Co-op, summer internship positions, or part-time engineering jobs give you access to the many benefits of experiential learning. 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 your 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 will likely receive additional training and more significant projects that you can oversee from start to finish, simply because you will probably work more total hours than as an intern. Employers value students with co-op experience when they recruit for entry level full time positions.

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

Assuming you meet the eligibility requirements, 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 Maryland. Note that 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 participate in engineering competitions to build technical and communication skills. Talk to potential employers at career fairs and information sessions. Practice your networking skills in our Advanced Job Search Strategies workshop. Apply for jobs posted outside 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 should I respond to an offer?**

Be sure to consider your options and ask questions before you say yes. 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 any employers that may still be seriously considering you that you have decided to accept another position. If you’ve accepted an internship offer, please let us know! Just stop by our office or go to our website to fill out our Student/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 resign, 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.

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**If you would like to enroll in ENCO099/098: Co-op/Internship 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

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**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.
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, students are responsible for discussing with their academic advisor how co-op work tours affect their 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 might 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.

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 may affect these awards. You may be able to extend the award to the semester you return, but arrangements must be made in advance with the scholarship administrator. Each type of financial aid and scholarship has its own requirements of enrollment status.

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 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.

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.

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 listed above by phone or email. If you have trouble reaching an advisor, contact Engineering Career Services at careerengr@umd.edu.
ENCO099/098 REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Prior to starting each co-op work assignment and preferably before the first day of classes, you must register for the 0-credit co-op course (ENCO099/098). You do need to request permission from the Engineering Career Services staff to be able to enroll. 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 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. Failure to complete the survey may result in an "Incomplete" or "F" for the course, which will appear on your UMD transcript.

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. 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.

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

Supervisor Evaluations

At the end of each work assignment, 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. These evaluations will be returned to Engineering Career Services and kept in your file. You are welcome to read them at any time. 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.