



CO-OP & INTERNSHIP FAQs & REQUIREMENTS

Co-op, summer internship positions, or part-time engineering jobs give you access to the many benefits of experiential learning while you are a student. You will:

- Apply the technical knowledge you've learned in the classroom to a real-world environment and help confirm (or question) your choice of major.
- Earn money for school or rent, save for a car, or for fun. (Most engineering internship and co-op positions are paid!)
- Develop your organizational, administrative, and interpersonal job skills.
- Gain confidence as you talk with other engineers as colleagues and build a network of great professional contacts in your field of interest.
- Make yourself more marketable upon graduation with each professional experience. Employers expect you to have significant work experience by the time you start applying for full-time jobs at the beginning of your senior year.

CO-OP & INTERNSHIP FAQs

What is the difference between a co-op and an internship?

An internship gives you about 10-12 weeks of professional experience at one company full-time during the summer, or part-time during the school year. You can return to work with the same company in future school breaks, or work part time during the semester. You can also try different companies or industries in future summers.

A co-op position typically includes at least one regular semester of full-time work. You may receive additional training and oversee significant projects from start to finish, simply because you will probably work more total hours than as an intern. Employers especially value students with co-op experience when they recruit for entry level full-time engineering positions.

So which is better, a co-op or an internship?

Assuming you meet the eligibility requirements, go ahead and apply for both co-op and internship positions. Remember, applying does not obligate you to accept a job offer, nor does it guarantee you a job.

INTERNSHIP & CO-OP FAQs, CONT'D.

How do I get started on my search for an internship or co-op?

Start with a *Find an Internship (or Co-op!)* workshop if you want more tips on using campus career resources. See the schedule and on our website.

Bring your printed resume to Engineering Career Services for a critique so we can activate your [Careers4Engineers](#) (C4E) account. Complete your C4E account information and upload your resume. Be sure to update it each semester! Review and apply for job listings, including those with on-campus interviews.

When should I start applying for internships?

Now is a great time, even if this is your first semester at the University of Maryland. Peak recruiting occurs in September-October and February-March. Some companies hire during the fall semester for the following summer, while others recruit in the spring.

How can I improve my chances of finding a job?

Get involved – take on an active role in a student organization or engineering competition team to build technical and communication skills. Talk to potential employers at career fairs and information sessions. Build your professional network through informational interviews with alumni and other contacts. Use job boards beyond [Careers4Engineers](#) to supplement your job search.

Will I have to move to participate in an internship?

The more flexible you are about geographic location, the more likely you are to find a position. Some employers even help you pay for relocation.

Will I be paid for an internship or co-op?

Most engineering internships and co-ops are paid positions. There are some exceptions (non-profits, educational institutions, start ups).

How do I respond to an offer?

Be sure to consider your options and ask questions before you say yes or no. Attend our *Job Offers & Salary Negotiation* workshop for tips on what to ask, or stop in to ask for help responding to a job offer.

You are committed to the first offer you accept (even verbally), even if a more interesting offer comes along. There are serious consequences for your professional reputation if you renege on a job offer.

What do I do once I accept an offer?

Discontinue your job search and notify other employers that may still be seriously considering you that you have decided to accept another position.

If you have accepted an internship offer, please let us know! Just stop by our office or go to our website to fill out our [Job Update Form](#).

What if I want to quit my internship?

If you are considering resigning, first speak to your supervisor at work. If you cannot resolve the conflict and decide to leave, it is customary to give at least two weeks' notice.

What if my employer wants to hire me for the following summer or full-time?

Your co-op/intern employer may, but is not obligated to, offer you a permanent position after completion of your work assignment. You are not obligated to accept such an offer if it is made.

If you have a co-op position with the federal government, there are very specific requirements for non-competitive conversion to a permanent position. You are responsible for learning what these requirements are from your employer.

If you would like to enroll in ENCO099/098: Co-op/ Internship Work Experience, see the following pages.

Enrollment in Co-op/Internship Experience may be appropriate for you if:

- you have been hired for a full-time co-op position in fall or spring semester,
- you will be both working and taking classes on a part-time basis during a fall or spring semester,
- your employer requires you to be formally enrolled in your school's co-op or internship program, OR
- you desire a transcript notation of your engineering work experience

IMPORTANT NOTE for International Students on F-1 Visas:

Your process and forms for enrolling in ENCO 099/098 are different from those described in this handout.

See instead the handout *Internships & CPT for Students on F-1 Visas*.

ENCO 099/098 ENROLLMENT FOR CO-OP

Eligibility to Enroll in ENCO 099/098

A co-op program participant must be enrolled as a degree-seeking student at the University of Maryland the semester immediately prior to each co-op work assignment. All undergraduate students must have at least a 2.0 semester GPA and a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 at the time of enrollment. For graduate students, the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is 3.0.

Before accepting a co-op position, you are responsible for discussing with your academic advisor how co-op work tours affect your academic plan. Students who will participate in a full-time co-op for two or more semesters, or whose satisfactory academic progress may be affected by participation in a full-time co-op, are required to provide proof to Engineering Career Services that they have reviewed their four year plan with their academic advisor.

Students in QUEST or other special campus programs should consult with their program administrators before accepting a co-op position that may conflict with program requirements. Graduate assistants should consult with their supervisors before accepting a co-op assignment that might conflict with their obligations to the university.

You should not drop your classes to add ENCO until you have your job offer in writing! It is much easier to drop those courses after you accept an offer than to try to add them later if an offer never materializes.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

If you are receiving financial aid and/or scholarships, contact an advisor in the Office of Student Financial Aid (umfinaid@umd.edu, 0102 Lee Building) **prior to** accepting a co-op to determine how participating in a co-op semester may affect these awards. Each type of grant, loan, and scholarship has its own requirements of enrollment status.

You may be able to defer the award to the semester you return, but arrangements must be made in advance with the scholarship administrator. Send an email to sfa-scholarships@umd.edu, including your name, UID, and a copy of your signed offer letter (on company letterhead) that includes the start and end dates of your co-op position.

On-Campus Housing and Meal Plans

It is your responsibility to review and adhere to the policies and deadlines for campus housing established by the Department of Resident Life. Students who wish to be released from a resident hall contract due to the location of a co-op assignment may request an authorization letter from Engineering Career Services. Undergraduate students living on campus who wish to change their meal plan due to an internship schedule must request the change from the Dining Plan Office by the stated deadlines. A co-op advisor can provide the student with an authorization letter if necessary.

Taking Courses While on Co-op

Students who are registered for **only** the 0 credit ENCO course during the fall or spring semester are not charged student activities or athletics fees, preventing them access to some campus activities or services, such as free student football and basketball or performing arts tickets, or RecWell facilities.

Students who enroll in additional courses while on co-op will also be charged tuition based on the number of credits. If you then drop the course before the first day of classes, you may receive a 100% refund. After the first day of classes, the refund amount decreases significantly. After schedule adjustment, there will be no refund; you incur the full charge for courses dropped. Specific payment and refund deadlines are posted by the [Registrar](#) (fall or spring) or by the [Office of Extended Studies](#) (summer/winter).

Registering for Classes for the Semester after your Work Tour

If you are registered for ENCO 099, you will be able to register for classes for the next semester just like any other UMD student. You can access registration, schedules, grades, and other UMD administrative services at www.testudo.umd.edu. If your department has mandatory advising, contact your departmental advisor by phone or email. If you have trouble reaching an advisor, contact [Engineering Career Services](#) at careerengr@umd.edu.

ENCO099/098 REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

You do need to request permission from the Engineering Career Services staff to be able to enroll in the 0-credit co-op course (ENCO099/098). Plan to register prior to starting each co-op work assignment and preferably before the first day of classes. If you receive a job offer after the first day of classes, we can add ENCO to your schedule retroactively and you will not accrue a late registration fee.

1. Print and bring all of the following documents to Engineering Career Services. You may walk in during our regular hours or make an appointment with an advisor.
 - Original offer letter on company letterhead
 - [ENCO 099/098: Co-op/ Internship Experience Student Agreement \(General\)](#)
 - [Student – Job Update Form \(General\)](#) – just complete the “About You” section

In addition, you may be asked to provide proof to Engineering Career Services that your departmental academic advisor approves of your work/study plan. If you will participate in two consecutive co-op semester, if your GPA for the semester immediately preceding the co-op experience is 2.0 or lower, or if there is another concern about your progress to degree. Acceptable proof is one of the following:

- Email from your academic advisor to Career Services staff
 - Copy of updated four year plan including ENCO099 terms
 - [ENCO 099/098: Co-op/ Internship Experience Work Study Plan](#)
2. Once the Career Services advisor has given you the electronic permission stamp, you will be able to register for the 0 credit co-op class (ENCO099/ ENCO098).

ENCO099/098 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are no class meetings for the 0-credit ENCO course.

Assessment and Grading

At the end of each co-op work assignment, you are required to complete a final survey reflecting on the work experience. Engineering Career Services will notify you by email (at the address on file through Testudo) at the end of each work term to remind you to complete your co-op survey online through our website.

The evaluation process is an opportunity for you to reflect on your experience and articulate the ways in which the co-op experience has contributed to your education.

After you fill out and submit the survey, a grade of “Satisfactory” will be submitted for ENCO 099/098. *Co-op/ Internship Work Experience* will appear on your transcript, with a grade indicating Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). If we do not receive your work report by the given deadline, we will give you an “Incomplete” grade for ENCO.

Supervisor Evaluations

We will send your employer a performance evaluation form that asks your supervisor to evaluate you in areas such as dependability, attitude, ability to learn, attendance and punctuality, communication skills, and relations with others. The completed evaluations returned to Engineering Career Services are kept in your file. You are welcome to read them at any time. It is also a good idea to ask your supervisor for an exit interview to discuss your performance and future professional development. *Your grade for ENCO does **not** depend upon the receipt nor the content of the supervisor evaluation.*

Co-op Distinction

Co-op Distinction is a special designation that co-op students receive on their transcript after their graduating semester if the following requirements have been satisfied:

- Completion of work-study schedule including the equivalent of 50 weeks of full-time work.
- Completion of all work reports.
- Grade point average of 2.0 or above for undergraduates; 3.0 or above for graduate students.
- Completion of senior survey.