

NSA'S COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Q&A WITH AN NSA RECRUITER



Q. What is NSA's Cooperative Education Program?

A. In this program, students alternate a semester of full-time work at NSA with a semester of full-time college study, including summer semesters, until the student graduates. We require a minimum of 52 weeks of Co-op work experience by graduation. This work experience allows the student to be fully prepared for full-time employment post-graduation.

Q. Does that mean I won't graduate in four years?

A. That is correct. It will delay your graduation by a semester or two, however, you have an excellent chance of finishing up your final work tour with a final job offer from NSA in hand. That means no stressing about job searching during your senior year of college!

Q. Who is eligible?

A. College sophomores and second-semester freshmen who are majoring in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Cybersecurity or Chinese. We accept applications from both traditional four-year students, as well as community college students who have the intent to continue on to get a bachelor's degree in one of those fields. Applicants also have to be U.S. citizens and eligible to obtain a security clearance.

Q. What are the advantages of being an NSA Co-op vs. being an intern?

A. While the Co-op Program can be seen as a bigger commitment than an internship, it can also come with greater rewards. For instance, Co-ops are entitled to all the same government benefits as a full-time employee. Through your rotating assignments, the Co-op Program allows for a lot more exposure to different areas of the agency. You gain a lot more experience, which makes you a more desirable employee upon graduation. Co-ops have a chance to make an array of contacts at the agency throughout their multiple work tours, which will benefit them when it comes time to find a full-time position with us. Co-ops are hot commodities at our agency. They are valued a great deal.

Q. Is this a paid position?

A. Yes, students' salaries are highly competitive and determined by the percentage of credits completed toward a degree. There are other perks, too, like housing assistance for students who attend colleges that are outside a 75-mile radius of NSA headquarters. Co-op students also receive paid time off, and paid holidays and sick leave. On top of that, while they're at school, they'll receive reimbursement for one technical course per semester. Our new [Student Portal](#) is a great resource for details about housing, general benefits and tips on interviewing and the security clearance process.

Q. Am I guaranteed a job at the end of the program?

A. No, but so many of our Co-op students do decide to become full-time employees at NSA. And because they've been with us for some time, they've established great working relationships with people, they have mentors, and they have a good idea about where they can take their careers next.

Q. How do I apply?

A. We're taking applications online now through March 31, and we'll have a second application period in the fall. Chinese majors should apply for [Job ID 30000613](#). The other majors should respond to [Job ID 30000612](#). Students can start the Co-op Program during the fall or winter semester, but the application process can be lengthy. Students who are applying now would probably start in January 2019 at the earliest.

THE NSA CO-OP PROGRAM:

For college sophomores and second-semester freshmen who are majoring in:

Computer Science

Computer Engineering

Electrical Engineering

Cybersecurity

Chinese

Apply online at IntelligenceCareers.gov/NSA

U.S. citizenship required. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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