



UNM

Office of Career Services

Cooperative Education (Co-op)

Cooperative Education is a college program that integrates classroom studies with paid, productive, real-life work experience in a degree-related field. The UNM Cooperative Education Program provides students with the opportunity to have their experience reflected on their academic transcript.

Advantages of Cooperative Education

- Co-op students develop life skills that positively impact their future career success.
- Co-op programs encourage students to strive for their full potential by gaining work experience and industry contacts.
- Important career decisions are often clarified. The blend of classroom learning and on-the-job skill-practice makes for a rewarding educational experience.
- Employers participating in the Co-op program develop positive relationships with future graduates and can help students develop the set of skills and experiences needed for their career.
- Employers also find motivated, well-prepared students who excel as employees and as future hires after graduation.

Who is Eligible for Cooperative Education?

- Students of UNM enrolled full-time or part-time.
- Undergraduate students who have successfully completed at least 24 hours of course work.
- Transfer undergraduate students who have successfully completed at least 12 hours of course work at UNM.
- Graduate students that have successfully completed at least 9 hours of course work.
- Students in good academic standing (2.5 undergrad, 3.0 grad)* making significant progress towards a degree at UNM.
 - * Students enrolled in the School of Engineering additionally must meet their program requirements.

Types of Cooperative Education

CO-OP 105 WORK PHASE: The most common Co-op format is an academic course the student registers for, just like any other course at UNM. Upon successful completion, the course will be reflected on the students' academic transcript showing either a "Credit" or a "No-Credit" grade. Students do not receive semester hours for Co-op and there is no tuition charge; however, please check with your department/school regarding any applicable fees. The program does not impact GPA.

CO-OP EVALUATION PHASE: With approval from a tenured faculty member of his/her school/college, the student can complete a semester paper or project by applying the knowledge gained from Co-op 105 work phase. This is an entirely optional program. The student can earn between one and three credit hours for his/her project as approved by academic department. Since credit hours are received, there will be a tuition charge depending on the credit hours approved by the department. This option may not be available in all schools and colleges of UNM.

Formats of Cooperative Education

FULL-TIME: This requires 40 hours per week for one school semester. Students do not register for other UNM classes during this semester. In this format, students must work a minimum of 480 work hours to satisfy the UNM Co-op program requirements. Full-time Co-op students are required to return to UNM and resume a full-time course load the semester following a full-time Co-op program.

PART-TIME: This requires 15 to 30 (max 20 hours for international students) hours per week for one school semester. Students have to register for a full-time or part-time load of regular credit-bearing classes at UNM while completing their part-time Co-op assignment. In this format, a student must work a minimum of 240 work hours to satisfy the UNM Co-op program requirements.

Students must re-apply each semester if they wish to participate in the Co-op Program, regardless of their current acceptance.

Co-op Program Application Procedure

Step 1: Register with UNM Career Services

Step 2: Meet with Co-op Coordinator to assess participation eligibility and explain Co-op process

Step 3: Identify Co-op Employer (through networking and job search processes)

Step 4: Register for Co-op Program (Co-op coordinator will release CRN for the course)

Step 5: Complete Student and Employer Evaluation (at least one week prior to the last day of the semester)

International students have additional requirements.

Responsibilities for Co-op Participants

- **Confirm Eligibility Status**

Before signing the Cooperative Education Agreement Form, confirm that all related UNM and/or outside agencies that will be affected by your Co-op application accept your Co-op status. For example, if you have financial aid, a UNM scholarship or any outside or private scholarship, you need to verify how this might affect your status.

- **Contact Information**

Make sure UNM Career Services is kept informed of all personal and professional changes in your address, phone numbers, e-mail, and fax numbers. UNM Career Services is not responsible for any paperwork and/or information that is not received by a student or employer due to contact information change.

- **Transcript**

Always check your current academic transcript to make sure that it reflects all credits earned for your Co-op experience. You can pick up your academic transcript at the office of records and registration next door to our office. (Unofficial transcripts are prepared instantly and are free of charge; official transcripts take 3-5 business days and involve a fee.)

- **Student Health Insurance**

You are responsible for purchasing and maintaining your own health insurance. If you have purchased UNM student health insurance, be sure that it is paid up and active for the Co-op semester. If you are covered by another insurance company, verify if that carrier requires an enrollment confirmation to maintain the policy during the Co-op semester.

- **Employment Status**

UNM considers each Cooperative Education position as a semester-long course. Co-op employment is limited and defined by the stated terms and duration of each semester's Cooperative Education Agreement Form. It is a learning relationship and not a business or consulting contract. Therefore, the end of each semester's Co-op course is not considered a termination of employment or a forced layoff and cannot be the basis of any unemployment insurance claims.

Academic Advisor/Dean Contact Information

The academic advisor or the dean's approval (depending on college) is an essential part of the Co-op application. Since Co-op is an academic learning experience, with a minimum GPA requirement, students cannot be approved for Co-op without the support of their academic program. Your academic advisor's or Dean's signature is required on the Cooperative Education Agreement Form. Therefore, you need to contact your college's advisor/Dean before the Co-op Coordinator can approve your Co-op program.