

Cooperative Education



Cooperative education (co-op) is an academic program designed to complement a formal education with practical work experience that is directly related to a student's major or career path.

Co-op allows students to gain career-related work experience, earn general elective credit that applies toward their academic degree and help them to earn money for tuition.

The Mount's co-op program works on a trimester calendar. This enables students to be placed for 15 to 16 weeks each semester. Students have two options available:

- Parallel — Students carry a full-time course load and co-op for approximately 20 hours per week.
- Alternating — Students are employed full time one semester and attend college full time the following semester.

A History of Success

Since 1982, the Mount has helped students develop skills and gain experience in the working world. From an initial placement of three students at the program's beginning to almost 7,000 placements today, the Cooperative Education program continues to serve students, employers and organizations throughout the Greater Cincinnati area.

Faculty members are actively involved in the program serving as advisors and visiting students at their co-op placement to evaluate their progress and the integration of classroom work into the co-op position.

The Co-op Advisory Board, comprised of employer partners, plays a major role in supporting the co-op program's continuing success. The Board is led by Kenneth Leslie, Ph.D., a scientist recruiter at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. "When I was getting my education, I was never a co-op student, but I did do an internship," observes Dr. Leslie. "It gave me an opportunity to do some exploration outside of a laboratory." He believes cooperative education enables students to "learn what the real world is all about — and to hit the ground running after graduation." Dr. Leslie also sees the Mount's program as unique because "it's available to all students in all academic disciplines."

Advantages of the Mount's Co-op Program

Co-op is an excellent opportunity for students to:

- test career interests.
- acquire valuable academic credit for work experience.
- gain a practical understanding of professional work practices and environments.
- earn money for college and living expenses.
- sharpen skills employers value.
- integrate textbook learning with on-the-job experiences.
- develop a network of professionals who can help launch their careers after graduation.

All students, sophomores to seniors, can take advantage of a variety of services offered by the Cooperative Education program. Co-op coordinators partner with students to encourage exploration by considering a wide range of personal and professional options. Services include résumé/cover letter critiquing, interview skills and preparation, job exploration, and access to eRecruiting, an online résumé and job posting database. Students complete a one credit-hour course, CED 220 Professional Development. Designed to prepare students for the cooperative work experience, students begin with self-assessment and skills analysis, then move to career exploration, résumé development, interviewing, job search strategies, and issues related to successful co-op work experiences.

Co-op is available to baccalaureate degree seeking students from all majors who have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5; have reached a level of course work commensurate with position requirements; have completed the Professional Development course, and have the approval of their department chairperson.

Students interested in scheduling an appointment with a member of the cooperative education staff may call (513) 244-4888.

Fast Facts

- At the Mount, you can begin co-opping your sophomore year, and opportunities are available in every undergraduate degree program.
- As a co-op, you can gain valuable work experience, meet new people in your field of interest and earn a salary to help pay for your education. Co-opping can also help you confirm your choice of an academic major and help you set clear career goals.
- In 2010, more than 168 students participated in co-op, and collectively they earned more than \$1.1 million. The benefits extend beyond the work experience. More than 31 percent of graduates who had co-op jobs accepted full-time positions with their co-op employers.
- The Mount is a recent recipient of a grant specifically designated for supporting co-op positions at nonprofit institutions. Students have worked with 17 organizations and agencies participating in this grant program.
- The College has been honored with the Sam E. Sovilla Award for Excellence by the Ohio Cooperative Education Association and a Service Award from the Council on Aging of Southwest Ohio.
- In 2010, Maggie Davis, Ph.D., director of the Career & Experiential Education Center, was named Educator of the Year by the Ohio Cooperative Education Association.

Job Opportunities

Mount students co-op in a variety of positions that enable them to leverage their talents while developing new skills. Some examples include:

Activity Leader	Lab Technician
Assistant Networking Administrator	Legal Assistant
Clinical Research Assistant	Marketing Intern
Communications Co-op	Media Relations Intern
Events Coordinator	Nursing Co-op
Graphic Designer	Sales Associate
Interior Design Assistant	Web Page Designer



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What Others Say

"I had several co-op jobs — at the Mount's Career & Experiential Education Center, the Cincinnati Area Chapter of the American Red Cross and Rumpke Corporate Communications. The program prepared me for real-world situations and helped me build an impressive portfolio. I have worked on a variety of projects — designing logos, flyers, posters, invitations, mailers and other promotional material. My co-op job at Rumpke led to a full-time position, and I couldn't imagine being happier anywhere else."

Maria Ruebusch

Class of 2009

Graphic Design with an iDesign and Business Administration minor
Graphic Designer at Rumpke Corporate Communications

"Co-op helped me to develop into a professional — taking what I had learned in the classroom and applying it to the business world. It also allowed me to develop a perception of what the real working world is actually like. I started out co-opping at Legg Mason Investment Counsel and co-oped for six semesters there. After I graduated, I was hired to fulfill a job position with additional, expanded responsibilities."

Robert Huesman

Class of 2009

Business Administration

Social Research Analyst at Legg Mason Investment Counsel

"Culturing tissue from endangered plants onto a growth medium or running DNA experiments to determine diversity within a rare and endangered species — these are some of the projects given to co-op students who work at the Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife at the Cincinnati Zoo," says Meg Riestenberg, Ph.D., Mount faculty member and a winner of the Co-op Faculty Coordinator of the Year Award. "I am impressed with the challenging and exciting work students are called upon to do."

Meg Riestenberg, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Department of Chemistry

College of Mount St. Joseph