CEIP EMPLOYER
GUIDE

C·E·I·P

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
& INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

CEIP
AT VIRGINIA TECH

Program Overview

The Cooperative Education and Internship Program (CEIP) is a work-based experiential learning program for undergraduate students to gain practical, career-related experience.

Through learning, reflection, and connection students will apply classroom knowledge in an authentic work setting while developing professional competencies and technical skills necessary for career readiness and success.

CEIP is a partnership between Career and Professional Development, the student, employer, and academic department. Students enroll in a zero-credit academic course where they establish learning objectives, assess and develop professional competencies, and reflect on their experience with the support of a career coach. Students may enroll in full-time or part-time work options which will be noted on their official transcript.

Full-time program:

- Students are working full-time for an organization (32+ hours a week) for 13-16 weeks during the Fall/Spring semester or 10-12 weeks during the Summer.
- Students are not enrolled in full-time courses; however, they may enroll in up to 3 credit hours while working full-time.
- Maintains students' full-time student status at the university.

Part-time program:

- Students are working at least 4 hours per week, but no more than 30 hours. Students must work a minimum of 4 weeks during the academic term for a minimum of 40 hours total. Based on best practices, it is recommended that while a student is enrolled in full-time course credit they work between 10-15 hours a week.
- Students are encouraged to enroll in full-time credit hours during Fall and Spring semesters, but not required.
- Full-time student status is achieved through academic credit hours, not the part-time internship.

MEET THE CEIP
TEAM

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Co-ops and Internships:
What's the difference and which is best for your organization?

Although the terms co-op and internship are often used interchangeably, there is some notable difference between both of these very valuable learning experiences for students. The primary difference between a co-op and an internship is the duration of the experience and often the level of structure and planning that is required by the employer.

Cooperative Education (co-op) is an academic program that is meant to complement the student's education through hands-on application in their field of study. It is a long-term plan that can start as early as their freshman year and can last the duration of the student's academic career. Co-op involves multi-term work assignments/rotations with increased tasks and responsibilities as the student progresses through classes, obtaining in-depth work experience. Students will often remain with the same employer for the duration of their co-op experience for a scaffolding learning process. Virginia Tech offers a full-time co-op program where students will take a semester/summer off from classes to work full-time with an organization alternating between work and school.

Both co-op and internship opportunities provide students with first-hand experience applying classroom theory to real-world practice, developing professional skills and identity, and creating realistic career expectations.

Internships are typically project-based and last one semester or a short term. Internships often occur in the summer and will not interfere with academic classes, but some students will take advantage of the opportunity to intern full-time or part-time during the academic year as well. An internship opportunity becomes valuable experiential learning when learning, reflection, and connection to academic studies and future career goals are integrated. Students are supervised by a professional with expertise in the field where they receive regular feedback and training. The duties and responsibilities of the internship build on academic learning and career preparation.

Contact the CEIP team for tips to determine which option is best for your organization!

Questions regarding student majors? Check it out!

🔍 *Majors at Virginia Tech*

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COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
& INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
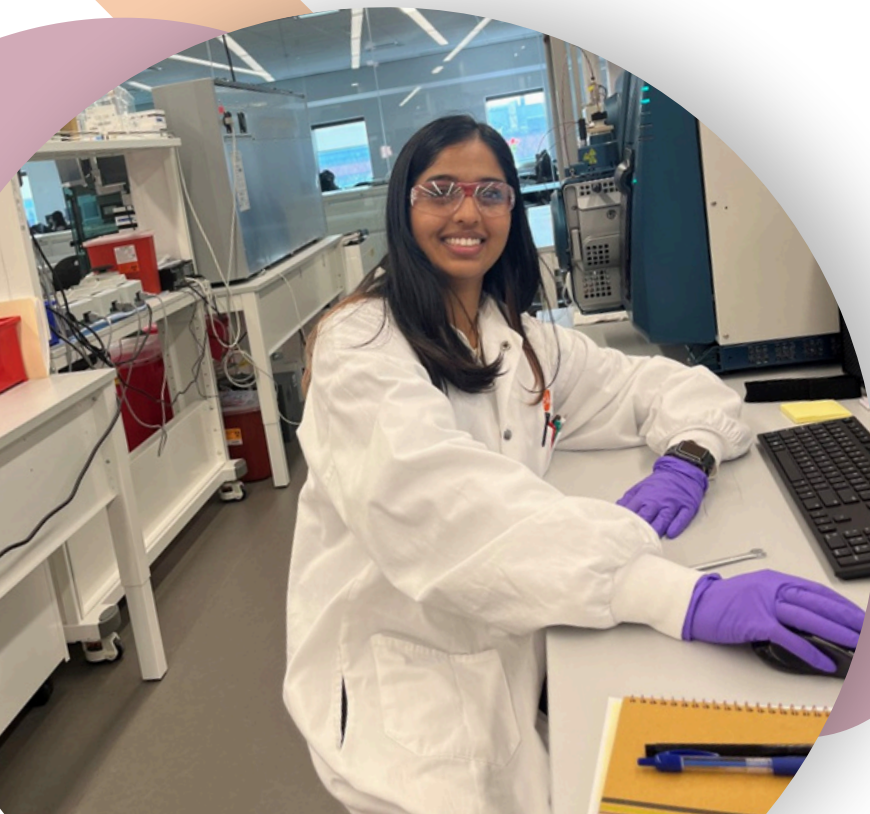
CEIP Course Information

While students are working with you, they are also enrolled in an asynchronous zero-credit internship course as part of their work-based learning experience. This course is grounded in experiential learning best practices which includes developing learning objectives, reflecting on learning and the experience, and connecting skills and experiences to future career goals.

The framework for professional development is based on seven professional competencies for career readiness:

- *Communication*
- *Teamwork and Interpersonal*
- *Leadership*
- *Professionalism and Productivity*
- *Creativity and Problem-solving*
- *Global Perspective*
- *Digital Fluency*

Students receive coaching and feedback on assignments throughout their experience. Students earn a Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory at the completion of the semester based on their performance at the workplace and successful completion of the required coursework.

Curriculum

Students complete four to six assignments (determined by length of experience) during their co-op/internship experience and must earn 80% of total points to receive a Satisfactory in the course. Assignments are blocked into two to three deadlines throughout the semester with each assignment block taking approximately 60-90 minutes to complete. (Note: Some supervisors allow time during the work day for students to complete their assignments.)

1
- Learning Objectives and Professional Competencies Assignment
- Student Learning Agreement

2
(only required in semester long experiences)
- Professional Development Assignment
- Mid-semester Reflection

3
- CliftonStrengths Reflection
- Final Reflection Assignment / Program Assessment

Students working in multiple work terms will complete rotational assignments that will continue to promote awareness and use of their unique CliftonStrengths, and continue their professional development by considering topics such as work values, professional inner circle, communication in the workplace, ethics at work, and finding their life's purpose.

What is?   🔍 *CliftonStrengths*

This assessment is a personal and organizational development tool that helps individuals understand their unique talents and strengths and recognize how they best contribute to their team. It explains the ways individuals naturally think, feel, and behave so they can be more engaged at work and more productive in their roles.

EMPLOYER
PARTNERSHIP

Our industry and employer partners are critical to the success of our program and the learning experiences for Virginia Tech students. Partnering with CEIP to fill your co-op/intern hiring needs provides more strategy and communication between our team and the employer partner and allows for increased structure, accountability, and engagement on the part of the student.

CEIP Employer Partners provide co-op and internship opportunities for our students, in which they can gain practical experience and develop their professional and technical skills.

Formal Partnership with CEIP Provides Employers:

- Support and resources for the co-op/intern's supervisor/mentor as they provide training and feedback on learning objectives and performance during their work term.
- Required student enrollment in CEP 4084/3084 as part of their experience.
- Ability to notify CEIP of hires and student reneges on offers.
- Access to the Student Internship and Co-op Network (SICN) resume book and VIP sessions.

Interested in becoming a CEIP Employer Partner?
Please visit: https://career.vt.edu/experience/ceip/employers-dev-program.html
OR
request a meeting with our team by emailing ceip@vt.edu.

C·E·I·P
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
& INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

RECURITING
STRATEGIES

There are a number of recruiting strategies organizations can take advantage of when hiring Virginia Tech students for co-op and internship opportunities. There is no "one size fits all" for recruiting on campus and we encourage our partners to schedule a meeting with the CEIP team to learn more about strategies that might work best for them. If your recruiting extends beyond CEIP and into full-time and/or graduate student hiring, we are happy to connect you with our Employer Engagement and Recruiting Services team for a broader look at campus recruiting and branding at Virginia Tech.

Examples of Strategies you Might Consider Including:

☑ **Handshake:**
Post your positions on Handshake for students to view. Get started with Handshake!

☑ **Student Internship and Co-op Network (SICN):**
We have a Student Internship and Co-op Network that students can join to learn more about events and opportunities related to securing co-op and internship experiences. (Note: CEIP Employer Partners can request resume books from the network.)

☑ **Career Fairs:**
Connection Job Fair is open during Fall and Spring semesters to employers who recruit students from any major, virtually and in-person. Learn more about Virginia Tech career fairs offered during Fall and Spring semesters.

☑ **Information Sessions:**
Information sessions can be a great option as an alternative or addition to attending a career fair to engage with students and begin to build your brand on campus.

☑ **On-campus Interviewing:**
On-campus Interviewing is another option to come to campus and engage with students.

As you put your recruiting timeline in place, please note our recommended hiring and enrollment dates:

Hiring Finalized

Fall start date
hire by July 15
Spring start date
hire by November 1
Summer start date
hire by April 1

Student Enrollment Deadlines

• **Full-time co-op and internships**
Last day to add classes each semester
For classes/work end dates for each semester: (please see calendar below)

🔍 *Virginia Tech academic calendar*

• **Part-time internships**
Fall semester: October 1
Winter session: December 1
Spring semester: March 1
Summer session: July 1

HIRING
PRACTICES

Students have many important factors to consider when making decisions on co-op/intern employment offers. In order for students to make the most informed decision, consider providing information on the following factors when making co-op/intern offers to students:

Wages
Offer competitive wages - take into account academic major and geographic location.

Housing
Consider offering housing, housing assistance in the form of a stipend, and/or assistance with securing safe and affordable housing. Make it clear if the stipend is a contribution to offset the cost of housing or if the stipend is expected to cover the cost of reasonable and affordable housing. Consider connecting other co-op/intern students with each other well ahead of their start date to help explore housing and roommate options for those interested.

Details & Expectations
Provide specific details and expectations regarding the duration of the experience (be sure to state clearly if you are hiring a student for multiple work rotations), work modality (in-person/hybrid/remote), transportation expectations (do they need their own vehicle, is public transportation available/appropriate, is there parking available - free or at cost), required materials/supplies the student must provide, dress code details, and information about security clearance process (if applicable).

Offer Letter
Provide an official offer letter that includes: organization and supervisor name, employment start/end dates, job title, number of work hours per week, and a brief job description.

Hiring Undergraduate International Students

Hiring international students provides a talented multicultural and multilingual workplace. Undergraduate international students may enroll in CEIP while using Curricular Practical Training (CPT). CPT allows students to pursue employment that is directly related to their field of study without sponsorship. There are no additional costs to the employer when hiring international students using CPT. Hiring international students requires additional enrollment steps for the student, so please make hiring decisions as early as possible. Late hiring may delay the student employment start date.

Students at Virginia Tech work with Cranwell International Center to request CPT authorization. If you are interested in hiring undergraduate international students, please contact ceip@vt.edu for more information.

C·E·I·P

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
& INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PLAN
FOR SUCCESS

Planning for your co-op/intern prior to their arrival paves the way for a successful experience.

- Stay in regular contact with your student between the time you extend an offer and their expected start date. Touch base with them several times in the weeks leading up to their start date to provide details and expectations about their first day/week at work.
- As part of your hiring process, provide information to your co-op/intern student about enrollment in CEIP and how to begin the enrollment process (see enrollment deadlines).
- Clearly explain work modalities (hybrid/remote/in-person) and the expectations for each. Examples include expected work hours, work hour accountability (ex: not caring for children, not taking classes, not working other jobs, and not doing extensive housework during work hours), modes of communication, and virtual/in-person meeting expectations.
- Plan fun things for your co-op/intern to participate in. Provide professional development opportunities and events with other co-ops/interns and young professionals. Contact local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Boards, and Young Professionals groups to see if you can connect your co-op/intern to programming and networking opportunities in your area. (See Enhance the Experience)
- Schedule an on-boarding process that includes meeting regularly with their supervisor, an overview of office policies and expectations, training on technology, explanation of office dress code, overview of projects and job responsibilities, and review your student's learning objectives for their work experience.
- Dress code examples:

Business Professional

Business Professional
The most formal business attire. This dress code requires a suit, with preference for minimal accessories and muted tones or power colors.

Business Casual

Business Casual
The emphasis is on business, not casual. It should emulate a more relaxed version of business professional, mimicking the look of a suit through suit separates. There is a bit more freedom regarding color, texture, and accessories.

Smart Casual

Smart Casual
A form of professional dress mixing casual pieces with traditional, professional items. The goal is to be professional, but not too formal. There is more freedom regarding color, pattern, texture, and accessories. Open-toe shoes are also permitted.

Casual

Casual
The most casual form of professional dress most commonly worn on "casual Fridays." Jeans of any color, without distressing or holes, are typically permitted, along with dressy, clean sneakers.

MANAGE AND
SUPPORT

Best Practices in Supervision

As the supervisor to a co-op/intern, you are an important part of their experience!

Organization/Supervisor Responsibilities

During this experience, it is beneficial to the student's development for you to help promote reflection on what they are learning, provide feedback on their performance throughout, and help them define their goals and action plans. These conversations do not always need to be formal or prompted by an assignment; however, to ensure there is time and space for these conversations, we encourage you to schedule regular meetings with the co-op/intern. This also provides a great time for the student to ask questions they may have.

As their supervisor, here are some key areas where you can contribute value to their CEIP experience.

Topics and Touchpoints

Learning Objectives and Professional Competencies Assignment
Plan to review the student's self-assessment and discuss why the student rated themselves where they did in each competency in comparison to their peers and provide some insight. Most importantly, review their learning objectives! Provide insight on how realistic the objectives and action plans are, guidance on which competency and/or job-related/technical skill to focus on based on their role, and suggestions for their action plans, as needed.

Student Learning Agreement
This agreement, provided by the student, contains important information and is helpful to review as you begin setting expectations for the student's experience. Review and sign this document early in their experience.

Mid-semester Reflection
This reflection serves as an important check-in with the student roughly midway through their experience. Consider doing a mid-experience check-in of your own with the student to revisit expectations, check-in on their progress toward their learning objectives, and provide feedback on their performance so far with suggestions for continued growth.

CliftonStrengths at Work
Engage with the student by showing interest in what their top 5 CliftonStrengths are. Consider how your student could lean into these strengths to continue growing professionally within their role and improving overall performance. Want to know more about CliftonStrengths? Visit CliftonStrengths: https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home.aspx

Final Reflection
Toward the end of their experience, consider revisiting their initial ratings on the seven professional competencies with your student. Share areas where you have seen significant growth and areas to continue focusing on as they continue their professional development journey. Discuss their progress toward accomplishing their learning objectives.

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COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
& INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Performance Evaluation and Feedback

Both formal and informal, positive and critical feedback are an important part of your student's experience. This will help them identify where their strengths and talents lie, along with areas of continued growth. Additionally, your feedback is pivotal in helping the student understand strategies and resources available to them to aid in their continued development. Be specific! Consider projects they have been assigned, professional competencies, tasks, and technical skills. This will help improve their performance, aid in their development as a young professional, and support your development of a strong relationship with your student.

We also ask that supervisors complete a Virginia Tech CEIP Employer Evaluation toward the end of each term. We use the data we collect from the evaluation to report on students' development in our key professional competency areas, as well as other program goals. Please return this evaluation form on your student to assist with our data collection and assessment, which we look forward to sharing with you.

We recognize that many of you may have company specific evaluation forms for your student; however, we ask that you complete the CEIP Employer Evaluation form in addition to your company specific form. This will allow both your company and our program to assess and report on specific goals. If your organization does not allow you to complete external evaluation or third-party evaluation forms, we encourage you to submit your organization's form to us at ceip@vt.edu or provide your student with a hard copy to submit to us.

We hope that, in addition to filling out an evaluation for your student, you will take time to meet with them and provide this feedback to them one-on-one. If your student is wrapping up their employment with you, this gives them a great idea of what they've done well and what they can continue to work on in future experiences. If your student is continuing employment with you at a later time, this can be a great opportunity to review what they've done and what they might improve for the upcoming term.

**Performance feedback is important for
the students' continued growth, and it is also important as they are developing
the skill of asking for and accepting feedback, both positive and critical.**

Recent data tells us that only 12-15% of students have ever held a job prior to coming to college. Their work experience with you is likely their first work experience ever. This presents new challenges and opportunities in working with this generation of students.

Experiencing Challenges with your Student in the Workplace? Contact us!

☑ We are here for you and your student! If you are experiencing continued challenges with your student, please tell us before termination.

☑ We can setup a time to discuss the challenges you are experiencing and how you have addressed these so far, provide additional tips and strategies for navigating this situation, and provide resources for both you and your student.

☑ We can also setup a time to meet with your student for individualized coaching and share additional professional development training focused on the challenges they are experiencing.

☑ If the challenges persist and your organization needs to move forward with termination, please let us know as soon as possible.

Incidents of Discrimination or Harassment

If you suspect your co-op or intern student has experienced harassment or discrimination in the workplace, please remind them of resources and protocols applicable in your organization, as well as resources provided by Virginia Tech.

If you are concerned that your student's behavior could be perceived as inappropriate, discriminatory, or harassing follow your organizations HR protocols, as well as reach out to us to discuss options for moving forward.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

**Recent data from NACE's
2023 Internship & Co-op Report found that:**

50%-60% of eligible interns convert to full-time employees. Interns who become employees are retained at higher rates than other hires (75.5% are still with the organization within the first year of employment compared to 51.5% of non-intern employees).

Investing in your intern plays a huge role in your conversion and retention strategy.

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& INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

STUDENT
RECOGNITION

Each year Career and Professional Development at Virginia Tech (which manages CEIP) hosts a Student Celebration and Awards Reception to recognize the outstanding achievements of Virginia Tech students participating in our various experiential learning programs. CEIP students in good standing are eligible to be nominated for CEIP Student of the Year and the seven Professional Edge Awards.

The CEIP Student of the Year Award is presented to a CEIP student who has displayed outstanding drive and talent during their co-op/intern experience. The Professional Edge Awards acknowledge significant performance and development in each of our seven professional competencies for career success which include: Communication, Teamwork and Interpersonal, Leadership, Professionalism and Productivity, Creativity and Problem-solving, Global Perspective, and Digital Fluency. These professional competencies are the foundation for professional development and learning in the Cooperative Education and Internship Program (CEIP).

Students are invited to nominate their supervisor for the CEIP Supervisor of the Year Award. This award is granted to a supervisor who supported their co-op/interns' professional development through outstanding coaching and mentoring. Students and supervisors are nominated throughout the year and winners are announced at the annual Student Celebration and Awards Reception in April.

ENHANCE THE
EXPERIENCE

It is important to keep students engaged and provide a work environment where they have opportunities for continued professional development, networking, mentorship, and connection with their peers. Consider what your organization already offers in each of these areas and what other opportunities you can connect your co-op/intern student with to enhance their experience.

Professional Development Opportunities
Shadow meetings, work trips, professional conferences/webinars, LinkedIn Learning courses, and Virginia Tech Skillshops series (Available in both Fall and Spring semesters).

Networking Events
Team/company lunches, informal activities, field trips, and meetings with different teams/levels of the organization.

Connection with their Peers
Activities, co-op/intern lunch and learns, connect with local young professional organizations and after hours meet ups.

Mentorship
Does your organization formally assign mentors to your co-ops/interns in addition to a supervisor? If so, great! This is an excellent way to help your co-op/intern feel connected to the organization and provide them with another person they can trust who can also share feedback, advice, and answer questions.

If not, consider identifying someone in your organization who may serve as a good connection/mentor for your student.

🔍 *Helpful Links*

Majors at Virginia Tech: https://www.vt.edu/academics/majors.html

CliftonStrengths: https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home.aspx

Virginia Tech Academic Calendar: https://www.registrar.vt.edu/dates-deadlines/academic-calendar.html

CEIP for Employers: https://career.vt.edu/experience/ceip/employers-dev-program.html

Professional Competencies: https://career.vt.edu/develop.html

Handshake: https://career.vt.edu/for-employers/post-jobs.html

Student Internship and Co-op Network (SICN): https://career.vt.edu/experience/student-internship-co-op-network.html

Employer Engagement and Recruiting Services Team: https://career.vt.edu/for-employers.html

Virginia Tech Career Fairs: https://career.vt.edu/content/career_vt_edu/en/events/Career-fairs.html#fall

Employer Information Sessions: https://career.vt.edu/for-employers/info-sessions.html

On-Campus Interviewing (OCI): https://career.vt.edu/for-employers/on-campus-interviewing.html

Undergraduate International Student/Curricular Practical Training: https://international.vt.edu/employment/cpt.html

THE POWER OF
PARTNERSHIP

Recruit once. Hire twice!

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