

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint faculty with the Cooperative Education Program and the procedures for coordinating a student's Co-op placement. Since the program began in 1983, faculty have been responsible for assisting and evaluating students during Co-op experiences. Faculty, therefore, maintain the academic integrity and quality of the program.

Cooperative Education Defined

Cooperative Education is the integration of classroom and laboratory study with planned and supervised periods of relevant and meaningful employment. While on Co-op assignments, students work as regular wage-earning employees with Co-op employers and earn academic credit for the knowledge and skills they acquire.

Student Eligibility

To be eligible to register for a Cooperative Education course at West Virginia University at Parkersburg, a student must:

1. be currently enrolled and actively pursuing a certificate or degree;
2. have completed a minimum of 12 WVU-P semester hours in courses numbered 100 or above;
3. have a 2.8 cumulative grade-point average; and
4. have completed an orientation with the Cooperative Education personnel.

Specific deviations from these eligibility criteria may occur with permission of the appropriate division chairperson or the Executive Dean of Academic Affairs.

Transient Students

Students from other colleges and universities may be eligible for Cooperative Education credit provided they are in good academic standing and have the required transient documentation.

Co-op Credit and Use

Co-op courses may be used:

- 1) to fulfill electives
- 2) to substitute for required courses*; and
- 3) to provide additional credit hours in a program.

* When co-op substitutes for a required course, the student's Co-op Coordinator must complete a course waiver form and submit it to the Records Office for inclusion in the student's file.

Calculation of Credit

Credit for Co-op experiences is based on the ratio of 80 work hours to 1 credit hour (+/-10 work hours). For example, if a student is placed with an employer to work 5 hours per week during a 15-week period, the total work hours would be 75, and the student could register for one credit hour in the appropriate curriculum. If a student works 15-20 hours per week over a 15-week period, the total hours worked would be 225-300, enough for the student to register for 3 or 4 credit hours.

Maximum Credit

Baccalaureate Degree students may apply a maximum of twelve credit hours in Co-op courses toward their degrees. Associate Degree and Certificate students may apply a maximum of eight hours in Co-op courses. Students may not earn more Co-op hours in a single semester than the maximum allowable in their degrees. If students have earned the maximum number of Co-op hours allowed in a degree, additional registration for Co-op credit may occur with the clear understanding that such credit will not fulfill any degree requirements at the college.

Grading

Co-op faculty coordinators grade students' work either on a Pass/Fail basis or on a traditional A-B-C-D-F scale. The student selects the grading method. The means of grading must be clearly stated in advance on the Course Outline form. Final grades include consideration of:

- 1) the Activities Log (describes 40 hours of the student's work experience);
- 2) the Summary of Work Experience that the student writes toward the end of the credit period;
- 3) the Job Supervisor's evaluation of the student;
- 4) the Faculty Coordinator's evaluation of the student;
- 5) additional assignments or projects as determined by the student's Faculty Coordinator; and
- 6) the completion of an Evaluation of Employer form.

Unethical behavior leading to employment termination can result in the student receiving a failing Co-op course grade and being dismissed from the Cooperative Education Program.

Student Registration and Payment

After being placed in a job by the Co-op personnel or upon approval for credit in a present job, students must register for the credit as they would for any other credit course in their program. However, CRN numbers are assigned by the Co-op Office personnel on an individual student basis and are not printed in a schedule, nor are they assigned by advisers outside the Co-op Office.

Students use the regular online registration procedures at the beginnings of terms or during pre-registration periods. If students are approved for a Co-op credit course after these registration periods, they will register by following the online procedures for adding a class. The College allows registration for Co-op credit through mid-term. After this point, the student will be advised to register for the next term.

Co-op credit hours, like other credit hours, cost the current rate set by the West Virginia Board of Trustees of the University System. Payment is expected at the time of registration or when fees are normally due. No charge is made for adding Co-op hours when the student is registered and has paid fees as a full-time student (12 credit hours of WVU-P courses).

Overloads

If Co-op credit creates an overload (>18 credit hours), the student must submit an approved schedule form signed by the Academic Dean at the time of registration. Students may not use the online system for adding classes if an overload results. The Admissions and Records office personnel will assist in registering students who request overloads.

Student Withdrawal from Co-op

If a student must withdraw from a Co-op course, they initiate the withdrawal by discussing the need with the Co-op Office personnel. In some instances, partial credit can be awarded for the time the student completed in the Co-op position before leaving. However, the circumstances must justify the administrative effort involved.

In no case should a student quit a Co-op position without extending notice to the employer and to the Co-op Office. As a rule, two-weeks notice is the ethical norm.

Because a faculty contract is involved, student withdrawals from Co-op courses are much more complex than withdrawals from other college courses. Depending upon the circumstances, the faculty contract may or may not be rescinded.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

Coordinators

When a student is placed with a Co-op employer, the Co-op Office contacts the student's adviser. That person is asked to be the faculty coordinator for the student, and the coordinator becomes responsible for the student's successful completion of the Co-op experience. If an adviser is unable to accept the role of coordinator, another faculty person is enlisted from the student's program of study. A single faculty member may coordinate Co-op experiences for several students.

Supplemental Contract for Coordinators

When a faculty member agrees to become a student's Co-op coordinator, the Co-op Office writes a supplemental contract for the faculty member's service. The contract amount will be based on the current rate for student coordination as determined by budget allocation. The contract must be signed by the faculty member, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the President, and the Personnel Officer.

Payment Method for Supplemental Contracts

The Co-op Office notifies the Business Office when the faculty member's contractual obligations have been met (on-site visits, evaluations, and grade submissions). The Business Office initiates the payment process for the next pay period.

Faculty Procedures and Contractual Responsibilities for Coordinating Co-op Students

The Co-op Office sends copies of the **Course Outline** and **Training Agreement** to faculty coordinators for each student they have been assigned. Upon receipt of these documents, coordinators should complete the following activities:

- 1) Contact the student and arrange a meeting to discuss the **Course Outline** and **Training Agreement**. (Locate student phone numbers and student schedules by using the student database.) During the meeting, the student and faculty member should complete the entries on the **Course Outlines** and sign them. The student

keeps one copy of the **Course Outline**. The student and faculty member then review the **Training Agreement** and sign it. The faculty member secures the signature of the Division Chairperson and the employer. The faculty member then returns both the **Training Agreement** and **Course Outline** to the Co-op Office for continued processing. The student's Co-op registration is not valid until these two documents are received by the Co-op Office.

2) Schedule a mid-point visit to check the student's progress.* The Co-op Office sends **Mid-Point Report Forms** via electronic means (e-mail) to coordinators approximately two weeks before mid-term. The coordinator should make an appointment to visit the student's work supervisor. The purpose of the visit is to record the supervisor's assessment of the student's progress. The faculty member returns the **Mid-Point Form** to the Co-op Office. D/F grades should be reported.

3) Schedule a final visit with the employer to collect the **Employer's Evaluation Report** and to record the student's completion of requirements.* The Co-op office mails the **Employer Evaluation Reports** to employers before the end of the semester. The faculty coordinator receives a separate evaluation form via electronic means (e-mail) for recording the final grade and indicating that the requirements of the Coop experience have been fulfilled. Both forms are then returned to the Co-op Office.

*Faculty may use state cars for travel involving Co-op evaluations.

4) Issue Final Grades

The Student's final grade is based upon the compilation of grade percentages assigned to:

- 1) the Activities Log;
- 2) the Summary of Work Experience;
- 3) the Job Supervisor's evaluation;
- 4) the Faculty Coordinator's evaluation;
- 5) the Special Projects, if assigned.

When the final grade is determined, the faculty member writes the letter grade (or P/F) in the GRADE block on the Final Evaluation Form and places a mark in the block labeled FINAL. All copies of this form, the student's Activities Log and Summary, should be submitted to the Co-op Office. Finally, the student's grade must be placed on the final grade roster and delivered on time to the Records Office. The roster is issued by the Records Office.

After these responsibilities have been fulfilled, the Co-op Office will tell the Business Office to initiate payment for the faculty member's contract services.

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