CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

BACHELOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE CO-OP

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Bachelor of Computer Science Co-op Program

Algoma University, SH 206

1520 Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Tel: 705.949.2301, ext. 4214

Email: coop@algomau.ca

algomau.ca/academics/co-operative-education

Algoma UNIVERSITY

Dear Student,

I would like to welcome you to the Computer Science Co-op Program at Algoma University; a program based on a three-way partnership between Algoma University, co-op employers, and you — the co-op student!

Co-operative education provides you with an opportunity to explore various careers in a variety of work environments, providing you with insight into the skills and attitude necessary for success in the workplace.

Your co-operative education work placements will enable you to develop a network of contacts in the workplace which can prove invaluable upon graduation, while the co-operative education career skills course will provide you with job search strategies and interview experience.

This handbook serves as a reference to compliment your mandatory Career Skills course (COOP 0101). Please read this handbook in its entirety and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Please note that the Algoma U Academic Calendar supersedes all information found in this manual.

Once again, welcome to the Bachelor of Computer Science Co-op Program. I look forward to assisting you in your career development.

Sincerely,

Cindi

Cindi Elgie
Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator
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Algoma University, Room SH 206
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Introduction

The Computer Science Co-op Program integrates academic experience paid employment experience. Students must complete COOP 0101 and the required academic terms and co-op placements to complete the program. Co-op work terms have a weight of 2 academic credits.

All co-op placements must:

- provide a meaningful and productive work experience;
- provide paid work experience
- be monitored by the Algoma University Co-op Department;
- provide directed, supervised, and evaluated work experience by the employer;
- integrate students into the workplace environment in a fashion similar to that of other employees;
- be of significant duration – the minimum term of employment for an eligible position is ten weeks, but 16 weeks is the typical work placement length;
- be based on a 35-40 hour work week; and
- meet the accreditation guidelines established by the Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning (CEWIL)

Co-op Department: Contact Information

The Co-op Department is located at the SSM Campus in room SH 206. Cindi Elgie, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning earning Coordinator can be contacted at coop@algomau.ca or phone (705) 949-2301 ext. 4214.

Why Choose Co-op?

There are many benefits to be gained through co-operative education:

- paid work experience
- meaningful work experience
- contact with potential employers
- develop competencies and improve skill-set

What is the Role of the Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator?

The Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator acts as a liaison between employers and co-op students. The CWILC works closely with employers and students to develop suitable placements, ensuring the objectives of the co-op program are met:

- Facilitates employer/student contact;
- Ensures fair and equitable treatment of students and employers through the process;
- Assists employers through all aspects of the co-op process;
- Monitors the placements, ensuring both the employers' and students' needs are being met;
- Discusses career goals with students and helps them develop these goals; and
- Instructs the mandatory career skills course (COOP 0101) for all co-op students.

Please note: the CWILC cannot guarantee a co-op work term placement for any student however we assist in locating placements for students.

Maintain good standing in the Bachelor of Computer Science Co-op Program

- Maintain an overall average of 70%, including all course attempts;
- Successfully complete COOP 0101;
- Register as a full-time student (9-15 credits per term) in any two out of the last four consecutive academic terms;
- All international students must adhere to the requirements of their study permit and have a Co-op Work Permit;
- Complete 15 credits at Algoma University); and
- Students must be living in the country they are completing their co-op placement in (unless discussed and verified with the Co-op Department.

Please note: In certain circumstances concurrent enrolment in COOP 0101 will be granted. This requires prior permission via the CWILC.

Co-op Placement Learning Outcomes:
1.Integrate knowledge and skills learned in the classroom with responsibilities in the co-op placement.
2.Gain knowledge and develop new skills through engaging in unfamiliar activities and projects
3.Assess, critique and reflect on work over the course of the term
4.Adapt behavior to different audiences and develop workplace etiquette
5.Learn the importance of working in team environment while respecting confidentiality and adhering to ethical practices

Co-operative Education Fees

The Introductory Career Skills course, COOP 0101, is counted as 1 co-op credit and is charged at a rate = to 1 credit Canadian Fees. Each work term placement, COSC 2896, 3897 and 4897 are counted as 2 academic credits and is charged at a rate = to 2 academic credits. Domestic and International fees apply.

International students do not pay international fees for COOP 0101. All credits are based on the Fee Schedule found in the Academic Calendar.

Bachelor of Computer Science Co-op Degree

	Fall	**Winter**	**Spring**
Year 1	School	School	Off
Year 2	School	School	Work Term
Year 3	School	Work Term	Off
Year 4	Work Term	School	Off
Year 5	School	School	

Accelerated Bachelor of Computer Science Co-op Degree

	Fall	**Winter**	**Spring**
Year 1	School	Work	School
Year 2	Work	School	Off

Academic Calendar Regulations

The Academic Calendar of Algoma University contains the official regulations of the Co-operative Education program as approved by Senate, and updates to those rules may be made at any time and printed in the subsequent annual edition of the Calendar.

Every attempt has been made to make this manual consistent with the Academic Calendar; however, changes in regulations may not be reflected in immediate updates of the manual. If you are in doubt, please consult with the Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator. Content in the Academic Calendar overrides information proved in this manual.

Please contact the financial aid office to determine how co-op may affect your OSAP funding. Email fao@algomau.ca or phone (705) 949-2301 ext.4219

Co-op Work Terms: What Is Required and How Am I Evaluated?

You must contact coop@algomau.ca immediately once you are hired so that the Co-op Office can provide you with the necessary co-op paper work

At the beginning of each work term you must submit the required paper work including:
1. Co-op Position Offer
2. Work Term Information
3. Work Term Objectives

You will be registered for and pay tuition for the appropriate work term course code (ie. COOP0201). Mid-way through your work term placement, you will receive a site visit from the Co-op Office. This site visit allows the CWILC to speak directly with you and your supervisor to ensure that both of your expectations are being met and that the co-op term is going well.

At the end of each work term, you must submit a Work Term Reflection Report. Failing to submit an acceptable report may result in failure of your work term placement. If you receiving a failing grade on the Work Term Reflection Report, you will be given one opportunity to make the necessary changes to obtain a passing grade. Additionally, your co-op employer will be asked to complete the Work Term Performance Evaluation to provide feedback on your performance during their work term placement. Students will be assigned a "pass" or "fail" on their work term based on the site visit, the work term reflection report, and the employer evaluation.

What is the Length of Each Work Term Placement(s)?

The exact start and end dates of each work term vary from term to term according to the employer's needs. For a variety of reasons, employers may be unable to hire a student for the full four-month (16-week) period. Following CEWIL guidelines, Algoma U's Co-operative Education Department may approve a work term placement if the position in question is at least 10 weeks of full-time work (usually defined as a 35- hour work week).

Job Posting Information

All co-op positions are posted on the Student Portal under Job Opportunities. Algoma University also hired a Talent Partnership Developer to increase co-op employment placements.

Can I Find My Own Placement?

Yes. Often, students may have a place of employment in mind for completing a work term placement. Students may arrange their own co-op position with final approval of the Co-op, Career and Experiential Learning Coordinator. You must get approval from the CWILC PRIOR to beginning work in order to receive recognition for a co-op work term. Students securing their own employment who wish to have it recognized as a co-op credit must register and pay tuition for the co-op work term. This fee is not a placement fee; rather, it is an administrative fee used to help off-set the administrative costs associated with running a co-operative education program.

Students Returning to Previous Employers

The CWILC will attempt to obtain confirmation from employers regarding their intentions to re-hire students, and students will be advised accordingly. Students who have just completed the first work term with the employer are committed to return for a second term if requested by the employer. Each student must inform the Co-op Office by the end of the second month of the academic term whether he/she intends to return to the previous employer. Students who have indicated an intention to return will not be permitted to apply for other posted positions.

Students who have not submitted an acceptable Work Term Reflection Report from the previous term will not usually be permitted to commit to a return.

Students returning to a placement should sign the appropriate work term forms by the end of their current work term. These students may also be required to sign additional paper work/contracts given to them by their employer.

Applying for a Co-op Job Posting

When applying for a posted co-op position, you must submit your application (resume + cover letter) to:

Cindi Elgie, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator at coop@algomau.ca, unless otherwise stated.

Contacting the Employer Before Applying to a Position

DO NOT contact the employer directly without first discussing it with the Co-op and Career and Experiential Learning Coordinator.

The Application Process

Whether you are applying for a position posted on the Student Portal, or are applying directly on a website, please follow all application instructions.

International students must have a co-op work permit to apply for positions. Unless agreed upon in advance, students must reside in the country they wish to work once the position commences.

The Selection Process

Positions posted on the Student Portal by the co-op office will be screened to ensure students meet all requirements. The employer will determine who receives an interview.

The Interview

An employer will contact you directly to arrange for an interview. If you receive two job offers, please reach out to the co-op office. We are here to help you make the best decision regarding which position to accept.

Notifying Successful Candidates

An employer will contact the successful candidate and notify them of what steps must be taken to begin a co-op position with their company.

After the Hire

Once you have been given an official offer, please email the Co-op, and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator at coop@algomau.ca with the news. You will be given access to documents to complete. The documents are time sensitive. The Co-op Office will register you for your co-op work term placement.

Co-operative Education Fees

There are two fees associated with co-operative education: tuition fees for COOP 0101 and Work Term fees.

COOP 0101: Career Skills Course

The fee for COOP 0101 is equivalent to the cost of a one-credit academic course. Refund policy for withdrawals is the same as those for academic course withdrawals.

Work Term Fee

Each work term requires the payment of a work term fee. The fee for each work term is equivalent to two academic credits.

Registration for an Academic Course During a Work Term

During the work term, students are expected to concentrate on work not study. Students may enrol in one, with a maximum of two 3-credit courses during the work term as long as the course is not scheduled during your scheduled working hours. Students must have permission from the Co-op Office to register for more than 3 credits concurrently with a work term placement. To discuss, please email coop@algomau.ca

Out of Town Placements

Students accepting positions away from home are responsible for their own transportation and expenses during the work term. Some employers will pay reasonable moving expenses, but you should not expect such reimbursement unless arranged in advance.

I encourage you to contact the housing office at the colleges or universities located in the city where you will be working. They often offer reasonably priced accommodation to co-op students. This prevents you from incur costs associated with signing an apartment lease or furnishing an apartment.

Site Visits

The Co-op and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator is responsible for helping to ensure
   1. the work term is a positive and educational experience for the student
   2. the employer is obtaining the maximum benefit from hiring a co-op student.

Site visits are organized mid-way through the work term. The CWLC will contact employers to organize a site visit.

A Typical Site Visit Could be Arranged as Follows:

- 15 minutes with the student to discuss learning objectives, work placement satisfaction, the work term report, and determine whether there are any work-related issues that need to be addressed with the employer (i.e. underutilization of the student, poor working conditions, need for additional guidance);
- 20 minutes with the co-op student's supervisor to discuss job responsibilities, establish relevance to program of study, and obtain confidential feedback on the student. At this time, you can also discuss the university's curriculum, the administration of the program, and the identification of any future possibilities for collaboration.

What if I Encounter a Problem with my Employer?

Should you have any concerns regarding a particular employer or encounter any unusual, unsafe, or uncomfortable circumstances (e.g. sexual harassment, discrimination, unsafe work environment, etc.) please contact the CWILC immediately at (705) 949-2301 ext. 4214 or email coop@algomau.ca. If it's an emergency, please call (705) 206-6548. Please see the "Student Rights" document in the appendix.

Work Term Reflection Report

Each co-op work term placement requires students to submit an original Work Term Reflection Report. Work Term Reflection Reports must be completed by the deadline. Students failing to submit an appropriate Work Term Reflection will not receive credit for their co-op work term. Please see the appendix for more details on this Work Term Reflection Report.

You cannot submit the same Work Term Reflection twice. Each work term requires an original Work Term Reflection. Submitting the same Work Term Reflection more than once constitutes academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Work Term Evaluations

Employers must complete a Work Term Evaluation Form for each co-op work term placement. Employers must reflect on how well a co-op student performed. Students will have the opportunity to review this evaluation form with their employer as well as provide their own feedback.

How Am I Graded?

To receive a passing grade on your work term a student must:
- Complete all paper work requested from co-op office (ie. work term objectives, employer info, salary info, etc.);
- Complete a full work term (min. 10 weeks in duration, unless approved by the co-op office) with the recommendation of a passing mark from an employer; and
- Submit an appropriate Work Term Reflection Paper.

Failed Work Term

Under some circumstances a failure of a work term will be entered into your Co-op Record. Failure of a work term usually means you will be required to withdraw from the co-op program. Failure of a work term could result from, but is not limited to, any one of the following:
- failure to report to the employer
- leaving job before end of term without permission
- dismissal from employment with cause
- unsatisfactory performance evaluation
- failure to return to employer for second term if requested
- failure to submit acceptable Work Term Reflection Report
- failure to submit required documentation to co-op office
- failure to meet commitments to Co-operative Education

Consequences of a Failed Work Term

Under most circumstances, the failure of a work term will result in required withdrawal from the Co-operative Education Program. Students may be allowed to continue, at the discretion of the CWILC and Registrar, but the failed work term will be included on the Co-operative Education Student Record, which is available to potential co-op employers.

Appeals

The failure of a work term is a serious consequence. The entry of "failed work term" on the Co-operative Education Student Record may be appealed through normal university appeal channels. As with appeals of academic course marks, students should attempt to resolve matters through discussion with the CWILC before initiating appeals.

Rules and Regulations of the Computer Science Co-op Program:

1. Students who follow the study/work schedule and pass all courses will graduate in the scheduled alloted timeframe of the program. Students who deviate from the plan potentially may not graduate in that timeframe.
2. Students may withdraw from the Computer Science Co-op Program and move into the regular stream Computer Science Program at any time.
3. Students not meeting the minimum GPA of 70% will be asked to withdraw from the Computer Science Co-op Program and move into the regular stream Co-op Program.
4. Co-op placements are not guaranteed however the Talent Partnership Developer will provide job opportunities for students to apply to. The Talent Partnership Developer will endevour to find placements in areas of interest however, students may be required to work in a related area rather than in their preferred area of employent.
5. As of May 1, 2024, the Computer Science Program with the Co-op Certificate is no longer available to students. Computer Science students must apply directly to the Computer Science Co-op Program. This is a competitive program with limited seating.

APPENDIX

Student's Rights as an Employee

In general, co-op students are treated exactly like any other employee as far as legal requirements for work conditions are concerned. The following information is very brief and can only provide general guidelines. If you have further questions, you will have to contact the Co-op Office at coop@algomau.ca.

Human Rights Code

Every employee is legally entitled to freedom from discrimination and sexual harassment. The Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination or harassment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offence, marital status, family status, or handicap. In addition, the Code prohibits any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence, humiliation or reasonably be perceived as placing conditions of a sexual nature on employment or opportunity. Your employer should make available to employees a written policy on sexual harassment.

If you feel you are being harassed, make it clear to the harasser that the behaviour is not welcome in a polite but firm manner. Contact the Co-op Office immediately if you are being harassed at coop@algomau.ca to discuss further actions you should consider taking. In case of emergency, contact Cindi Elgie at 05-206-6548. For further information on Human Rights, go to the Ontario Human Rights Commission website.

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are targets for performance, stated in such a way that you can determine your own success at achieving them. In a work environment learning objectives provide a way for you to set realistic targets for self-improvement. The result is that you gain skills and the employer is more satisfied with your performance.

Why Bother with Learning Objectives?

Focus for Better Learning
There are many things that you might learn on your work term, some of which are directly related to the job and some of which are more personal. Having to determine objectives forces you to decide what is really important to you, allowing you to focus your attention during the work term.

Motivational Effects
Most people work better and gain more satisfaction from work when they feel like they are making progress. Properly constructed learning objectives, which include measures for determining progress, allow you to give yourself feedback on a regular basis.

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How to Write Learning Objectives

Write Them Down
Writing learning objectives forces you to state them clearly. Look at your objectives periodically to see if they are still relevant to you.

Keep Them Simple
Keep your objectives simple. Objectives that are impossible to reach are meaningless.

Keep the List Small
You will do much better with a small list of meaningful objectives than with a huge list. Large numbers diminish the importance of individual items.

Make Objectives Reasonable and Challenging
If you set a learning objective that is out of reach, there is no motivation to strive for it because you are doomed for failure. The trick is to find objectives that you can achieve if you really try hard.

State Objectives in a Positive Fashion
Stating an objective makes you focus on it. Rather than focusing on weaknesses, emphasize the development of your strengths.

Choose Objectives that can be Measured Precisely
After you state your objectives, make sure that you have a means of evaluating them. The measurement is your way of evaluating your performance.

Sample Work Term Objectives

Personal Objective:

To participate in some sort of fitness program; record progress in a daily planner at least three times/week.

Work Objective:

To be 15 minutes early for work each day; record number of late days per week in a daily planner.

Work Term Reflection Report Guidelines

Introduction

All co-operative education students are required to submit a Work Term Reflection Report at the end of each co-op work term. This report must be polished and professional (typed, double spaced). Students failing to submit an appropriate Work Term Reflection will not receive credit for their co-op work term.

Purpose of Work Term Reflection

1) Facilitates an understanding of the employer's organization and work environment.
2) Assists in the development of a student's communication skills.
3) Assists in developing learning objectives for subsequent work terms.
4) Allows a student to reflect upon what he or she has learned during the work term.

Guidelines adapted by CEWIL *Co-Operative Education Manual: A Guide to Planning and Implementing Co-Operative Education Programs in Post-Secondary Institutions*. https://www.cewilcanada.ca/