

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



**NASA Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)**  
**Desk Guide for**  
**Program Managers and Supervisors**  
**Version 1**

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## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

This section provides an overview of the document content, as well as how the information is arranged.

### **1.1 Purpose**

This guidance provides the framework for use of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). This document serves as a supplement to the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), 5 C.F.R. § 213.3202, Entire Executive Civil Service.

### **1.2 Program Objectives**

The purpose of SCEP, which is sometimes referred to as the Cooperative (Co-op) Education Program, is to provide students with exposure to public service, enhance their educational experience, and provide financial support to encourage and support their educational goals. The program also assists NASA in attracting and recruiting well-educated graduates into the workforce.

SCEP is a formally structured program that gives students the opportunity to work in positions related to their academic/career goals. A written agreement is required between the employing Center, school, and student. The written agreement should inform the student of their roles and responsibilities for successful completion of program requirements. Upon successful completion of the program and academic requirements, SCEP employees are eligible for conversion to permanent employment.

SCEP also provides managers the ability to evaluate the student's performance in real work situations. This program can be used effectively to help close the skills gap, accomplish succession planning and knowledge management, as well as build a more diverse workforce.

### **1.3 Applicability**

This desk guide is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities, the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC), and the Office of the Inspector General. Unless otherwise stated, the use of the word Center(s) in the text of this document includes NASA Headquarters and the NSSC, and any reference to Center Director(s) includes the Executive Director, Headquarters Operations and the Executive Director, NSSC. This desk guide is for use by NASA Center Human Resources (HR) Offices, as well as NASA Program Managers and Supervisors.

### **1.4 About This Document**

This document contains information on regulations and processes relating to SCEP. The following appendices are included in this document:

- Appendix A, Acronyms and Abbreviations
- Appendix B, Sample Cooperative Education Program Agreement

- Appendix C, Sample Performance Plan, NASA Form 1763
- Appendix D, Sample Tuition Assistance Agreement

**Note:** For your convenience, this document identifies Web links when available. These links are correct as of this publishing; however, since Web links can be moved or disconnected at any time, we have also provided source information as available to assist you in locating the information.

## SECTION 2 – REFERENCES

Various regulations govern SCEP and SCEP participants. This section provides references to the documents and codes identified in this document. The following references were used in the preparation of this desk guide:

- a. Training, 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapter 41.
- b. Employment of Relatives; Restrictions, 5 U.S.C. § 3110.
- c. Exec. Order No. 12015, 3 C.F.R. 150 (1977).
- d. Exec. Order No. 13024, 3 C.F.R. 150 (1996), Amending Exec. Order 12015.
- e. Temporary and Term Appointment, 5 C.F.R. Part 316.
- f. Training, 5 C.F.R. Part 410, (2008).
- g. Entire Executive Civil Service, 5 C.F.R. § 213.3202, (2008).
- h. Probationary Period; When Required, 5 C.F.R. § 315.801.
- i. Length of Probationary Period; Crediting Service, 5 C.F.R. § 315.802, (2008).
- j. Administrative Assignment, 5 C.F.R. § 351.705, (2008).
- k. Basic Insurance Amount (BIA), 5 C.F.R. § 870.202, (2008).
- l. Coverage, 5 C.F.R. § 890.102, (2008).
- m. Outside Employment, 5 C.F.R. § 6901.103, (2008).
- n. NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 3300, Appointment of Personnel To/From NASA.
- o. NPR 3430.1C, NASA Employee Performance Communication System (EPCS).
- p. NASA Employee Benefits Handbook. (It is located on the NASA People Web site at <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov>. Click the **Benefits & Pay** button, then click the **Benefits** link. Under the **General Benefits Information** heading, click the **Benefits Handbook** link.)
- q. NASA Flexibility Act of 2004 codified in 5 U.S.C. § 9808, Pub. L. No. 108-201, (2004).
- r. NASA Form 1763, NASA Employee Performance Communication System: Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal.
- s. NASA Web site on NASA Employees Benefit Association (NEBA) is located at: <http://neba.nasa.gov/>.

- t. NASA People Web site is located at: <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov>.
- u. NSSC Web site is located at: [www.nssc.nasa.gov](http://www.nssc.nasa.gov).
- v. NSSC Customer Service Web site is located at:  
<https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/customerservice>.
- w. Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program information is located at:  
<https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>.
- x. Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) Personnel Bulletin (PB) 2001-29-WI,  
Subject: Qualification Standard for Co-ops, April 30, 2001.
- y. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Web site is located at: [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).
- z. OPM Web page for the Federal employee insurance programs is located at:  
[www.opm.gov/insure/](http://www.opm.gov/insure/).
- aa. OPM Web page on Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) is located at:  
<http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/index.asp>.
- bb. OPM Web page on Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) is located at:  
<http://www.opm.gov/retire>, then under the **Federal Employees** heading, click the **FERS Retirement** link.
- cc. Standard Form (SF) 50, Notification of Personnel Action.
- dd. SF 52, Request for Personnel Action.
- ee. SF 2810, Notice of Change in Health Benefits Enrollment.
- ff. SF 2817, Life Insurance Election: Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program.

## **SECTION 3 – GENERAL**

### **3.1 Recruitment Strategies**

Centers can recruit top talent by participating in career/job fairs conducted by colleges/universities and professional organizations, establishing and maintaining networks (e.g., university career centers, institutions receiving NASA grants and conducting NASA research), and contacting diversity organizations.

Center HR Offices should also work collaboratively with their Offices of Equal Opportunity (EO) and Education. The EO Office can provide assistance in identifying strategies to identify and recruit diverse candidates for the program. The Office of Education manages Agency and Center-specific educational programs that specifically target Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) students and faculty. Upon completion of these programs, there may be opportunities for placement of these candidates into pipeline programs such as SCEP.

### **3.2 Student Eligibility**

A student is an individual who has been accepted for enrollment or who is enrolled as a degree-seeking (e.g., diploma, certificate, etc.) student in an accredited college or university, graduate, or professional school. The student must meet the following requirements:

- Attends an accredited college or university on at least a half-time basis;
- Enrolled in an academic program that is directly related to the position;
- Has at least a 2.9 grade point average (GPA) or higher on a scale of 4.0 upon initial appointment; and
- Is a United States citizen.

Students must enroll in the Co-op program at the school attended. A written agreement is required between the school, the Agency/Center, and the student. This agreement outlines the responsibilities and expectations of the school, student, and the Agency/Center. A sample agreement is included in Appendix B, Sample Cooperative Education Agreement.

SCEP employees must be in good academic standing at the school in which they are enrolled to continue in the program. An academic improvement period to raise a GPA may be extended by the employing Center. Exceptions to the minimum 2.9 GPA can be made by the Center HR Office on a case-by-case basis with supporting justification.

### **3.3 Appointment Authority**

All students are appointed in the Excepted Service under Schedule B, 5 C.F.R. § 213.3202 (b). The Nature of Action Code for the appointment is 170 or 570 if the student is already on the rolls and is being converted from another appointment or program such as the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). When processing the personnel action, the following Legal Authority Code corresponding to the academic program must also be cited:

Academic Program	Legal Authority Code
High School Diploma	YBM
Vocational/Technical Certificate	YGM
Associate Degree	Y3M
Bachelor's Degree	Y1M
Graduate/Professional Degree	Y2M

In accordance with Executive Order No. 12015, students may continue on their appointment for up to 120 days beyond the date of completing their work and academic requirements. At the end of the 120 days, if the graduate has not been converted to a position in the competitive service, he/she must be separated.

### 3.4 Duration of Program

A student's time in the program is limited to the number of years shown in the following table:

Degree	Timeframe
Associate's Degree	3 years
Bachelor's Degree	6 years*
Master's Degree	4 years
Doctorate Degree	5 years
*Includes time spent pursuing the AA degree	

An additional year to complete the program may be requested if there is evidence of a personal or academic circumstance warranting special consideration. Students who do not complete their degrees in the time allocated cannot continue to participate in the program.

The required education must lead to a degree with specialization in or directly related to the field in which the student receives training on the job. Upon graduation, the degree of specialization in this field must satisfy the specific educational requirements in the qualification standard for the corresponding position.

### 3.5 Conversion from Student Temporary to SCEP

Work experience gained by a student serving on a STEP appointment counts towards the required 640 hours necessary for noncompetitive conversion to a permanent appointment if the work performed is related to the student's academic studies. There must be clear documentation showing the relatedness between the work that was performed on the STEP and SCEP appointments.

Time spent under the STEP appointment does not count towards career tenure because the 3-year period must begin and end with non-temporary employment in the competitive service.

## SECTION 4 – QUALIFICATIONS FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT

A student may be appointed to any position that leads to a professional, administrative, or technical occupational series and provides an opportunity for the student’s growth and development toward the target position. The following qualification requirements for student trainees are consistent with those published in the Personnel Bulletin 2001-29-WI, issued by OHCM:

<b>Clerical and Technician Student Trainee Positions</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>
GS-1	High School Student
GS-2	High School Graduate/Equiv.
GS-3	Completed 1 Year of Study Post High School
GS-4	Completed 2 Years of Study Post High School

<b>Scientific &amp; Engineering and Professional Administrative Student Trainee Positions</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>
GS-4	College Sophomore
GS-5	College Junior
GS-6	College Senior
GS-7	Masters Program or College Graduate
GS-9	Doctorate Program or Completion of 1 Year of Masters Level Study
GS-11	Doctorate Program (Research) or Completion of 1 year of Doctorate Level Study

The intent of SCEP is to permit the appointment of students to positions in the Excepted Service so they may gain work experience that is related to the academic course of study being pursued. Therefore, education must be in a field of study appropriate for the student trainee position. As a general rule, the college or university will determine the Level of Education that the student trainee has attained.

## SECTION 5 – PAY AND PROMOTION

### 5.1 Pay

Students are paid using the appropriate pay schedule for their position. Salary Tables are posted on the OPM Web site at: [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).

Student trainees who are classified in an occupational series ending in “99” may be covered by a special rate table if:

- a) Their officially classified parenthetical titles link directly to an official title for a covered series,
- b) Their positions are classified at one of the covered grades,
- c) They fully meet the qualification requirements for the covered series and grade, and
- d) They meet all other coverage requirements for the special rate table in question (e.g., official worksite location).

In other words, a student trainee who is fully qualified to be classified in a series and grade that is covered by special rates is entitled to the appropriate special rate if the student trainee otherwise would be eligible but for the use of the “99” occupational series code. For example, an engineering Co-op with a bachelor’s degree may be eligible for special salary rates pay for engineers.

### 5.2 Promotion Requirements

Student trainees may be promoted to higher-graded trainee positions based on level of education plus student trainee work experience. For purposes of this standard, the college or university will determine the “level of education” that the student trainee has attained.

Student Trainee Promotion Requirements	
Grade	Level of Education and Work Experience
To GS-3	Completion of one full semester or the equivalent of post-high school study and completion of 2 months (320 hours) of SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-4	Completion of 1 academic year of post-high school study and 4 months (640 hours) of SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-5	Completion of 2 academic years of post-high school study leading to a bachelor’s or higher degree and GS-4 SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-6	Completion of 3 academic years of post-high school study leading to a bachelor’s or higher degree and GS-5 SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-7	Completion of 4 academic years of study (or all the requirements) for a bachelor’s degree and GS-6 SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-9	Completion of 1 academic year of graduate level education and GS-7 SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-11	Completion of all requirements for a master’s degree in an appropriate field and GS-9 SCEP trainee work experience.
To GS-12	Completion of all requirements for a master’s degree in an appropriate field and GS-11 SCEP trainee work experience.

## SECTION 6 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

SCEP employees are eligible for both health and life insurance coverage as long as they are expected to be:

1. Employed under this appointment for at least 1 year and
2. In a pay status for at least 1/3 of the total period of time from the date of their initial appointment to the date of program completion.

Cost of premiums is split between the employee and the Agency, as it is for all permanent employees. (See 5 C.F.R. § 870.202 for life insurance and 5 C.F.R. § 890.102 for health benefits.)

New SCEP employees are eligible to enroll in any available health insurance plan within 60 days and life insurance within 31 days after their initial appointment. Additional information and details can be found on the OPM Web page for the Federal employee insurance programs at: [www.opm.gov/insure](http://www.opm.gov/insure).

Information about these programs must be provided to the employee upon appointment.

### 6.1 Health Insurance

The student's share of the health insurance cost will be paid through payroll deductions. The amount of the Government contribution is based on the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work.

Student employees who elect health insurance are covered for up to 12 months while in a non-pay status (while the student is at school); however, students must pay their share of the premiums by either making payments while they are on Leave Without Pay (LWOP), or when they return for another work tour.

If SCEP employees elect not to enroll or cancel their health benefits, they must wait for an Open Season, usually each November, to enroll or reacquire health benefits and must be in a pay status for it to become effective.

Employees may also sign up for health benefits at anytime they have a life-qualifying event such as loss of coverage from another health plan, marriage, and childbirth. Student employees must provide proof of the qualifying life event.

Students may lose coverage from family policies upon graduation and may not convert for 2 or 3 months. Graduation and the conversion to a full-time position are not considered life-qualifying events. For these reasons, to avoid a lapse in health care coverage, it is particularly important for graduating students to consider enrolling in a health plan during the Open Season prior to graduation. The plan will remain inactive until the student's return to pay status.

To cancel health insurance coverage, SF 2809 must be completed by the employee.

## **6.2 BENEFEDS**

SCEP employees are eligible to participate in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) and may enroll in this program outside of the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. They can enroll for dental insurance only, vision insurance only, neither, or both.

## **6.3 FSA**

SCEP employees are eligible to set up contributions to a health care FSA to cover out-of-pocket costs including dependent care and health care expenses not covered by insurance (e.g., dental services and eye-care). More information about the FSA program is located at:

<http://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>.

## **6.4 Life Insurance**

### **6.4.1 FEGLI Program**

SCEP employees are automatically covered under the FEGLI Basic Life Insurance Plan upon initial appointment. Optional additional coverage may be elected within 31 days of appointment.

At any time, those wishing to waive coverage must submit SF 2817 to stop payroll deductions. Employees who waive coverage, but later wish to obtain FEGLI coverage, must either wait one year from the effective date of the waiver or participate in an Open Season enrollment period. To acquire coverage, the employee must undergo a physical exam with satisfactory results.

The Government shares the cost of the basic insurance with the employee (Government 1/3, employee 2/3); however, the employee is responsible for paying the entire premium for optional insurance through payroll deductions.

Students remain covered under FEGLI up to 12 months while in a non-pay status. However, coverage cancelled due to expiration of 12 months is restored upon the student's return to duty (RTD). The following OPM Web site contains more information on FEGLI:

<http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/index.asp>.

### **6.4.2 NEBA Group Life Insurance Plan**

SCEP employees may also elect to participate in the NEBA Group Life Insurance Plan. The amount of life insurance coverage available is based on annual earnings. The premium is based on the participant's age and the amount of insurance coverage. Premiums may be made through payroll deductions while in a work status, but must be paid quarterly while the employee is on LWOP. Payment notices are mailed directly to the employee's home address. Insurance coverage continues while in a non-pay status for up to 12 months as long as the employee makes the quarterly payments. The following NASA Web site contains more information on NEBA:

<http://neba.nasa.gov>.

## 6.5 Retirement Program

SCEP employees are covered under FERS. This three-tier system combines Social Security, a basic annuity plan, and a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

The contributions that a SCEP employee makes to the basic annuity plan and the TSP may be returned to the student who chooses not to work for NASA on a full-time basis, although penalties for withdrawing funds may apply.

More information on FERS can be found on the OPM Web site at: <http://www.opm.gov/retire>, then under the **Federal Employees** heading, click the **FERS Retirement** link.

## 6.6 TSP

As a NASA employee, SCEP employees are eligible to contribute to the TSP. This plan is similar to a 401(k) plan in the private sector. Employees may contribute up to an established maximum of their salary each year with the government making an automatic contribution of 1% of the salary with additional matching up to an established total of the employee's salary. The cost of the TSP is dependent on the employee's contribution. Salary deductions are automatic. Total employee contributions in each year cannot exceed limits set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

## 6.7 Leave and Holidays

### 6.7.1 Annual Leave

SCEP employees earn annual leave while in a pay status according to their creditable service. Employees with less than 3 years of Federal service may earn up to 4 hours of annual leave each pay period. Annual leave for employees who work less than full time, that is less than 40 hours per week, will be prorated. Employees with 3-14 years of full-time Federal service earn up to 6 hours of annual leave each pay period, and employees with 15 years or more of service earn 8 hours.

Annual leave may be used for vacations and personal or emergency purposes. SCEP employees must request approval of annual leave according to the instructions of their supervisors. SCEP employees may use annual leave that has been accrued during their work tour. Supervisors may also grant advance annual leave. However, employees do not have an entitlement to advance annual leave. Leave credited to a SCEP employee that is in advance of the amount earned must be approved judiciously. For example, supervisors should limit the amount advanced to the amount of leave an employee would accrue in the remainder of their tour of duty before returning to school and going on leave without pay.

If a SCEP employee transfers within NASA or between NASA and another Federal agency, all earned annual leave will be transferred. SCEP employees separating from Federal service are entitled to a lump sum payment for earned unused annual leave.

### **6.7.2 Sick Leave**

SCEP employees may earn up to 4 hours of sick leave each pay period to be used for sickness, medical, optical, or dental appointments for the student or their immediate family, as well as for bereavement. Sick leave for employees who work less than full time, that is less than 40 hours per week, will be prorated. There is no limit on the accrual of sick leave.

If incapacitated for duty due to illness, SCEP employees must follow sick leave procedures outlined by their supervisors. Sick leave transfers with the employee as long as the employee remains in Federal employment.

SCEP employees may use sick leave that has been accrued during their work tour. Employees may also request advanced sick leave and apply to leave donor program in accordance with applicable guidance. Leave credited to a SCEP employee that is in advance of the amount earned must be approved judiciously. For example, supervisors should limit the amount advanced to the amount of leave an employee would accrue in the remainder of their tour of duty before returning to school and going on leave without pay. The Employee Benefits Handbook provides additional guidance on official use of sick leave. It can be found on the NASA People Web site at: <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov>.

### **6.7.3 Military Leave**

SCEP employees who are also members of the military are eligible for 15 days military leave with pay during each fiscal year. An employee on military leave receives his or her full civilian salary, as well as military pay. SCEP employees must be in a pay status to be eligible.

### **6.7.4 Federal Holidays**

SCEP employees returning to duty are eligible for holiday pay if they work the day following a holiday and are in pay status the entire day. SCEP employees going on LWOP are eligible for holiday pay if they are in a pay status the entire day preceding a holiday.

The NSSC Customer Contact Center can provide additional information and assistance in the area of retirement and benefits. The NSSC Customer Service Home page is located at: <https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/customerservice>. Information is also posted on the NASA People Web site at: <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov>.

## **SECTION 7 – LWOP AND RTD**

SCEP employees are placed in an LWOP status upon completion of each work tour. The service computation dates will be adjusted if LWOP exceeds 6 months in a calendar year. Students must provide an estimated RTD date for their next work tour prior to going on LWOP. Since both LWOP and RTD actions must be submitted to the NSSC 4 weeks prior to the effective date for processing, students must provide written confirmation of their RTD date to the supervisor and/or Co-op Program Manager at least 6 weeks in advance to meet processing deadlines.

## SECTION 8 – PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

EPCS is NASA's performance management system for all non-Senior Executive Service (SES)/Senior Technical (ST)/Senior Leader (SL) employees including those who participate in the Student Educational Employment Program (e.g., Co-op Education Program). EPCS provides a systematic process for planning, monitoring, developing, and assessing student/employee performance and is mandatory. Center Co-op Program Managers are responsible for informing employees and supervisors of the following requirements in this area:

1. Establish performance plans using NASA Form 1763.
2. Monitor and assess the performance of employees in accordance with the requirements specified in NPR 3430.1C.
3. Ensure that all Ratings of Record for SCEP employees are reported to the Center HR Office in a timely manner.
4. At the end of each work period/assignment, the supervisor of record must conduct a performance review with the employee that must be retained in the Employee's Performance File. At the end of the appraisal period/year, all reviews will be considered in the final Rating of Record of the employee.
5. Identify, document, and discuss with the employee any performance deficiencies prior to the end of the performance appraisal period.
6. Consider performance summary ratings in determining performance awards and promotion to the next higher grade.

## **SECTION 9 – TRAVEL**

At the Center's discretion, travel expenses may be paid from the Center to school and for the return trip. The initial trip to the Center is typically not paid. However, travel and relocation expenses may be paid for those students who are converted to permanent and term appointments.

## **SECTION 10 – TRAINING AND TUITION**

### **10.1 Training and Development**

NASA's commitment to continuous and quality learning and employee development enables the workforce to achieve mission success. NASA offers a wide range of training and development opportunities which include mentorships, leadership courses and programs, formal education, on-the-job developmental experiences, competitive degree programs, and technical courses that support employee career development. Centers can use 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 5 C.F.R. Part 410 authorities to pay for all or part of the training expenses to improve performance. Supervisors may approve training courses for SCEP employees in a work status in accordance with training regulations and agency policies.

### **10.2 Tuition Assistance**

At the discretion of the Center, tuition assistance may be offered to an undergraduate or graduate student if he or she is in good academic standing and received a Meets Expectation or higher performance rating in the latest work period. SCEP employees are eligible for payment of other tuition-related expenses such as matriculation and laboratory fees. The employing Center will set forth the maximum amount and criteria.

Before a student accepts tuition assistance from the employing Center, the Center may require the student to sign a continued service agreement to continue employment in NASA for a specified period of time, when and if converted to a permanent position. Service in a non-pay status is not counted toward completion of the obligation unless it is at the convenience of the Agency.

## **SECTION 11 – OTHER ASSIGNMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **11.1 Rotational Assignments**

Rotational assignments can broaden the employee's perspectives on the mission, goals, and objectives of the Center and the Agency. Therefore, management officials and supervisors have the discretion to define the nature and content of the assignments and to tailor them to meet Agency-specific needs. The purpose and duration of the assignments should be mutually agreed upon by the supervisor and the student. Assignment objectives should be well defined in advance of the assignment. Documentation must provide a clear understanding of the expectations, goals, and timing of the assignment(s).

A SCEP employee may initiate a request for a rotational assignment but must first receive concurrence from his/her supervisor before making contacts or agreements to start the rotation. An SF 52, Request for Personnel Action, is required to document any assignments over 30 days.

### **11.2 Outside Employment**

An employee who wishes to engage in outside employment or other outside activities must comply with appropriate regulations, policies, and procedures. Outside employment means any form of compensated or uncompensated non-Federal employment or business relationship involving the provision of personal services by the employee. It includes, but is not limited to, personal services as an officer, employee, agent, consultant, contractor, general partner, teacher, or speaker.

Before engaging in outside employment activities outlined in 5 C.F.R. § 6901.103, the student employee must request and obtain administrative approval. Engaging in outside employment with a NASA contractor, subcontractor, or grantee in connection with work performed by that entity for NASA or a party to a Space Act agreement, Commercial Launch Act agreement, or other agreement to which NASA is a party pursuant to specific statutory authority is prohibited.

## SECTION 12 – PROGRAM COMPLETION ACTIVITIES

### 12.1 Conversion After Program Completion

The SCEP appointment allows for noncompetitive conversion to a term (5 C.F.R. Part 316), career, or career conditional appointment within 120 days after the employee graduates. SCEP employees must have 640 hours of work experience (before completion of, or concurrently with the course requirements) and complete their course requirements for a degree commensurate with their student position in order to be eligible for a permanent appointment. Centers must ensure student employees eligible for conversion meet all program and educational degree requirements for conversion. Once converted, the employee is governed by the rules and conditions of the (new/current) appointment.

Prior to the end of the 120-day conversion period, the Center Co-op Program Manager should inform the student employee of the requirements that must be met, including mandatory certifications if applicable. Also, the employee's supervisor should submit to Center Human Resources Office a Letter of Recommendation for conversion to the target position.

A student is eligible for noncompetitive conversion by another NASA Center or Federal agency. The Center Co-op Program Manager should attempt to place the graduate with another Center or Federal agency if placement at their own Center is not possible. One way to locate appropriate positions for graduated students is by checking the job listings on the USAJOBS Web site at: [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

Students may also be appointed to a term appointment under the NASA Flexibility Act of 2004. The conditions for making appointments under this authority must be followed (e.g., public announcement of position). SCEP employees who are converted to term appointments under the NASA Flexibility Act may be converted to career or career-conditional appointments before the term appointment expires. Additional information can be found in NASA Procedural Requirements, NPR 3300, Appointment of Personnel To/From NASA.

### 12.2 Crediting Other Experience

Centers have the flexibility to credit up to 320 hours toward the required 640 hours for non-SCEP work experience (e.g., internships/fellowships) if the previous work was related to the same field of study. To qualify, the work experience must have been performed in a formally structured program requiring a written agreement between the school, student, and employer. For example, the agreement would have addressed issues such as the nature of work assignments, schedule, class attendance, evaluation procedures, and requirements for continuation and successful completion of the program.

Centers may also credit up to 320 hours for any type of active duty military service (including active duty for training) performed by a SCEP employee as long as the active duty service is related to the SCEP position. The criteria set forth in 5 C.F.R. § 213.3202 (b) (11) (ii) must be used.

The remaining 320 hours must be worked by the student while assigned to his or her SCEP appointment. Centers cannot credit non-SCEP work experience toward the entire 640 hours required for conversion.

### 12.3 Resignation

Student employees electing to resign must submit a letter of resignation. The letter should include effective date, reason for resignation, and a permanent mailing address.

### 12.4 Termination

The Center may terminate a SCEP employee who has completed his/her education requirements, and is within the 120-day conversion period for optional conversion because it is unable to offer him/her a position after graduation (e.g., due to funding, downsizing/FTE issues) without regard to Reduction-in-Force (RIF) regulations.

SCEP appointments may also be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- Change in the academic major which will not qualify the SCEP employee for the target position;
- Suspension, expulsion, or withdrawal from school;
- Unsatisfactory work performance;
- Unacceptable conduct;
- Failure to maintain a good academic standing;
- Lack of available work; or
- Budget reasons.

A Co-op **does not** have appeal rights.

### 12.5 RIF

SCEP employees terminated prior to completing degree and program requirements due to funding, lack of available work, or downsizing are covered under OPM's RIF procedures and placed in Excepted Service, Tenure Group II. For additional information, see 5 C.F.R. § 213.3202 (b) (19) and 5 C.F.R. § 351.705 (a) (3).

### 12.6 Trial Probationary Period

The entire tenure of a SCEP employee's trainee work experience is served on a trial basis. This must be stated in the **Remarks** section of the SF 50.

SCEP employees who are converted to career and career-conditional appointments are subject to the probationary period when required by 5 C.F.R. § 315.801, Probationary Period. However, time spent on the SCEP appointment may be credited towards probation provided it meets the requirements of 5 C.F.R. § 315.802. One month of work experience can be credited toward one month completion of the probationary period.

Time spent in a non-Federal internship or as an active duty military member is not creditable towards the probationary period. 5 C.F.R. § 315.802 only allows credit for prior Federal service in the same agency and in the same line of work.

## APPENDIX A – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms that are used in this desk guide are identified upon first use in this document. Thereafter, the acronym is used. In cases where the first or only instance of the use of an acronym is in a table or graphic, it may not be spelled out on first reference. Since many acronyms and abbreviations have multiple meanings, the following list includes those used in this guide and the applicable meaning:

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
BIA	Basic Insurance Amount
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
Co-op	Cooperative
EO	Equal Opportunity
EPCS	Employee Performance Communication System
FEDVIP	Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program
FEGLI	Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance
FEHB	Federal Employees Health Benefits
FERS	Federal Employees Retirement System
FSA	Flexible Spending Account
GPA	grade point average
HR	Human Resources
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LWOP	Leave Without Pay
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NEBA	NASA Employees Benefit Association
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirements
NSSC	NASA Shared Services Center
OHCM	Office of Human Capital Management
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PB	Personnel Bulletin
RIF	Reduction-in-Force
RTD	return to duty
SCEP	Student Career Experience Program
SES	Senior Executive Service
SF	Standard Form
SL	Senior Leader
ST	Senior Technical
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
STEP	Student Temporary Employment Program
TSP	Thrift Savings Plan
U.S.C.	United States Code

## **APPENDIX B – SAMPLE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT**

This appendix contains a sample agreement. It contains information specifically related to Marshall Space Flight Center that has been underlined for ease of locating it.

### **NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center Cooperative Education Program Working Agreement**

This agreement constitutes a basis of understanding between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), Alabama, and the academic community concerning their mutual responsibilities in a Cooperative (Co-op) Education Program and its administrative details. This agreement provides a direct relationship with the appropriate educational institution and eliminates direct involvement of students in establishing the framework of the relationship. In addition, this agreement sets forth the program's purpose and objectives and states requirements for their attainment.

## **Program Purposes and Objectives**

### **Purpose**

1. To provide study-related work experience for students pursuing associate, baccalaureate, and graduate curricula in subject matter fields useful to NASA where work experience being a prerequisite for the degree.
2. The Co-op Program provides a resource for potential employment with NASA following the successful completion of the program and graduation from college.

### **Objectives**

1. To provide qualified college students with supervised, on-the-job learning experience in subject matter fields related to their academic majors.
2. To provide a variety of occupational experiences to assist students in determining the professional fields for which they may be suited.
3. To acquaint students with NASA's mission, program, and major projects in space and aeronautical research, development, and professional administration.
4. To provide learning and employment opportunities for qualified students without regard to age, race, sex, religion, or ethnic origin.
5. To establish and/or strengthen relationships between MSFC and the academic community to ensure mutual reinforcement between college curricula and the world of work.

## The Cooperative Education Program

The MSFC Co-op Education Program consists of a series of planned work assignments performed in laboratories, offices, and other related work areas, alternating with periods of related academic study. It is designed for qualified students in the fields of science, engineering, professional administration, and other occupational fields. Work assignments are designed to prepare students for entry into career positions after successful completion of the program and graduation. While on the job, Co-op students perform duties in or related to their field of study and will work under the guidance of qualified MSFC personnel. Difficulty and responsibility of the work will vary with the grade level of the position. While successful completion of the program and graduation from college are prerequisites for appointment to permanent positions, such appointments are not guaranteed. MSFC's manpower needs, the availability of position vacancies, and a recommendation by the employing organization are determining factors for conversion not later than 120 calendar days after completion of the Co-op Program.

### Program Admission Requirements

1. Associate students must be full-time enrollees pursuing an associate's degree. The candidate must maintain at least a 2.9 overall grade average on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent.

Baccalaureate students must be full-time enrollees pursuing a bachelor's degree. Completion of one full year of academic study is strongly recommended. The candidate must maintain at least a 2.9 overall grade average on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent.

Graduate students must be enrolled in a curriculum leading to a master's or a doctorate degree on a substantially full-time basis (usually at least nine semester credit hours or the equivalent) and must be pursuing a major field of study related to the job for which he or she is being considered. The candidate must maintain at least a 2.9 overall grade average on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent.

2. Candidates must have an academic record predictive of graduation.
3. Candidates must be enrolled in the educational institution's Co-op Education Program and must be recommended for the Co-op assignment by an authorized staff official of the institution.
4. Candidates must be U.S. citizens. The restrictions on employment of relatives described in 5 U.S.C. § 3110 must be applied when appointing Co-op students. That restricts a student from working in the same agency with a relative if there is a direct reporting relationship and/or the relative is in a position to influence or control a student's appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement to a position within the agency.
5. Candidates must be at least 16 years of age upon entry into the program and pass a security investigation.

## How to Apply

Students who express interest in applying for Co-op vacancies within NASA MSFC are required to apply through their school's Co-op Office or Career Services Office.

The Co-op Office at each school will continue to be responsible for making sure the student has met all requirements of the MSFC Co-op Program and that the student has registered through the school's Co-op Office prior to submitting a resume to MSFC. The student will still be required and instructed to have an official transcript and letter of recommendation submitted to MSFC's Co-op Office immediately following submittal of his or her resume. The student's resume (hardcopy), official transcript (hardcopy), and letter of recommendation (hardcopy) will be required in order to be considered for a MSFC co-op vacancy through the MSFC Co-op Program. The official transcript and letter of recommendation should be sent to the following address:

NASA MSFC  
Attn: HS30/Chrissa Hall  
Academic Affairs Office  
Marshall Space Flight Center, AL 35812

You may include any other related information that would be beneficial in the evaluation process. An OF612 is no longer required.

## Responsibilities

### Marshall Space Flight Center will—

1. Maintain a liaison with the educational institution through its Co-op Education Coordinator.
2. Keep the educational institution informed of work experience opportunities in a timely manner.
3. Select appointees from among those recommended and referred by the educational institution. Such selection shall disregard age, race, sex, religion, or ethnic origin.
4. Process all personnel actions relative to the employment of Co-op students.
5. Ensure that students are supervised and counseled during their work periods by competent professional personnel.
6. Ensure that work assignments are related to the academic majors being pursued by students and collaborate with the institution in setting up work schedules to accommodate assignments.

7. Furnish supervisory evaluations of student work performance to the educational institution at reasonable intervals, or upon request.
8. Notify the educational institution of any proposed action to terminate a student's appointment because of failure to perform at an acceptable level, an unauthorized change of major, or misconduct.
9. Maintain records on student performance and other matters, including promotions, change in student status, and grade reports (course titles, number of credit hours, and grades) after the conclusion of each school term.

### **The educational institution will—**

1. Designate an official to act as the Co-op Education Liaison with MSFC.
2. Inform prospective candidates of MSFC's Co-op education opportunities.
3. Recommend only students who are enrolled in the institution's Co-op Education Program, including all honorably discharged veterans, and who have shown strong ability and potential in the fields of MSFC's interests and needs, and who plan to complete academic work leading to a degree. Students shall be recommended without regard to age, race, sex, religion, or ethnic origin.
4. Coordinate on-the-job training and academic education to ensure that the student obtains maximum benefit from their Co-op education experience, and inform the MSFC coordinator of any proposed change in the student's major field of study.
5. Keep the MSFC coordinator informed of any change in student status and furnish copies of all grade reports (including course titles, number of credit hours, and grades) after the conclusion of each school term.
6. In collaboration with the MSFC coordinator, set up an annual schedule of alternating work-study periods tailored to the needs and availability of each student and endeavor to ensure that each student adheres to the schedule. Inform the MSFC coordinator, in a timely manner, of any impending changes.
7. As needed, furnish the MSFC coordinator any releasable data and information about the appointee(s).

### **Appointment**

1. Students are appointed under the following authorities provided in the Code of Federal Regulations:

**Baccalaureate Section 213.3202 (B)—BA/BS Graduate  
Section 213.3202 (B)—GRAD/PROF Associate Section  
213.3202 (B)—ASSOC.**

2. All appointments are for the full period beginning with the date of initial appointment to a date not to exceed 120 days after completion of degree requirements as required by Executive Order 12015, as amended by Executive Order 13024. There are no provisions for exceptions. The 120-day period commences upon the student's satisfactory completion of the school's educational requirements needed for graduation and completion of the minimum MSFC work hour requirements.
3. Initial appointments will be made as follows:

**Associate Program**—Initial appointments will be made at the GS–2 or GS–3 level depending on each candidate's academic progress. The maximum grade level for the program is GS–4.

**Baccalaureate Program**—Initial appointments will be made at the GS–3 through GS–6 level depending on candidate qualifications. The maximum grade level for the program is GS–6.

**Graduate Program**— For master's degree candidates, initial appointment of professional administrative graduate Co-op students will be at the GS–7 or GS–9 level depending on an individual's qualifications. Doctoral degree professional administrative candidates, who have completed requirements for a master's degree, may be appointed at the GS–9 level. Initial appointment of all master's degree engineering candidates will be at the GS–7 level. Doctoral degree engineering candidates, who have completed requirements for a master's degree and who otherwise meet Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Position Qualification Standards or qualification requirements for NASA's Aerospace Technology positions, will be appointed at the GS–9 level.

## Probationary Period

The student's first two years are considered a probationary period during which strengths and weaknesses are observed and assessed. Students who fail to meet MSFC performance standards or who show no promise for successful career service will be terminated during this time for any reason or at anytime. Indications that the student should not continue in the program include, but are not limited to, the following: failure to maintain a GPA of 2.9; unauthorized change of curriculum or change of major; failure to submit reports in a timely fashion; disrespectful attitude; unethical conduct; suspension, expulsion or withdrawal from the educational institution. Students can still be terminated beyond the two year probationary period for-misconduct or poor job performance.

## Work Schedules

1. Schedules will involve alternating periods of full-time study and full-time work (except in rare situations when MSFC authorizes part-time work because of the nature of the assignments) while on the program and will continue until the student graduates from college. Certain exceptions may apply if a student has completed a minimum of three

semesters in work status and is at the senior level, since senior level classes may only be offered at certain times of the year.

2. Work periods may include summers but must not be restricted to summers.
3. Schedules must ensure that students will have the required hours and periods of employment necessary for noncompetitive conversion upon graduation.
4. Intermittent employment on an indefinite schedule is not creditable as Co-op education experience and will not be permitted.
5. Schedules must ensure that associate students will not be in an employee status for more than 2.5 years of their co-op appointment.
6. Schedules must ensure that undergraduate, graduate, PHD students not be in an employee status for more than five years from their initial co-op appointment.
7. Students last work period must be within two years of their anticipated graduation date.
8. Students Leave w/out Pay (LWOP) status cannot exceed a year and a half (18 months) while on the co-op program.

## Pay and Benefits

1. **Pay Schedules**—Students will be paid in accordance with the regular pay schedules established for their grades and will receive payment for any authorized overtime. The following table describes the academic requirements needed to qualify for initial appointment.

### ASSOCIATE AND BACCALAUREATE STUDENT TRAINEES Academic Qualifications for Initial Appointments Clerical and Technician Student-Trainee Positions

Grade	Level of Education
GS-1	High school student
GS-2	High school graduate/equivalent
GS-3	Complete 1 year of study post high school
GS-4	Complete 2 years of study post high school

### Scientific, Engineering, and Professional Administrative Student-Trainee Positions

Grade	Level of Education
GS-4	College sophomore
GS-5	College junior
GS-6	College senior

Grade	Level of Education
GS-7	Entry master's program or college graduate
GS-9	Doctorate program or completion of 1 year of master's-level study
GS-11	Doctorate program (research) or completion of 1 year of doctorate-level study

2. **Leave Without Pay (LWOP)**—Students will be placed in an LWOP status when not in a pay status.
3. **Tuition Assistance**—Payment in the amount of \$2,000 per academic year per student for tuition and lab fee's is sponsored by MSFC for students pursuing associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Also includes doctorate degrees.
4. **Travel Costs**—MSFC will not pay for travel to and from the job.
5. **Medical Insurance**—The Government sponsors a voluntary health insurance program offering a choice of insurance plans including basic coverage and major medical protection. The Government contributes part of the premium cost and the student pays the balance through payroll deductions when in a work status. During a non-pay status, payment should be made by check payable to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
6. **Life Insurance**—Regular term life insurance is automatic, unless waived. Two kinds of insurance are provided—life insurance and accidental-death and dismemberment insurance—in an amount that is usually at least \$2,000 more than annual base pay. The Government pays one third of the premium cost and the student pays the remainder through payroll deductions. In addition, the student may purchase extra optional insurance for which full premium must be paid through payroll deductions.
7. **Medicare Insurance**—Students are subject to the Medicare hospital insurance portion of the social security (FICA) tax. This coverage was extended to Federal employees as a result of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982.
8. **Retirement**—Co-op students are subject to the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). Co-op students hired since December 3, 1983 will be covered under FERS. FERS is a three-tiered plan that includes a retirement annuity, Social Security, and a thrift savings plan (TSP).
9. **Annual Leave**—Annual leave is earned according to the number of years in Federal service (civilian plus creditable military service). The maximum accrual rates are 13 days a year for the first 3 years and 20 days a year for the next 12 years. After 15 years, employees earn 26 days of annual leave each year. Unused annual leave can be accumulated (up to 30 days) and carried forward from one year to the next.
10. **Sick Leave**—Sick leave is earned at the rate of 13 days a year. This leave can be used for illness and for appointments with a doctor, dentist, or optician. There is no limit on the

amount of sick leave that can be accumulated for use in succeeding years.

11. **Holiday Provision**—Students are paid for holidays that fall within their work periods.

## Employment and Graduation

Within 120 days after graduation, MSFC may convert, noncompetitively, any Co-op education student, who receives an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree and who satisfies the eligibility requirements cited below, to a career, career-conditional, or term appointment.

1. Conversion must be effected within 120 days after graduation or the student will be terminated.
2. Although the prime purpose of Federal employment of Co-op education students is to prepare students for the Agency's permanent work force, the Agency sometimes cannot, for administrative reasons, noncompetitively convert all Co-op graduates it has trained as students or cannot convert at the grade for which a person is eligible. Students who are not converted may seek eligibility through the competitive process in the same or another area of work. The MSFC coordinator will refer the credentials of student trainees, who are not offered permanent positions by MSFC, to other NASA installations for consideration. Student trainees who do not meet the requirements for noncompetitive conversion may also seek eligibility at that level through the competitive system.

## Conversion Grade-Level Requirements

### Associate Program

A student is eligible for noncompetitive conversion at the GS-4 level if he or she—

- Meets the qualification standards for the position at the GS-4 level, except for any written test.
- Has a minimum, cumulative (overall) GPA of at least 2.9.
- Still meets the citizenship requirement and employment-of-relatives restriction.
- Has completed three or more Co-op work terms in a pay status at MSFC. (Reminder – not limited to summers only) Recommend at a minimum, one summer, one fall and one spring Semester.

### Baccalaureate Program

A baccalaureate student is eligible for noncompetitive conversion at the GS-7 level if he or she—

- Meets the qualification standards for the position at the GS-7 level.
- Has a minimum, cumulative (overall) GPA of at least 2.9.

- Still meets the citizenship requirements and employment-of-relatives restriction.
- Has completed three or more Co-op work terms in a pay status at MSFC. (Reminder – not limited to summers) Recommend at a minimum, one summer, one fall and one spring Semester.

## **Graduate Program**

A graduate student is eligible for noncompetitive conversion if he or she—

- Receives the graduate degree and still meets the citizenship requirement and employment-of-relatives restriction.
- Has a minimum, cumulative (overall) GPA of at least 2.9
- Has completed two or more Co-op work terms in a pay status at MSFC. (Reminder – not limited to summers) Recommend at a minimum, one summer, one fall and one spring Semester.
- Satisfies the qualification requirements for conversion at grades GS–9 for completion of a master’s degree and GS–11 for a doctorate degree.

## **Helpful Web Sites**

**NASA Headquarters Web site:** <http://www.hq.nasa.gov>

**MSFC Web site:** <http://www.msfc.nasa.gov>

**MSFC Co-op Web site:** <http://coop.msfc.nasa.gov>

**Alabama Web site:** <http://www.alabamainfo.com>

**Huntsville, Alabama Web site:** <http://www.huntsville.org>

## Conditions of Agreement

1. The conditions of this agreement are in conformity with existing Federal regulations. However, it is understood that they, at no time, supersede, alter, or take the place of such regulations. Any change required by new or revised laws or regulations shall be automatically effective. Changes that are not required by new laws or regulations will be made only by mutual consent of this Agency and the institution.
2. This agreement becomes void if there have been no students from the educational institution employed by this Agency within the preceding 12 months.
3. This agreement will remain in effect until such time that the Agency and/or the institution wish to terminate it.

## Signed

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Institution's Representative

Date Signed

---

Title

---

Name of University/College

---

Address Street

City

State

Zip Code

---

Area Code/Telephone Number

---

E-mail Address

---

MSFC Representative

Title

Date Signed

NASA Marshall Space Flight Center

Academic Affairs Office

HS30/Chrissa Hall

E-mail [chrissa.k.hall@nasa.gov](mailto:chrissa.k.hall@nasa.gov)

**MSFC Cooperative Agreement last amended December 1, 2005.**

## APPENDIX C – SAMPLE PERFORMANCE PLAN, NASA FORM 1763

This appendix contains a sample performance plan with information included that is specific to SCEP participants.

	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	<h3>NASA Employee Performance Communication System                  Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal</h3>	
Employee _____		Title <u>Student Trainee (enter science area) GS-XXXX-4 (enter series)</u>	
Organization _____		Center <u>Center Name</u>	
Appraisal Period: May 1, <u>2008</u> to April 30, <u>2009</u> If other, from _____ to _____			

**Performance Plan Development**

Performance requirements for the above period have been established, discussed with, and provided to the employee.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Rating Official's Name and Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Progress Review**

A minimum of one progress review must be conducted during the appraisal period, generally midpoint in the period. If performance requirements have changed, the plan should be modified accordingly.

A Progress Review has been conducted by the Rating Official with the employee.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Rating Official's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Development Discussion(s)**

Both the progress review and the end of the appraisal period discussion provide opportunities to discuss an employee's training and development needs, such a discussion may be initiated by either the Rating Official or the employee.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Rating Official's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Development Plan (IDP) offered.  Yes  No *(Note: The offer of an IDP is optional unless required by Center policy.)*

Employee's Initials/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Rating Official's Initials/Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Performance Appraisal - Performance Summary Rating Level**

RATING OF RECORD *(A Rating of Record must be supported by the narrative summary.)*

DISTINGUISHED  ACCOMPLISHED  FULLY SUCCESSFUL  NEEDS IMPROVEMENT  UNACCEPTABLE

Rating Official's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(A performance summary rating of Distinguished, Needs Improvement, or Unacceptable must be reviewed and approved by a higher-level official.)*

Reviewing Official's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgment**

I acknowledge receipt of this rating, however, my signature on this form does not imply agreement or disagreement with the rating received. I may request reconsideration of the rating within 15 calendar days.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I request reconsideration. Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition of Form:** *This form is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act. The original signed form must be retained in the Employee Performance File for 4 years.*

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Employee \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_



National  
 Aeronautics and  
 Space  
 Administration

**NASA Employee Performance Communication System  
 Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal  
 Critical Element**



**In the accomplishment of the performance elements and standards below, the employee shall abide by NASA's values of Safety, Teamwork, Integrity, and Mission Success.**

In accordance with NPD 1000, Strategic Management and Governance Handbook, the employee's performance plan must show the linkage to projects up through the Agency's strategic goals/objectives (i.e., individual performance plan → projects → programs → annual performance goals → performance outcomes → strategic goals/objectives). Identify at least one annual performance goal (APG) and/or organizational performance goal related to the APG to which the employee will contribute. The goal(s) should follow the performance plans of the chain of authority within the organization (i.e., from senior executive to manager to supervisor to employee). (See *Alignment under Performance Planning in Instructions, Requirements, and Guidelines*.)

The Office/Directorate supports all six NASA Strategic Goals:

- 1) Fly the Space Shuttle as safely as possible until its retirement, not later than 2010.
- 2) Complete the International Space Station in a manner consistent with NASA's International Partner commitments and the needs of human exploration.
- 3) Develop a balanced overall program of science, exploration, and aeronautics consistent with the redirection of the human spaceflight program to focus on exploration.
- 4) Bring a new Crew Exploration Vehicle into service as soon as possible after Shuttle retirement.
- 5) Encourage the pursuit of appropriate partnerships with the emerging commercial space sector.
- 6) Establish a lunar return program having the maximum possible utility for later missions to Mars and other destinations.

**1. PROGRAM/PROJECT/FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVE** (Insert the primary work assignment or responsibility of the employee that supports the achievement of the goal(s)/objective(s) above per instructions.)

Primary work assignment: As a Student Trainee (enter science area here) the student is responsible for \_\_\_\_\_ in support of \_\_\_\_\_ (add organization responsibility here -this responsibility will flow down from supervisor's plan)

**Performance Standards** (Identify in sufficient detail (i.e., number of standards), the expected results defined by credible measures):

The employee is knowledgeable of NASA/(Center Name Here) and office-level directives applicable to their assigned duties; the employee achieves timely, accurate, and comprehensive compliance with all NASA/(Center Name Here) and office-level directives; and the employee completes required training related to NASA/(Center Name Here) and office-level directives.

- 1) Supports the scientific research and delivery of products in accordance with project requirements and schedule.
- 2) Attends classes in order to obtain a (name of degree) degree from a certified institution, in compliance with cooperative education agreement.
- 3) Attend meetings as required.
- 4) Attend and provide subject-area contributions as requested at team meetings and telecons.
- 5) Keep necessary certifications current.
- 6) Perform required training on time.

COMMENTS

**PROGRAM/PROJECT/FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVE RATING:**

- SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     
  EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     
  MEETS EXPECTATIONS  
 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT     
  FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS

Employee \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_



National  
 Aeronautics and  
 Space  
 Administration

**NASA Employee Performance Communication System  
 Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal  
 Required Elements**



**2. COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK**

CRITICAL     NON CRITICAL

**Performance Standards:**

- When possible, identifies opportunities to collaborate and work with others in other NASA organizations and NASA.
- Knowledge of best practices and lessons learned are, to the extent possible, shared with others.
- Working relationships with his/her supervisor, co-workers, and others are cooperative and respectful.

When possible, identifies opportunities to collaborate and work with others in other Center organizations, at other NASA Centers, and/or with external organizations.

Knowledge of best practices and lessons learned are, to the extent possible, shared with others.

Working relationships with his/her supervisor, co-workers, and others are cooperative and respectful.

**COMMENTS:**

**COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK RATING:**

SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     MEETS EXPECTATIONS  
 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT     FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS

**3. COMMUNICATIONS:**

CRITICAL     NON CRITICAL

**Performance Standards**

- Oral and written communications are open and honest, yet aware of and sensitive to individual and cultural differences of the audience.
- Information is usually accurate and effectively presented (e.g., presented in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner).
- Written materials generally follow NASA's prescribed standards and style and are infrequently returned for substantial revision.
- Oral communications are generally courteous (e.g., shows respect, listens well, and responds appropriately).

Oral and written communications are open and honest, yet aware of and sensitive to individual and cultural differences of the audience.

Information is usually accurate and effectively presented (e.g., presented in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner).

Written materials generally follow NASA's prescribed standards and style and are infrequently returned for substantial revision.

Oral communications are generally courteous (e.g., shows respect, listens well, and responds appropriately).

**COMMENTS:**

**COMMUNICATIONS RATING:**

SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     MEETS EXPECTATIONS  
 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT     FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS

Employee \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_



National  
 Aeronautics and  
 Space  
 Administration

**NASA Employee Performance Communication System  
 Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal  
 Additional Elements**



**4. Safety, Health, and Environmental (SHE)**

CRITICAL     NON CRITICAL

**Performance Standards:**

- Demonstrates a commitment to Safety, Health, and Environmental requirements.
- The employee is knowledgeable of NASA and (Center Name Here) Safety, Health, and Environmental directives.
- The employee achieves timely, accurate, and comprehensive compliance with all Safety, Health, and Environmental directives.
- The employee will adhere to and implement established operational controls.
- The employee will participate in safety meetings, safety visits, and mandatory physicals as required.
- The employee will complete any mandatory NASA/(Center Name Here) SHE training as required.
- Asks knowledgeable persons (supervisor, lab manager, organization Safety representative, etc) if safety requirements are not understood
- With supervisor, ensures hardware and personal safety concerns are promptly and effectively addressed, as necessary, on all work orders, procedures, etc.

**COMMENTS:**

**ELEMENT RATING:**

SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     MEETS EXPECTATIONS  
 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT     FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS     NOT RATED

**5. (Optional)**

CRITICAL     NON CRITICAL

**Performance Standards:**

**COMMENTS:**

**ELEMENT RATING:**

SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS     MEETS EXPECTATIONS  
 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT     FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS     NOT RATED

## APPENDIX D – SAMPLE TUITION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT

This appendix contains a sample tuition assistance agreement.

### **Tuition Assistance Agreement for Cooperative Education (Co-op) Students**

The following agreement is voluntarily entered into by the undersigned (hereafter referred to as the student) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Goddard Space Flight Center (hereafter referred to as the GSFC). The “Cooperative Education Assistance Program” is incorporated by reference as part of this agreement.

1. The GSFC, when properly billed by the school, will pay the student’s tuition (up to \$2,500 per semester with a total cap of \$10,000), if so requested by the student. In return for such payment, the student agrees to:
  - a. Conform to the terms specified in the Cooperative Education Agreement between the school and the GSFC.
  - b. Accept any full-time position offered by the GSFC in a comparable field, no later than 120 days after receipt of a degree in an approved field. Such offers will be at appropriate levels depending upon job standards and the student’s qualifications.
  - c. Remain in the employment of the GSFC for a period at least equal to three times the total periods of training covered by tuition assistance provided by the GSFC. Such periods of obligation will commence on the first workday after the end of the training covered by the agreement. (Time in a leave without pay status will not count toward this obligation.)
  - d. Notify the Co-op Coordinator of any change in courses (re-schedule, course drops or additions, withdrawals, etc., prior to enactment.)
2. In addition, the following terms are mutually agreed upon:
  - a. If no position offer has been made by the GSFC prior to 120 days following the graduation, financial obligation to the GSFC is canceled.
  - b. Failure to accept a position offer from the GSFC within the specified period, leaving the Co-op program prior to graduation, changing the academic major to one not approved by the GSFC, or otherwise failing to meet the conditions of this agreement will require proportional repayment to the GSFC of tuition assistance based on the service obligation that has not been satisfied.
  - c. Voluntary separation from the Government prior to completion of the obligated service item (Paragraph.1.c) or involuntary separation for cause will require repayment to the GSFC. Liability for repayment

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will be no more than the percent of the tuition assistance that is proportional to the percent of service obligated that has not been completed.

- d. If a student is terminated, not for cause, during the probationary period, the student's financial obligation to the GSFC is canceled.
  - e. If the student voluntarily transfers to another Federal Agency before completing the period of service and it is determined that the academic credentials are not required in the new position, repayment to the GSFC will be requested as set forth in paragraph 2.c.
  - f. The student understands that any amounts which may be due to the Government as a result of any failure on the student's part to meet the terms of this agreement may be withheld from any monies owed the student by the Government or may be recovered by such other methods as are provided by law.
3. An employee who fails to fulfill the Tuition Assistance Agreement will be required to repay to the GSFC a sum equal to the total amount or balance of training expenses. Request for repayment on an installation basis may be submitted for approval.

The Agency may waive the right to recover training expenses (in whole or in part) if the Agency finds that:

- a. an employee completes most, but not all, of the required period of service;
- b. an employee resigns because of illness or serious illness of an immediate family member, or
- c. because of severe hardship, an employee financially is unable to make the required payments.

A request for reconsideration or waiver must be submitted with 10 working days of the notification of the amount owed or within 10 days of separation. A detailed written justification for reconsideration/waivers must be provided to the Student Programs Office, Code 112.

I have reviewed and read the GSFC Tuition Assistance Agreement and fully understand the provisions of this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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## Instructions for Completing the Tuition Assistance Package

\*\*\* Please read all the instructions. \*\*\*

There are **two** things to do:

### 1. Tuition Assistance Package

Be sure to read and **sign** the attached Tuition Assistance Agreement for Co-op Students Form (there are **2 places to sign**) and send it to the Student Programs Coordinator, Code 112. A new agreement is required each semester you request tuition assistance. If you don't sign the Tuition Assistance Agreement Form, your tuition assistance paperwork will not be processed!

### 2. Training Request(s)

Go to the SATERN system at <https://satern.nasa.gov>, enter your username (typically first initial, middle initial, lastname), and click LOGIN to begin. [If you are logging into SATERN for the **first time**, consult [https://saterninfo.nasa.gov/html/SATERN\\_UserInfo.pdf](https://saterninfo.nasa.gov/html/SATERN_UserInfo.pdf) for instructions on how to obtain a password.]

After successful login, SATERN will give you a 10-15 minute window to input your information. After this timeframe, SATERN will lock up even if you were typing the whole time. Be prepared prior to logging into SATERN.

A **separate request** must be filled out for **each course** you are requesting tuition assistance for. Remember, you may only request up to \$2,500 per semester. Once the form(s) are inputted, a phone call to your supervisor is recommended to alert him/her that you sent training forms for approval. All authorizations and approvals occur on-line.

**Block 19 in SATERN** is a comments field. You should note in Block 19 that you are an Undergrad Co-op or Graduate Co-op.

Once your request(s) has made it through all approvals, the SATERN system automatically sends you an email confirming your registration. You should log into SATERN to print your approved request(s). It is **your responsibility** to take (or fax) the approved request(s) (NF 1735) to your college/university.

Your college/university will then invoice the NASA Shared Services

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Center (NSSC) in order to get an official payment. The NSSC address is listed in the Billing Instructions section on the approved training requests.

Be aware that once the semester/quarter has concluded, the NSSC will be requesting a copy of a grade report or transcript for each course you were approved for tuition assistance. This could be a faxed copy of your report card or transcript, or you may attach a screenshot/PDF to an email.

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## **Cooperative Education Tuition Assistance Program**

Tuition assistance may be offered to employees in the Cooperative Education (Co-op) Program. Such assistance must be for the expressed purpose of developing those knowledges, skills, and abilities which will best qualify them for prescribed positions and are directly related to future performance in assigned positions.

Consideration for tuition assistance is given without regard to gender, race, religion, color, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or ability. Consideration for tuition assistance will not be given to employees training in any non-Government facility that has discriminated on the basis of gender, race, religion, color, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or ability in the admission or in subsequent treatment of students.

Guidelines covering any selection for and payment of tuition assistance will be subject to provisions of or any revisions to the standards, regulations, policies, procedures, or any other guidelines of the Agency or the Office of Personnel Management.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To qualify, students must:

1. meet the basic requirements of the undergraduate or graduate Co-op Program, including maintaining a 2.9 or higher grade point average;
2. be currently completing or have completed one Co-op work tour at GSFC; and
3. be performing at an acceptable level at work (if applicable, must have been rated “Meets or Exceeds Expectations” or better on the last performance evaluation.)

### **COVERED EXPENSES**

The Tuition Assistance Program provides for the payment of the following expenses:

Tuition up to \$2,500 per semester or \$1,625 per quarter, with a total cap of \$10,000 while in the Co-op program, to include registration and laboratory fees/services.

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The GSFC will not fund the following:

1. Housing
2. Books
3. Supplies/Materials
4. Other fees not directly related to tuition and registration

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## **SERVICE OBLIGATION**

All employees receiving tuition assistance will incur a service obligation with the GSFC beginning the first workday after the end of the training covered by the agreement. A service obligation requires that employees receiving tuition assistance work for the GSFC for a period equal to three times the amount of time spent in the GSFC funded training. Therefore, for students, the service obligation would be calculated by totaling the number of calendar days in a semester/quarter in which tuition was paid by GSFC and multiplying by three.

Service obligations will be reduced by the time spent in a work cycle while in the Co-op Program.

## **FAILURE TO FULFILL THE TUITION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT**

An employee who fails to fulfill the Tuition Assistance Agreement will be required to repay GSFC a sum equal to the total amount or balance of training expenses. Requests for pro-rated repayment on an installment basis may be submitted for approval.

Any amounts due as a result of an employee's failure to meet the terms of the agreement, may be withheld from any monies owed to the employee by the Government (i.e., salary, lump sum leave credit, retirement credit, etc.) or may also be recovered by such other methods as are provided by law.

An employee whose service is terminated for unacceptable performance is subject to the repayment provisions under the Tuition Assistance Agreement. Furthermore, an employee who declines an offer of full-time employment is subject to repayment!

Continued service is subject to the staffing needs of the GSFC and the availability of funds. The Tuition Assistance Agreement in no way commits the GSFC to continue a Co-op's employment or to make an offer of permanent employment. If the GSFC does not make an offer of permanent employment, any balance due is not subject to the repayment provisions.

GSFC may waive the right to recover training expenses (in whole or part) if the Agency finds that:

1. an employee completes most, but not all, of the required period of service
2. an employee resigns because of illness or serious illness of an immediate family member, or

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3. because of severe hardship, an employee financially is unable to make the required payments

A request for reconsideration or waiver must be submitted within 10 working days of the notification of the amount owed or within 10 days of separation.

A detailed written justification for reconsideration/waivers must be provided to the Student Programs Office, Code 112.

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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