

# CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## 2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

### CO-OP BASICS: OVERVIEW

During 2L and 3L years, all full-time Northeastern JD students complete three co-ops. All co-ops for full-time JD students are full-time (a minimum of 35 hours per week) for 15 weeks in a legal/law-related setting, involve substantive legal work, and are supervised by an attorney.<sup>1 2</sup> Prior to the end of co-op, co-op supervising attorneys complete evaluations that become part of students' transcripts.

In certain, limited cases, students may be permitted to complete one of their co-ops in a position that is not supervised by an attorney if there is a career-based rationale for doing so. This requires prior approval from the Center for Co-op & Career Development ("the Co-op Office"). Our goal is to ensure that each co-op is a good match to each student's interests and goals, that it will help to move their career forward, and that it provides the opportunity for the student to practice the lawyering skills learned during the academic terms.

#### *Repeat Co-ops*

Students typically complete three *different* co-ops, as this maximizes the opportunity to learn from a variety of practitioners and experience different practice settings. Different placements also help a student to expand their professional network! In certain cases, however, a student may complete more than one co-op with the same employer if it is beneficial to their long-term career goals and if the student secures prior approval from the Co-op Office.

#### *Remote Co-ops*

**COVID-19 Exception.** While the following rules concerning remote co-ops constitute best practice, disruptions due to COVID-19 have made them impractical during the pandemic. During the on-going public health emergency, in compliance with an employer's request, students may work remotely for their first co-op and do not require express permission for any other remote co-op. Note: if you have concerns about reporting to a physical location due to the pandemic, please schedule an appointment with a co-op advisor to discuss.

**First Co-op Placement.** One of the core benefits of co-op is the opportunity to work alongside and learn from practicing attorneys. For this reason, "remote co-ops," defined as either: (1) a co-op where a student does not go to the office, but rather works from home or another location, or (2) a co-op where the supervisor overseeing the NUSL student is working remotely or is away from the office during all or most of the student's co-op, are traditionally not allowed for a student going on their first co-op placement. This standard was implemented after feedback from first-time co-op students who had remote placements.

---

<sup>1</sup> FlexJD students will complete part-time co-ops (25 hours per week) for 15 weeks.

<sup>2</sup> LLM students participating in co-op will complete one full-time co-op for a minimum of 12 weeks.

## **CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

### **2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

**Second and Third Co-op Placements.** For subsequent co-op placements, after a student has successfully completed their first co-op, remote co-ops are permitted only with permission of the Assistant Dean for Co-op and Career Development. For a remote co-op to be approved, the employer will be asked to confirm that it will provide meaningful opportunities for supervision, feedback, and, where appropriate, client contact.

#### *Student Application Material Review by a Co-op Advisor*

We encourage you to submit resumes, cover letters, and fellowship application materials to a co-op advisor for review. This will maximize your chances of receiving an interview and/or an offer. Our office policy is to return student materials with edits and comments **within 7 business days** of receipt. Please keep this timeframe in mind when sending your materials for review, and note that we cannot guarantee review of your materials in less than 7 business days, particularly during peak application timeframes before a co-op or OCI deadline.

Please only forward your application materials or co-op questions **to one advisor at a time**. If you choose to send to more than one advisor, copy everyone on one e-mail and one advisor will respond.

Thank you for adhering to these guidelines so that all students can have the opportunity to get their materials reviewed in a timely manner.

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

Successful participation in Northeastern University School of Law's Co-op Program is a graduation requirement to earn one's law degree. As such, students must comply with all requirements of the Center for Co-op and Career Development. This includes attending events designated by the Center for Co-op and Career Development as mandatory and completing all mandatory paperwork, evaluations, and forms. It also includes adherence to all Center for Co-op and Career Development policies, as well as law school policies and professional ethics guidelines.

The Center for Co-op and Career Development works closely with, and may refer students to, the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs to address specific cases of co-op related misconduct. The Deans will review the matter and determine whether to commence a complaint under Northeastern University's Code of Student Conduct. Northeastern University's Code of Student Conduct may be found in the student handbook and on the Academic and Student Affairs website.

#### **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REGARDING ACCEPTANCE OF CO-OP OFFERS**

Students must honor their employment commitments – therefore, if you accept a co-op position, you are expected and required to follow through on that acceptance and co-op with that employer. If, due to unforeseen and/or extraordinary circumstances, a student needs to modify or rescind the acceptance of

# CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## 2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

an offer, then s/he/they must consult with the Assistant Dean of the Center for Co-op and Career Development before taking any action. Employers also are expected to adhere to this policy.

### QUALITY QUESTIONNAIRES

Quality Questionnaires are an important means by which Northeastern Law students share information about the quality of their co-op experiences with fellow students. Students must complete a Quality Questionnaire at the end of each co-op and submit them to the Co-op Office in order for their performance evaluations to be processed. Students will gain access to their co-op evaluation on Symplicity once they complete and submit the Quality Questionnaires for that co-op. It is imperative that students maintain the confidentiality of all information contained in the Quality Questionnaires; none of the information in the Quality Questionnaires should be shared with anyone outside of our NUSL community in order to ensure that students continue to provide thoughtful and accurate reflections on their experiences.

### TYPES OF EMPLOYERS

**Collecting Co-op Employers:** Employers that hire Northeastern Law co-op students on a regular basis through Symplicity are referred to as “Collecting Co-op Employers.” Students applying for co-ops with Collecting Co-op Employers must utilize the application processes established by the Co-op Office. Students may not reach out independently to the person listed on Symplicity as the main contact person for a Collecting Co-op Employer until after interview requests and/or offers are made (see “Non-Communication Rule” and FAQ for more information).

**Apply Direct Employers on Symplicity:** There are many employers with job postings in Symplicity to whom students may “apply directly.” These are designated as “Apply Direct” employers. You should contact these employers directly to explore specific opportunities with them and to submit your application. Apply Direct employers are not bound by the same deadlines as our Collecting Co-op Employers. *Typically, an early application to an Apply Direct employer is strongly recommended.* If you have questions about the optimal timing for applying to an employer, please meet with an advisor.

**Develop on Own/Student Developed Co-ops:** Any law student may apply independently to employers and legal internship programs not listed in Symplicity, and may also reach out to specific employers who are not “Collecting Co-op Employers” to develop specific co-ops that meet the student’s interest, co-op requirements, and the employer’s needs. For opportunities publicized on an employer’s website or found through other means, simply follow the employer’s application instructions to set up your own co-op with them. All “develop on own” co-ops must be approved by the Co-op Office, so if you are not sure whether something will qualify, be sure to speak with an advisor prior to setting up the co-op.

**Approval of Student Developed Co-ops:** Students work with the Co-op Office and their intended co-op employer to ensure that the proposed co-op will meet the law school’s co-op requirements. The intended co-op supervisor completes, and the employer signs, the “Co-op Placement Approval Form.” Before the co-op can be approved, the form must be submitted to the Co-op Office for review.

# CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## 2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

### APPLICATION PROCESS SUMMARY & RULES FOR EACH TYPE OF EMPLOYER

## TYPES OF CO-OP EMPLOYERS/JOB

Type of Employer	Number of Employers	Where to Find Job Postings	Sample Job Titles	When to Apply	How to Apply	Applicable Rules
Collecting Co-op Employer	~600	Symplicity	"Summer 2020 Early"  "Summer 2020 Co-op"  "Summer 2020 Supplemental 4/9"	According to Co-op office deadlines – refer to annual Co-op Calendar for specific dates	Through Symplicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Non-Communication Rule</li> <li>✗ Co-op Placement Approval Form</li> <li>✓ Judge Rule</li> </ul>
Apply Direct Co-op Employer	~800	Symplicity	"Summer 2020 Apply Direct"	Employer's discretion, any time until the start of the quarter	Directly through employer (instructions and/or contact information provided in Symplicity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Non-Communication Rule</li> <li>✗ Co-op Placement Approval Form</li> <li>✓ Judge Rule</li> </ul>
Other Co-op Employer	Unlimited	Symplicity, anywhere legal jobs are posted, develop through outreach, etc.	In Symplicity: "Summer 2020 Employer Self-Post"  Elsewhere: job titles will vary	Employer's discretion, any time until the start of the quarter	Directly through employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Non-Communication Rule</li> <li>✓ Co-op Placement Approval Form</li> <li>✓ Judge Rule</li> </ul>

### NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

There is no limit to the number of applications students may submit each term for co-op. *We encourage students to be proactive and strategic in their applications and co-op selections.* Our general recommendation is to submit approximately ten (10) to fifteen (15) applications for each intended co-op term, but this number can vary greatly depending on your practice interests, geographic preferences, and prior experience. This is why it is imperative to meet with a co-op advisor to craft the best application strategy for your situation!

### INTERVIEW REQUESTS FROM COLLECTING CO-OP EMPLOYERS

**Step 1:** Collecting Co-op Employer notifies the Co-op Office regarding which student applicants they would like to interview.

**Step 2:** The Co-op Office notifies the students via **[northeastern.edu](mailto:northeastern.edu) email address**. Congratulations, you have an interview!

## CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

### 2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

**Step 3:** By 5:00 PM the next business day after students receive notice from the Co-op Office (or directly from employer, should that occur) students contact the employers to accept or decline the interview opportunity.

**Step 4:** In addition to contacting employers directly by 5:00 PM the next business day, students also notify the Co-op Office by selecting “Accept” or “Decline” on Symplicity for each Interview Request.

#### **EMPLOYMENT OFFERS FROM COLLECTING EMPLOYERS**

**Step 1:** Collecting Employer notifies the Co-op Office to extend offer to student on the employer’s behalf, or the employer communicates the offer directly to the student.

**Step 2:** Co-op Office notifies student directly via **northeastern.edu email address**.

**Step 3:** Student contacts the employer to acknowledge receipt of the offer within 24 hours of receiving it.

**Step 4:** Student contacts the employer to accept or decline the offer as follows:

- By 5:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> business day after the co-op offer was sent, unless the employer tells you otherwise.
- Judge Exception: by the end of the next business day after the co-op offer was sent. Essentially there is a 24-hour response rule for judges/members of the judiciary.

**Step 5:** If the student accepts the offer, the student notifies the Co-op Office by going to the “Confirm a Co-op Placement” page of the Co-op Office’s website, located here:

[nulawcareers.sites.northeastern.edu/confirm-a-co-op-placement/](http://nulawcareers.sites.northeastern.edu/confirm-a-co-op-placement/). Until the Co-op Office receives notice through the website, the student’s co-op is not official and cannot be considered for potential funding, nor can the student be registered for co-op with the University.

**Step 6:** Once the student has accepted the co-op offer (congratulations!) and informed the Co-op Office, if the student has other collecting co-op applications pending the Co-op Office will inform subsequent employers who request an interview that the student is no longer available. For **any already outstanding interviews or offers** – including interviews requested, scheduled or conducted, offers received, etc. – the student **must** contact that employer directly to withdraw from consideration.

**Step 7:** Student updates Symplicity by selecting “Accept” or “Decline” for the offer. NOTE: this does not substitute for informing the Co-op Office through the website confirmation page.

**CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT**  
**2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

**SEEKING ADDITIONAL TIME TO RESPOND TO AN OFFER/NOTIFYING ANOTHER EMPLOYER THAT YOU HAVE AN OFFER**

If you need additional time to consider an offer, beyond the standard time frames delineated above, you may contact the employer to request an extension. Granting (or denying) an extension is up to the employer's discretion. **You may not ask a collecting co-op judicial employer to extend the 1-day judge deadline.**

If you have an offer from one employer, but want to hear from another employer before making your decision, you have two options:

- 1) If you have not yet been in contact with the second employer, you may e-mail lawcoop@northeastern.edu to inquire with us about their projected hiring timeframe, or
- 2) If you have already been in contact with the second employer, you may notify them directly that you have received an offer in hopes of spurring a quicker response.

Consult with an advisor in the Co-op Office if you have any questions about, or need assistance with, this process.

**“THE JUDGE RULE” - PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & CENTER FOR CO-OP AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT RULES FOR EMPLOYMENT OFFERS FROM JUDGES - WHETHER COLLECTING, APPLY DIRECT, OR DEVELOP ON OWN**

- **A student must always accept an offer from a judge.**
- Do not apply to judges or courts unless you are prepared to accept an offer. Offers for judicial co-ops can occur very quickly. A few judges make offers without ever conducting an interview, just on the basis of students' application materials; other judges extend offers on the spot or very soon after the interview.
- Occasionally, you may be in a position where you receive two judicial co-op offers close in time, i.e. within the same 24-hour period. Only in this situation, where you have two offers in hand, may you decline one offer, but you must accept the remaining offer. You may never use an offer from one judge to “leverage” an offer from another, nor may you wait to respond to a judge to see if you receive another offer from a different judge.
- An application to a judge may be withdrawn at any point BEFORE an offer is extended, including after the interview.
- Some variation of the judge rule is in place at the majority of ABA accredited law schools, and applies to both judicial internships and post graduate clerkships.

# CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## 2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

### **“NON-COMMUNICATION RULE” - POLICY FOR COMMUNICATING WITH COLLECTING CO-OP EMPLOYERS**

As stated on the second page of this handout, **students applying for co-ops with Collecting Co-op Employers may do so only through Symplicity** and via the processes established by the Co-op Office in consultation with employers. Students may not reach out independently to the main contact person listed on Symplicity for a Collecting Co-op Employer regarding the application process or the status of their application until an interview request and/or offer is made to the student. Once interview requests and/or offers are made, students must respond to employers directly within the above-listed timeframes.

*This policy does not prohibit students from reaching out to an organization/firm/agency exclusively for networking purposes. Further, this policy does not prohibit or limit recommenders, or any other connections students may have with the Collecting Co-op Employers, from contacting these employers on behalf of student applicants. If you have any questions about the application of this rule, please be in touch with the Co-op Office.*

To determine whether an employer is a Collecting Co-op Employer or not, go to “Employers” in Symplicity, and search for the employer. On the first tab of the employer profile, the “Employer Type” field will indicate the employer’s status.

### **CHANGING CO-OP ROTATIONS**

It is sometimes possible to change co-op rotations if there are compelling personal or professional extenuating circumstances. Students may request to change co-op rotation through an official process established by the Office for Academic and Student Affairs. Students are required to consult a co-op advisor prior to making this request, if the basis is related to professional circumstances. The Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs will review student requests in consultation with the Assistant Dean for the Center for Co-op and Career Development. Please contact the Office of Academic and Student Affairs for more information.

### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WHILE ON CO-OP**

The Co-op Office reaches out to students a few weeks into the term via email as part of our “Early Check-in” to inquire how co-op is going (e.g. appropriate workload, supervision, etc.). We review all your responses and take your comments seriously - we will contact you to see if there is any way we can be of help. Please fill out your Early Check-in survey.

Students are always welcome to contact the Co-op Office or reach out to a co-op advisor if they encounter any issues while on co-op. In the event that a student has concerns about discrimination in the workplace (including sexual harassment), the student should contact the Co-op Office or the student may file a complaint directly with the [Northeastern University Office for Equity and Compliance](#). In addition to investigating Title IX complaints, they are charged with investigating complaints and/or advising students who bring forth claims of discrimination based on any legally protected category.

# CENTER FOR CO-OP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## 2021-2022 CO-OP RULES & PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

### **CALENDAR WHILE ON CO-OP**

While on co-op, a student's schedule follows their employer's calendar, not the calendar of Northeastern University School of Law. If there is a break in the academic term, it does not apply to students on co-op unless their co-op employer has a corresponding break. For example, some employers may have closures over the Thanksgiving or end-of-year holidays that correspond with the school's academic term holiday breaks but most employers will not have a spring break that corresponds with the spring academic term. Students are permitted to ask their co-op employers for reasonable time off for holidays, as they would in any professional setting.

### **FULFILLING NUSL's PUBLIC INTEREST REQUIREMENT THROUGH CO-OP**

In 1993, amended in 2004, the Northeastern University School of Law Faculty enacted a [Public Interest Requirement](#) for all law students that must be fulfilled prior to graduation.

Many students fulfill the law school's public interest requirement through one of their co-ops, through enrollment in a law school clinic, or through 30 hours of *pro bono* work. There are hundreds of co-op placements that fulfill the requirement. If a student is uncertain whether a particular co-op will qualify, the student should consult with a co-op advisor. Note: if the employer is in Symplicity, their job posting will have a field titled "PIR" – a "Yes" indicates that it satisfies the Public Interest Requirement.

For students who need additional assistance fulfilling the Public Interest Requirement for graduation, please contact the Director of Public Interest in the Center for Co-op and Career Development.