

The Student's Guide for Cooperative Education Programs

Enrollment

Students seeking enrollment in a cooperative education program generally fall into the following categories:

- Students who have specific career objectives and desire “work experience” in that field.
- Students who want to gain experience in a specific field but remain undecided regarding a career choice. There are OJT options available for each career cluster.
- Students who have a need for financial assistance.

Responsibilities of the student

- Signing and abiding by required agreements and forms.
- Maintaining accurate records of hours worked and earnings.
- Demonstrate the employability skills essential for success on the job.
- Following safety rules and instructions.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the Child Labor Laws.
- Discussing any employment-related problems that occurs with the teacher/coordinator.
- Being a positive representative of the school, the community, and the career and technical student organization (CTSO) when provided.

How does the student keep a record of work hours for the school?

The student will complete a time card document for the school, listing the hours, days, and weekly/monthly totals for their training site. U.S. Department of Labor laws must be followed. The time card is the official audit record for the school and is an important document needed for attendance.

This time card must be completed each month by the student. It must be signed by the employer or current supervisor at the training location. The teacher/coordinator must make the OJT records available for audit based on the school timetable and audit requirements.

Why is the school's record of attendance for the student/employee so important?

The student attendance for OJT experience is counted as enrollment for Florida school attendance payments. Attendance is a very important record for every school, and cooperative education job experience attendance must be kept accurately and meticulously by the teacher/coordinator. Audits may occur yearly for these records, and all student time cards must be kept by the school district for five years. Even though the student is not in the formal classroom, the student is reporting to his/her Training Site, which is the classroom for on-the-job training and cooperative education program purposes.

Some school districts may require that a copy of the student's pay voucher be attached to each time card to verify actual employment of the student. This could include the student's employee number, Social Security number, earnings record, and federal tax records for school attendance and official audit reports. Records must be stored in accordance with district policy on student privacy.

What is a Training Agreement?

A Training Agreement is a standard form/document used for cooperative education program purposes. It must be signed by the student, parent/guardian, employer, and teacher/coordinator. A copy is filed with the school, a copy is kept by the employer at the training site, and the parent may receive a copy. This contract designates the general expectations of the student/employee, and the responsibilities of the school, the cooperative education teacher/coordinator, and the employer. **However, it does not confer any rights, expressed or implied, to remain as an employee. Employment is at will and is not for any specific time. Employment may be terminated at will, with or without prior notice by the employer. The student/employee may resign for any reason at any time.** Some school districts may also require that the worker's compensation insurance carrier's name and telephone number be listed on this training agreement. A new training agreement must be completed each time a student/employee is hired.

Supervised on-the-job training, with a training agreement and an individualized training plan signed by the student, teacher/coordinator, employer, and parent/guardian, is required for a cooperative education program student.

What rights does the student/employee have in a cooperative education program?

The employer may place a student/employee in a particular job description that is within the scope of their technical and academic training. The Training Plan is the document that will outline the student's duties, skills to be learned, and the expected timeline to be completed. This training plan is completed by the cooperative education teacher/coordinator in collaboration with the employer for each student. The student will be asked to review it and to sign the training plan. The student is an employee for the company and is covered by all state and federal laws and all policies regarding hiring, firing, and termination.

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| <p>The student/employee's Training Plan is to include instructional objectives and a list of on-the-job and in-school learning experiences.</p> |
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How does the student receive a grade?

The teacher/coordinator should visit each Training Site at least once during each grading period. This visit will be to evaluate the student's progress and to discuss with the supervisor how the student is meeting the goals listed in the Training Plan. The student is evaluated on: overall job performance; employability skills; mastery and competency of job skills and duties.

The class size and district/school policies will affect the teacher/coordinator's ability to visit each training site multiple times during each grading period. School districts may place varying numbers of cooperative education program students in cooperative education classes, so the actual class sizes of students may be greater for some teacher/coordinators.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Teachers, counselors, and support staff are responsible for serving all students and for helping each student reach his or her goals based on individual interests, preferences, and aptitudes. All students benefit from quality cooperative education program experiences that provide the opportunity to develop and practice skills that students need to successfully transition to adult life as productive citizens. However, some students need accommodations, modifications, special assistance, and/or support services to actively participate in and to benefit from cooperative education programs.

It is important for career and technical education teacher/coordinators to take steps to:

- Connect with special needs personnel to ensure that students' needs are met, leading to success in the program
- Define roles and responsibilities clearly so that each staff member can contribute to the program effectiveness based on his or her strengths and experiences
- Ensure that accommodations and special services are provided

Resources

[Exceptional Student Education DOE Home Page](http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf) Accommodations, Assisting Students with Disabilities: (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education)

<http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf>

Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities in Vocational Education and Adult General Education, 200 (brochure, Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Development, available at http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070067-310907_accomm.pdf)

Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities in Vocational Education and Adult General Education (a guide, Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Development, available at http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5398/urlt/311201_acmod-voc.pdf)

District implementation guide for section 504

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070057-sect504.pdf>