STUDENT INTERNSHIP & CO-OP GUIDE
MISSION STATEMENT
The Georgia Southern University Cooperative Education (co-op) and Internship Program provides graduate and undergraduate students academically enhancing employment opportunities in industry, business, and government. The Georgia Southern Internship and Co-Op Program also offers relevant, quality work experiences for all qualified students who desire to enrich their academic program of study with planned, progressive and monitored work experiences. These employment opportunities build upon strong instructional programs to ensure that students receive an outstanding education that prepares them intellectually, technically, culturally, ethically, and socially for the demands and opportunities of an increasingly changing world.
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTERNSHIPS AND CO-OPS?

**Internship**
- One semester opportunity
- Paid or non-paid

**Co-op**
- Ongoing work experience
- Builds progressively upon your responsibilities
- Always paid

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?
- Short-term, real-work experience over a semester
- Can be paid or unpaid
- Can occur during the academic year, the summer, or after graduation
- Can be full-time or part-time
- Helps students understand the “real world” application of their classes

TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS

**Academic Credit**
- Counts towards your degree requirement
- Must be approved by Faculty/Academic Advisor
- Register through WINGS for Internship Course in your degree program
- Pay tuition for this course

**Non-Academic Credit**
- Complete for relevant experience, not degree requirements
- Must be approved by the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning who will register you for COOP credit
- Do not have to pay tuition for this course
- Allows you to maintain full-time student status while completing the internship

**Internship Requirements**
Academic internships are controlled by your academic department, so requirements may vary upon your degree program.
To be enrolled in non-academic credit, students must:
- Schedule an appointment with the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning in Career Services.
- Have an offer letter from the company or organization.
- Have a 2.5 GPA, have completed 30 credits hours, and have attended Georgia Southern for at least one semester.
WHAT IS A CO-OP?
Co-op stands for Cooperative Learning
• It is a program that allows you to alternate semesters of academic study with semesters of full-time, paid employment in positions related to your academic or career interests.
• Common for majors in engineering, technology, business, information technology, information systems, computer science, and chemistry.

EXPLANATION OF ROTATIONS
Georgia Southern University supports the alternating plan and parallel plan for cooperative education:
• The alternating plan allows co-op students to work full-time one semester and return to school the next semester. One semester of work and one semester of school is considered one rotation. The University requires students to commit to their co-op position for at least two rotations.
• The University also offers the parallel co-op plan. This plan requires a student to work four or more work/school combination periods scheduled over two academic years. It is required that the student work at least 16 hours per week but not more than 30 hours per week while maintaining a part-time student status.

Required Co-op Work Terms & Typical Work/School Experiences
Incoming first-term freshmen are required to complete at least one term of school before the Office of Career Services staff can work with them to assist in the co-op job search process. All students must complete two academic terms of college before being authorized to report to work as a Georgia Southern University co-op Student.

Transfer students may apply for a co-op job offer during their first academic term at Georgia Southern. Transfer students are eligible to report to work after completing one academic term at Georgia Southern University.

Work/School Rotation & Calendar
Sample Full-Time Co-op Alternation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Summer Semester</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>School</td>
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Sample Part-Time Co-op Alternation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
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<th>Summer Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
<td>School/Work</td>
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Transfer students with up to two years of transfer credits are usually eligible to participate in the co-op program. Such schedules depend on the term in which a student enrolls at Georgia Southern University and the number of terms necessary to complete degree requirements. Under the semester system calendar, each co-op student normally works, at a minimum, one summer, one spring, and/or one fall term. The schedules involve students working their first term beginning summer, fall, or spring. Some students have non-traditional co-op work schedules due to availability of classes offered in their departments.

Starting to work as a co-op student during the summer term is the schedule most popular with students; however, it is also the most competitive sequence on which to obtain a co-op job offer. For this sequence, there are generally a higher percentage of the student population competing for approximately 10-15% of the jobs.

Approximately 85-90% of the total co-op job openings call for a first work term in the fall or spring. In general, fewer students compete for these openings and find the quality of the co-op work assignments is higher. Students who are flexible about when they can begin work maximize their chances of securing co-op positions.

INTERNETNISH & CO-OP PROGRAM

Advantages to Participants

Some advantages are tangible while others, ultimately more important, have value not easily measured in terms of dollars. A few of the advantages internship and co-op students enjoy are as follows:

- Students will become better prepared technically than their classmates. Not only do they acquire valuable knowledge but they see this knowledge applied in business and industrial situations on the job. Students see their classwork come alive, which is stimulating, and encourages students to make extra efforts in their studies. Evidence shows students that participate in experiential education achieve a higher GPA on average than that of the overall student body.

- Students will learn valuable lessons in human relations through associations in a professional environment. The maturity and discipline gained in, this manner is usually reflected in their personal relations with others. After graduation, these associations will help ease a student’s transition from student to professional.

- Students will observe professionals working in their chosen field. This unique opportunity will help students decide early in their academic education whether they have chosen the right vocation. Many co-op students feel this is the greatest benefit they receive from the Co-op Program.

- Savings from wages can be used to significantly contribute to education expenses. There is no substitute for the learning gained from the lessons of self discipline and management of personal finances. Savings can be substantial; however, most co-ops require additional financial assistance in meeting educational expenses. Individual thrift will largely determine the amount of your savings which can be utilized to defray college expenses.
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Student Eligibility Requirements
The Georgia Southern University Experiential Education Program is open to all full-time undergraduate and graduate students meeting the following requirements:
• Be in good academic standing
• Have completed a minimum of 30 credit hours prior to start date
• Have attended Georgia Southern for at least one semester (for transfer students)
• Be available to participate in at least two alternating semesters (40 hrs/week) OR four parallel semesters (16 – 30 hrs/week) of a work rotation.
Note: If a student’s GPA falls below the requirement, the co-op must be approved by their Faculty/Academic Advisor.

Physical Requirements
Employers are making every effort to accommodate the physically challenged. However, due to the wide variety of tasks to which a student may be assigned, the exact nature of any challenge should be brought to the attention of the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning and the prospective employer. Most internship and co-op job offers are contingent upon applicants passing a pre-employment physical which often includes a drug test.

Course Credit
Academic credit eligibility may vary based on the academic department. Co-op courses are available to students for all three academic terms (fall, spring, and summer semesters). During the school terms students will be registered for classes. During work terms, students will be registered for a course titled COOP. Students enrolled in an alternating plan will register for the 12 credit hour course (full-time) and students enrolled in a parallel plan will register for the 9 credit hour course (part-time).

CONTACT WITH GEORGIA SOUTHERN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
After securing a position, continuous student communication with the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning at Georgia Southern is necessary to ensure an effective, professional work experience purposefully intermingled with expanding academic progress. Students are expected to maintain contact with the Office of Career Services each and every school and work term until they have completed all required work terms.

Proper coordination can be achieved when students communicate to the University the extent of the on-the-job learning environment. This will enable the Career Services staff to compliment and encourage employers for quality work assignments while pointing out weak or marginal assignments which need strengthening. Constructive criticism often supplies the necessary information to the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning to improve work situations.
CONTACTING OTHER CAMPUS DEPARTMENTS FACULTY/ACADEMIC ADVISOR

It is vitally important that the student meet with his/her appointed Faculty/Academic Advisor to develop a four year academic plan and develop a complete understanding of when to pursue an internship or co-op opportunity.

**Housing**

**On-Campus**

Per Georgia Southern University housing contract upon written notification from the student that he/she will vacate his/her housing space early due to completion of graduation requirements, to participate in a University cooperative education, study abroad, transfer to another institution, or practice teaching program and that the student will not return before the end of the contract period, this contract shall terminate upon the completion of the last semester of residence and the University’s verification of the matters asserted in the student’s notification.

1. Notification must be received by the Housing Office by November 1 of the Fall Semester immediately proceeding the canceled term.
2. Students who provide notification from November 2 – December 1 will be assessed a $100 contract cancellation fee.
3. Students who provide notification on December 2 up to the first day of the Spring Semester will be assessed a $200 contract cancellation fee.

**Off-Campus**

It is the student’s responsibility to contact his/her leasing agent(s) and inquire about subleasing and whether it is allowed. If subleasing is allowed, the student will then be held accountable for finding a sub-leaser.

**Financial Aid**

Students need to meet with their Financial Aid Counselor, located in the Rosenwald Building, to discuss a Financial Aid package.

**Financial Aid for the summer is not automatically granted; students have to apply.**

**Parking & Transportation**

Contact Parking and Transportation to discuss parking permits if necessary.

**Meal Plan**

Contact Eagle Dining Services to discuss cancellation of meal plans if necessary.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Student Obligations**

**To the Experiential Learning Program**

1. Maintain a complete and up-to-date file, including a résumé and a current transcript with the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning. Have updated résumé on Eagle Career Net each semester.
2. Have at least 30 semester hours or equivalent of college credit and an overall GPA of at least 2.5 for undergraduate students and a 3.0 for graduate students at the time of application. Exceptions may be made upon written recommendation of the student’s advisor, but under no circumstances will a student participate without a minimum 2.0 overall GPA.
3. Inform the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning of acceptance of an internship/co-op offer. Inform the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning of contact information including home and work phone numbers, address, company name, supervisor name, and supervisor’s phone number and email address.
4. Maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.5 during academic semesters while participating in an internship/co-op.
5. Meet specific requirements of the Georgia Southern academic department for acceptance and retention in the internship/co-op program. (If receiving partial or full academic credit for the internship/co-op experience)

6. Maintain regular contact with Academic Advisor and Assistant Director of Experiential Learning throughout work and academic semesters. Notify them of any conditions or problems which might threaten the student’s continuance in the program.

**To the Employer**

1. Accept employer’s conditions for participation in the program, which may include a minimum number of required work semesters.
2. Conform to company policies and procedures and follow safety rules explicitly.
3. Maintain a satisfactory work record as attested by the performance evaluation submitted by the employer at the midterm and at the end of each work semester. Give your employer a full day’s work for each day paid and recognize the fact that this will be possible only if you apply yourself promptly, courteously, and conscientiously to each work assignment. It is as much your responsibility as it is your supervisor’s to see that you stay productive at work.
4. Remain with your original employer unless a change in your curriculum dictates a change in employer, or unless you are terminated by your employer.
5. Remain on the same alternation schedule unless an academic scheduling conflict arises or a scheduling conflict arises or a schedule change is requested by your employer.
6. Meet specific requirements of the employer for acceptance and retention in the internship/co-op program.
7. Once employed, you should willingly transfer to various company locations if requested to do so by your employer.

*Violation of any of the preceding obligations can result in you being dropped from the program.*

**Georgia Southern Office of Career Services Obligations**

1. Provide advising, guidance, and assistance with academic support to participating students.
2. Provide a method to register working internship/co-op students for their courses.
3. Inform students of internship/co-op opportunities and ensure that their résumés are sent to prospective employers.
4. Provide employers with the most recent student information and inform the employers of any changes in the information.
5. Develop new experiential education employer sites.
6. Assist students and employers with any questions and concerns they may have.

**Employer Obligations**

1. Ensure that the student’s work is related to his/her major.
2. Provide a safe and healthy work environment.
3. Provide a planned work sequence for each student such that he/she is given progressively increasing work responsibilities. Tasks should relate to those that the student would perform if hired as a full-time permanent employee in that position.
4. Provide a written job description outlining work assignments for each rotation.
5. Develop learning objectives with the student.
6. Provide a reasonable salary, generally 60 percent of the earnings of a newly hired professional in that field. And, if appropriate, assist with housing arrangements for each semester the student works.
7. Inform the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning of openings promptly so they can be advertised and can receive résumés of suitable candidates.
WORKPLACE ETHICS
A command of ethics involves knowing what’s right and wrong and then doing what’s right. While most ethics concepts are easy to understand, other situations are harder to navigate. As an intern/co-op student, rely on your mentor and supervisor for guidance if you’re unsure of the best approach in a given situation. Begin with a web search to locate the code of ethics for your chosen profession. For example, engineering students can view the international code of ethics available at nspe.org/ethics. Sections include fundamental canons, rules of practice, and professional obligations.

ADJUSTING TO WORK
Adjusting to work involves not only learning about the tasks expected of you, but also getting a feel for the corporate environment, studying organizational charts, learning who has the information you need for completing projects, and knowing the proper person to speak with concerning pay or human resources issues.

If you have problems or concerns during your work term, speak with your supervisor, mentor, and/or Assistant Director of Experiential Learning. Don’t talk negatively about co-workers or work situations as a way to vent your frustrations. Tackle problems in a positive manner, get them resolved, and move on. Remember, there is no perfect job or situation. View the flaws in your job as opportunities for growth and improvement.

Don’t neglect the social aspects of your new work situation. Many employers offer the opportunity for activities such as softball, lunches, parties, picnics, etc. Take advantage of these opportunities to have fun and get to know your fellow employees. If the employer has no structured activities for internship/co-ops, offer to coordinate them yourself. Lunch-and-learn sessions allow internship/co-ops to socialize while hearing informative presentations from engineers, managers, or guest speakers. For large employers, tours of various departments are helpful.

If you are in a new city, read the local newspaper, pick up tourist information, and enjoy whatever the location has to offer. Students who have interned/co-oped in the North Georgia mountains have enjoyed mountain biking and river rafting. Internship/co-ops in Boston have gone to Fenway Park for Red Sox games. California-based internship/co-ops have gone surfing in the Pacific.

Take advantage of your after-work hours to experience new people and places. Enjoy a balanced lifestyle and have a positive outlook, which will allow you to thrive both at work and in your personal life.
QUESTION & ANSWER

1. If I am not pleased with my co-op/internship experience, may I change employers?
   The Office of Career Services expects all students to fulfill their internship/co-op agreement. If you are unhappy with your internship or co-op, contact the Office of Career Services immediately.

2. During work terms, will I still be considered a full-time student at Georgia Southern?
   Yes, Career Services will enroll you in “COOP” hours. These hours will maintain your full-time status while on a co-op or internship.

3. Is tuition charged for the co-op/internship course?
   No, the “COOP” hours offered by Career Services are free of charge.

4. How will a co-op/internship impact my scholarships?
   Your co-op or internship experience should not affect your scholarship, however students should always consult with the Office of Financial Aid.

5. What salary can I expect?
   Salary and wages differ based on the company. All co-ops are paid positions, yet internships can be paid or unpaid.

6. If I am working near Statesboro, can I continue to live in campus housing?
   Yes, if you have a housing contract while on your co-op, you can reside in that living space while on your internship and/or co-op.

7. If I work outside of Statesboro, will my employer locate housing for me?
   Many companies either offer housing or assist you with your housing needs, but it is not guaranteed. Like pay, housing assistance varies by employer.

8. How will my work experience be evaluated?
   Managers should offer continual feedback while on the job site. Midterm and Final evaluations will also be required in your co-op experience, which will provide each student with the opportunity to be evaluated. If you receive academic credit for your co-op or internship, additional evaluation requirements may exist. Contact Career Services if you have specific questions about evaluations.

9. May I take a course during my co-op/internship?
   Yes, students may enroll in a course while on a co-op or internship. However, a student should focus on his/her job duties as their primary responsibility while on an internship or co-op. Consult with your Career Development Specialist and Academic Advisor if you wish to take a course while on your internship or co-op.
**INTERNSHIP/CO-OP CHECKLIST**

It is essential that students complete their internship in a professional and timely manner, meeting all expectations. No student will start their internship hours without verification that an approved internship site is registered through the Office of Career Services at Georgia Southern University, and the Assistant Director of Experiential Learning has verified the student followed the appropriate steps to obtain an internship.

This checklist will become part of the student's file and serves as a written agreement between the Office of Career Services and the student that they are aware of the responsibilities related to this internship/co-op experience.

Please read and initial each item below. Upon completion of the checklist, sign and date the checklist and return to the Office of Career Services.

1. I have received and read the Student Internship & Co-Op Manual.
2. I have reviewed the key points of the manual with my advisor, and agree to refer to the manual during the internship.
3. I have signed and dated the Career Services Experiential Learning Application Agreement.
4. I acknowledge I have received, read, and signed the Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct Policy.
5. I acknowledge I have received, read, and signed the Liability Release, Waiver, Discharge, and Covenant Not to Sue Policy.
6. I understand that I must complete and submit performance evaluations of my work experience throughout my internship or co-op. Failure to do so may result in a grade of “Unsatisfactory”.
7. I understand that my site supervisor must complete and submit performance evaluations of my work experience throughout my internship or co-op. Failure to do so may result in a grade of “Unsatisfactory”.
8. I understand that it is my responsibility to report any problems encountered during the internship with my advisor so that corrective action can be taken in a timely manner.

Student Signature ____________________________________________ Date ____________

Career Services Signature ____________________________________________ Date ____________
CODE OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

As a Georgia Southern University co-op/intern, I am representing not just myself, but the University and my fellow students, both current and future. My conduct should make the employer want to host students from this college in the future. As a student co-op/intern I am expected to adhere to the employer’s company policies, practices, procedures, dress code, and/or standards of conduct. To avoid any misunderstanding, it is recommended that I obtain clarification regarding such matters from my employer when I begin my assignment.

My performance while on assignment as a co-op/intern will be evaluated by my employer. Upon completion, I will receive a pass/fail for the course. A passing grade will be required in order for the co-op/internship to be recognized by the University and to receive my certificate of completion. The following is expected of me as a co-op/intern representing this college:

• Adhere to the Georgia Southern University Student Code of Conduct: students.georgiasouthern.edu/judicial/Documents/SCC.pdf
• Report for the co-op/internship on-time, maintain the established work schedule and meet all co-op/internship obligations.
• Maintain strict confidentiality regarding information obtained on any clients, members, customers, patients, employees, and products or services associated with the internship site.
• Familiarize myself with and adhere to relevant organizational policies and procedures.
• Understand what constitutes a permissible work absence and who to notify if absent. Changes in work schedule, supervision, or problems at my site must be reported to my Assistant Director of Experiential Learning as early as possible. I may not withdraw from a co-op/internship, except in certain circumstances, and I may be penalized if it is a dishonorable dismissal.
• Use appropriate written and oral communication in all interactions with all supervisors, employees, clients, and University staff.
• Listen, ask questions, and do not conduct personal business during work hours.
• If I feel victimized by a work-related incident, (e.g. job misrepresentation, unethical activities, sexual harassment, discrimination, etc.) I should contact my campus Assistant Director of Experiential Learning immediately.
• Demonstrate honesty, cooperation, respect, integrity, courtesy and a willingness to learn when dealing with your supervisor, co-workers, customers, clients and University staff.
• Assert myself and my ideas in an appropriate and tactful manner. Be positive and supportive. Keep an open mind; avoid jumping to conclusions; try to make informed judgments.
• Accept constructive criticism and continuously strive to improve performance. Seek feedback from your supervisors, accept suggestions for corrective changes in behavior and attempt to improve performance.
• Seek to enhance your professional effectiveness by improving skills and acquiring new knowledge.

I understand and agree with the professional standards of the Career Services Co-op & Internship Program as listed above and I will make every effort to abide by it.

Student Name (Printed) ___________________________________________________________ Date __________________

Student Name (Signature) ___________________________________________________________ Eagle ID #_____________
LIABILITY RELEASE, WAIVER, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE

I, (Name of Student) __________________________________________ hereby acknowledge that I am an applicant for placement as an intern/cooperative education student with: (Company/Organization Name) ________________________________________________________________.

I acknowledge that I make this application on a voluntary basis, that I am _____ am not _____ (please initial one) obligated to accept or perform this co-op/internship as a part of my graduation requirements or degree or major requirements even though I will _____ will not _____ (please initial one) receive academic credit for its completion. I also acknowledge there may be risk to myself and I voluntarily assume that risk. This assumption is made freely and knowingly without any coercion from anyone.

I fully recognize that there are dangers and risks to which I may be exposed by participating in the co-op/internship during ______ (insert dates of co-op/internship). The following is a description and examples of specific, significant, non-obvious dangers and risks associated with this activity. I voluntarily assume full responsibility of any risks of loss, property damage, or personal injury. Risks include, but are not limited to: strains, sprains, cuts, bruises, broken bones, up to and including death. I know of no medical reason why I should not participate.

I therefore agree to assume and take on myself all of the risks and responsibilities in any way associated with this activity. In consideration of and return for the services, facilities, and other assistance provided to me by the Institution in this activity, I release the Institution (and its governing board, employees, and agents) from any and all liability, claims, and actions that may arise from injury or harm to me, from my death, or from damage to my property in connection with this activity. I understand that this Release covers liability, claims, and actions caused entirely or in part by any acts or failures to act of the Institution (or its governing board, employees, and agents) including but not limited to negligence, mistake, or failure to supervise by the Institution.

I recognize that this Release means I am giving up, among other things, rights to sue the Institution, its governing board, employees, and agents for injuries, damages, or losses I may incur. I also understand that this Release binds my heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, as well as myself.

I acknowledge that Georgia Southern University assumes no responsibility for housing, transportation, or other personal need that might arise as a result of the internship or cooperative education program. Further, I release and forever discharge Georgia Southern University, the Board of Regents, their members individually, or any employee of any kind from all claims, demands, and causes of action whatever, foreseen and unforeseen, arising from and by reason of any known or unknown bodily and personal injuries resulting from my participation in or in any connection with the internship/cooperative education programs.

I acknowledge that my co-op/internship experience is not covered under the insurance of Georgia Southern University. I have read this entire Release. I fully understand it and I agree to be legally bound by it.

Student Signature (parent or guardian must sign if under 18 years old) ___________________________ Date _______

Witness ___________________________________________ Date _______

Parent/Guardian Signature (if student is under 18) ___________________________ Date _______