Cooperative Education Program
EMPLOYER’S CO-OP GUIDE
http://www.engineering.pitt.edu/coop/

Thank you for your interest in partnering and supporting cooperative education, which is an academic program within the Swanson School of Engineering. Employers approved for participation in the Cooperative Education Program at the University of Pittsburgh have the following responsibilities:

General

1. The co-op program is a three-way partnership involving the school, employer, and student. We ask that you apprise us as soon as possible of any issues regarding work schedules, job performance, layoffs, and permanent job offers upon graduation.

   Assuming that the student’s work performance is satisfactory and economic conditions are viable, the employer can consider having a student complete 2 six-month rotations. It is advisable to let the Co-op office know of your plans regarding Pitt co-ops so we can support the students’ academic schedules accordingly.

   Discussions with the student can happen at the end of the first six-month rotation regarding returning for another, as well as any recruiting procedures needed (re-applying, etc.) Please be aware that a student may decide to work with another employer for their second six-month rotation. It is important to communicate your intentions with the student regarding opportunities.

2. Job assignments must be related to the student’s major field of study. Diversification is encouraged to afford the student a range of training and experience. The technical level should increase as the student demonstrates competency and progresses through the program.

3. Students cannot switch from the cooperative education program to summer, permanent, or part-time employment. There is a philosophy to cooperative education that the rotation between school and work benefits both the student and employer due to the progression in academics coupled with exposure to the work environment.

   Requesting that the student work part-time while on a full-time academic semester or begin working full-time prior to graduation can put the student in academic jeopardy and is not in the spirit of the program. We realize there may be some exceptions to this guideline and ask that you work with the co-op office with any requests outside of the original co-op schedule.

   It is fundamental to the University of Pittsburgh Cooperative Engineering Education Program that the students alternate the 6-month work periods with academic sessions. Deviation from their approved co-op rotation cycle should be made only with agreement from the University of Pittsburgh. Please reach out to someone in the ELPE office if you are not sure about changes or have any questions.

   Additionally, students should not be taking daytime classes while on a co-op assignment. If there is an exception to this, we will notify you. Students have schedules in place to ensure that they can work full-time, and only in an extreme case would a daytime class be permitted. We appreciate your support.

   Students may be permitted to take one night course during their second co-op rotation as long as it does not interfere with work responsibilities.
Co-op positions are considered professional in nature and may therefore require overtime, weekends, or irregular hours. We do not allow students to work part-time for other employers while on a co-op rotation without the employer’s permission.

4. We ask that you do not approach us with a request to refer either only minority, only non-minority, only female or only male students for co-op positions with your organizations. We are committed to placing our co-op students without regard to race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, handicaps or status as a veteran.

5. Students on term probation may still participate in the program as long as they have permission from: a. The Cooperative Education Office  
b. Their Undergraduate Co-op Coordinator  
c. The Company of Employment

Any student who receives less than a 2.0 for two terms can be suspended from the Cooperative Engineering Education Program. A student on probation who begins a work term may still be dismissed even if he/she is already at the work-site. The employer reserves the right to either terminate or continue employment of the dismissed student.

6. The Co-op Coordinator and/or the Director may visit the work site and review the program.

7. Employers may receive requests for "at work" photographs of co-op students. The photographs are for various publicity activities.

Specifically

1. It is advised to submit requests for co-op students well in advance of the projected beginning work date. Employers must complete and return to the ELPE office the "Employer Intake Form" prior to the referral of students for employment consideration. We also request that you supply written co-op descriptions to be able to educate students on the opportunities and requirements.

2. Written job offers with details and conditions of employment should be issued to the students with copies to the appropriate university and company officials.

3. It is appropriate to give students 1-2 weeks to make an official decision on a co-op offer.

4. If you have difficulties contacting candidates by telephone or email, please do not hesitate to contact us at 412-624-9826 to assist you. Students often have hectic, irregular schedules; therefore, it may be easier for us to reach them.

5. Initial work assignments should include an orientation to company policies and procedures.

6. Employers are expected to assign students to qualified supervisors who share an interest and enthusiasm for developing new employees.

7. Each co-op student must be evaluated by the employer. At the end of the co-op, we request an evaluation be submitted on-line (survey provided by the ELPE office). The completed evaluation should be discussed with the student and returned to the ELPE office within the specified time period.

8. Approximate start dates for co-op work assignments are January 2nd or July 1st. Rotations can run from January-June or July to December. If it is decided that a student will stay and work through the summer (end of August), or start earlier than July, that is acceptable as needed if agreed upon between student and employer.