What is Experiential Education?
Experiential education is a broad category of opportunities designed to help students define and validate their educational and career goals by exploring the realities of the work world. Experiential education through UAB Career & Professional Development Services includes cooperative education (co-op), internships, mentoring, job shadowing and volunteering.

Why Get the Experience?
- Employers surveyed indicated that 40% of their new college hires completed an internship and/or co-op with their company. (1)
- 72.4% of employers prefer candidates with relevant work experience; 53% of employers have a preference for internship/co-op experience. (2)
- 66.7% of students who intern receive permanent job offers; 57.7% accept (1)
- 63.2% of students who co-op receive permanent job offers; 55.5% accept (1)

How Do You Gain Experience?

Cooperative Education (Co-ops) provide students with structured, work-related programs on a long-term basis to gain experience, supplementing classroom studies.
*Time Commitment: 20-40 hrs / week (1 or more semester)*

Internships provide students with structured, short-term programs to gain experience in their chosen fields of study, supplementing classroom studies.
*Time Commitment: 10-20 hrs / week (1 semester)*

Study Away offers students the opportunity to make progress toward home campus degree programs while studying in new places, meeting new people, and enrolling in specialized courses.
*Time Commitment: 1 semester*

Volunteering provides one of the best ways for you to gain entry into an organization. There are countless opportunities for you to make worthwhile contributions to an organization while at the same time gaining professional experience.
*Time Commitment: Varies (short or long term)*

Mentoring allows students to build relationships with professionals in their chosen career fields through one-on-one interactions.
*Time Commitment: Varies (short or long term)*
UAB Program: Fall through Spring for sophomores & juniors (2 semesters)

Job Shadowing provides students opportunities to observe professionals in the work environment and learn about their chosen career field.
*Time Commitment: 2 hours – 1 day (short term)*

Service Learning offers students an opportunity to gain experience with a non-profit organization integrating community service with academic learning.
*Time Commitment: Varies according to the course and community partner but usually 2 hours per day (short term)*

Undergraduate Research involves research conducted by a student in collaboration with a mentor that makes an original, intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.
*Time Commitment: Varies according to course or mentor*
# Experiential Education

## Program Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Student:</th>
<th>To Employer:</th>
<th>To UAB &amp; Community:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Validates career choice</td>
<td>• Creates the opportunity to recruit future employees</td>
<td>• Supports the development and professional growth of student leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides a realistic view of the daily business operations</td>
<td>• Provides a cost-effective way to evaluate prospective employees without long-term commitments</td>
<td>• Provides valuable learning experiences beyond the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Produces valuable work experience</td>
<td>• Frees up professional staff to pursue more creative projects while supervising student’s progress</td>
<td>• Helps organization remain vital and competitive within a shrinking workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides a competitive edge in the Job Market</td>
<td>• Presents an excellent way to find energetic and skilled employees who bring the latest theories and concepts</td>
<td>• Promotes community involvement and public relations</td>
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<td>• Creates networking opportunities</td>
<td>• Feeds the leadership pipeline by early exposure to corporate leaders</td>
<td>• Develops collaboration between academic and organizational community to share in the educational process</td>
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<td>• Applies knowledge gained in classroom</td>
<td>• Identifies student advocates for recruiting other students</td>
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<td>• Expands career options / possibilities</td>
<td>• Applies knowledge gained in classroom</td>
<td>• Provides valuable learning experiences beyond the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Produces new skills and confidence</td>
<td>• Helps establish short/long term career goals</td>
<td>• Offers great visibility of your organization on campus</td>
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UAB Career Services has re-occurring programs to help you with these experiences:

- **Job Shadowing**—begin as freshmen and continue to network in your chosen field
- **Mentoring**—register in January to participate in Mentor Program matching you with a professional in your chosen field (open to sophomores and juniors)
- **Internships / Co-ops**—participate in as many as possible to build your resume, your career story, and your chances of career success (a job or seat in the graduate/professional school of your choice)

## Job Shadowing Checklist

**Preparation and set-up:**
- Develop a job shadowing site target list
  - Explore company contacts on DragonTrail
  - Ask advisors/faculty members, relatives, friends, neighbors, etc. for contacts
- Create script to use when contacting the site
- View CareerSpots videos on website

**Prior to going:**
- Secure Job Shadowing site, confirming dates, timeframe and directions
- Print copy of Information Interview worksheet from Career Services website

**After the experience:**
- Send thank you to contact
- Record experience in OrgSync

## Internship/Co-op Checklist

**Preparation and set-up:**
- Register on DragonTrail
- Get resume approved by Career Consultants
- Meet with Dept Internship Coordinator or UAB Career Services Experiential Education Director

**After the offer:**
- Record placement on DragonTrail
- Register for Internship/Co-op Course within academic department or UAB Career Services
- Establish learning goals for Internship/Co-op

**After the experience:**
- Evaluate experience on DragonTrail
- Complete evaluation with supervisor
- Send thank you to employer