

Employer Guidelines for VSB CoOp

Program Overview

The Villanova School of Business (VSB) is committed to providing a world-class business education complemented by appropriate experiential learning through internships and cooperative education programs (CoOps) in the business community. VSB engages in CoOp relationships with organizations committed to participating in the School's strategic initiatives.

The CoOp Program is designed to be mutually beneficial to the employer and VSB students. A CoOp employer is provided with direct access to well-prepared students (typically Juniors) who can deliver high quality work; additionally, the CoOp experience allows the employer to develop a potential full-time hiring source. Students participating in CoOps experience complete immersion in a professional work environment. The hands-on application of classroom theory provides valuable insight into career interests, professional aspirations, and personal values, thus helping students crystallize goals and focus on future plans.

A CoOp is a six-month full-time paid work experience that is rigorous to merit earning academic credit, and endorsed by the VSB and Faculty Chair(s) of the appropriate academic area(s). The work content mirrors that of a full-time professional employed by the sponsoring organization. VSB CoOps are administered through the O'Donnell Center for Professional Development (ODC).

CoOps are offered during two timeframes: Fall (July – December) and Spring (January – June). Students earn six academic credits for successful completion of a CoOp experience. The VSB CoOp program is designed so that students maintain full-time status, thus continuing eligibility for insurance coverage, scholarships, and campus housing, and remain on track to graduate in four years by completing coursework (missed while working as a CoOp) before, during or after the CoOp assignment.

Approval Process

To be considered for participation in the VSB CoOp Program, the employer must agree to the following requirements:

- **Timing** – CoOp students are required to work full-time over the course of a six-month period. (Fall CoOp: July-December; Spring CoOp: January-June)
- **Provide CoOp Description** – to include the following information:
 - Specific responsibilities and duties required of the CoOp student
 - Skills and competencies the CoOp student will gain through the experience
 - Nature of the CoOp (i.e., project or task-based)
 - Roles and relationships that exist in the workplace (i.e. type/quantity of supervision/mentoring)
 - Professional development provided through the CoOp
 - Preferred qualifications (e.g., class year(s), major(s), minimum GPA, skills, courses, etc.)
 - Compensation arrangements
 - Housing accommodations (if appropriate)
 - Full-time hire opportunities

CoOp Description will be evaluated by VSB's O'Donnell Center for Professional Development staff and appropriate VSB Faculty for credit approval. O'Donnell Center staff will notify employer of approval status.

CoOp Student's Academic Requirements

Villanova business students participating in a CoOp for academic credit must complete the following requirements:

- **Learning Objectives** – CoOp student will establish, in conjunction with Supervisor, 3-4 Learning Objectives as a means of focusing his/her CoOp experience. CoOp student will complete a Learning Objectives form (to be initialed by student and Supervisor) and submit it via Blackboard within the first two weeks of beginning the CoOp experience.
- **Daily Activity Log** - CoOp student will maintain a Daily Activity Log in which he/she will record the dates worked, the number of hours completed, the nature of projects, tasks, responsibilities, etc., and the relationship of activities to the Learning Objectives. The Log will be initialed by the CoOp Supervisor on regular basis (i.e., once a week).
- **Final Paper** – CoOp student is required to complete a 10-12 page paper answering the following prompts:
 - Describe the nature of the CoOp (i.e., responsibilities, projects, assignments, etc.)
 - What were your learning objectives at the start of your CoOp and how did you achieve them?
 - How did the CoOp relate to your past/future coursework?
 - Reflect on insights gained regarding the industry, profession, leadership styles, etc.
 - How can/will you apply your learnings to experiences in the future?
 - Did your CoOp experience help to focus or clarify your career goals? How so?
 - Read an excerpt about Career Readiness. Select 3 career competencies and discuss how you utilized and refined these competencies during your CoOp. Be sure to cite 2-3 sample behaviors you practiced during your CoOp as well.
- **Evaluation** – CoOp student will complete a Student Evaluation of the CoOp experience, including assessment of workload, quality of supervision, professional development and the overall quality of the CoOp experience.
- **Submission Deadlines** - CoOp student is required to submit Learning Objectives, Daily Activity Log, Final Paper and Student Evaluation through Blackboard. Submission deadline for Fall CoOp: December 1, and for Spring CoOp: May 1.

Supervisor Responsibilities

The designated CoOp Supervisor within the employing organization agrees to:

- Provide CoOp student with an overview of the organization and its industry, as well as its operation and management issues
- Assist CoOp student in identifying 3-4 Learning Objectives and initial Learning Objectives form (within the first two weeks of the CoOp); guide CoOp in focusing daily activities and projects on accomplishing established objectives
- Set clear performance expectations for the CoOp student
- Provide regular supervision and act as a mentor to the CoOp student
- Monitor and initial CoOp student's Daily Activity Log on a weekly basis as a means of ensuring the quality of the CoOp experience
- Respond to regular communication from the ODC Associate Director of Experiential Education & Employer Outreach; notify Associate Director, in a timely manner, if CoOp student performance issues arise
- Complete and submit to the O'Donnell Center an Employer Evaluation at conclusion of the CoOp assignment