

## The Employer's Guide for Cooperative Education Programs

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Cooperative education programs permit the student to be released from the school campus to work part-time for an employer. The student will report to the assigned job, which is referred to as the student's Training Site. The student/employee represents the school district at all times and is expected to demonstrate professional qualities of responsibility, dependability, ethical behavior, and maturity while performing tasks for the employer.

**The purpose of cooperative education programs is to provide the student with competencies developed through paid, supervised on-the-job training related to an occupational goal.**

### Benefits of cooperative education programs for the employer

- Provides a supplemental workforce.
- Productive, enthusiastic employees.
- Reduce the cost of recruiting students.
- High school graduates with practical work experience.
- Enhanced community relationships by increasing a company's visibility on campus and in the community.

### When can the student/employee work?

The employer will set the student/employee's schedule according to their school/class schedule and according to employer needs. Students will be assigned to a school Cooperative Education Program for elective credit(s). Each school district may use different strategies in scheduling students for cooperative education experiences.

### What about transportation of the student/employee to and from the job?

Many cooperative education programs and school districts have students and parents sign an agreement or contract stating that they are responsible for their own transportation and are permitted to travel to and from the Training Site. **The employer is not responsible for the student traveling to and from work. The student is expected to abide by all school rules related to driving and parking.**

### Does the student/employee have to be paid?

Students must be compensated for the work that they do. The purpose of cooperative education programs is to provide the student with competencies developed through supervised on-the-job training. The employer is required to follow all state and federal laws that apply to payroll, Social Security, and federal income tax rules and procedures.

**Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Child Labor Program**

<http://www.myfloridalicense.com/DBPR/child-labor/>

If the student is under 18 years of age, Child Labor Laws must be followed. *Florida Child Labor Law Chapter 450, Part I, Florida Statutes*

Division of Regulation  
2601 Blair Stone Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0782  
Phone: 850.488.3131

### **How does the student/employee 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 documents does the teacher/coordinator need to have on file for each cooperative education program student/employee?**

- ✓ A copy of Florida driver's license or picture id.
- ✓ Copy of job description/duties, job title, name of supervisor(s), training site address/location, skills to be learned (Student Training Plan)
- ✓ Time card (a time card document must be completed by the student for attendance and school audit reports)

- ✓ Training Agreement document signed by the student, parent, employer, school and teacher/coordinator

Some schools may require an individual school contract that denotes specific policies of the school district

## 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.

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

### **How can a school district or the Department of Education be contacted?**

The Florida Department of Education website has statistics, information about standards, testing, accountability, program guidelines and frameworks, teacher certification, scholarships, and legislative changes.

By using the keyword search at the top of the Florida Department of Education home page, virtually any topic or subject involving Florida School Districts can be found.

<http://www.fldoe.org/>