Refer to the Academic Policies and Regulations (<http://catalog.kettering.edu/undergrad/academic-policies-regulations>) section of this catalog (Petition to Alter Academic/Work Sequence) more for information.

## Continuous Growth

The cooperative education partnership is designed to achieve the educational and career goals of our students in conjunction with meeting the future human resource needs of the co-op employers. Because co-op is an academic program, Kettering students are encouraged to remain with the same employer throughout the entire program. Experience has shown that, in most cases, it is more advantageous for the student to progress within one organization than to change from one to another. Each time a student begins with a new organization, they start over in the learning process and are often given less responsibility until their learning curve increases. Staying with the same organization throughout the entire program has proven to increase opportunities and the responsibility level afforded to the student.

There are appropriate reasons for some students to request a new co-op employer or for an employer to terminate a student. This process is referred to as Reassignment. Students seeking reassignment must meet with their Cooperative Education Manager (<https://www.kettering.edu/undergraduate-admissions/co-op/staff>) to help determine if the process is necessary. Kettering will approve reassignment after it has been determined that it would be in the best interest of the student and the employer (see below: Changing Co-op Employers). It should be recognized that changes in assignment are permitted, but are not granted solely on the basis of student financial gain, personal commitments or assumed responsibilities. The intent of the cooperative relationship is to meet the goals of both the student and the employer, but not at the expense of the other. A healthy respect for both is needed to maintain a successful program.

## Other Experiential Learning Opportunities

Kettering University offers an array of experiential learning opportunities that can be interchanged or used to greatly enhance the co-op experiences of our students. The best examples of these experiences include:

- On-campus co-op opportunities
- Internships
- Research opportunities
- Entrepreneurship opportunities

Students who are interested in integrating some of these options should work closely with their Cooperative Education Manager; in conjunction with their degree departments.

## Selection by a Co-op Employer

Resumes of eligible students are forwarded to co-op employers by the Cooperative Education Managers (<https://www.kettering.edu/undergraduate-admissions/co-op/staff>), or a variety of other means such as Co-op Employment Fairs, personal referrals, or through self selection via our Kettering Connect (<http://connect.kettering.edu>) system, where employers may post their positions online for students to review. Careful attention is given to student objectives, interests, needs and preferences. While most students obtain co-op employment through these efforts, students are equally encouraged to assist in the process by initiating contact with potential co-op employers through their own personal networks. The Kettering Cooperative Education Managers will work with students who wish to pursue new co-op employers. All employers must be approved and entered into our database in order for students to receive credit for their work terms.

Co-op employers choose to interview an applicant based on the student's academic background, employment history, skills, extracurricular activities and honors. Factors that may influence selection by a co-op employer include communication skills, leadership potential, career interests, desire to work, and the capacity to acquire the necessary academic and practical experiences that lead to greater responsibility.

## Section Assignments

A-Section students begin school in July; B-Section students begin school in October. Kettering University assigns students into a section based upon space and class-load balance. The University will attempt to meet student requests, but has the right to determine section assignments. Co-op employers may also request section assignments for students based upon their co-op hiring needs.

## Registration

All students are automatically registered in their cooperative work experience term according to the alternation sequence. Students are allowed to register for a maximum of eight credits of coursework while registered for a co-op or thesis term.

## Grading System

To receive a satisfactory grade for a co-op work term, each student must have on file both the Supervisor and Student Evaluation of the co-op experience and evidence of completion of a Work-Term Reflection. The supervisor's evaluation of the student's co-op experience should be reviewed with the student and then signed by the employer. During a co-op work term, students generally work full-time (40 hours) a week, and

in some cases, required to work overtime or various shifts depending on the employer's needs. A student hired later than the start of the term, or released prior to the end of the term (except under extreme conditions) must work at least six weeks (240 hours) of the twelve week term and receive a "satisfactory" grade to have their work experience count toward graduation requirements.

## Professional Development Modules

Cooperative and experiential learning is fully integrated in our academic and educational program and supports University learning outcomes. Over the course of their academic career, students will participate in professional development modules designed to allow them to reflect upon, plan for, and be intentional in their personal work experiences.

## Work Experience Evaluations

The student's performance during a cooperative work experience term is evaluated by the student's supervisor, who is assigned for that term by the co-op employer. This evaluation is required by Kettering and is kept on file for five years after graduation or separation from the University. The terms are evaluated on a "satisfactory/unsatisfactory" grading format. No academic credit hours or quality points are earned through the work experience requirements of the program.

S = Satisfactory evaluation received (credit awarded) U = Unsatisfactory evaluation received (no credit awarded) NR = One or both evaluations were not received or were not signed by you or your employer.

P or PD = Thesis Completed EX = Thesis Extension

## Students Released From a Co-op Employer

Students released from an employer one or more times based upon performance will be required to meet with the Cooperative Education Director, Academic Services and/or Dean of Students. Students could be required to work on campus as they acquire personal and professional development skills before returning to the workplace. If a student is released due to grades, they may be required to take back-to-back school terms with a reduced number of credits to improve their academic standing.

## Changing Co-op Employers

It is mandatory that students work at least two work terms with an employer and have given their best to be a responsible employee before they petition for reassignment. Students desiring a change in co-op employer must meet with their Kettering University Cooperative Education Manager (<https://www.kettering.edu/undergraduate-admissions/co-op/staff>) to discuss the reason(s) for the request. Requests for reassignment must be approved by the Cooperative Education Manager or Review Team. If it is determined that reassignment is the best option, prior notification to their current employer will be necessary before a new job search process is initiated. Students should not initiate a discussion with a prospective new employer without the knowledge and approval from the Cooperative and Experiential Education Office.

It should be emphasized that any deviation from this policy, or unilateral student action, to secure a new co-op employer without prior approval may result in that student jeopardizing receiving work experience credits for graduation and/or being placed on probation. It is imperative that we

maintain good relationships with our employer partners, in addition to assisting students in successfully negotiating change.

The Cooperative and Experiential Education Office will assist students who are granted permission to seek new co-op employment. All students available for reassignment will be given access to the current co-op database, enabling their resume to be sent to co-op employers currently seeking students with similar profiles (academic major, skills, etc.).

## The Reassignment Process

The Reassignment requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In order to submit requests, students must follow these steps:

- Make an appointment with the Cooperative Education Manager (<https://www.kettering.edu/undergraduate-admissions/co-op/staff>) before pursuing reassignment, preferably at the beginning of a term
- The Cooperative Education Manager will work with the student to determine if reassignment is the right step
- If pursuing reassignment is agreed upon, the student will fill out all necessary forms, which include:
  - Reassignment Employment Request/Authorization Form
  - Reflection Form (for terminations)
  - Provide a written description explaining reason(s) for the reassignment request
  - Employer Notification - Phone call to employer followed by a formal resignation email including the Cooperative Education Manager
  - Ensure copies of the following are accurate and up-to-date:
    - All evaluations, both student and employer, are complete
    - Updated resume uploaded to Kettering Connect is required

The Cooperative Education Manager and/or Cooperative Education Director will preview all submitted materials and make a decision. The Cooperative and Experiential Education Office is prepared to help guide and assist all students as they continue to grow with their organizations and move toward graduation. The student is required to contact their Cooperative Education Manager for advice and counsel before making any change to their cooperative education program. The timing of reassignment should take place at the end of the work term or within three (3) weeks of the academic term. This ensures both the student and employer adequate time to prepare.

## Transfer of Work Experience

Students who have participated in other comparable college-level cooperative work experience programs or who believe they have significant work experiences related to their Kettering degree program may be eligible to transfer this work experience toward their Kettering degree requirements. Students wishing to pursue such action should contact the Cooperative and Experiential Education Office to determine the documentation necessary to transfer a maximum of two work experiences. These work experiences will apply toward the student's freshman and sophomore level experiences only.

## Students without a Co-op Employer

Students who are not employed by the start of their work term are allowed to complete a back-to-back academic term. This choice will require students to fill out the Altering the Academic/Work Sequence form and gain the necessary signatures from Co-op, Academic Success and Registrar's office. Students seeking employment while attending

classes must maintain a current resume, attend seminars on employment search skills, and apply for positions. They must be easily reached and available for interviews with prospective employers, and be proactive in the co-op search process with the assistance of the Cooperative Education Managers.

Locating positions for students with unsatisfactory academic performance can be challenging. Students who continue to remain on academic probation and/or have been released for cause by their employer may forfeit their right to university assistance in finding new co-op employment. These students should immediately make an appointment with their Cooperative Education Manager or Director.

## Student Concerns and Complaints

Refer to the Academic Policies and Regulations (<http://catalog.kettering.edu/undergrad/academic-policies-regulations>) section of this catalog, under Student Complaint Procedures.