

Co-ops and Internships in English

What is a Co-op or Internship?

- A co-op or internship is an intensive writing or editing experience with an employer. It is equivalent to a part-time or full-time job, depending upon whether it is paid or unpaid. It should not be taken with a full course load, and generally not in a regular (fall or spring) semester.
- The co-op or internship should be the culmination of your course work. Although you should prepare for it early, you should not take the internship before the last year, after you have received instruction in professional writing and editing. Literature students thinking about graduate work might also consider working closely on a research project with a faculty member.
- Students must plan their own internships, though they get guidance in their search from the department co-op liaison and Mardy Ashe in Career Services. Begin looking for your internship between a semester and a year in advance.
- In developing your internship, talk to employers in occupations you might actually want to enter. Avoid looking for internships on campus "just to get it out of the way." The internship has two important functions: it gives you real-world experience with a real-world reference, and it helps you decide whether you would really like to do that kind of work.

What's involved in a Co-op or Internship?

- The particular number of hours depends on whether you are paid. However, to get credit for an internship, follow these steps:
 - Have a preliminary conversation with the English Department Co-op Liaison or with Mardy Ashe (Career Services).
 - Identify an employer. In conjunction with the employer and Career Services or Co-op liaison, outline the duties for which will receive credit. If money is an issue, look for an employer in your home town or nearby Western. If it is not, consider looking online for an out-of-town internship with a higher profile.
 - Fill out the appropriate forms with Mardy Ashe in Career Services, and enroll in either co-op or internship (for the distinction, see Career Services).
 - Keep a formal log and a portfolio of all work done for the internship.
 - Receive a midterm and final evaluation from the employer, as well as a midterm visit from Co-op liaison.
 - Hand in the final portfolio, professional presented and preceded by a written narrative, as well as the daily log.

Note that students usually take an incomplete so that they have time to finish this project. Students who want to graduate the same semester must get their materials to Career Services no later than one week after final grades are due. Career Services will forward your work to the Co-op liaison.

Who should a student talk to about co-ops and internships?

- Deidre Elliott is the co-op liaison. Her job is to make sure that the learning experience is a valuable one and that the student is properly supervised. She approves all internships and evaluate all final projects. Neither the advisor nor the department head should approve internships.
- Mardy Ashe is the person in Career Services who helps students identify internships and navigate the paperwork. She works in Killian Annex.

For more information, Contact Deidre Elliott at 227-3925 or email delliott@email.wcu.edu.