Experiential Development Opportunities

Grow your career with Cornell's EDO Program!

What is an EDO?

Experiential Development Opportunities (EDO) are basically "hands-on" training experiences. They are generally short-term or project-based assignments that fall under two categories:

- **Skill Development**: where you can learn new skills to enhance work similar to your current level of responsibility.
- **Leadership Development**: where you can gain experience in a role with advanced or broader responsibilities compared to your current position.

Why apply for an EDO?

An EDO is an excellent way to gain practical experience, invest in your career, and demonstrate your initiative and abilities. An EDO can open doors to new career opportunities, and make your current work more enjoyable. It's also a way for the University to strengthen connections between departments and more efficiently tap into Cornell's vast talent pool to address special needs and projects. Consider an EDO if you'd like to:

- See what working in a different department or unit would be like
- "Try out" a different job at the university
- Get to know how other colleagues handle projects similar to your current job
- Gain experience to position yourself for taking on a different or supervisory role
- Challenge yourself to try something new

How do I get started?

First -- talk with your supervisor! Let them know what interests you, and discuss what sort of arrangement would work best for your group. Use the EDO Agreement form as a discussion guide.

Related: Experiential Development Opportunities - Managers Page

Apply for an EDO the same way you would apply for a job at Cornell: through Workday! After logging in, click on the "Career" icon, and then select “Find Development Opportunity,” which will take you to a list of available opportunities.

Learn more
What kinds of arrangements are available through the EDO Program?

- **Rotational Assignments:** Temporary assignments aimed at providing flexible cross-training, leadership development, and knowledge-sharing opportunities for employees. Rotational assignments allow staff members to gain a better understanding of other areas and processes of the organization, and expand relationships with other employees.

- **Stretch Opportunities:** Assignments or projects that go beyond your regular role, causing you to stretch outside your comfort zone. It’s a challenge by definition, but also an opportunity to learn new skills and demonstrate to supervisors an interest in advancing your responsibilities. A stretch opportunity might be presented to you by a manager who asks you to take on additional responsibilities in the case of a colleague who takes another position or goes on leave. Or you might request a stretch assignment by asking to manage a volunteer or intern; turn around a struggling project; or organize an event.

- **Job Shadowing:** Spend time working with another staff member to gain a greater understanding of their role and expertise. If you’re interested in moving into a different career area, this is an effective way to learn what you’ll need to know, and see firsthand if it might be a good fit.

- **Volunteering:** Is there a particular project that interests you, which no one else seems to be doing? For example, perhaps a department newsletter isn’t being published anymore. If you’re interested in developing graphic design or writing skills, volunteering to take on such a project could be a good way to get practical, hands-on experience. You might even combine it with one of the other learning opportunities above. Speak with your supervisor to make sure your efforts are aligned with department goals.

Related: [Experiential Development Opportunity Descriptions](#pdf)

**Expectations of Participants**

EDO Participants are expected to exhibit:

- Cornell University’s values of collegiality, stewardship, initiative, civility, integrity, and excellence. See “Skills for Success.”
- A desire to develop one’s skills and knowledge base.
- The ability to work well with others.
- Dependability and a strong work ethic.

**Expectations of Supervisors**

Supervisors are expected to support staff self-development activities wherever possible, with the understanding that not all requests will be approved depending on staffing and other departmental needs.

Supervisors are expected to have open and honest discussions with employees regarding where they stand and what needs to be done in order to be considered for an EDO assignment. Such discussions should happen throughout the year, as well as when creating goals for the employee’s Individual Development Plan (IDP) during the annual performance management process.

If the EDO involves placement with a different manager, your temporary manager will complete the assessment of your objectives in the EDO agreement.

See [more information about EDO for supervisors](#)

**Timing**

Assignment duration and frequencies vary depending on departmental needs and availability.

You are encouraged to make your EDO experience a success by completing it as scheduled. If circumstances warrant, either the home or host supervisor or employee may end the EDO prior to the agreed-upon completion date. Extensions should be discussed between you, your manager, and your EDO manager.

**Pay**

Your pay will continue at your existing rate (as opposed to an interim assignment at a higher job level that could require
additional compensation). You will continue to be paid by your regular department, unless both departments agree to alternative funding arrangements.

Individuals supported by sponsored funds may be required to seek department/college support if they wish to participate in Experiential Development Opportunities (EDO). The individual should reach out to their Department Administrator to discuss requirements for maintaining project support. This may include a requirement to back-fill the position to ensure that the project is not adversely affected and only effort associated with conducting project activities is charged accordingly.

**Bargaining Unit Staff**

Am I eligible to participate in an EDO if I am in a position covered by a collective bargaining agreement?

Yes. However advanced approval is needed from college/unit HR prior to finalizing any arrangements. In these cases, supervisors must contact their college/unit HR rep who, in turn, will partner with Workforce Policy and Labor Relations and the appropriate union leadership to finalize the terms of the EDO.

**Recordkeeping**

Any completed EDO becomes part of your overall career development at Cornell. Please keep a copy of all completed assignments for your next performance review, and be sure to update your resume.