Cooperative Education Program Policy Update

To:
All University of Arizona Faculty
Names and titles:
Dennis Ray, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Celeste Pardee, Assistant Director for Academic Policies/Organizations

Date:
May 29, 2018

In Spring 2018, the Offices of the Registrar and Scholarships/Financial Aid presented a proposal to the Undergraduate Council (UGC) to update the Cooperative Education Program (Co-op) Policy to allow students in a co-op work experience to be considered full time for enrollment verifications and loan deferments. The UGC approved the proposed update on 4/10/18, as did the Faculty Senate on 5/07/18, to be effective for all undergraduates in Fall 2018.

Approved revisions to the Undergraduate Cooperative Education Program Policy:

Undergraduates seeking work experience related to their academic program and career goals prior to graduation may apply for the Cooperative Education Program in their major department, if this option is available. Cooperative education (Co-op) enables students to alternate semesters of full-time course work with a semester and/or summer of full-time paid professional experience in the field. The Co-op Program helps students explore and confirm their career choice.

Co-op requirements:

To qualify, students must have full-time status and a minimum cumulative 2.500 GPA. Students with senior status may participate in Co-op as long as one full-time semester of course work remains to complete their degree requirements after they return from a co-op experience. Once approved for the program by the faculty member overseeing the Co-op Program or their major advisor, students may register for COOP 100, Career-Related Experience, a 1-unit course taken for audit (i.e., no credit). COOP 100 maintains a student's active status at the University, similar to a Leave of Absence. While COOP 100 may be repeated, enrollment is limited to non-consecutive regular semesters, consecutive summer sessions, or one regular semester combined with summer sessions. Students registered for COOP 100 will be considered full-time for enrollment verification purposes, including notification to the National Student Clearinghouse for loan deferment. However, COOP 100 does not count towards enrolled hours needed for financial aid disbursement.

To ensure that a career-related work experience will support their academic and career goals, interested students should consult with their major academic advisor.
Justification for the amendment:

An official Co-op experience is sanctioned by the student's major department and serves as a legitimate learning opportunity within the degree program. Co-op students are considered full time at the University through their work experience.

The Office of Scholarships/Financial Aid determined that the former policy regarding financial aid was too restrictive, based on a review of other universities' Co-op policies, as well as clarification of Department of Education Title IV regulations. The revision maintains a restriction on using Co-op for eligibility and disbursement of Title IV funds; however, it allows Co-op students to be considered full-time for enrollment verifications and loan deferments.

Management of the revision:

Students participating in a college/department-approved Co-op Program must enroll in COOP 100, Career-Related Experience, a 1-unit course taken for audit, during the semester or terms when they are working. Once the work experience is approved by the faculty member overseeing the Co-op or the student's major advisor, the student registers by submitting a signed Change of Schedule form to the Registrar's Office.

When verifying co-op students' enrollment, the Registrar's Office will notify the National Student Clearinghouse that those students have full-time status.

Questions about registering for COOP 100 or the enrollment verification process may be addressed to Beth Acree, Registrar, at 621-5200, or acree@email.arizona.edu. Questions about the policy amendment may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curricular Affairs, at 621-5375, or cpardee@u.arizona.edu.


Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/uannounce/cooperative-education-program-policy-update

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