

University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information

Please note

The Cooperative Education Program requires that you complete co-op work rotations at a company/facility which is external to the University of Pittsburgh, and such company/facility will or may require a Criminal Background Check, an ACT 33/34 Clearance (if applicable) and perhaps a drug screen to determine whether you are qualified to work at the company/facility in question. Additionally, in order to become employed at the company/facility, many states will inquire as to whether the applicant has been convicted of a misdemeanor, a felony, or a felonious or illegal act associated with alcohol and/or substance abuse.

Cooperative Education Graduate Student Handbook

SCI Co-op Contact Information

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Visit our co-op page on the Engineering Library website:
<http://pitt.libguides.com/engineeringco-op>

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[Insert SCI graphic here]

Welcome to the University of Pittsburgh's Co-op Program, an exciting opportunity that will allow you to learn, gain experience, professional development, and financial remuneration!

Co-op has a rich history at the University of Pittsburgh, and this history originated with the School of Engineering. With the first degrees of "Engineer" awarded in 1846, Pitt was established as having the nation's sixth earliest engineering programs. Keeping in stride with their "cutting edge" origins, Pitt's School of Engineering was among the first three established co-op programs in the country. Although the Depression forced its suspension in the 1930's, cooperative education at the University of Pittsburgh was re-established in 1987. Soon afterwards, the university's nationally ranked chemistry and computer science departments were added to the program, as well as students from our regional campuses. The graduate program was instituted in 2011, and the School of Computing and Information was added in 2017. Since 1987, thousands of students have benefited from this exceptional program. Although the program is not mandatory, over half of the students in engineering participate, along with growing numbers in Chemistry, SCI, and the regional campuses.

What is Co-op?

Co-op provides students with work experience relating directly to their field of study. The program enables students to complement classroom studies with practical experience, technical knowledge and financial reward.

Co-op is an academic program where students earn credit while working in their field of study.

All co-ops are paid a competitive wage. The average salary range for graduate students in 2015-2016 was approximately \$16-30/hour. All positions are full-time.

Nuts and Bolts of Co-op at Pitt

Graduate students must complete at least one rotation to complete the program requirements. Although most MS students will work only one term, there is a possibility to work multiple terms; however, each work experience must be integral to the student's field of study, and documented as such by the students' faculty advisor. Students on an F-1 visa must be sure to comply with the CPT requirements. PhD candidates may complete more than one rotation as well, particularly when working on the dissertation. All co-op schedules need to be approved by the student's graduate faculty advisor.

- **Students work full-time while on co-op. The standard term is 15 weeks of work. We do not accept less than 12 weeks of work. Students normally do not take any academic courses along with the co-op.**
- **Students earn one credit for each term worked,**
- **Our positions are with employers who are local, national and international.**
- **The one credit co-op course keeps you enrolled with a full-time status.**
- **Students do not pay tuition while on a co-op assignment, but a modest fee.**

- The work should take place in the employer's physical location (no telecommuting, etc.)

Program Requirements

1. All participating students begin the registration process with the SCI Co-op and Internship coordinator and their academic advisor prior to signing up for the Graduate Co-op Program. As part of this review, students will need to assess whether co-op or a 3-credit practicum or field experience is the best option for their academic goals and the nature of the work experience they are seeking. Also as part of this review, students must generate a completed plan of study showing their pattern for completing all required coursework along with Co-op rotations.
2. If Co-op is determined to be appropriate, students would then [sign-up officially with the central Co-op Program Office](#), including submission of an electronic application and resume, signing the "Co-op Contract," and agreeing to follow all co-op rules and policies including payment of the necessary fees.
3. The student's resume will be sent to all companies on file with the Co-op Office for which the student meets the work requirements.
4. If the SCI graduate student finds an appropriate position on his/her own, identifies one with the assistance of the SCI co-op and internship coordinator, or is contacted for a position, the student must then decide on committing to the position.
5. Upon committing to the position, the student would be charged the regular Co-op Fee as well as the other applicable University of Pittsburgh fees. The student would also register for the 1 credit that is covered by the Co-op Fee, and that registration must be for the term in which the experience is to occur.
6. The student would be required to prepare a short paper describing his/her rotation, including the skills learned and used and its educational relevance. That paper would be due within two weeks after completion of the rotation and submitted to the [Co-op Faculty Reviewer](#). In addition, the student and employer would complete the required evaluation forms.
7. Upon acceptance of both evaluations, the student would receive an "S" grade for the 1 credit. Additionally, the student must supply a one-page synopsis of their work experience to the SCI co-op and internship coordinator and their academic advisor.
8. Participation Eligibility
 - a. School of Computing and Information (SCI) undergraduates who go directly into an SCI graduate program would be permitted to co-op the term before starting their graduate degree program as well as after successful completion of two academic semesters of graduate study.
 - b. Full-time MS students who were not SCI undergraduates would be allowed to co-op after successful completion of two academic semesters of graduate study during which time a minimum of 18 credits of graduate-level coursework must be completed successfully.
 - c. PhD students would be allowed to participate by following all of the parameters indicated above, but also must have the approval of their research adviser.
 - d. Students will need to explain to the SCI Co-op coordinator how this is integral to their studies and why this option was more appropriate than a 3-credit practicum or field experience.

International Students

Before registering with co-op, international students are required to check with the Office of International Services (OIS) to determine eligibility to co-op, appropriate start and end dates for a given co-op experience, whether or not the timing of

the experience falls within the parameters allowed for a Curricular Practical Experience (CPT). OIS' Web site is <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/> and appointments are made online.

Eligible students accepting a co-op offer must complete the necessary forms for OIS and the co-op office; additionally, the student must inform both offices of any changes in visa status, work status or work rotations. All positions must be directly related to the student's field of study and on par with graduate level work.

Work Schedules

Any changes in already approved co-op schedules must be approved by the co-op office, faculty advisor and employer. This includes additional work sessions.

University Co-op Certification

Graduate level students who participate in the cooperative education program at the University of Pittsburgh must complete the required work term(s) in order to receive certification on their transcript.

Commitment and Ethics

Students who apply and then accept a position through the Co-op Program should be aware that it is a commitment. We expect students to honor the commitment to their employer and to the University. This means that we expect students to adhere to the co-op schedules **that are deemed appropriate by their faculty advisors**. In the event that a change is requested, we must have it in writing. When taking into account any request for changes, we will look at the individual as well as the impact on the whole program. Please bring any and all concerns to our office.

Participants are expected to serve as ambassadors of the University of Pittsburgh, working to the best of their abilities, and acting in an ethical manner, both during the interviewing process and work rotations. In a recent employer survey, it was noted that employers valued ethics in an individual as much or more than a high GPA. We have found that it is a rare occurrence for a student to lose a co-op position due to lack of ability. Students most often lose a co-op because of poor attendance, lack of professionalism, or unwillingness to give 100%. Check with us about any concerns you have.

Co-op Fees

Students who are placed through the efforts of the co-op office are required to register for the co-op credit. In fairness to the many hundreds of students who participate in our program each year, **we cannot negotiate or waive the co-op fees.**

Current fees per term are: **\$325 co-op fee (includes cost of credit) plus pro-rata charges for the activity fee and computer fee.** All Oakland (Pittsburgh) campus students will pay the safety and transportation fee.

Office Hours

The SCI Co-op and Internship coordinator is your first point of contact for this experience. She is available Monday-Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. She is here to advise on resume writing, interviewing skills, job development and to answer any questions that you might have about the program. Co-op specific forms, procedures, and more detailed administrative issues are handled by the central Co-op Office in Benedum (see below), but planning, initial documents, and any initial questions or concerns should be addressed with the SCI Co-op and Internship coordinator.

Forms and Procedures

The co-op office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and located in offices 152 Benedum Hall.

The following link can be used to register; however, graduate students must also submit an approved co-op schedule that has been signed off by the SCI Internship Coordinator and their academic advisor. We also require an electronic copy of your resume that can be sent to adsingh@pitt.edu.

<http://www.engineering.pitt.edu/Student/Student-Programs/Coop/For-Students/Application-Process/>

Each student who wishes to participate in the program will be responsible for completing the application process which will include an on-line application and question and answer portion. We also need an electronic version of the resume and a signed and approved academic schedule. Your faculty advisor must approve your complete plan of study that demonstrates how you will incorporate your Co-op rotations in with all of the other classes you will take to graduate.

This handbook is also available electronically at our website, or in a hard copy by stopping in the office.

Your resume will be sent to all companies for which you meet the requirements. If you indicate on your interest form that you only want a local co-op, we will only send your resume to local companies. If you indicate you will go anywhere, we will send your resume to any company for which you qualify.

Finding an SCI Co-op

While your resume will be shared with companies on file with the Co-op Office for which you are qualified, graduate students are expected to be proactive in seeking co-op positions and work in partnership with the SCI Internship Coordinator and the Co-op Office.

We encourage you to seek graduate level positions by visiting the SCI Career Expo, the University career fair, our Co-op Job Fair, company websites, the SCI job posting board, and Handshake (on the university Career Services website at www.careers.pitt.edu). Handshake is the University's Career Services' on-line job-posting and recruiting system. While Handshake is geared towards undergraduate student positions, we do recommend that you view possible opportunities on the Handshake site in addition to utilizing the co-op office for positions.

If an employer of interest to you is attending the Co-op Job Fair, the SCI Career Expo, or the University Career Fair, please be sure to submit your resume in person on that date, even if that employer is already on file in the Co-op database.

For more information or if you have any questions contact Alka Singh at adsingh@pitt.edu or 412-624-0879.

Success in Co-op

Have a positive attitude. One of our employers once noted that she looks for "A" level work. That means:

- You are willing to work.
- You are anxious to learn.
- You are flexible.
- You expect to make a contribution.

Also, make sure that you respond to any e-mail or phone calls from either the co-op office or the employers within 24 hours. This is critical to your success in the program. Remember: You never have a second chance to make a first impression!

Resume and Interviewing Skills Assistance

The SCI co-op and internship coordinator is here to assist you with your resume. We would like to critique yours before you turn it in to our office. There are several sample resumes in the back of this handbook. Prepare a draft of a resume that will showcase your skills and bring it in to our office for a final review.

We provide a cover letter example as well as a thank you letter in the back of this handbook.

There is also an interview section to assist you in preparation for the interview process. We can schedule mock interviews for you if you would like. Without a good resume and interviewing information skills, you will have a hard time making a good impression. You can also check our website for interviewing information.

What is an interview?

Typically, an interview is used as a screening process in which you are given the opportunity to learn more about an organization. At the same time, it is the company's opportunity to evaluate you as a prospective employee. The effective interview is the most important aspect of the employment search. In a 20- or 30- minute interview, your personality, educational background and work experience are appraised. It is usually the most decisive part of your campaign for the job opportunity you want. Initial contacts by letter, resume or application describe one's credentials. The interview demonstrates these credentials.

<p><u>QUALITIES THE INTERVIEWER LOOKS FOR:</u></p> <p><u>Personality</u> Be genuine, self-confident, pleasant and honest. Be yourself.</p> <p><u>Articulateness</u> Express yourself clearly and concisely. Answer questions thoroughly and in a candid manner.</p> <p><u>Alertness</u> Make your answers and questions relevant and intelligent. Develop your questions prior to the interview.</p> <p><u>Enthusiasm</u> Be enthusiastic, optimistic, and show an appropriate amount of interest.</p> <p><u>Maturity</u> Express clear professional goals. Know what you want. Conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing.</p> <p><u>Motivation</u> Show your incentive and willingness through your desire and interest in the job opportunity.</p> <p><u>Compatibility</u> Express, through your behavior, your ability to get along with others.</p> <p><u>Preparation</u> Know relevant information about the company – location, product, and general knowledge about its business purpose. The more you know, the greater impression you will make on the interviewer.</p> <p><u>POSITIVE INTERVIEW TIPS:</u></p> <p>Some interviewers like to do most of the talking and judge you by your reactions – the comprehensive intelligence you show. Other interviewers say very little.</p>	<p>Be friendly, relaxed; be yourself.</p> <p>Maintain good eye contact.</p> <p>Communicate accomplishments.</p> <p>Do not monopolize the conversation, but be an active participant.</p> <p>Be an attentive listener when the interviewer is speaking.</p> <p>Respond to questions with more than a yes or no answer.</p> <p>Show interest through asking well-thought-out questions. Ask some definite questions about the company.</p> <p>Do not try to fill in the silent spots. You may tend to ramble.</p> <p>Display your personality and achievements, initiating as well as responding.</p> <p>Accentuate the positives. Be optimistic. Display self-confidence, ambition, and competitive attitude. Be sure your good points get across to the interviewer.</p> <p>Emphasize your special skills and interests.</p> <p><u>QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWER IS LIKELY TO ASK:</u></p> <p>What do you know about our company? (Critical !!!)</p> <p>Why did you decided to interview with our company?</p>
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<p>Their attitude is that it is up to you to sell yourself. In either case, the following tips can be of great value to you:</p> <p>Approach the interview with a positive attitude and sincere interest in the company.</p> <p>Pay attention to your appearance. You want to appear professional, so dress conservatively.</p> <p>Arrive a few minutes early for the interview.</p> <p>Allow the interviewer to initiate the conversation.</p>	<p>Tell me about yourself.</p> <p>What personal qualities do you possess which might distinguish you from other applicants?</p> <p>What are your basic interests and your non-job or school-related achievements?</p> <p>Why did you decide to attend graduate school?</p> <p>How did you choose this particular school?</p>
<p>How did you choose this particular field of study?</p> <p>What have been some of the more important aspects of your education?</p> <p>What courses did you like best? Least? Why?</p> <p>Do you feel you have done the best scholastic work of which you are capable?</p> <p>Which of your graduate courses were the more difficult? Why?</p> <p>What type of work interests you?</p> <p>Under what kinds of conditions do you work best?</p> <p>What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?</p> <p>What personal factors do you consider most important in evaluating yourself or your success?</p> <p>How do you weight career priorities such as job security, satisfaction, work hours, salary, and working conditions in evaluating your needs in a job?</p> <p>To date, what have been some of your more important work responsibilities?</p> <p>What have you enjoyed most and liked least about the work you have done?</p> <p>What work satisfaction or achievements have not been realized or at least have not been at the level that you had hoped?</p> <p>Do you have a geographical preference? Why?</p> <p>What consideration have you given to further enhance your performance and personal growth?</p> <p>How do you schedule your time? Set priorities? What are your hobbies?</p> <p>What do you consider to be strengths and weaknesses?</p> <p>What was your most difficult decision in the last six</p>	<p>In what school activities have you participated? To what extent?</p> <p>How have your extracurricular activities helped prepare you for the kind of work you've done or influenced your development as a person?</p> <p>Do you think that your extracurricular activities were worth the time you devoted to them? Why?</p> <p>At this point in your life, what would you like to be doing in the foreseeable future in terms of your career goals?</p> <p><u>QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWEE IS LIKELY TO ASK:</u></p> <p>What are the opportunities for advancement?</p> <p>Does your company have a practice of promoting on merit and of promoting within?</p> <p>Describe initial assignments in my particular area of interest.</p> <p>What opportunities will I have for professional development?</p> <p>Does your company encourage and support "continuing education" for its employees?</p> <p>Tell me about the community in which I would be employed.</p> <p>What will I be doing?</p> <p><u>CHECKLIST FOR CO-OP INTERVIEWING:</u></p> <p>Dress professionally for the co-op interview. "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."</p> <p>Do not chew gum, smoke, or use too much perfume or aftershave.</p>

<p>months? What made it difficult?</p> <p>Give some instances in which you anticipated problems or influenced new directions.</p> <p>How do you deal with pressure?</p> <p>Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?</p> <p>Would you prefer a large or small company? Why?</p>	<p>Be on time for an interview. Call if an emergency prevents you from being on time.</p> <p>Bring a copy of your resume, a list of at least 3 references, pen and notebook, and list of questions to ask the interviewer.</p> <p>Know something about the company. (co-op office has information.)</p> <p>Send thank you note to the interviewer noting your interest and how you can contribute to the company.</p>
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IMPORTANT!
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CO-OP

What is Cooperative Education?

Cooperative Education is an academic program allowing full-time work assignments that relate directly to your engineering, chemistry, or School of Computing and Information discipline. This program enables students to complement classroom studies with practical experience, technical knowledge, and financial reward.

Do I work full-time or part-time?

At the University of Pittsburgh, the student works full-time for a term, and then returns to school for full time study.

How is this different than a 3 credit practicum/field experience/internship?

Co-op has to be at least one semester of full-time experience and would only be counted for 1 credit that does not directly apply towards academic degree requirements; it is a structured and documented outside of the classroom practical experience that is an officially encouraged educational enhancement to a student's degree program. This differs from the practicum in that the practicum: a) is a 3-credit practical experience with a strong academic component that directly applies to degree requirements, b) does not have to be paid, and c) does not have to be with an employer with whom we have a formal Co-op relationship. The SCI Co-op Coordinator can help employers new to working with SCI students determine whether or not a formal relationship can be defined. If the employer cannot develop a formal Co-op relationship, the student cannot take the experience as a Co-op experience.

When Do I Begin and how many terms can I work?

Master's students in the School of Computing and Information who received an undergraduate degree in the School of Computing and Information at Pitt or Engineering at Pitt may work the summer before matriculation and the summer between their first and second year of study; other academic terms of work can be permitted if approved by the SCI co-op and internship coordinator and the student's faculty advisor. If you are a student here on a visa, the work must be integral to your field of study and academic and work schedules must also be approved by OIS. Master's and PhD students may work 1 or more rotations.

What are the eligibility requirements?

Students must possess a minimum 3.0 QPA overall, and may not be on academic probation. Also, students must generate a completed plan of study showing their pattern for completing all coursework along with co-op rotations (Some co-op employers will set a higher QPA requirement.)

Is co-oping mandatory?

No, co-oping is an option for any qualified student.

What types of positions are there?

The Co-op Office is committed to assuring a practical work experience for each student in his/her field of study. We work with a wide range of companies including public and private, small and large. We have placed students nationally as well as in the Pittsburgh area. Some students have had international assignments with their co-op employers.

What are the primary benefits of the co-op program?

Practical experience, technical knowledge, financial remuneration, confidence, assurance, and better understanding of academics are all benefits of the co-op experience in addition to the academic credits earned by the student. The co-op experience has also immensely benefited graduating students in their job search. Although many students eventually accept permanent employment with their co-op employers, many others find that they have multiple offers to select from; many with a higher than average starting salary.

How do I register with the Co-op Program?

The co-op office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and located in offices 152 Benedum Hall. The following link can be used to register; however, graduate students must also submit an approved co-op schedule that has been signed off by the SCI co-op and internship coordinator and their academic advisor. We also require an electronic copy of your resume that can be sent to adsingh@pitt.edu.

<http://www.engineering.pitt.edu/Student/Student-Programs/Coop/For-Students/Application-Process/>

A one-on-one mock interview is available to any student who requests it. We strongly encourage all registrants to participate.

How long will it take to get a job?

Applying and getting approval to seek a co-op position does not guarantee anyone a position or guarantee that you will receive an offer within a specific time frame. You may be one of those students who interviews for one position, receives an offer from the company, accepts it, and thus completes the interviewing process. Most students find, though, that securing a position is a waiting game. Most offers are tendered towards the end of the term, and many students find themselves deciding between two offers. Keep in mind that it may take more than one term to secure a position. Applying to the co-op office and reviewing your plan of study for including co-op should be done as early as possible in your studies so that you can begin applying up to 9 months before your targeted start date. It is our experience though that, if you are interested in only certain industries or certain geographic locations, your job search will become more difficult.

Don't give up! Many students think that because they haven't heard from a company they are not desirable candidates. That is simply not the case. Employers are extremely busy with varied responsibilities; the co-op program is just one area for many of them. Again, most students will receive offers if they sign up for a number of companies.

Will there be a job fair?

Yes! The co-op office hosts two annual job fairs for co-op employers and students during the spring and fall terms of each year. By attending this job fair, you will significantly increase your opportunities of finding a co-op position. A booklet of participating companies will be available the week of the Fair. Please check with the co-op office for details on this event. Not all companies attend the job fair. The co-op office works with many employers and continues job development efforts throughout the term. Grad students should also attend the university career fairs, since the co-op schedules are more flexible for graduate students.

How will I know which companies interest me?

You should research any company that interests you on-line. Our job fair participants are listed on our website www.engineering.pitt.edu/coop. We also have a list of participating companies from our annual reports but please keep in mind that this list changes constantly.

In addition, the co-op office has a file on each company. We often have informational brochures on each company that you can keep or borrow. We also have salary information on almost all of our employers. Please ask us for this information if it is important to you!

What if I don't have the QPA or discipline the company requests? Can I still sign up?

It is important that we follow guidelines established by the employers. However, if you are truly interested in a company for which you do not meet criteria, please let us know. We will contact that company on your behalf. Many employers will agree to consider those candidates.

How will I know which companies are interested in me?

Once the resumes leave our office, one of several things might happen:

- The company schedules an on-campus recruiting visit. You will be notified by email of the interview schedule. We will expect a response from you.
- The company contacts you by telephone and discusses the position with you.
- The company offers you a plant trip based either on your resume or telephone interview. (It is imperative that you have an answering machine or cell phone. Companies will call during business hours when you are often not available. The greeting on your phone needs to be professional. If an employer is offended by a message, he or she will not continue the interview process.
- The company will usually notify you by telephone or in writing to offer you a position.
- Please note: All offers and plant visits must be reported to the co-op office.

I've never interviewed with a corporation before. Do you assist us in preparation for an interview?

Yes. We strongly encourage all students to mock interview with our staff members or someone in the Career Services Office. We have found that most students who utilize this service not only feel more comfortable during the interviewing process, but ultimately receive job offers. Co-op employers sometimes offer interviewing skills workshops through Career Services or our office. Check out our important dates to see if there are any professional development workshops coming up. It's important!

Is it appropriate to send "Thank You" notes after an interview?

Yes! Particularly if you are interested in the position. A sample letter can be found in this booklet. It is appropriate to send by email or regular mail. The notes can be hand written if sent by regular mail.

If I get an offer, do I have to take it?

No, you do not. However, it is critical to turn down the position in a professional manner. There may come a day when that same company might be of great interest to you. If the company has had a less than positive experience with you, it's possible that they won't consider you for future employment with them. Be truthful but professional. If you have absolutely no interest in the position, don't take up the interviewer's time by accepting a plant visit.

What if I interview and then decide that co-opping is not for me?

The first thing you need to do is notify the co-op office. We will make certain that your resume is not circulated to any additional companies, to save you the responsibility of explaining your decision to them. Do not continue to interview or go on plant trips. Tell any employers who contact you that you are no longer available, but thank them for considering you. You may also want to add that you might re-submit a resume to them during senior year.

Will I be told if I don't get the position?

Usually. However, some companies just notify the students they wish to extend the offers to for co-op employment. If you have not heard from a company you are interested in, ask someone in the co-op office. We are usually up to date on what is happening with each company.

Are all positions paid?

Yes; all positions are paid. **The average starting salary is approximately \$3494 per month.**

What if I accept a position with a company but a better offer comes along?

If you have an offer with a company, you must decline that position before we submit your resume to additional companies. We ask that you consider any job offer very seriously before accepting or rejecting. If you have an offer but are waiting for a possible offer from another company, it is perfectly acceptable and in fact a good idea to call them to ascertain your status before making a decision. We are also available to help you obtain any needed information.

Once you have made your decision, however, we expect you to consider that a commitment to the company. Reneging on job acceptance will cause dismissal or suspension from the co-op program. We recommend that students ask questions and get details regarding the position before accepting. Information can be gained from: 1. Employer 2. Internet 3. Other Students 4. Professors. 5. Co-op office. Take advantage.

If I co-op, can I still get the courses I need in order to graduate?

This depends on how well you plan and how far in advance you plan. You'll need to review your plan of study with both the SCI co-op and internship coordinator and your faculty advisor to determine what timing will best align with your particular specialization. For this reason your plan of study is to be completed as a part of the application checklist before you accept interviews. It is the student's responsibility to give a signed copy to the co-op office and his/her department. You also need to keep a copy for yourself.

What if I accept a job outside of Pittsburgh and need temporary housing during either my school or work rotations?

Accepting a co-op position outside of Pittsburgh is a great way to broaden your horizons. It is a fantastic way for you to see what it's like to live in another part of the country or even internationally for a finite period of time. Most companies will offer some form of housing assistance for those positions outside of Pittsburgh. Inquire at the co-op office or ask the company during your interview. When you return to Pitt for classes and need a sublet for 4 months, you can let us know and we will email your housing needs to current co-ops through Blackboard.

Are there any co-op fees?

Yes; SCI graduate co-op students will be registered for a one credit course, the number and title of which is mapped to your program. The fee for this course is \$325 plus the safety & transportation fee, part-time activity fee, part-time wellness fee, and pro-rated computer fee. Students will be registered for this course prior to the commencement of each work term.. Although a credit is earned, you do not pay for the credit itself.

Is there any negotiation with the fee?

No. If a student uses the services of this office to gain employment, the fee must be paid.

Will I be drug tested before beginning an assignment?

You will most likely be drug tested. Companies have the right to rescind the offer in the event of a positive testing. Additionally, many companies complete background checks, and can also rescind an offer based on the results of that check.

AFTER ACCEPTING A CO-OP POSITION

Congratulations on being accepted as a Co-op Professional! The privilege of participating in this program will enhance your academic career while affording you an opportunity to gain practical work experience and financial reward.

Before beginning your co-op position, notify the co-op office of your acceptance. We will have some final paperwork and instructions for you. If you are an international student, it is required that you meet with the OIS office before starting your co-op.

Class Registration Process

You MUST be registered for the one-credit co-op course that maps to your specific program. The student does not pay for the one credit but does pay the \$325* co-op fee plus miscellaneous fees listed in this handbook. The SCI Co-op Coordinator will work with you to enroll you in the appropriate Co-op course. While enrolled in co-op, you are considered a full-time student. The SCI Co-op Coordinator will work in conjunction with Engineering Co-op Office to register you for co-op.

If you accept a position through the efforts of the co-op related staff, you will pay the fee.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are add/dropped into the Co-op course, you will not receive a second invoice. You can verify the amount you owe by contacting student accounts (412-624-7575, 201 Thackeray), or checking your account through my.pitt.edu. You are responsible for settling your invoice by your due date, or you will be assessed a late fee.

If you are an international student, the Office of International Services (OIS) must approve your Curricular Practical Training (CPT) before you begin working. Apply online at <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/>.

University Health Fee

Students will not be billed for the university health fee while on work assignments; however, students who want the ability to visit the Student Health Center while on co-op assignment can purchase directly at the student health center, which is located on the first floor the Nordenberg Hall on Fifth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15213 (phone # 412-383-1800). Coverage may be purchased at any time during the term.

Cooperative Education Financial Aid Procedures

Please notify the SCI Financial Aid coordinator if you have financial aid or loans. Her name is Corey James and she can be reached at cjames@sis.pitt.edu or 412-624-9388.

Evaluation of Co-op Assignments

Students are required to complete and submit two evaluation forms to the co-op office per term. The first is e-mailed approximately 6 weeks into the term and is to be completed and returned as soon as possible. If there are any concerns with your assignment, both the co-op office and faculty coordinator would like to be of assistance. Many issues can be easily resolved, and this six- week evaluation provides us with a mechanism to assist the students in a timely manner.

At the beginning of each work rotation we will e-mail you and ask you to send your manager's name and e-mail address to us. At the beginning of the last month of your work rotation term, you and your manager will receive an e-mail which will give you instructions regarding our on-line registration process through which you and your manager will submit end-of-term evaluations.

End of term evaluations must be completed each term by both the student and the employer. You cannot receive a satisfactory grade without the completion of the forms. We encourage your manager to go over the Employer Evaluation of Student with you.

Graduate students must also submit a one-page synopsis of their experience to their faculty advisor and the SCI Co-op Coordinator.

Taking Coursework while on a Co-op Assignment

Students are not encouraged to take coursework in addition to co-op during the first work term unless they have been approved to do so by their academic advisor. In the event that a class must be taken, we do not expect the student to leave work early or re-schedule work hours.* This practice puts a strain on our relationships with employers, does not take into account that these positions are considered professional in nature, and may occasionally require overtime, and puts the student at academic risk. Students are expected to adhere to the work schedule prepared for them by their faculty coordinators.

Daytime classes are not permitted while a student is on co-op.

*If the course is at another university, you must have approval beforehand.

Part-Time Work

Students are prohibited from working part-time with the co-op employer during academic terms. Students put themselves at academic risk and the practice of juggling part-time work and full-time academics is a practice which is not in the spirit of cooperative education.

Work Realities

We strongly discourage the use of excessive vacation or personal sick leave while on assignments unless absolutely necessary. Students are expected to work the full work term (approximately 15 weeks). Work periods include: January through April, May through August, September through December.

We have had students lose their co-op position due to absenteeism and tardiness.

The Co-op Office strongly recommends you check with your employer to discern and abide by their Internet Usage Policy.

Grading Policies

1. After completing the co-op, the student would be required to prepare a one-page paper describing his/her rotation, including the skills learned and used and its educational relevance. **That paper would be due within two weeks after completion of the rotation and is sent to the program assistant for the department, who will distribute it to the appropriate faculty member for grading.** In addition, the student would complete the required evaluation forms.
2. If both the student and employer review of the student are submitted and work rotation was satisfactory, an "S" grade will be issued. If the reviews are not completed, a "G" grade will be issued for the semester. Additional terms cannot be worked if the student does not have an "S" grade and the brief paper submitted.

"F" or "U" grades can be given for the following reasons:

- Unsatisfactory completion of assignment.
- Failure to return for a work rotation without properly and promptly notifying the co-op director and the employer of your resignation.
- Not abiding by co-op regulations as detailed in this booklet.

Co-op Probation

Graduate students must perform up to the standards of their departments academically in order to participate or continue in the co-op program

Removal from the Co-op Program

Automatic removal or an unsatisfactory or "F" grade can result from the following:

- Changing rotations without approval of co-op office.
- Receiving less than a 3.0 quality point average.
- Being dismissed by employer for poor work performance, failure of drug testing or other unprofessional work behaviors.
- Resigning from your position without authorization of the co-op office.
- Reneging on a commitment to an employer in order to take a position with another company without going through the co-op office.
- Taking an overload of coursework while on co-op.
- For International Students, failing to notify the OIS office and to abide by OIS and university policies

Layoffs or Strikes

Co-op students will be treated the same as regular employees in the event of lay-offs. The student is then encouraged to use the co-op office to find another position to complete the Program requirements.

In the event of layoff, a student is encouraged to use the co-op office to find another position to complete program requirements.

Conditions of Employment

Students are responsible for confirming all conditions and dates of employment, keeping in mind that a term is about 15 weeks in length.

As a graduate level student, we expect you to determine the appropriate level of your education in conjunction with your job duties prior to accepting the position.

Legal Requirements

Students must have a social security number and have social security tax deducted from their salaries. Students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents must have approval from the OIS office to co-op.

Co-op Certification

Students completing their work term(s) in good standing under the Co-op Program are eligible for certification upon graduation from the University of Pittsburgh. This certification is noted on the student's transcript.

Graduate Student Resume #1

3700 O'Hara Street, Pittsburgh, PA-15217 • aaa1@pitt.edu • 412-555-1212

Objective

To seek a challenging co-op opportunity in a professional & competitive environment. To be involved in research & implementation of projects related to Power Storage, Conversion and Transmission, grid and systems Integration.

Educational Qualification

Electrical Engineering, University of Pittsburgh
Masters, Electrical Power & Control Systems
GPA- 4.0/4.0

December 2015
Pittsburgh, USA

Electrical Engineering, Mumbai University
Bachelor of Engineering
Aggregate: 67%

May 2014
Mumbai, INDIA

Professional Experience

University of Pittsburgh

January 2014-Present

Graduate Research Assistant

- Evolution of VSC-HVDC and conventional HVDC technology over the years
- Conducting feasibility studies as part of an initiative on offshore wind farm integration in North East
- Market research and penetration levels of major vendors involved in HVDC Technology

Arrow Engineers Pvt. Ltd.

September 2013-May 2014

Senior Design Project

Mumbai, INDIA

- Designed a power factor correction device which switched capacitor at zero voltage
- Acquired various components after preparing technical specifications based on IS (Indian Standards)
- Assembled the device at factory workshop
- Successfully corrected the power factor of an industrial motor from 0.7 to 0.95

Academic Projects

- **Offshore Wind-Farm Turnkey Project**-Prepared a complete project proposal with technical specifications, regulations involved, transmission system, civil costs, project management and payback period calculations
- **Load Flow Studies:** Used C++ to perform load flow using Gauss Seidel and Newton Raphson methods
- **Static VAR Compensator (SVC) Design**-Designed an SVC for a facility to provide smooth control for compensation in the range of -150 to +300 MVAR

Relevant Coursework

- Power System Planning & Reliability, Power System Operation & Control, Protection & Switchgear Engineering
- Project Management, HVDC & FACTS Applications, Power Electronics, Electrical Drives & Control
- Control systems, Optimal Control, Design & Management of Electrical Systems, Digital Signal Processing, Computer Aided Power System Analysis, Electric Machine Design

Applications: MATLAB, SIMULINK, PSCAD, PSSE, MS OFFICE, C++

Leadership Skills & Accomplishments

- **Head of Organizers, Energy Volunteers' Group (EVG)**-With the help of faculty, started an On-Campus initiative to spread awareness on Energy Conservation. As a senior student, organized seminars, energy audits and industry talks with representatives from corporates for Junior, Sophomore and Freshmen
- **Cultural Secretary, SPCE**-Led a team of 20 people to efficiently carry out all cultural events (fairs and festivals) in academic year 2009-2010. Raised the budget by roping in more sponsors and events. Took the initiative to introduce new events and community service as part of the college tradition
- **Second Place, Annual Gulf Science Exhibition**-Second prize for developing a chemical equation balancer using C++

• Grad Resume #2

E-mail: resume3@gmail.com Phone: 412-555-1212

EDUCATION

2014.9-Present University of Pittsburgh **Pittsburgh, PA**
Master in Industrial Engineering
2010.9-2014.7 University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (USST) **Shanghai, China**
B.S. in Opeoelectronic Information Engineering GPA: 3.30 / 4.00

AWARDS AND HONORS

2013.03 Outstanding Graduate, USST
2011.10 Second-class Scholarship for Spiritual Civilization
2011.5 The Excellent cadre of Communist Youth League of China
2010 2 2012 Third-class Scholarship for Academic Excellence, USST
2010 & 2011 Second-class Scholarship for Student Leadership

WORK EXPERIENCE

2013.12-2014.1 Intern, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. (HSBC) **Shanghai**

- ◆ Inspected the factors influencing the bullion price such as trade balance, interest rate, CPI and PPI, etc
- ◆ Learned foreign exchange regulations for managing well in foreign currency operations.
- ◆ Planned a family financial management according to the investment and financing pyramid ratios.

2013.3-2014.5 Intern, Baosteel Group Corporation, EM Department. **Shanghai**

- ◆ Got familiar with the process of steel production, transportation, and plant layout.
- ◆ Interviewed three project leaders of functional divisions.
- ◆ Analyzed the managerial framework and contributed several suggestions about rational planning and information processing.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

University of Pittsburgh:
Lean Six Sigma Probability and Statistic for Engineers and Scientists
Intro to Manufacturing Systems Data Mining Operations Research Database Design

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2013.9-2014.3 Research Assistant, Key Lab of Modern Optical System of Shanghai **USST**
Project 1: Far-field nano-resolution optical microscopy imaging method
Project 2: Nanoscale detection of the facula and the intensity of the light
2013.6-2014.12 Research Assistant, Key Lab of Modern Optical System of Shanghai
USST
Project: Identification of Drugs THz Absorption Spectra of Using SVM

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

2021 Summer Organizer, "Knowing Cup" College Student Social Practice Contest **Shanghai**
2011.3-2012.5 Senior member, Student In Free Enterprise (SIFE), USST **Shanghai**

- ◆ Co-designed the project "Save Our Culture Heritage" and be responsible for the statistics;
- ◆ Team-worked on presentation, responsible for competition in East China;
- ◆ *Achieved the 1st place in East China region and "The Most Environmental Project"*

2012 Spring A Comparison of Business Strategy and Tactics in Mainland KFC and McDonald's **Shanghai**

TECHNICAL SKILL

- ◆ Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Power Point
- ◆ Data Processing : IBM SPSS.
- ◆ Design Software: Zemax, Protel DXP

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

Attention US Steel Co-op recruiting,

I am interested in interviewing with US Steel for an IT/Application developer Co-op position or an IT infrastructure Co-op position. I recently had an interview with Fred Smith at the University of Pittsburgh campus, and I would like to reiterate my interest in your company.

I am especially interested in obtaining a position with US Steel because of its long history as one of the leading steel producers in the world and because of your company's wide international presence. I can offer your company strong communication skills, an ability to learn quickly, and considerable lab experience.

I have worked at the Radio Frequency and Devices Lab at the University of Pittsburgh since January where I have gained valuable experience solving complicated real world design problems. One particular problem was how to design a blood pH RF sensor model using a thermistor. I also gained experience with surface mount soldering of resistors and capacitors to a printed circuit board.

Over the past summer, I taught myself the fundamentals of object-oriented programming by developing IOS applications for the iPhone. I am currently furthering my knowledge of object-oriented programming in my Intermediate Programming with Java class. I am confident that my programming background along with my lab experience and communication skills provides me with a solid foundation for a successful Co-op with US Steel.

I am very interested in coming onsite for an interview with US Steel. I look forward to hearing from you and I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration.

Regards,

Student Name

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2

111 ABC Highway
Pittsburgh, PA 15555

July 31, 2015

Mr. John Doe
Manager, Executive Recruitment
XYZ Company
400 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Mr. Doe,

I am interested in interviewing with XYZ Company during your September 6th recruiting visit to the University of Pittsburgh. I am particularly interested in a career with XYZ Company because of your reputation as one of the 10 best executive training programs in your industry. As a candidate, I can offer your company strong interpersonal skills, organizational ability, and retail sales experience.

As a sales associate at Rave, I developed effective selling techniques, resulting in consistently exceeding my store's quotas. Through extensive contact with customers, assisting in merchandising, and performance of daily store operations, I gained valuable experience.

(cont'd on next page)

My internship at WJPA Radio and my work-study position at the University of Pittsburgh have provided me with an opportunity to develop oral and written communication skills, as well as experience in researching and analysis of data. I am confident that these skills have provided me with the background for a successful and productive career at XYZ Company.

I have enclosed a resume for your review. I am very interested in discussing my qualifications with you further. I will contact your office on August 2nd to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Pen written signature)

Joe Retailer

Enclosure

Post-Interview Thank You Note Samples

150 Farmington Avenue
Hartford CT 06105
August 21, 2013

Mr. John Doe
XYZ Enterprises
1931 W. Willow Drive
Chicago, IL 00178

Dear Mr. Doe,

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the media relations position at XYZ Enterprises. I would like to reiterate my interest in the position and your organization.

The enthusiasm I have felt right along about the possibility of working for you has increased with our meeting. I am more certain than ever that I am well qualified to make the kind of contribution to XYZ Enterprises that you are expecting from your media relations specialist.

I will look forward to hearing your decision regarding my application.

Sincerely,

Clarence Smith

Hi Mr. XXX,

I wanted to thank you for your time in coming over and setting up the interview.

It was a great opportunity for me to interact with you and learn about the basic challenges that a global company like ABC Company faces. The fact that you took my inputs and discussed how they could effectively change the operations within ABC Company was a highly valued experience for me.

Thank you for considering me for the co-op and please let me know if there is any additional information that I can provide.

Yours Sincerely,

Student Name

Electrical and Computer Engineering Department
Swanson School of Engineering, University of Pittsburgh