

DCAD

DELAWARE
COLLEGE OF ART
AND DESIGN

Co-op Student Handbook

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A. COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AT DCAD

A.1. Defining the Co-op Program and Internship Initiative

A.1.a. What is Co-op?

Cooperative education, or Co-op, is a program that adds meaningful, paid work experience to your traditional academic course of study. Cooperative education is a distinct educational program. All Co-op experiences are expected to move the student toward the goals of his/her major's mission in accordance with DCAD's curriculum.

- Co-op employment is strategically related to your field of study
- Co-op employment is paid
- Co-op employment increases in complexity and challenge according to your ability
- Co-op employment includes formal evaluation and documentation of your performance

A.1.b. Co-op vs. Internship – What is the difference?

At DCAD, the Internship Initiative is available to all majors, first and second years; and focuses on participation during the summer. It can occur after first year or second year. Internships undertaken while students are enrolled in classes are discouraged, but can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The DCAD Co-op program is an entire academic year of learning while earning, and provides a more in-depth experience. It is currently available to Graphic Design and Interior Design students, and other majors depending on employer needs, between their first and second years of study. Students who wish to participate in Co-op must meet a particular set of guidelines, and are subject to faculty approval.

Internship only option

This option is two years to AFA.



Co-op + internship option

This option is three years to AFA.



A.1.c. Why is Co-op education of value to me?

Co-op gives you the opportunity to:

- Enrich your educational experience by applying what you have learned in class to a real-world work setting and bring what you have learned during Co-op back to the classroom
- Participate in meaningful, productive, paid work that makes you a more attractive candidate for full-time employment after graduation and helps you earn a higher starting salary than students without Co-op experience
- Explore different employers and work settings - helping you further refine your career choice and employment goals
- Develop additional skills and enhance vital personal skills such as written and oral communication, teamwork, and problem-solving

A.1.d. How long does Co-op employment last?

The Co-op program is two consecutive semesters of work. A student may work at the same place for both the fall and spring semesters, or he/she may complete a fall Co-op semester with one employer, and a spring Co-op semester with a different employer. The specific start and end dates of each Co-op semester are negotiated with the hiring employer but generally students will work 15 weeks per semester.

A student also may combine summer internship before the fall Co-op semester and after the spring Co-op semester to extend the learning-while-earning opportunity. (See chart on previous page.)

A.1.e. How do I get started?

You will attend a Co-op orientation to learn about the services and support available to you through the Co-op Office. Check your e-mail and the Guidebook app for specific times and information. You will fill out an "Internship Interest Form" to begin your individual search. Forms can be found near the Jobs Boards or at the door of the Co-op office, or on Guidebook. You will then make an appointment with the Co-op Coordinator to discuss your goals and skills.

A.1.f. Is anyone going to help me find a Co-op opportunity?

Every Co-op student meets with the Program Coordinator in the Co-op Office. The Program Coordinator works with the students and provides one-on-one advisement and support in the job search. Contact information for your Program Coordinator as well as the specific requirements and information concerning Co-op in your academic department is included in this handbook and available on-line.

A.1.g. How do I find out about Co-op opportunities?

Use the Co-op Jobs Boards to access information about current internship and Co-op employment opportunities. We highly recommend that you also develop leads and apply for openings on your own. This is especially important if you have some unique employment goals and interests. Your Co-op Coordinator can help you develop your search plan and provide you with helpful information to use in reaching out to prospective employers.

A.1.h. What type of work qualifies for Co-op?

Co-op opportunities may be part or full-time. They should be paid work directly related to your field of study and career interests. Opportunities created by the Co-op Office are approved Co-op positions. If you obtain a Co-op position on your own and are not sure if it is acceptable, see your Co-op Coordinator or Area Coordinator before accepting the opportunity. Keep in mind that if the opportunity meets the criteria, it doesn't matter if a company calls the opportunity an internship, Co-op, or temporary employment.

A.2. Academic Policies

A.2.i. Do I receive credit for Co-op?

Co-op does not take the place of other academic courses. It is completed in addition to the normal sequence of courses in your program. You will receive elective credits and a grade of pass/withdraw on your transcript.

CO101 Fall CO102 Spring	Credits	Hours / Week
Full Time	12	30-40
Part Time	9	20-29
Part Time	6	15-19

A.2.j. What if something changes?

You are required to register for classes and secure your financial aid award by the college's deadline of August 1 of your Co-op year. This process is used to ensure that the student is prepared for enrollment in case of unforeseen changes to the student's Co-op commitment, and to secure their classes in the event an offer of Co-op employment is not made.

A.2.k. Do I pay tuition for Co-op?

There are no tuition charges while you are in Co-op because you are not taking any classes. You are considered to be a student during Co-op employment and are eligible to utilize all the facilities and services of DCAD. Your financial aid is deferred until you return to the classroom in your 2nd year of classroom learning.

There is a required registration fee of \$75, which includes access to college, library, and advisement.

A.3. Earnings and Financial Aid

A.3.l. How does Co-op impact my financial aid?

Any federal student loans will remain on in-school deferment status as long as you are a Co-op student. Unsubsidized Loan interest will continue to accrue.

Some students may qualify for federal aid programs (Pell Grant and/or Direct Loans) while on Co-op. However, please note: Using any federal aid while on co-op may reduce future eligibility, and is not recommended.

A.3.m. How much will I make?

Your employer determines your compensation level. Salary rates are based on a number of variables and most often include the following: your academic course of study, prior work experiences, and established company pay schedules.

Income earned from Cooperative Education employment should be reported on the FAFSA as “earnings from work under a cooperative education program”, to ensure that earnings do not have a negative impact on your Financial Aid award for the following school year.

A.3.n. How is my performance evaluated?

The Co-op Office provides an evaluation form to your employer near the end of each internship or Co-op semester. The employer is asked to review the completed evaluation with you and provide you with a copy prior to your return to school. The evaluation is a key tool in helping you understand and improve upon your performance in subsequent opportunities. Failure to complete your Co-op employment commitment is noted on your transcript. You will also be completing an evaluation of your experience with the employer.

If a student anticipates a prolonged absence from the College, he or she may benefit from a leave of absence (LOA). Details of this policy are found in the [Student Handbook under section K. 12.](#)

A.4. Finding Co-op Employment

A.4.o. Am I guaranteed a Co-op opportunity?

It is impossible to guarantee any student a Co-op opportunity since the final hiring decision is the employer’s. You are not placed into a Co-op position, but rather you apply and go through the hiring and selection process, developing the job search skills that will help ensure your long-term career success. The Co-op Office will help you in any way we can with your search, materials, and professional development.

A.4.p. Can I stay in Wilmington?

Many Co-op educational opportunities are located in the Wilmington area. While it is quite understandable and appropriate to have specific goals and preferences, it is not advisable to limit your search to any one specific area. The Co-op student may live on or off campus, or in another city. Those wishing to live on campus will fill out a housing application as part of their registration.

Anyone participating in summer internship may choose to live on campus, at home, or in a rental property. The Co-op Office does not help students look for apartments. There is a minimum number of summer interns required to open and staff the dorms. This number is evaluated annually.

On-campus students will pay a discounted room fee to live in a double-occupancy dorm room in the Saville. The Saville has kitchens and Co-op students will have access to the DCAD Café during regular hours. A meal plan is optional for purchase. The DCAD café is closed in the summer.

A.4.q. What if I don't get hired?

Certain circumstances may make it difficult for students to find appropriate Co-op opportunities. It is essential that you are proactive in all your efforts. Close contact with your Co-op Coordinator and Area Coordinator is important. All Co-op students will also pre-register for classes as detailed previously in section A.2.

A.4.r. Do I have to pay taxes on what I earn?

Yes. According to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service salaries/wages paid to Co-op students are fully subject to applicable federal, state and local income taxes.

B. CO-OP STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

B.1. Ethical Considerations and Responsibilities

- Co-op employers expect DCAD students to work in accordance with accepted business ethics and practices.
- A summary of your responsibilities as a Co-op student is also provided in the Co-op Student Agreement Form, included at the end of this packet in section F, and for which a signature is required as evidence that you have reviewed and understand your responsibilities.
- Co-op students are held to the standards put forth in the [Student Handbook and Code of Conduct](#) while working at their internship.
- Students are seen as representatives of the College and of other DCAD students. Fulfilling that responsibility ensures future Co-op opportunities for the students who will follow.

B.1.s. Interview Ethics

- Be prepared for your interview by researching the employer and understanding their business.
- Provide accurate information about your qualifications and interests. Never falsify information such as GPA, academic major, coursework completed or extracurricular activities on a resume or during an interview.
- Notify the Co-op Office and the potential employer, at least 24 hours in advance, if you cannot make an interview appointment or employer presentation. The Co-op Office telephone number is (302) 622-8867. Leave a voicemail and follow-up with an email to the Co-op Coordinator if you are unable reach a person.
- Acknowledge invitations for on-site interviews promptly, whether you accept or reject them. Accept such invitations only when seriously considering a position.
- Follow an interview with a thank-you letter, card or email as appropriate.

B.1.t. Ethics of Accepting/Rejecting an Offer

- Once you accept a Co-op offer, even verbally, you must not back out, or renege on the opportunity, to work for another employer. If you have any questions/concerns about this, discuss them with your

Co-op Coordinator before taking action.

- Good employer relations are vital to the success of our Co-op program; and you, the student, are a critical link in this relationship. Therefore, consider carefully before accepting a Co-op position.
- Discuss offers thoroughly with employers so you understand the terms and reach a mutually acceptable date to respond to their offer.
- Request extensions from employers if you need more time to consider other offers. Do not ignore deadline dates you have agreed upon.
- Notify employers that you are accepting or rejecting an offer as soon as you make your decision.
- Once you accept an offer, immediately inform other employers who have offers pending. Honor your acceptance of an offer as a contractual agreement with the employer
- Cancel any other scheduled interviews or on-site visits.

B.2. Responsibilities after Accepting Co-op Employment

B.2.u. Documentation Required For Employment

- Federal law requires all employers to check candidate identity and establish work eligibility. When students report to work they should have at least the following:
 - An original social security card (to establish eligibility to work)
 - A state issued photo drivers license or state issued photo ID (to establish identity)

B.2.v. The following are expectations during the work assignment:

- You must report to work regularly and punctually.
- If you must be absent from work, call your employer prior to your starting time that day.
- Be sure to abide by work regulations as defined by your employer.
- You are expected to dress appropriately for the work environment and employer expectations.
- You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional and businesslike manner.
- Consult your supervisor if you are unsure of procedures or expectations on the opportunity or about any conflicts or concerns related to the work place.
- You are encouraged to periodically seek feedback from your supervisor concerning your opportunity performance.
- When you complete a project, advise your supervisor and ask for additional work.
- Inform your Program Coordinator immediately of any problems or concerns on the opportunity that can't be addressed by your immediate supervisor or the organization's human resource department.

B.3. Working with Others

Whatever work environment you find yourself in, your ability to communicate with and work well with others will contribute greatly to your success.

- Observe others and the hierarchy in the workplace
- Establish working relationships with co-workers and encourage mentoring.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be a good listener.
- If you don't understand something, admit it and ask questions.

- Be thorough in what you do.
- Be pleasant when you come to work each morning.
- Make decisions based on facts, not on another's opinions.
- You will constantly be meeting new people – it is important to remember their names, and bare in mind it is essential you make a good first impression.

DON'T:

- Over-react to a situation in the workplace; e.g. send emails or texts when you are upset or emotional
- Gossip
- Suggest making changes unless asked – listen, observe, learn

C. CO-OP TIMELINE

To ensure access to the best employers, it is important that you are thorough and organized. Diligently utilize planners, calendars, and apps that will help you stay on top of your resume building, cover letter writing, portfolio development, applications, interviews, and housing planning. The Co-op office posts the current year's schedule of important dates and events during the summer prior to the next academic year.

D. CO-OP AND INTERNSHIP LISTINGS:

Co-op opportunities for both summer internships and the yearlong Co-op program are accessed by viewing our jobs board. Opportunities are identified individually as Internships or Co-op. Physical jobs boards are located near the first floor elevator bank and in the Co-op office. Co-op also has an on-line jobs board for students and alumni.

E. THE CO-OP OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Tracey Mulveny | Co-op Program Coordinator

DELAWARE COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

600 N Market Street

Wilmington, DE 19801

(302) 622-8000 ext 712

Office Hours: Walk-in or by appointment: 9am-3pm Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday

Co-op Office: Room 401 A; through the student lounge on the 4th Floor

Web Site: [DCAD Co-op](#)

The Co-op Program Coordinator is available to assist you on a one-on-one basis with any aspect of your opportunity search. The Coordinator can answer questions and develop strategies with you. Topics for advisement typically include: Co-op Preparation, Resume Review, Cover Letter Development, Interviewing Skills, Salary Discussions, Weighing Offers, Employer Leads.

F. STUDENT AGREEMENT

Student must provide this signed agreement to the Co-op office by April 1.

F.1. I agree to:

- F.1.w. Provide personal profile information that is a truthful and accurate representation of my status and credentials as a candidate.*
- F.1.x. Accept primary responsibility for obtaining an acceptable position.*
- F.1.y. Conduct myself in an ethical manner consistent with accepted business ethics and practices.*
- F.1.z. Conduct myself in a manner consistent with the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, and the Housing Handbook while on Co-op. I understand I am subject to consequences as outlined in these documents.*
- F.1.aa. Complete all the Co-op related requirements (e.g. resume, cover letter, etc.) as determined by my academic department and the Co-op office.*
- F.1.bb. Follow all established procedures for reporting my employment to the Co-op office, and for completing the necessary evaluation upon completion of each Co-op semester and/or Internship.*
- F.1.cc. Honor my commitment once I accept a position and work as long as my services are required during the agreed upon period. I understand that accepting an offer of employment is a contract between myself and the employer.*
- F.1.dd. Acknowledge that wages earned while working on Co-op and/or Internship are subject to state and federal income taxes.*
- F.1.ee. Notify the Co-op Coordinator of any change in your academic or employment status or of any problems associated with your employment search or Co-op/internship work experience.*

Student name printed _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Co-op coordinator initials _____ Date agreement received _____

G. MISSION

The mission of DCAD Co-operative Education program is to engage students in planned, educationally related work and learning experiences that integrate knowledge and theory with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. The program prepares students for the academic year –long Co-op program and summer internships through a variety of personal and professional development learning activities (CAS, 2017).

G.1. Co-op Program Goals:

- Provide professional work experiences that are directly related to art and design curricula.
- Develop students' knowledge of employment demands, responsibilities, and opportunities.
- Provide an opportunity for students to apply art and design principles in a professional, problem-solving, decision-making environment.

G.2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

Students will:

- Integrate and apply fundamental art and design elements, principles, and processes in a professional context.
- Demonstrate professional workplace expectations, including, but not limited to: organizational culture, time-management, appropriate dress, teamwork, initiative and self-motivation, responsibility, and professional relationships.
- Utilize effective written and oral communication skills and listening and questioning skills in a professional setting.
- Apply critical thinking and problem solving skills in a professional setting.

REGISTRATION FOR CO-OP SEMESTER

All graphic design or interior design majors who have completed the co-op hiring process must complete the following registration form, gathering corresponding signatures of approval. This form should be returned to the registrar's office before the close of course registration for the semester.

Semester(s) of co-op: Fall _____ Spring _____ ; Start date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Major _____

Co-op Employer (*company name*) _____

Supervisor: _____

The student should complete the above section and deliver to the co-op coordinator. The form will be circulated via interoffice mail to complete the remaining signatures in the order below.

1) Co-op coordinator signature date

2) Area coordinator signature date

3) Dean signature date

4) Student Affairs signature date

5) Registrar signature date

H. STUDENT EVALUATION

Fall Spring 20____

Student: _____

Major: _____

Co-op Employer: _____

Co-op Employer Address: _____

Co- op Site

1. An effective company orientation was provided by my employer.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither or N/A	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Adequate resources were available to accomplish projects.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither or N/A	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. Co-workers were accepting and helpful.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither or N/A	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. Overall work experience contributed to my academic and art and design professional aspirations.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither or N/A	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Learning Experience

1. Work experience related to my academic discipline

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither or N/A	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. DCAD curricula prepared me to apply art and design knowledge, skills and abilities in a professional setting.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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3. DCAD's Co-op professional development prepared me for this professional work experience.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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4. The Co-op work experience provided me opportunities to apply art and design skills.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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5. The Co-op work experience provided me opportunities to learn new art and design skills.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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6. The Co-op work experience provided me opportunities to apply critical thinking and problem solving skills.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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7. The Co-op experience provided me opportunities to demonstrate communication skills: written, oral, listening, and questioning skills.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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8. The Co-op experience provided me challenging and purposeful opportunities.

5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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Comments:
