

# CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The following guidelines and procedures support the implementation of the "Policy on Co-operative Education Programming in Undergraduate Degree Programs ([https://www.recruitguelph.ca/cecs/sites/uoguelph.ca.cecs/files/public/files/Coop%20Education%20Policy\\_SenateApproved04June2012-1\\_0.pdf](https://www.recruitguelph.ca/cecs/sites/uoguelph.ca.cecs/files/public/files/Coop%20Education%20Policy_SenateApproved04June2012-1_0.pdf))", approved by Senate on June 4, 2012. In the event of a discrepancy between the Policy and these Guidelines, the Policy will apply.

The following definitions shall apply in these guidelines and procedures:

- "Co-operative Education" is defined by the University of Guelph as a collaborative partnership between the University and workplace employers who share a commitment to the learning objectives and outcomes of the co-operative education program as expressed through experiential education opportunities and the integration of workplace and academic learning.
- "Co-op Program" (Co-operative Education Programming): Co-op education programming is offered in two distinct formats, as defined by CEWIL:
  - i. "Co-op Option" (Co-operative Education Option): A co-op option may be offered within an established degree program and major. The Schedule of Studies includes semesters of academic study sequenced with semesters of on-site approved paid work terms.
  - ii. "Co-op Internship" (Co-operative Education Internship) is defined as an on-site approved paid work experiences, normally 12 to 16 months in length commencing once 50% of the academic program is completed.
- "Experiential Learning Hub" (EL Hub) is the unit designated to coordinate and support co-operative education programming by providing administrative assistance to co-op students, co-op employers, and co-op faculty advisors.
- "Co-op Co-ordinator" means the staff person assigned by the EL Hub to provide support for a co-op education program through securing appropriate work term opportunities, providing orientation, advice and guidance to co-op students, and, in partnership with the Co-op Employer, monitoring student progress over the co-op work term.
- "Co-op Work Term" is defined as the designated period of time that a co-op student is engaged in an on-site approved paid work experience.
- "Co-op Employer" means the designated supervisor of a student who is participating in a co-op work term.
- "Work Term Report" is a report written by the co-op student following the completion of a Co-op Work Term and submitted to the Co-op Faculty Advisor for evaluation.
- "Work Term Performance Evaluation" is the formal evaluation of the student by the Co-op employer upon completion of the Co-op Work Term.
- "Co-op Faculty Advisor" is defined as the faculty member assigned by the department or school to provide academic advice and guidance to students enrolled in the co-op program, provide advice and guidelines on the development of the student's Work Term Report, and evaluates the student's Work Term Report.

- "Co-op Certification" is the official recognition of a co-op student's satisfactory completion of all co-operative education requirements and graduation of their program, whereby they are awarded a co-operative education certificate.

## Guidelines for the Establishment of Co-op Programs

Co-operative Education Options shall be established according to the criteria listed under section 6.2 of the Policy on Co-operative Education Programming in Undergraduate Degree Programs at the University of Guelph. The roles and responsibilities of the co-operative education program partners are outlined under the Co-operative Education Programs in Chapter 10 Degree Programs.

## Schedule of Studies

- a. Every Co-op Option Schedule of Studies shall include the following features:
  - A minimum of three Co-op Work Terms to a maximum of five Co-op Work Terms shall be sequenced within the Schedule of Studies;
  - At least one Co-op Work Term shall occur in each of the Summer, Fall, and Winter semesters;
  - No more than two Co-op Work Terms shall commence in a Summer semester;
  - The first Co-op Work Term shall be scheduled no sooner than the second Winter semester of the program;
  - No more than five full-time academic semesters shall be completed before the first Co-op Work Term;
  - The Co-op Schedule of Studies shall not finish with a Co-op Work Term semester;
  - The Schedule of Studies for a Co-op Option shall not exceed eight academic semesters, a schedule that is no longer than five years;
  - At least thirty percent of the Schedule of Studies for the Co-op Option shall be comprised of semesters in Work Terms;
  - It is the responsibility of the academic department in conjunction with the EL Hub to design the Co-op Option Schedule of Studies taking into account that sufficient and appropriate courses are offered in the academic semesters on campus so that Co-op students are available year-round to employers participating in the program.
- b. Co-op Internships:
  - Co-op Internships normally commence once 50% of the academic program is complete and are 12 to 16 months in length.
- c. The work term requirements:
  - Each work term is developed and/or approved by the EL Hub as a suitable learning opportunity;
  - The student is engaged in productive work rather than merely observing;
  - The student receives remuneration for the work performed;
  - Work term opportunities without traditional remuneration must be approved by the EL Hub;
  - The student's progress on the work term is monitored by the EL Hub;
  - The student's performance on the job is supervised and formally evaluated by the student's co-operative employer;
  - Student's must complete a work term report and satisfactorily pass the academic requirements governing this assessment.

## Admissions

- a. Normally the minimum admission average required for students to be considered for admission to a Co-op Option is 80%. Exact cut-offs are determined on the basis on the quantity and quality of applications received and the number of places available in the program. Students not admitted to co-op will be automatically considered for the regular program. The number of admission offers to the Co-op Option will depend upon the capacity determined each year by the Co-operative Program Co-ordinating Committee.
- b. University of Guelph students and external students to the University may be admitted for transfer to a Co-op Option if there is capacity available in the specified program. The minimum admissions average for internal transfer is 70% cumulative average in the first two full time semesters. Other conditions and application deadlines may apply. Students should consult the Program Counsellor for information on internal transfer.

## Continuation of Study

- a. It is mandatory that co-op students be registered full-time for the duration of their program as outlined in the schedule of studies listed in the Undergraduate Calendar. Exceptions will be made for SAS registered students requiring accommodation.
- b. Students are required to meet a continuation requirement at the end of semester two. Students will be allowed to continue in the co-op program only if their cumulative average is 70% or higher after their first two full-time academic semesters.
- c. Students are required to complete and pass the mandatory Introduction to Co-operative Education (COOP\*1100 Introduction to Co-operative Education) non-credit course as the pre-requisite for the first employment process.
- d. Students are required to follow the academic and work sequence as outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.
- e. Students who receive a Marginal work performance evaluation will be required to meet with their Co-op Co-ordinator. Students who receive two Marginal work performance evaluations will be withdrawn from co-op and transferred to the regular academic program. The grade as well as the phrase "Req to Withdraw from Co-op" will appear on the Official Transcript.
- f. A student who receives an Unsatisfactory work term report will be required to withdraw from co-op. The grade as well as the phrase "Req to Withdraw from Co-op" will appear on the Official Transcript.
- g. A student who does not complete and submit the Work Term Report by the 5th class day of the next semester may not register in the following work term.
- h. A student on academic probation shall not be eligible to participate in the Work Term process and will not be eligible to commence a Co-op Work Term.
- i. The co-op employment process is competitive and while the EL Hub makes every effort to assist students in gaining employment, there is no guarantee that every student will become employed through the employment process.

## Graduation Requirements

Students are eligible to graduate with the "Co-op Certification" if they meet the following conditions:

- a. Meet the academic conditions for graduation for their degree program as outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

- b. Receive evaluations of "Good" or higher in all but one of the Work Performance Evaluations.
- c. Receive evaluations of "Satisfactory" or higher in all Work Report Evaluations.

Students wanting to graduate with less than the required number of work terms must contact their Co-op Co-ordinator with the request and it will be brought to the Director Experiential Learning for final approval.

Students who do not achieve the requirements for continuation of study or graduation in the co-op program may appeal the decision (see Chapter VIII, Academic Consideration).

## Roles and Responsibilities of Co-operative Education Program Partners

The University of Guelph's co-operative education program requires a collaborative approach that engages all partners in the process. The success of the co-op programs at Guelph is dependent upon a commitment by all the partners involved.

### Students

Student success in a co-op option requires commitment, students are required to read and understand the Policy Agreement for Undergraduate Student Involvement in Co-operative Education.

There is no guarantee that all students enrolled in co-op will have a work term. They must take responsibility for the employment process. This includes:

- Meeting the co-op continuation of study requirements;
- Successfully completing the COOP\*1100 Introduction to Co-operative Education preparatory course; and,
- Understanding the competitiveness of the co-op application process and their responsibilities within the process.

Students must also take responsibility for success in the workplace. As such, students must:

- Adequately prepare for the work term and represent themselves and the University in the workplace;
- Set learning goals with the supervisor early in the term and work toward achieving those goals;
- Request a formal performance evaluation at the end of the term;
- Prepare a work term report for the Co-op Faculty Advisor;
- Successfully complete the requirements of the work terms; and
- Inform the EL Hub on matters affecting their status.

### The Academic Department

The Academic Department is responsible for all academic components of the co-op program including the offering of courses to support the co-op option and the evaluation of the co-op work term report. A Co-op Faculty Advisor is provided for each co-op program.

The role of the Co-op Faculty Advisor is to support the student on the academic requirements of the program. The responsibilities of the Co-op Faculty Advisor are to:

- Assist students in academic/work sequences and course selection;
- Provide detailed guidelines on the writing and marking of work term reports;

- Advise the student of appropriate work term report topics, supporting the process, grading of the work report and follow-up discussion with the student; and
- Undertake administrative tasks in support of the educational program, including management of the unit's co-op program, supporting the development of materials about the program (where required), and establishing procedures for the co-op option within the department.

## Experiential Learning Hub

The role of the EL Hub is to support all of the administrative functions related to the work term experience. Responsibilities of the EL Hub include:

- Following the required operational guidelines as an accredited program of the Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL);
- Preparing students for the co-op experience;
- Co-ordinating job development relevant to the academic curriculum and facilitating the employment process;
- Ensuring the quality of the job development effort;
- Providing all the administrative support required for the smooth functioning of the university's co-operative education program;
- Operating the competitive employment processes including co-op interviews and employer information sessions, panels and informational interviews; Maintaining all employer, department and student data;
- Processing all clerical and administrative matters relating to the relationship between employer and institution;
- Building employer relationships and provide students with a range of suitable employment opportunities, and working closely in conjunction with the academic unit and Alumni Affairs and Development;
- Offering the COOP\*1100 Introduction to Co-operative Education course the semester prior to the student employment process;
- Providing student support for resume, cover letter and interview preparation as well as career guidance where needed;
- Ensuring that the employer maintains the appropriate educational quality in the work term experience provided to the student;
- Working with the Registrar to ensure a reasonable number of students are admitted into the program;
- Ensuring that the academic/work program schedules provide year round availability of work terms to meet employer needs; and
- Assigning Co-op Co-ordinators to co-operative education options.

## Co-op Co-ordinator

The role of the Co-op Co-ordinator is to work within specific programs to support the work-term process. Responsibilities of the Co-op Co-ordinator are to:

- Develop jobs in specific discipline areas;
- Advise students in regard to their activities in the employment process and on the work term;
- Market the co-op program to employers and obtaining work term commitments;
- Prepare co-op students for their involvement in co-operative education, and educate students concerning employer and performance expectations;

- Actively monitor the work term maintaining contact with the student during the work term;
- Be available any time during the work term to respond to student or employer inquiries;
- Conduct a work term site visit with the student and supervisor;
- Conduct pre- and post-work term student advisement and debriefing;
- Manage the student's file and ensuring complete institutional records on each student;
- Undertake administrative tasks in support of the co-op program, including consultation with academic units on their co-op offering, consultation with Co-op Faculty Advisor on policy and procedure aspects of the program; and
- Approve special situations where students may complete a work term without traditional remuneration.

## Co-op Program Coordinating Committee (CPCC)

The role of the CPCC is to provide administrative oversight and advice as it relates to the University's co-op programs. Responsibilities of CPCC include:

- Ensure that all co-op programs conform to the established policy and standard practices;
- Co-ordinate co-op option schedule of studies to support the maximum availability of students in all three semesters;
- Review new program proposals to confirm that sufficient resources are available to mount a quality co-op program, including the assignment of a Co-op Coordinator and Co-op Faculty Advisor for each stream; and
- Monitor co-op programs to support high quality program delivery.

## Employer

Good quality employers who understand the educational focus of the co-op programs are critical to the program. Responsibilities of the employer are to:

- Provide co-op work term job opportunities that meet the university's educational objectives;
- Provide the university with an accurate job description along with any available company information;
- Conduct interviews and select the best candidate;
- Pay competitive wages in accordance with the student's work term level and academic level;
- Provide safe employment including WSIB and liability insurance coverage for the duration of the employment period; and
- Comply with the Provincial Employment Standards Act.

## During the Work Term

- Orient the student to the organization, workplace protocols and the job during the first few weeks of the work term;
- Supervise the student and provide guidance when the student is setting learning goals at the start of the work term with a review mid-term and at the completion of the work term;
- Provide performance feedback to the student throughout the term and keeping the Co-op Coordinator current on any changes in the student's performance;
- Meet with the Co-op Co-ordinator during the work term visit and providing feedback concerning the student's performance and if there are concerns maintaining communication with the Co-op Co-ordinator;

- Provide career information and guidance as appropriate;
- Complete a work term performance evaluation form and exit interview for the student at the conclusion of the work term; and
- Assist the student with the selection of a topic for a work term report and providing comments on the final work term report if appropriate.