



**SPEED SCHOOL OF  
ENGINEERING  
CO-OP  
HANDBOOK**

**SEMINAR 288  
("Co-op 101")**

Bioengineering  
Chemical  
Civil & Environmental  
Computer  
Electrical  
Industrial  
Mechanical

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## THE CO-OP PROCESS

The Cooperative Education Seminar – 288 provides you the opportunity to learn and practice job search skills prior to co-op and graduation. These skills can be used throughout your career and will help you define and direct your efforts in achieving your career goals. In this seminar you will prepare a résumé, research prospective cooperative education employers, interview, and develop a job acceptance strategy that will allow you to effectively evaluate offers. The knowledge, skills, and experience you gain from this seminar will become the foundation of choosing a cooperative education position that best fits your needs and aspirations. The same knowledge, skills, experience, and competencies will also allow you to successfully manage your career upon graduation.

All students pursuing a Bachelor of Science or Master of Engineering degree are required to co-op for three alternating semesters with the exception of those who qualify for advanced standing or international students with student visas. Students must be admitted to their major department before they are eligible for co-op. Students are required to take the Co-op Seminar – 288 **prior** to securing a co-op position. The seminar is designed to assist students in the job search process including résumé preparation, interviewing skills, writing a co-op report and professional ethics and job success.

Students are required to co-op on an alternating sequence. Students work **full time paid positions**, with the **same employer** for these **3 alternating semesters**. A co-op report and employer evaluation must be submitted after each co-op semester to earn academic credit. Students earn 2 credit hours for each completed co-op term.

During the Co-op Seminar students will work with their co-op coordinator to prepare a résumé which will be emailed to employers seeking co-op students. Employers screen résumés and select candidates to interview, and interviews will be arranged through the co-op office. Interviews may take place on campus or at the company location.

**Co-op students are not guaranteed a position.** The co-op coordinator refers students' résumés for employment opportunities based on company needs. Whether or not a student gets a job is determined by their qualifications, the job interview, their ability to compete with other students, and economic conditions.

Students are encouraged to secure their own work assignments as long as this is discussed with the co-op coordinator.

It is imperative that students stay in close contact with their co-op coordinator throughout the co-op process. Communication regarding job interviews, job offers, and academic concerns is essential to the student obtaining a co-op position.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CO-OP

### DO I HAVE TO DO THREE CO-OPS?

- Academic policy requires three semesters of co-op educational training. If you plan to exit with the B.S. degree, *under special circumstances* you may apply for permission to waive the third co-op - by substituting a course for the third co-op. There may be special courses or restrictions, therefore discuss this with your departmental advisor after you have informed your cooperative education coordinator. If you plan on completing the M Eng. degree, you must complete three co-ops **prior** to graduates with the B.S. degree!

### IF I WORKED FOR SEVERAL SEMESTERS, CAN I COUNT PART-TIME WORK FOR CO-OP?

- No, our program requires full-time, paid work experiences!

### DOES PREVIOUS MILITARY ACTIVE DUTY OR ROTC CAMP COUNT FOR CO-OP?

- Yes, you may use military experience to substitute for one, two or three co-ops and ROTC camp for one co-op! See form: [Advanced Standing Application](#)

### CAN I TAKE A CLASS WHILE ON CO-OP?

- Academic policy states that co-op work experience is full time. Taking academic classes during co-op work terms is highly discouraged. Exceptions require the approval of the career development office, your department, and the Dean for academic affairs. Approval will be given only if:

- The class is outside normal working hours (8:00-5:00)
- The class does not exceed 4 semester hours.

There is a request form on the web site ([Course Request Form](#)) you need to complete. The form can also be obtained from your co-op coordinator.

### CAN I CHANGE EMPLOYERS?

- No, students are expected to co-op with the **same** employer all three terms. If we feel that a change is justified, we will assist you. If not, you are expected to complete all three co-ops with the same employer!

### WHAT IS THE AVERAGE SALARY FOR CO-OP?

- Co-op salaries vary each semester depending on the employer, location and the engineering major. Salary averages will be discussed in co-op seminar! Data is available from the Engineering Career Services Office.

### DO I GET SPRING BREAK OFF WHILE I AM ON CO-OP?

- **No**, you observe employer holidays, not the university semester breaks!

## THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION

Engineers are problem solvers. Engineers use the principles of science and mathematics to develop practical solutions to technical problems. Engineers design products and the tools and processes to make them, from consumer goods to buildings, highways and transit systems. They develop and implement ways to use the earth's raw materials, such as petroleum and natural gas, water and even the sun. They create new materials and improve the performance of products or procedures and systems.

They estimate the time, steps to produce, and the cost to complete projects. They schedule and oversee the work process from beginning to end, or they know the technical aspects of a product and assist in planning its installation or use.

More than 25 major specialties are recognized by professional societies, and within the major branches are numerous subdivisions. Structural, environmental, and transportation engineering, for example, are subdivisions of civil engineering, involving construction of bridges, roads, and other infrastructure. In the building industry, project engineers, also called construction managers, review engineering and architectural drawings, such as field monitor progress, quality, and construction costs. They may have subordinates, such as field engineers, or crew supervisors, reporting to them. Engineers may also specialize in one industry such as motor vehicles, or in one field of technology, such as jet engines or ceramic materials.

Engineers in each branch have a base of knowledge that can be applied in any fields. Electrical and electronics engineers, for example work in the medical, computer, missile guidance, and power distribution fields. Because of the separate problems in a large engineering project, engineers in one field often work closely with specialists in other scientific, engineering, and business occupations.

Engineers use computers to produce and analyze designs; simulate how a machine structure, or system operates; and generate blueprints for parts. Many engineers also use computers to monitor product quality and control process efficiency. They write reports and consult with other engineers, as complex projects often require an interdisciplinary team of engineers.

Engineers work in offices, laboratories, and industrial plants. Others spend time outdoors at construction sites, mines, and oil and gas exploration sites, where they monitor or direct operations, and solve onsite problems. Some engineers travel extensively to plants or work sites.

## **CO-OP POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **TYPICAL BIOENGINEERING CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Assist in the development and qualification of a wide range of biomedical devices, implants, and diagnostic medical equipment
- Assist in the development and qualification of biomaterials
- Laboratory testing of devices and materials – including test monitoring, data gathering and analysis
- Use CAD to update device drawings
- Research prices for materials
- Design new or modified biomedical devices or equipment
- Perform project engineer tasks associated with biomedical devices and equipment – scheduling, cost estimating and cost tracking, and analysis

### **TYPICAL CECS CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Network and PC user support
- Website and application development
- Software development and testing
- Testing of software for new product development; for example, point of sale systems, corporate marketing and accounting systems
- Computer integrated control applications including use of programmable logic controls, servo motors, closed loop controllers, and vision systems
- Installation, configuration, repair of software and hardware such as network cards, graphics cards, CD ROM drives, hard drives
- New PC set-up and deployment
- Customer interface regarding software design, implementation, deployment and support
- Database maintenance and development

### **TYPICAL CEE CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Work with construction estimates and environmental projects
- Input construction estimates into various computer programs
- Research prices for materials
- Supervise a land surveying crew
- Concrete and soil testing in the field or in a laboratory
- Design roads, dams, bridges, waste treatment plants and produce inspection reports
- Perform layout and facility price takeoff reports of construction bids
- Use CAD/AutoCAD to update drawings

### **TYPICAL CHE CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Follow up on recommendations resulting from Hazardous Materials audit
- Design a valve system using software tools
- Create isometric drawings for installation of new piping
- Write standard operating procedures used by environmental technicians
- Research methods for printing on plastic products
- Install thermal expansion pressure relief devices in multiple transfer lines
- Conduct and report viscosity tests relative to heat exchangers
- Install a conservation vent in a neutralizer tank to prevent air emissions

## **TYPICAL ECE CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Write software interfaces/drivers to control a set of test procedures and collect data
- Debug software/hardware failures on failed units under test
- Design a circuit to prove a design concept
- Upgrade electrical distribution systems
- Mark up schematics to be updated with new parts
- Use a logic analyzer to test the performance of new parts

## **TYPICAL IE CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Implement and maintain quality control of manufactured products
- Implement statistical process control for manufacturing
- Perform machine capability studies
- Maintain computer databases and spreadsheets and word processing
- Improve work methods via time studies
- Help install and program automated systems; (e.g. robots)

## **TYPICAL ME CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Trouble shoot equipment reliability problems
- Implement corrective design modification
- Coordinate equipment repair activities
- Develop equipment maintenance programs
- Prepare drawings and specifications
- Equipment procurement, technical and economic evaluation of design concept and alternatives

See link to Bureau of Labor Statistics for more detailed information regarding your major:

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos027.htm>

## GETTING STARTED

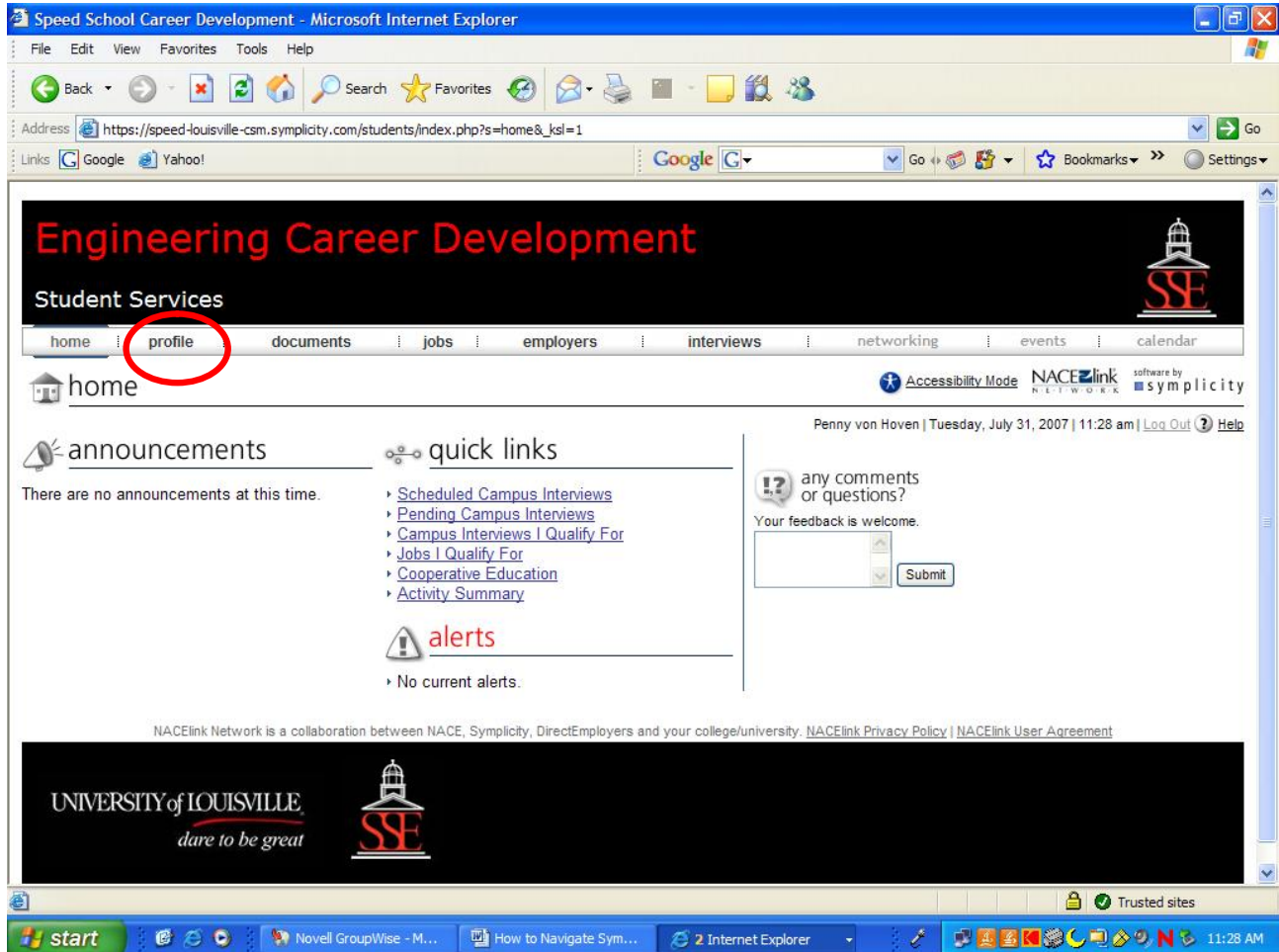
If this is your first co-op work experience, you must set up your account in **Symlicity** in our Career Services Management System. Here is how:

### New Students Navigating in Symlicity

1. Log in to this website – <https://speed-louisville-csm.symlicity.com/students>
2. Click on **Register for New Account**.
3. Start by entering your U of L Student ID NUMBER. Enter all of your information (on the Student Registration screen). **NOTE:** In the Academic Information section, under “MAJOR”, please select your engineering major from the drop down box.
4. Once the screen is completed, click on the Submit button. A note will then appear stating that you will receive an e-mail to verify your e-mail address. Please check your e-mail promptly and verify your address. After e-mail verification and account approval, you will receive another e-mail containing the weblink and your password to access Symlicity.
5. **Sign-in to Symlicity.** Once you have successfully logged in, your screen should appear similar to the screen shown below.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Speed School Career Development - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar displays the URL: <https://speed-louisville-csm.symlicity.com/students/index.php?s=home&ksl=1>. The website content includes a navigation menu with links for home, profile, documents, jobs, employers, interviews, networking, events, and calendar. The main content area features sections for announcements (stating no announcements are present), quick links to various resources like "Scheduled Campus Interviews" and "Cooperative Education", and an alerts section (stating no current alerts). A feedback form is also visible on the right side. The footer contains the University of Louisville logo and the text "dare to be great".

6. Click on **Profile** and complete the Personal Information, Academic Information, and Privacy screens. Under Privacy tab, please check both **E-mail** and **Opt-In** to résumé book. You may also click on the Password/Preference Tab to change your password. Remember to save your information.



7. You are now ready to **UPLOAD** your résumé (unofficial transcript, etc.) by clicking on the Documents Tab.
8. Click on Add New. Enter your name in the Label box as follows: Last, First, Major and Co-op, Graduate or Alumni (whichever applies)

**EXAMPLE: Doe, John, ME Co-op**

Then click on Browse to Upload your résumé.

9. You will receive an e-mail when your résumé has been approved.

If you are a returning student, update your profile and upload your updated résumé on the Symplicity website. Log-in with your U of L Student ID number and password.

<https://speed-louisville-csm.symplicity.com/students>

## EXPLORE THE SPEED WEBSITE:

Additional information is available under Career Development/ Cooperative Education.

### CO-OP FORMS

There are forms listed on the website under Useful Links (<http://speed.louisville.edu/co-op>) you will need:

#### Office of Career Development

Co-op Forms:

- [Advanced Standing Application](#)
- [Co-op Education Student Agreement Form](#)
- [Co-op Employment Form](#)
- [Course Request Form](#)
- [Release Statement Form](#)
- [Resume Sample](#)

Co-op Report:

- [Report Guidelines](#)
- [Report Evaluation Form](#)
- [Report Cover Page](#)
- [Student Performance Appraisal](#)
- [Writing Center Form](#) (IE Students)

Job Search Tools:

- [Interview Questions](#)
- [Post Interview Reflection](#)
- [References Sample](#)

## A WINNING RÉSUMÉ!

Elements of a résumé include the following:

- Personal Information
- Objective
- Education
- Skills/Coursework
- Applied Experience
- Work Experience
- Activities and Honors
- References

In terms of the format, your résumé may look similar to those of your classmates. Important differences will be grade point average, previous applied experience (course projects, independent projects that illustrate your skills), and work experience, involvement in school or community activities, and personal talents or abilities that would be an asset in the work environment.

When possible, **state accomplishments and results** – not just duties. These are the things that will set you apart from your classmates. Present them in the best possible way, without exaggeration.

*Your résumé speaks for you in your absence.* The purpose of your résumé is to get the interview so that you have the opportunity to be hired for a co-op position.

**Use key words** – terminology and technology that employers search for when trying to fill an engineering position.

**Use action verbs** to describe the tasks you did in your previous work experience. See link below for a list of action verbs that describe accomplishments:

[http://www.quintcareers.com/action\\_verbs.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/action_verbs.html)

There must be **no errors** in spelling, grammar, capitalization, or punctuation! **Proofread very carefully!** Ask a friend to proofread it, also.

**Length of résumé:** One page is preferred, but if two pages are necessary, the page break should not be in the middle of a section.

## REFERENCES

Ideal references are people who know you in a work or school setting or are professionals in your intended field. Make sure that you *ask permission* to use their name as well as update them on your academic progress and the need to co-op as part of your degree requirements. Provide your references with a copy of your résumé.

**Format:** References are on separate page. Use the same heading for your reference page that you use for your résumé. Provide the name, title, and contact information of at least **three** references.

**YOUR RÉSUMÉ IS THE EMPLOYER'S FIRST IMPRESSION OF YOU. MAKE IT A GOOD ONE!**

A résumé template is available for download at the co-op website: [Resume Sample](#).

A copy of the résumé template is shown below. You should download and use to construct your résumé.

**Note:** This template is for a **co-op résumé**. You will use a different format after you have completed your co-op requirements and are seeking full-time employment.

3025 Walnut Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40292  
(502) 555-5555  
[student@louisville.edu](mailto:student@louisville.edu)

**OBJECTIVE** First Mechanical Engineering co-op position **August 25 – December 19, 2008**

**EDUCATION** **M. Eng. in Mechanical Engineering** Expected May 2011  
*J.B. Speed School of Engineering, U of L, Louisville, KY* GPA 3.5 / 4.0  
Dates attended 1/2006 - present Hours Completed: 113

**Associate of Science** May 2006  
*Jefferson Community College, Louisville, KY* GPA 3.5 / 4.0

**High School Diploma** May 2004  
*Louisville North High School, Louisville, KY*

**SKILLS/  
COURSEWORK**

- Statistics
- AutoCAD
- Strength of Materials
- C++ Programming
- Microsoft Office
- Vibrations
- Dynamics

*Additional Skills*

- Fluent in Spanish, written and verbal
- Small Engine Repair

**APPLIED  
EXPERIENCE** **ASME Project:** Human Powered Vehicle – Worked with a team to design and build a human powered vehicle. Used water jet to produce parts. Placed fourth out of twenty schools.

**EMPLOYMENT  
HISTORY** **Alcoa Louisville Foil**, Louisville, KY May - August 2006  
*Engineering Design Intern*

- Created AutoCAD drawings of parts
- Designed specific small parts for machines and conveyors
- Updated network database and engineering drawing book

**Jefferson Community College**, Louisville, KY Aug 2004- May 2006  
*Student Worker, Math Department*

- Answered telephones and directed calls
- Copied and collated class handouts
- Ran errands on campus

**Wendy's**, Louisville, KY Summer 2003  
*Order Clerk*

- Assisted customers with food orders
- Balanced cash drawer
- Worked with team to maintain store

**ACTIVITIES  
& HONORS**

- Work 20 hours per week
- Dean's List
- Habitat for Humanity, volunteer
- Hobbies include troubleshooting and repairing automobiles

**REFERENCES** Furnished upon request

3025 Walnut Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40292  
(502) 555-5555  
[student@louisville.edu](mailto:student@louisville.edu)

### References

John Doe  
Professor  
University of Louisville  
JB Speed Scientific School  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, KY 40292  
(502) 555-4567

Jack Dawson  
Assistant Manager  
Trendy Cafe  
1234 5th Street  
Myville, KY 45632  
(502) 555-6453

Marshall Howard  
Chief Engineer  
Huddleston Metal Co.  
9615 Main St.  
Myville, KY 00000  
(985) 333-3142

Note: a release statement is required for the Engineering Career Development office to refer your résumé. See link: [Release Statement Form](#).

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The interview is the basis for most hiring decisions. There are resources on the internet, books, and workshops devoted to the subject of interviewing because knowing how to get a job is as important as knowing how to do a job. Unfortunately too many applicants try to “wing it” instead of concentrating on the details that make the interview fruitful. The following will help you to understand the interviewing process and to make the most of the opportunity it provides.

### GETTING READY - PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

As a student, you may have occasionally gone to class unprepared. Remember how uneasy you felt? You probably didn't learn much from the discussion that day because you were concerned about being called upon and not knowing the correct answer.

Going to an interview is similar to going to class in that you will experience the same unpleasant feelings if you do not prepare beforehand. "Doing your homework" will give you confidence so that in the interview you can concentrate on demonstrating what you know and on learning more about the position. Lack of preparation signals to the employer a low level of interest in the job opportunity or company. **Preparation is essential to a successful interview!**

**Self-Analysis.** Begin by realistically assessing your experiences, skills, interests, values and goals. Think of specific situations in which you demonstrated team participation, leadership, problem-solving, negotiation, initiative, and adaptability. Don't limit yourself to work or school activities; you have undoubtedly had other interesting *life experiences* you can draw upon. Describe them in a positive manner. You may want to practice with a tape recorder or role play with a friend. It is important to have a clear sense of why you've done what you've done, where you are now, and where you hope to be in the future. Present these qualities in a way that is meaningful to the employer.

**Describing yourself.** You should prepare a 30 – 60 second statement about yourself that answers the question, “Tell me about yourself.” This is **not** a *personal* question. It is an opportunity to briefly tell about your studies, your major and related strengths. This is a chance to tell the employer what you have to offer. See link for detailed example: <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview-practice/Tell-Me-About-Yourself/home.aspx>

**Employer Research.** You will know what is meaningful to the employer only if you have researched the company. Reading in advance will enable you to **respond** to questions appropriately and to **ask** knowledgeable questions as well. If a company is considering two equally qualified students for a job, and one has taken the time to find out as much as possible about the company, while the other can only talk in generalities, the first one unquestionably has the advantage.

**You should know the company's general history, the products or services it offers, its size, location, the names of top management (if available), the customer base, competitors, and prospects for the future.**

#### Resources:

- Visit the company's web site on the internet.
- Previous student co-op reports on employers – see your co-op coordinator for these reports. These reports give readers a realistic idea of the duties co-op students have performed in the past and their perceptions of the company's culture and environment.

- Visit [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com) for a free company report that gives information including financials and names of top executives.
- Check out on-line sources:
  - Business First (<http://louisville.bizjournals.com/louisville/>)
  - Business Week (<http://www.businessweek.com>)
  - Courier Journal (<http://www.courier-journal.com>)
  - The Wall Street Journal (<http://online.wsj.com/public/us>)

## Appearance

First impressions are very important and lasting. It is important for job candidates to be well-groomed and dressed appropriately. Business casual attire may be acceptable once you are hired, but **professional apparel is expected for the interview**. Males should wear suits or sports coats and dress slacks, ties with a subtle pattern (no cartoon characters), and dress shoes and socks. Females should wear conservatively cut pant suits or skirts with jackets; the hem length should be no higher than two inches above the knee when standing. Clothing should be clean and pressed. Hair, teeth and nails should be clean. Cologne and body jewelry should be minimal.

*One word of caution: Recruiters are generally conservative when it comes to appearance. If your personal style is unconventional and important to you, you will have to weigh the value of risking this distraction in a job interview.*

## Preparation for day of interview

Before the interview, assemble items or information you might need but could easily forget before the interview. For example, you may be asked to complete a company application. Complete application forms in black or blue ink. It is also a good idea to have the name and phone number of the person you're meeting; if you are unavoidably detained on the way to the interview, you can call and let them know.

## The Right Place at the Right Time

- Know the date, time, and location of your interview and with whom it will be held.
- Get **directions** and leaving for the interview early enough to allow extra time for traffic delays or finding a parking space.
- **Arrive at the interview 15 minutes** early so that you are relaxed and composed and have time to recall the key points he/she wants to make in the interview.

## What to take

- You may want to purchase a black or dark brown leather or vinyl business notebook - also called *padfolio*. It holds an 8.5X11 pad of paper and has a space on the left side to hold your documents. These often come with a calculator and little slots for business cards.
- Take 3-4 copies of your co-op résumé, one copy of your references, and one copy of your transcript. Give the references and/or transcript only if asked. Do not offer them to the employer.
- A blue or black ink pen.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Interviewers have different backgrounds and experiences; consequently, the format of interviews varies. Some are very structured, with the employer following a previously determined set of questions; others are non-directional with the interviewer saying little more than, "Tell me about yourself." Some interviews are screening interviews conducted by human resource professionals; others are selection interviews conducted by engineers. In general, you can expect an interview to have four parts: Introduction, questions from the interviewer, questions from the candidate, and the closing.

### Introduction

The introduction establishes rapport between the interviewer and candidate. These few minutes are usually devoted to non-threatening subjects, such as sporting events or the weather, and are designed to make the candidate feel comfortable. Although the conversation may seem trivial, it is during this time that the interviewer begins to form an impression of the interviewee.

You want to convey an image that is businesslike, and warm, courteous, and responsive at the same time. As you enter the interviewer's office, your right hand should be unencumbered so that you can easily offer a **firm** handshake. Remain standing until you are offered a seat. Don't be afraid to smile or to occasionally nod your head to indicate your agreement or understanding of what the interviewer is saying. Good eye contact does not mean a fixed stare, but it does mean looking at the interviewer's face most of the time. Posture should be relaxed but attentive, and hands should be open and resting in one's lap rather than clenched or clutching the chair arms.

### Questions Asked by the Interviewer

A list of questions commonly asked by interviewers is included in the manual. If you have conducted a thoughtful self-analysis, these questions will not catch you off-guard. If you are asked a question that you find ambiguous, it is better to ask the interviewer for clarification rather than to respond inappropriately. If you are asked a question that you find particularly difficult, take a moment to organize your response.

Be sure to ask the employer questions throughout the interview. You are also interviewing the employer to determine whether or not you would like to work with that organization.

"Tell me about yourself." is a typical ice-breaker question. Many interviewers like it because it gives them a good "feeling" for who you are and your ability to express yourself. This is not an invitation to ramble on about your life history. The main points to keep in mind when answering this question and others are:

- 1) Speak clearly, honestly, and positively. Avoid using slang and phrases like "You know," "like," "well," or "dude."
- 2) Try to key your experience, accomplishments, and skills to the position for which you are interviewing.
- 3) Back up general statements with specific examples. Quantify things if you can. Stress accomplishments. For example, saying "I am a full-time student and work part-time in order to pay 75% of my college expenses" is better than saying "I am a hard worker and I want to get ahead." Articulate your message in a confident, but not arrogant, style. Get your message across by telling stories; draw upon an episode or event in your life that will illustrate your ability.

How do you respond to questions about low grades, firings, arrests, or other liabilities? The key is not to blame others or make excuses; sob stories turn recruiters off. Every liability can be neutralized with a three-step response:

- 1) Recognize the liability as a legitimate issue or concern.
- 2) Identify the strength that is perceived by the interviewer as missing.
- 3) Demonstrate that you have that strength.

One frequent question many have trouble with is, "What are your weaknesses?" Of course, everyone has development needs, but don't catalogue them for the interviewer. You want to clearly indicate you are "self-aware" and are working on your development needs. Pick one or two areas, and show that you are taking steps to improve: For example: "I am a little uncomfortable making oral presentations, but the speech class I'm taking now has helped."

# BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

## What is Behavior Based Interviewing?

Behavior based interviewing focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related. It is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. You may use work experience, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, school projects, family life - anything really - as examples of your past behavior. Current employment literature indicates that there is a strong trend towards this type of interviewing. In addition to questions found in many current resources, you should also consider the following in your interview preparations.

## What Do Employers Evaluate in A Behavioral Interview?

Employers are looking for several different characteristics in the interview process:

### Technical knowledge and experience

- GPA, courses, work experience

### Leadership traits:

- Initiative:
  - Ownership
  - Passion & Energy
  - Self-confidence
  - Integrity
- Teamwork
- Communication skills

### Attitude!

Realistically, for the co-op, very early in your career, it is often much more important to convey the right leadership traits and attitude than technical skills.

## How Are Behavioral Questions Different?

Theoretical questions ask about how you would do something if "X" happened, whereas Behavioral questions ask how **did** you handle the situation.

1. **Theoretical questions** -- Questions that place you in a hypothetical situation. These questions are more likely to test your skill at answering questions rather than in doing a good job.

*Example:* How would you organize your friends to help you move into a new apartment?

2. **Behavioral questions** -- Questions that seek demonstrated examples of behavior from your past experience and concentrate on job related functions. They may include:
  - **Open-ended questions** -- these require more than a yes or no response. They often begin with "Tell me...", "Describe...", "When...".  
*Example:* Describe a time you had to be flexible in planning a work load.
  - **Why questions** -- Used to reveal rationale for decisions you have made or to determine your level of motivation.

*Example: Why did you decide to major in this program at UM rather than at a small private college or larger university?*

## How to handle Behavior-Based Questions?

Think of "PAR for the Course". A complete answer to a behavior-based question must explain the task or problem for which you were responsible, the specific action you took, and the results of your actions. Your answer must contain **all of these components to be a PAR answer. Tell the interviewer a "story" (with a beginning, a middle, and an end) about how you used a practical skill.**

**Problem (P)** -- Advertising revenue was falling off for the Daily News and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

**Action (A)** -- I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of DN circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a College of Business professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

**Result (R)** -- We signed contracts with fifteen former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by twenty percent over the same period last year.

## How Can I Prepare for A Behavioral Interview?

- Analyze your own background. What skills do you have (content, functional, and adaptive) that relate to your job objective?
- Identify examples from your past experience where you demonstrated those skills. How can you "tell a story" about your use of particular skills or knowledge? Concentrate on developing complete PAR answers and remember that a good story has a beginning, middle and end.
- Wherever possible, quantify your results. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility.
- Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then?
- Before starting the interview process, identify 2 to 3 of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points during the interview.
- Once employed, keep a personal achievement diary to help document demonstrated performance.

***And most important – practice the interview questions shown below – not just mentally but out loud, with a partner. Some people find it useful to actually write out the answers, before practicing out loud.***

Behavioral Interviewing: (Adapted from <http://www.umt.edu/career/interviewing/behavior.htm>)

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## **Questions Employers Frequently Ask in an Interview**

1. *Tell me about yourself.*
2. *What are your greatest strengths?*
3. *What are your weaknesses (development needs)?*
4. How would you describe yourself?
5. Why should I hire you?
6. How would friends and professors who know you well describe you?
7. Give me an example of an important goal that you set in the past. Did you reach it?
8. What motivates you?
9. How do you determine or evaluate success?
10. What/How do you define success?
11. *What do you know about our company?*
12. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
13. What influenced you to seek a co-op position with our company?
14. How has your experience (coursework or work experience) prepared you for this co-op position?
15. *Why did you select University of Louisville? (Usually Asked)*
16. Why did you choose CIVIL ENGINEERING? What are you specifically interested in?
17. *Which college subjects did you like best? Why? Which the Least? Why?*
18. Is your GPA a good indication of your ability?
19. What is the most valuable lesson that you have learned in your life thus far?
20. What are your long and short-range career goals?
21. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
22. What qualifications and qualities should a successful CEE possess?
23. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
24. Describe a major problem have you encountered and how did you dealt with it.
25. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
26. Describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
27. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him/her.
28. What two or three things are important to you in a job?
29. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company you wish to work for?
30. Are you willing to relocate? Does relocation bother you?
31. How much on-the-job travel would you be willing to do?
32. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
33. Give me an example of how you dealt with a significant change in your life.

### Sample Behavioral Questions Employers May Ask

1. *Tell me about a time when you were in a leadership role. Who did you lead and what did you accomplish?*
2. Have you ever worked with someone on a team that you did not get along with? How did you handle it?
3. *Describe a situation in which you thought it might be justifiable to bypass a company policy or procedure.*
4. Describe how you would handle a deadline project that is given to you at the last minute.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What was the situation?
  - a. What did you do?
6. Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What were the repercussions?
  - a. What did you learn?

**Questions Asked by the Candidate.** The interview should be a dialogue, not an interrogation. Students often neglect this aspect of the interview. Asking questions is part of being an active participant in the information exchange and demonstrates interest in the position. Furthermore, it will insure your ability to make an informed decision should an offer be forthcoming.

### Sample Questions to Ask Employers

1. *What are the duties and responsibilities of this position?*
2. *Will I have some task or project that I can own?*
3. How many co-op positions do you normally fill each year?
4. *What skills and qualities are you seeking for co-op candidates in this position?*
5. How will my performance be evaluated?
6. What analytical and interpersonal skills are needed in this position?
7. Is there a lot of team or project work?
8. Will I be expected to resolve all issues independently, or will there be opportunity to consult with others?
9. Does this organization have a mentor or coaching program?
10. Have you previously hired U of L co-ops?

### Questions to Avoid Asking in the Interview

1. Don't ask about salary or other benefits questions during the interview. (If they make you the offer, they will tell you at that time - and ask for an offer letter.)
2. Pay attention and do **not** ask questions that have already been answered during the interview.
3. Avoid asking questions that you should know through your research of the company. (ex. other locations, what they make or what services they provide)
4. Don't ask personal questions of the interviewer.

## Group Interviews

The group interview has gained popularity because of its timesaving value. It is also used to determine whether or not the candidate will fit in with the team and to insure fair play and bias-free selection procedures. In most cases, the company will use a round-table seating arrangement or T-table setting. This means that you will be speaking to two, three, or more faces in either a circular or horizontal pattern. Focus on each person initially (noting and remembering their names). Treat each person as if they are important; don't slight anyone. While you may need to adjust your style slightly for different interviewers, resist the temptation to be all things to all people. Otherwise, your sincerity will be questioned.

## Closing

Most interviews last between twenty and thirty minutes. Be alert to signals from the interviewer that the session is drawing to a close. Looking at a watch or asking if you have any *final* questions are sure signs.

## Tips:

- **End the interview on a positive note. If you want the job, say so.** "I would really like to work for your company name."
- Summarize why you are the best candidate.
- Thank the recruiter for the time and consideration.
- **Ask when a decision will be made.**
- **Get a business card** so that you can follow up with a Thank You Letter.
- Smile and show as much confidence in leaving as you did in arriving.

## PHONE INTERVIEWS

It is becoming more common for employers, especially those out-of-town, to interview by telephone, or to phone screen potential candidates for follow-up interviews. Phone interviews can be critical in the job search process. Avoid being caught off-guard by keeping your co-op résumé, company research notes, and writing materials by the telephone.

Take a surprise call in stride. Sound positive, friendly, and calm. It is probably best to say that you cannot interview at the moment. Ask if it is possible to set an appointment for a telephone interview for a time when you are available. This gives you time to research the company and prepare for the interview.

With the wide use of cell phones today, it is not likely that an employer would expect you to interview the moment they telephone you. However, if you must interview at that time, ask the interviewer to wait while you close the door or find a quieter area to speak. Put the phone down, take a few deep breaths, and gather your thoughts. Now you are in control of yourself and the situation.

The most obvious (and often neglected) point to remember is that during the interview, the **employer has only ears with which to judge you**. The interviewer is missing the visual cues available in a face to face interview. Your energy and enthusiasm about the company and the position must come through on the phone. The best advice is to **STAND UP** during the phone interview. This simple trick will naturally add energy to your voice and the conversation.

## Here are some additional tips that can help in phone interviews:

1. **Setting:** Make sure the surroundings are appropriate – quiet, private. If you have roommates, try to arrange a time when you can be alone without distractions. Lay out your resume and company information. Have a pad and pencil for jotting down notes.

You can have a glass of water available. Do not smoke, eat, or watch TV while on the phone. The telephone system is highly capable of picking up and amplifying food or gum chewing, smoke inhaling or exhaling, and background music and voices, or children. Speak directly into the phone and eliminate outside interference.

2. **Stay alert:** Keep up your end of the conversation. Don't expect the interviewer to do all the talking. Ask questions of your own. Beware of giving yes/no answers that provide very limited information about your abilities and do not demonstrate good communication skills.

3. **Make notes:** In a telephone interview you can jot down notes. Get the correct spelling and pronunciation of the interviewer's name. You may state, "If I need any additional information, I would like to feel free to get back to you." The employer will naturally agree and offer a phone number. No matter how many questions you get answered in the initial conversation, there will always be something you forget. Calling the employer will allow you to confirm details and to increase rapport. One well-placed phone call that contains two or three considered questions will be appreciated; two or three phone calls will not.

## COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES:

- No preparation for the interview...particularly *tough behavioral questions*.
- Not ready to ask *employer* questions – "I guess they are not really serious."
- Personal QUES are not right: posture, handshake, eye contact, energy level, speech patterns.
- Not able to "pitch" yourself.

## SURVEY – FREQUENT MISTAKES:

- Little or no company knowledge – 44%
- Unprepared to discuss goals – 23%
- Lack of enthusiasm – 16%
- Lack of eye contact – 5%
- Unprepared to discuss skills, etc – 3%
- Late arrival – 2%
- Other – 7%

## TIPS TO REMEMBER:

- ✓ Be on time!!!! Be well groomed!
- ✓ Firm handshake - good eye contact - be friendly, and smile.
- ✓ Be aware of your body language (posture, gestures, etc).
- ✓ Be yourself.
- ✓ Be positive...NEVER criticize previous employers, teachers, students, or co-workers
- ✓ Emphasize your strengths
- ✓ Be ready to give *examples*.
- ✓ Be confident, but not aggressive.
- ✓ Be a good listener.
- ✓ Participate in the interview.
- ✓ Close the deal! Ask for the order: "I really want this job"
- ✓ Wrap-up question: "What's your hiring process? When can I expect to hear from you?"
- ✓ Say thank you and mean it.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Make sure that "out of sight, out of mind" will not apply to you. You do this by beginning a follow-up procedure immediately after the interview.

**Critique the Interview.** The Post Interview Reflection sheet might be a help (see following page).

## DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS – REMEMBER:

- **Check your e-mail and voice mail daily.**
- **Respond to employer messages within 24 hours.**
- **Report employer contacts to your Co-op Coordinator.**

## Post-Interview Reflection Form

The form on the following page can help you determine where you need to refine your interviewing skills.

# Post-Interview Reflection

Name of Company/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Title of Recruiter/Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Sought: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**What questions were asked of me? What qualities or experience were they impressed with?**

**Which questions did I answer well? What were the rough spots in the interview?**

**Which questions were difficult to answer and why?**

**What did I learn from the interviewer about the job? About the employer?**

**Additional thoughts on the company and interview.**

**Did I get the interviewer's business card?**

**Do I know when they will make a decision?**

## **Follow-up:**

Thank you letter

References

Supplemental Documents

Phone Call regarding status

Decision Call or email sent

*Adapted from: <http://www.kc.cc.il.us/SuccessCenter/pdf/PostInterviewDebriefing.pdf>*

## EVALUATING, ACCEPTING, AND DECLINING OFFERS

If the employer has not volunteered salary information during the interview or offer letter, it is acceptable to ask about the pay rate AFTER an offer has been extended. Any other considerations that would affect your decision should also be discussed. Find out when the employer needs a response from you; decisions can normally be made within a week or less. Honor the date the employer gives you, and if an extension is needed, discuss it with your co-op coordinator prior to contacting the employer.

The self-analysis you did early in the job search should come into play when considering an offer. How does the position relate to your skills, interests, values and, most importantly, your goals for the co-op? How will the position enhance your engineering education? Do not get sidetracked by a higher salary, location, well-known company versus one you “never heard of,” or where your friends are.

If you are comfortable that the job being offered is the right one for you, don't prolong the decision process unnecessarily. On the other hand, the decision process is sometimes complicated by other offers and the need to consider them or to discuss them with parents. Find out when the employer needs a response from you. Normally a decision can be made within a week, sometimes less. Honor the date the employer sets. **Discuss any concerns with your co-op coordinator.**

When you accept an offer, communicate to the employer your interest in the position and your enthusiasm for beginning work. Confirm the terms of the offer including starting date, time and location. In the event that you are asked to write a letter of acceptance, these same topics should be covered.

Once you accept an offer verbally or in writing, you are committed to the employer and are ineligible to interview or accept another offer. Inform the Co-op Coordinator of your decision as soon as possible.

Please discuss any offers you decline with your Co-op Coordinator. Assistance can be provided in what is sometimes an awkward situation for students. You may be interested in employment with the company sometime in the future so you need to be gracious. Thank the person extending the offer, and briefly explain why you are declining it.

Regardless of how well you follow these guidelines, not all interviews will result in offers. There are a number of variables that influence the employment process. Your qualifications, for example, may be excellent but not the best match for a specific position. Your conversation with the interviewer may be pleasant, but perhaps the candidate who follows you communicates with the employer on a more personal level (maybe they went to the same high school or have the same hobbies in common). Even a good interviewer has difficulty avoiding the personal biases that we are subject to as human beings. Try not to take rejections personally or to become discouraged. Look at interviewing as a way of learning about the products and services individual companies provide and the opportunities they offer your intended profession.

It is expected that supervisors will mentor their co-ops; however, the a supervisor will look highly upon a co-op that takes initiative, is a team player, pays attention to details, sets priorities and has respect for his colleagues and supervisor. With a positive attitude, dedication and determination, you will see that doing good things and having the right kinds of people and contacts around you will open doors for you. This knowledge and information will allow you to open doors for others.

## BUSINESS LETTERS

### COVER LETTERS

Never send an employer your résumé without a cover letter. A cover letter serves as a letter of application for a position with a company. It can also serve as a follow up letter after submitting your résumé on-line.

Cover letters should be ONE page with 3-4 paragraphs and should:

- Be addressed to an individual and targeted towards that particular employer - "GENERIC" letters are almost always INEFFECTIVE.
- Expand upon the facts in your resume; do not repeat the information. Talk about your skills and accomplishments related to your job target. ("Bullets" can be an effective way to visually emphasize them.)
- Draw a match between your background, abilities and interests and how they would meet the needs of the employer.
- Demonstrate your communication skills and vocabulary.
- Prompt the reader to take some type of action regarding your application, which should ultimately result in an interview.

Adapted from: [http://explore.bradley.edu/scc/index.php?page=students/cover\\_letters](http://explore.bradley.edu/scc/index.php?page=students/cover_letters)

### Format of business letters:

- Left, Block style for letters that you will mail in U.S. mail.
- Begin with Dear \_\_\_\_\_, for email - put your address information with your name at bottom of page
- Begin salutation with Dear, not "Hello"
- End letter with "Sincerely"

### THANK YOU LETTERS

The employer may interview many of your classmates as well as students from other schools for the position you are seeking. A thank you letter is a part of interviewing etiquette and can give you an edge. It enables you to reiterate your interest in the position, to highlight any elements of your background which seemed to appeal to the interviewer, and to refresh your image in the interviewer's mind. Use words and phrases that demonstrate interest, enthusiasm, appreciation, and sincerity. Correspondence via e-mail is the most common method used today. Send the e-mail within twenty-four hours after the interview and proofread the letter prior to sending it. Your Co-op Coordinator will also be happy to review the letter for you.

## **JOB ACCEPTANCE LETTERS**

Once you have received an official job offer, respond with a short letter stating that you accept the position.

## **DECLINING LETTERS**

If you are declining an offer, write a short letter thanking the employer for the opportunity. Your tone should be polite and to the point. Stay positive and never mention negative reasons for declining the offer. You do not want to burn bridges as you may have interest in that company at a later date.

**See the following pages for sample letters**

## Cover letter thought process and format for EMAIL

Dear Mr. or Ms. (Employer's last name:), ex: Dear Ms. Smith:

*[one blank line]*

*First Paragraph* – Introduce **yourself** and tell the reader **what you are seeking**. Do **not** say: “This is John Smith.” or “I am John Smith.” A more appropriate example to use is: “I am a Mechanical Engineering student at University of Louisville in my junior year seeking an alternating co-op position at your company....” **(If you are following up from a career fair, then mention something that you talked about at the fair to jog the recruiter’s memory of your meeting. Do not use meaningless, fluffy buzzwords.**

*[one blank line]*

*Middle Paragraphs* – Be specific about why you are interested in the position. Briefly summarize some of your strongest qualifications to do the work. Provide your skills and a past experiences using that skill. You can elaborate about your experiences to provide information for the employer that they do not know from your resume. **NOTE: You must research the company in order to know how you will fit in with their organization.** Look for what the company does, or produces, or what services they offer, what skills they need from employees, what departments they have, how much money they made last year, etc. These items will give you an idea of how you can fulfill the employer’s needs if they don’t have a job description.

*[one blank line]*

*Last Paragraph* – Sum up in one or two sentences your skills and why you want to work there. Tell them that you would appreciate the opportunity to interview with them. Also, tell them how to contact you. Ex. “Please contact me by phone at 502-852-5555 or by email at [student@louisville.edu](mailto:student@louisville.edu) if I can be of further assistance.”

*[one blank line]*

Sincerely,

*[three blank lines]*

Type Your Name here

Enclosure

**NOTE: Format of Letter** – double space between paragraphs. Keep it **one page**, adjust margins accordingly. The letter should be centered on the page – that means that if it is a short letter, then come down about 2 or 3 inches from the top so that it is not just a half page.

**Read your letter as if you were the employer.** Would you want to interview this candidate? Can you understand what the candidate is stating?

**BE SURE TO ATTACH YOUR RESUME**

## Cover letter thought process and format for U.S. Mail

Your address  
City, State Zip  
phone  
email

*[one blank line]*

*You can center name, address -  
like on stationary letterhead, if  
desired*

Date ex. January 4, 2006

*[two blank lines]*

Employer's Name

Title

Company

address

City, State Zip

*[two blank lines]*

Dear Mr. or Ms. (Employer's **last name:**) , ex: Dear Ms. Smith:

*[one blank line]*

**First Paragraph** – Introduce **yourself** and tell the reader **what you are seeking**. Do **not** say: "This is John Smith." or "I am John Smith." A more appropriate example to use is: "I am a Mechanical Engineering student at University of Louisville in my junior year seeking an alternating co-op position at your company...." (**If you are following up from a career fair, then mention something that you talked about at the fair to jog the recruiter's memory of your meeting. Do not use meaningless, fluffy buzzwords.**)

*[one blank line]*

**Middle Paragraphs** – Be specific about why you are interested in the position. Briefly summarize some of your strongest qualifications to do the work. Provide your skills and a past experiences using that skill. You can elaborate about your experiences to provide information for the employer that they do not know from your resume. **NOTE: You must research the company in order to know how you will fit in with their organization.** Look for what the company does, or produces, or what services they offer, what skills they need from employees, what departments they have, how much money they made last year, etc. These items will give you an idea of how you can fulfill the employer's needs if they don't have a job description.

*[one blank line]*

**Last Paragraph** – Sum up in one or two sentences your skills and why you want to work there. Tell them that you would appreciate the opportunity to interview with them. Also, tell them how to contact you. Ex. "Please contact me by phone at 502-852-5555 or by email at [student@louisville.edu](mailto:student@louisville.edu) if I can be of further assistance."

*[one blank line]*

Sincerely,

*[three blank lines]*

Type Your Name here

Enclosure

**NOTE: Format of Letter** – double space between paragraphs. Keep it **one page**, adjust margins accordingly. The letter should be centered on the page – that means that if it is a short letter, then come down about 2 or 3 inches from the top so that it is not just a half page.

**Read your letter as if you were the employer.** Would you want to interview this candidate? Can you understand what the candidate is stating?

**BE SURE TO ENCLOSE YOUR RESUME**

## Thank You Letter – Email From Member - NACE

### Subject Line of Email Message:

Thank You – Co-op position at Company Name

Do NOT  
Copy this  
letter  
Write in your  
own words

### Email Message:

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

It was very enjoyable to speak with you today about the co-op accountant position at the Smith Agency. The job seems to be an excellent match for my skills and interests. The creative approach to account management that you described confirmed my desire to work with you.

In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong writing skills, assertiveness, and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with the department.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you regarding this position.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Email Address  
Address  
Phone Number

This is where  
you highlight  
your skills  
again.

You can add  
in something  
you may  
have  
forgotten

or clear up  
any  
misunderstand  
ing from the  
interview

Source: [Alison Doyle](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/thankyouletters/a/blthankemail.htm), retrieved on October 15, 2007 from  
<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/thankyouletters/a/blthankemail.htm>

## Sample JOB ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Jane Fieldstone  
87 Washington Street  
Smithfield, CA 08055  
(909) 555-5555  
Date

Dear Mr. Barnes,

As we discussed on the phone, I am very pleased to accept the position of Marketing Manager with Smithfield Pottery. Thank you for the opportunity.

I look forward to starting employment on January 2, 2008. If there is any additional information or paperwork you need prior to then, please let me know.

Again, thank you.

*Signature*

Jane Fieldstone

Source: [Alison Doyle](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/morejobletters/a/jobacceptletter.htm), retrieved October 15, 2007 from  
<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/morejobletters/a/jobacceptletter.htm>

## Sample Job Declining Letter

Use this sample job rejection letter to let an employer know that you are not accepting a job offer.

George Gilhooley  
87 Delaware Road  
Hatfield, CA 08065  
(909) 555-5555

Date

Dear Mr. Gilhooley,

Thank you very much for offering me the position of Marketing Manager with Hatfield Industries. It was a difficult decision to make, but, I have accepted a position with another company.

I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to interview me and to share information on the opportunity and your company.

Again, thank you for your consideration.

*Signature*

Susan Markstone

Source: [Alison Doyle](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/morejobletters/a/rejectajob.htm) retrieved on October 15, 2007 from <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/morejobletters/a/rejectajob.htm>

## SUCCESS ON THE JOB: ADJUSTING TO A NEW WORK ENVIRONMENT

You will be required to make a transition from the classroom environment to the workplace environment. To be effective, you will have to be accepted by the workplace team. The transition will be easier if you are attuned to business etiquette, ethics, and corporate culture. This information is every bit as important as technical skills or job search skills, and yet the specifics are not found in a textbook.

### BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Unwritten rules dictating appropriate or inappropriate behavior for a particular office are referred to as business etiquette. The new employee might regard these rules as trivial or might not even think about them at all. For the sake of group morale and productivity, however, it is important that they be followed.

**Attendance and Punctuality.** Your supervisor and co-workers are counting on you so attendance is important. If absence is necessary and expected beforehand (for example, jury duty), give your supervisor as much notice as possible. In the case of illness or emergency, phone your supervisor at the *beginning* of normal work hours. Refrain from habitual tardiness and from stretching lunch breaks.

**Dress Code.** Although a suit is appropriate for the interview, it may not be expected for daily wear. Take your cue from your co-workers and blend in with respect to attire. If you are lucky enough to work in an organization where business casual is the norm, note that this does not normally include jeans or collarless shirts.

**Telephone.** You might occasionally answer the phone for the organization or for a colleague. Depending upon the office, "May I tell Mr. Jones who's calling?" might be considered too formal or downright nosy. Know the appropriate greeting and to what degree you are supposed to screen calls. Keep your personal calls to a minimum and speak quietly enough so as not to disturb co-workers in nearby cubicles or offices.

**Coffee.** Many offices have coffee for employees and visitors. If you enjoy a cup of java, inquire about paying for it. You may be asked to donate funds or to provide the coffee periodically. Learn how to brew coffee so you won't ever be tempted to take the last cup and leave an empty pot for someone else.

**Smoking.** Inquire about a designated smoking area.

**Lunch.** Ignoring the lunch break or eating at your desk daily will not be perceived as diligence but as snobbery. Make yourself available to interact with co-workers, but at the same time, be aware that previously established groups may not appreciate a pushy newcomer. Now would be a good time to brush up on your table manners as you may be asked to join management or clients at business luncheons.

**Office Decoration.** Notice the personal items other employees display in their work areas. Some corporate offices limit personal items to one family photo. Also, good-natured rivalry between schools is expected, but do not antagonize diehard sports fans by displaying team posters or imposing school memorabilia.

**Office Equipment.**

Computer – Use the internet and computers for designated work purposes. Do not surf the web for personal use. This includes sites such as: myspace.com, facebook.com, blogs, e-bay, and other popular sites. Big Brother is watching you and using the internet for personal purposes may jeopardize your job.

Telephone – Limit use to business calls only.

**Office Supplies.** Some offices simply keep a cabinet or closet stocked with office supplies such as pens and notepads, and employees take from the inventory as needed. In other offices the employees must submit a requisition. The costs of these items add up; do not waste, hoard or take office supplies home for your personal use.

**Special Occasions.** All offices have their own way of recognizing birthdays, illnesses, and deaths of employees and their immediate family members, ranging from sending a card to contributing to an office pool. These are important, and yet, they can sometimes get out-of-hand. To avoid being put on the spot unexpectedly and feeling pressured to contribute more than you can reasonably afford, you might think ahead about how you will approach this. Likewise, employees may celebrate holidays by drawing names and exchanging gifts, having a pot luck dinner, etc. Again, try to learn ahead of time what's expected and decide what your role will be. For example, you would not want to give a \$25 gift when custom dictates that purchases be limited to \$10. You might feel more comfortable providing some festive napkins than preparing fancy hor d'oeuvres.

**ETHICS**

A common ethical dilemma for students involves exposure to proprietary (exclusively owned, private) information on the job. Make sure you observe company confidentiality when talking with friends and family. Be careful, also, about discussing work in public elevators, restaurants, etc.

Another ethical issue is the use of company technology for purposes that are not work related. Computer activity is monitored in most companies by systems security or network administration. Misuse is not only unethical; it is grounds for termination.

Students embarking on their first co-op assignment would be wise to review the Code of Ethics established by the National Society of Professional Engineers. The Code is based on the principle that "engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public in the performance of their professional duties" and that their services must be performed with honesty, impartiality, and integrity. Carry out your responsibilities with these principles in mind. In the unlikely event that your employer or a client asks you to compromise these ethics, it should be brought to the attention of your co-op director.

**CORPORATE CULTURE**

Corporate culture is a common reference to the personality of an organization. Yes, companies do have their own personalities as reflected in their mission, operating practices, etc. Maintain an objective mind and try answering the following questions to help you define a company's corporate culture.

**Employee Attitudes.** How do employees feel about their jobs and the company for which they work? Do they speak with pride and loyalty? Are they fearful for their jobs should their true feelings be known? What would they change if they had the opportunity? Is there high turnover among employees? Why or why not?

**Work Atmosphere/Environment.** Is there chit-chat and laughter among employees? Are there social functions that promote team spirit? Do employees have the information and the tools they need to perform their duties? Are office lighting, heating/cooling, and ventilation adequate? Are bulletin boards attractive and informative or are they plastered with out-dated material? How would you describe the employee lounge or cafeteria?

**Communication.** How knowledgeable are employees about the business of the company? Do they understand how their function fits in to the organization as a whole? By and large, where do employees get their information – from meetings with management, from memos, from the grapevine?

**Management Style.** How are decisions made? Would you describe the organization as bureaucratic or democratic, aggressive or "laissez-faire?" How do the decision-makers perceive their positions? What are their priorities? What makes them successful? Does management pursue innovation and change or rely on what's tried and true?

**Career Opportunity.** Is it company policy to promote from within? Are there any/many management-supported training and development programs? Are these programs available to all employees? Are their career paths designated within the company?

Usually it takes a couple of weeks to a month for a new employee to get used to the work environment. Co-op students need to learn the ropes more quickly since they are at the workplace for only one semester at a time. You may find it beneficial to identify a mentor, someone who can help you understand what is important in the organization and what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. But do not rely on that person's generosity to the point that you become a nuisance. After all, it's *your* responsibility to fit in.

There are a number of forms and handouts that you may need to access. These forms and handouts are located on the co-op website at

## **ON THE CO-OP JOB: DO'S AND DON'TS**

### ***Do...***

- ask questions
- keep your supervisor informed
- dress to suit your job
- get along with your co-workers
- take your assignment seriously
- be flexible
- realize your supervisor is a resource
- remain professional at all times

***Don't...***

- violate company employment policies
- use the computer for games, blogs, e-bay, or other personal needs
- ignore your supervisor
- gossip about your supervisor or co-workers
- get too familiar too fast
- push to personalize your area
- expect too much of others
- abuse privileges

## **CO-OP REPORT & EXIT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES**

### **EXIT INTERVIEW**

A brief exit interview will be conducted between the student and the Co-op advisor to discuss your co-op work term. This must be scheduled and completed within the first week of classes to get a passing grade for the co-op semester work.

(Note – all students initially receive an “Incomplete” (“I”) grade for the co-op semester. The final grade is turned in after the exit interview.)

### **WHEN IS THE CO-OP REPORT DUE?**

The co-op report is due at the time of the exit interview. It is strongly suggested that you:

- Keep a log book during your co-op experience;
- Write the report prior to the end of the co-op term so that your employer can review it.

### **WHAT TO BRING TO EXIT INTERVIEW?**

1. Co-op Report
2. Student Appraisal Form: Original, completed and signed by employer and student
3. Updated résumé with most recent co-op experience

### **APPROVAL PROCESS:**

Once the report has been reviewed and approved by your co-op advisor, it will be forwarded to the departmental faculty for approval. If the report is not well written and does not have the required format, you will be asked to re-write or revise the report.

Students will be notified when and where the graded reports can be picked up.

## **CO-OP REPORT GUIDELINES**

### **GENERAL REQUIRMENTS:**

Submit in a black jacket with clear vinyl front cover with either a **sliding lock (preferred)** or a three-hole fastener.

1. REPORT EVALUATION FORM\*
2. BODY OF REPORT\*
3. **Copy of** PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Note: **Performance Appraisal\*** – (original and signed) – must be left loose inside cover of report – this goes in your academic file.

**\*(Download the report template and performance appraisal from our web site. <http://.louisville.edu/speed> . (Click on Forms)**

## **BODY OF REPORT CONTENT**

### **I) EMPLOYER DESCRIPTION\* (1 page): QUANTIFY :**

How big is the company (sales, employees)?  
Is it publicly traded?  
Where are its locations?  
What are the principal products and services?  
What department did you work in?  
How big is it?  
Who are the major customers? **See writing sample. (3<sup>rd</sup> person)**

**II) MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES: (2-3 pages).** Describe in detail your major projects (one or two projects max).

**What were the project's objectives?**

**What were your specific duties and responsibilities? Analyze how they fit with the project objectives**

**What were your accomplishments? Analyze how they impacted the project outcome. Use 3<sup>rd</sup> person.**

(This section should be very straightforward if you kept a detailed diary of your experiences while on co-op.)

**III. EMPLOYER BENEFITS (1 page):** In this section you should **QUANTIFY** the benefits your project had for your employer.

- How much did sales increase?
- How much did profit increase?
- Did quality improve – how much?
- Did direct costs (material, labor) go down – how much?
- Were there other benefits that REDUCED indirect costs: inventory, cycle time, scrap, repair work?

**Use 3<sup>rd</sup> person (See writing sample).**

**IV. STUDENT BENEFITS (1 page):** In this section you should answer the CENTRAL QUESTION: **what did you learn on this co-op work period.**

These should be expressed in terms of the “learning outcomes or goals” established by ABET, Inc. (ABET, Inc is the recognized accreditor for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology. ABET, Inc. has accredited UofL Speed School of Engineering degree programs.)

The checklist of learning outcomes is shown below. You may not have experienced all of “a-k” learning outcomes. However for the ones which apply, you should describe what you learned in those terms. (This should be easy if you kept a diary.)

**Use 1<sup>st</sup> person!**

**ABET Learning Outcomes “checklist”:**

- a) Discuss how you applied math/science/engineering knowledge.
- b) Discuss experiments you conducted and how the data was analyzed.
- c) Discuss your participation in designing a system, component, or process to meet desired needs within constraints.
- d) Discuss examples of working on TEAMS.
- e) Discuss your experience solving engineering problems.
- f) Discuss how you increased your understanding of professional and ethical responsibility as an engineer.
- g) Give examples where you had to effectively COMMUNICATE!.
- h) Discuss how your co-op experience increased your understanding of the impact of engineering solutions on society.  
(E.G. RECOGNIZE THE HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES OF ENGINEERING ERRORS, AND BENEFITS OF RAPID ECONOMICAL SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS, IN THE BUSINESS, THE COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.)
- i) Discuss how you became aware of the need for lifelong learning in your field.
- j) Give examples of encountering contemporary issues in your field.
- k) Discuss your experience in using techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools commonly used in engineering practice.

**See the writing sample for more details.\***

**FORMAT:**

1. Laser printed on white paper, Times Roman 12, double-spaced with a 1.5-inch left margin and one-inch top, bottom and right margins
2. **Print single sided.**
3. Headings: CENTERED, **BOLD**, and ALL CAPS.
4. Reports should be SPELL-CHECKED and PROOF READ.

**STYLE and WRITING TIPS:**

1. Pay special attention to subject/verb agreement and verb tense, the two most common sentence-level problems in technical writing.
2. Favor short paragraphs over long ones in order to stay focused.
3. Build paragraphs around a central idea expressed in the topic sentence. The topic sentence may be as simple as “Daily activities fell into three categories.” Then all of the sentences in the paragraph should contribute to the development of the main idea.
4. Use transition words (therefore, for example, similarly, but, however, nevertheless, furthermore, now, meanwhile, after that, then, next, finally) at the beginning of pivotal sentences and paragraphs, remembering that transition words are simple ways to guide the reader’s thinking.

5. Rely on the active voice more than the passive. Write “The Flight Standards Office employs three co-op students” rather than “Three co-op students are employed by the Flight Standards Office.”
6. Use active verbs, thinking in terms of things you demonstrated, performed, defined, improved, mapped, programmed, organized, etc.
7. Avoid clichés, slang, and colloquial language (used in conversations).
8. Use punctuation marks such as the comma, semicolon, colon and dash correctly.

## Critical Thinking Skills:

You already use these skills, but probably have not labeled them as such. Critical thinking is **using logic based on facts and objective evidence when determining the answer to problems**. It is the ability to think **clearly and rationally**.

As you worked on and solved **any type of problem** on your co-op, evaluate your thinking using these **elements of CRITICAL THINKING (reasoning)**:

**Purpose** - what was the fundamental purpose and goal of the project or problem? You are seeking *Clarity, Significance and Accuracy*.

**Questions and Assumptions** – what were the fundamental questions associated with the problem? Are they *Clearly* and *Precisely* stated? Are they *Relevant* and *Complete*? How did your *Assumptions* affect your problem solution?

**Points of View, Knowledge and Concepts** – you should identify different points of view and be *objective* in the assessment of these viewpoints. You should have enough information to assess the key concepts for *Clarity* and consider all possibilities (*Depth* and *Breadth*).

**Inferences and Implications** – The solution selected should be a *logical conclusion* – *consistent and relevant*.

**A SAMPLE CO-OP REPORT (WRITING SAMPLE) IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE:**  
<http://louville.edu/speed>.

**HAVING TROUBLE? VISIT THE WRITING CENTER IN EKSTROM LIBRARY, OR SEE YOUR CO-OP ADVISOR.**

### **FORMAT – USE THE TEMPLATE FOR THE REPORT ON THE WEBSITE.**

- Submit the report in a black jacket with clear vinyl front cover with either a **sliding lock (preferred)** or a three-hole fastener.
- Laser printed on white paper, Times Roman 12, double-spaced with a 1.5-inch left margin and one-inch top, bottom and right margins
- **Print single sided.**
- Headings: CENTERED, **BOLD**, and ALL CAPS.
- Reports should be SPELL-CHECKED and PROOF READ.
- **Page numbering is not required.**

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT - RECOMMENDED TIME TABLE**

### **Freshman Year**

Consider your personality, activities, values, skills, needs, and goals. If you cannot describe yourself in detail in these different areas, you should seek assistance through exercises and tests administered at the University's Career Center.

Gather information about engineering careers in general and about specific fields within engineering from libraries, bookstores, professional organizations, etc. Conduct information interviews with faculty, counselors, and engineers. Shadow a professional for a day. Begin to narrow your focus to specific fields. Analyze information learned in your self-assessment with respect to what you've learned about that field.

Keep a journal; include a personal action plan, job search log, notes on short-term and long-term goals, and other information regarding your career progress.

Get a summer job in order to earn money toward your college expenses and to acquire work experience.

Continue researching all you can about your chosen career field.

### **Sophomore Year**

Within your chosen field, become familiar with specific job titles and duties. Read the job ads in the newspaper and on the internet to determine who's hiring and what types of skills are in demand. Find ways to acquire these skills through coursework or personal training.

Participate in student organizations to enhance your leadership and team skills, meet professionals, and tour companies.

Read books and periodicals about total quality management, just-in-time manufacturing, ISO 9000, corporate cultures, networking and other concepts important in the workplace and in career advancement.

Attend seminars on résumé writing and effective interviewing techniques in preparation for co-op.

Get a summer job. Continue to build a good work experience file and reference list.

### **Junior Year**

Through co-op, test your interests and abilities for work in your chosen field.

Seek to develop skills in making presentations, writing business letters, memos, reports, and conducting meetings.

Become familiar with the techniques for writing cover letters.

Review and update your résumé.  
Develop a networking list.

Inquire in the Career Services office about when and how to register for résumé referrals and on-campus interviews next year.

Continue developing knowledge and maturity about the workplace and what it takes to get ahead.

Get a summer job in your chosen field. Continue to enhance your marketability for jobs after graduation.

To help you focus your job search for your senior year, write the answers to the following questions: *What do I want to do? What do I have to offer as an employee? Who needs what I have to offer? How do I make them want to hire me?*

## **Senior Year**

Rev up your job search. Put it into high gear! **ATTEND THE GRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES PROVIDED BY CAREER DEVELOPMENT.** (See website, or contact Penny Hoerter or James Atkinson.)

Tailor your basic résumé and cover letter to specific companies. Identify the people responsible for hiring and mail directly to them. Follow up with phone calls within a week. Keep copies of your letters, record the date you called, what you learned from the discussion and action to be taken.

Network! Network! Network! Talk to everybody you can who may be able to help you in your job search. Follow up on their leads.

Schedule on-campus and company interviews. Write thank you letters within twenty-four hours after the interview. Express your appreciation and highlight any elements of your background which seemed to appeal to the interviewer.

Consider the various job offers you receive in light of your personal and professional interests and needs. Be realistic in terms of the value you can add to the company as a new graduate. Accept with confidence and a commitment to your employer. Write gracious letters declining offers; one never knows what the future holds and it is best not to burn your bridges.

Announce your job acceptance to those in your network who were supportive during your search. Express your appreciation and offer to assist them when needed.

Develop a checklist of areas to address in making your transition from college to the workplace.

***If you have more questions and want to discuss your job search and selection, please visit the Engineering Career Development and Cooperative Education Office in Kersey Building.***