

# COOPERATIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Cooperative and Experiential Education 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 develop a strong, positive connection between a student's academic program and their Co-op work experience.
2. To provide educational experiences which orient and integrate the student into productive and professional roles with their Co-op employer.
3. To create positive work-related habits, characteristics, and transferable skills which promote professionalism, 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. The minimum requirement for a work term is six weeks (240 hours) worked to receive credit for the term\*.

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

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

Students transferring to Kettering University with 24 - 55 earned hours (sophomore status) must complete at least four satisfactory work terms. Three 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 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 satisfactory work terms. The work experience terms must be earned while a Kettering University student.

## Co-op Managers

Co-op managers serve as a liaison between the employer partner, the student, and the university. They help address any concerns and ensure a successful co-op experience for all parties. Co-op managers are highly qualified professionals, a valuable resource, coaching students throughout the entire experiential learning program. Students will learn career-readiness skills and enhance their professionalism by following the advice of co-op managers.

The co-op team also develops and maintains employer relationships and promotes co-op positions to students seeking employment. The co-op office maintains the employment records of all students in the Connect system. It is therefore essential for students to update their co-op manager on any changes to their employment status as they work toward meeting co-op requirements.

## 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 and 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 must complete the Altering the Academic/Work Sequence process initiated with the Academic Success Center and 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 Alternating Sequence

Each student assumes responsibility for maintaining satisfactory progress toward their degree. This includes following an alternating sequence between school and work while 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 section of this catalog (Petition to Alter Academic/Work Sequence) for more information. Incoming freshman, B-section, are not required to secure a co-op in July, prior to attending school in October, Fall term.

## Continuous Growth

The cooperative education partnership is designed to achieve our students' educational and career goals in conjunction with meeting the future talent needs of the co-op employers. Co-op is an academic program and 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 company, they start over in the learning process and are often given less responsibility until their learning curve

increases. Partnering with the same employer throughout the entire program has proven to increase opportunities and the level of challenge afforded to the student.

The program provides numerous opportunities for students to develop technical, essential, and career-readiness skills. Participation in professional development seminars, one on one coaching meetings with co-op managers, as well as training and mentoring with co-op employers will enhance a student's confidence and marketability. The university encourages students to seek out and take advantage of these additional - often informal - learning resources.

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 to help determine if the process is necessary. Kettering will approve reassignment after it has been determined that it would be in the student's best interest and the employer (see below: Changing Co-op Employers). Changes in a co-op assignment are permitted but are not granted solely on the basis of student financial gain, personal commitments, or assumed responsibilities. The cooperative relationship intends to meet both the student and the employer's goals, but not at the expense of the other. A healthy respect for both is needed to maintain a successful program.

In the spirit of continuous growth and recognition of the comprehensive student experience, the co-op office liaises with other student-centered offices to best serve the needs of our students. Shared student support and solutions with the Academic Service Center, Office of the Registrar, Student Affairs, Office of International Programs, Wellness Center, and other departments enhance success. The co-op team encourages students to be proactive in engaging with student support teams.

## Other Experiential Learning Opportunities

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

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

Students 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 or various other means such as Co-op Employment Fairs, personal referrals, or self-selection via our Kettering Connect 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 the 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 alternating sequence. Students are allowed to register for a maximum of eight credits of coursework at Kettering University while registered for a co-op or thesis term.

Students may not adjust their alternating academic and work term sequence without approval. This ensures that all relevant university offices are aware of the changes in the students' plans. As such, arrangements made between students and employers without university approval will result in no co-op credit granted for the term. It is the student's responsibility to submit the completed, signed form to the Office of the Registrar so those appropriate registration adjustments are made. Please note that students may not request to complete more than 2 consecutive co-op terms.

## 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 completing 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, are 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 before 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 into our academic and educational programs and supports University learning outcomes.

Over the course of their academic career, students will participate in professional development modules designed to reflect upon, plan for, and be intentional in their personal work experiences.

## Work Experience Evaluations

During a cooperative work experience term, the student's performance 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 and Academic Standing impacted)

NR = One or both evaluations were not received or were not signed by the student or the employer.

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 strongly encouraged that students work at least two (2) work terms with an employer before they petition for reassignment. Students desiring a change in co-op employer must meet with their Kettering University Cooperative Education Manager 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 Cooperative and Experiential Education Office's knowledge and approval.

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.).

Reassignment Process

Reassignment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. To submit requests; students must follow these steps:

- Make an appointment with the Cooperative Education Manager before pursuing reassignment, preferably at the beginning of a term (or by 3rd week).
- The Cooperative Education Manager will work with the student to determine if reassignment is the right step.
- Documented reasons for the reassignment will be noted by the co-op manager in the student's file for future reference.
- If pursuing reassignment is agreed upon, the student will be required to complete the following:

- Employer Notification - A phone call to employer followed by a formal resignation email including the Cooperative Education Manager
- Reflection Form (for terminations)
- Written approval for passed health screenings (for terminations only)
- 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 reassignment timing should occur 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 can 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 their Cooperative Education Manager, Academic Success Center, 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 Cooperative Education Managers' assistance.

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.

## Cooperative Education Program Student Agreement

Students acknowledge their understanding of the co-op program and policies via the Cooperative Education Program Student Agreement in Kettering Connect. Active student involvement and participation are paramount to a student's co-op success.

## **Behavioral Standards and the Kettering University Code of Student Conduct**

The Kettering University Code of Student Conduct represents a body of behavioral standards for all students. These standards are strictly and vigorously enforced by the University to ensure members of this educational community a productive, safe, and equitable environment for growth and development. The University expects its students to conduct themselves as mature individuals while enrolled at Kettering wherever they are located, including on campus, at home, and in their work section communities.

Students are expected to comply with all University regulations governing student conduct and the use of University property and facilities.

Kettering University has the right to take action and investigate any offense that involves our students, either as victims reporting or students accused of violating the Code of Student Conduct or any federal, state, and/or local laws/ordinances. The Code of Student Conduct extends to students at their places of co-op employment. We expect students to honor their co-op employer's standards for workplace demeanor and may impose our Judicial Affairs procedures upon any student charged by an employer with workplace misconduct.

## **Student Concerns and Complaints**

Refer to the Academic Policies and Regulations section of this catalog, under Student Complaint Procedures.