

# COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

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Cooperative Education (CoOp) allows students to gain professionally relevant work experiences that complement their academic studies. Through alternating or paralleling study with paid work experience in their intended fields, students in the Cooperative Education Program have an opportunity to professionally explore and apply principles acquired in the classroom. Cooperative Education is always paid, always for credit, and always a multiple semester experience.

Cooperative Education is a partnership among employers, students, and the University focused on professional practice and vocational exploration. Vocational exploration confirms academic and career objectives and enhances development of self-confidence. Skills in human relations are realized. Courses assume greater meaning, employment options increase, and educational expenses are partially offset. The student may join an employer in industry, government, or social agencies.

Comprehensive guidelines govern the program. Students enter the program by attending a Cooperative Education Information Session offered through Career Services. Students must then receive departmental recommendation for the program and attend an Individual Planning Session. Once a student has faculty approval he or she can begin to apply and interview for CoOp positions. Upon accepting a CoOp position students will register in the Cooperative Education Program.

Students must have full-time status and have an established UWF GPA to participate in the Cooperative Education program. Undergraduate students must maintain a UWF GPA of at least 2.3. The program is also available at the graduate degree level. To start the program graduate students must have completed at least one semester of graduate study at UWF. Graduate students must maintain a UWF GPA of at least 3.0.

Students will participate in either the Alternating CoOp or the Parallel CoOp model. Alternating CoOp students must work at least two full-time semester long assignments, separated by a semester of full-time enrollment in courses. While Alternating students are on CoOp assignment they will work 40 plus hours per week. Alternating CoOps do not enroll in other courses while on assignment. They do not work in their CoOp positions during their coursework semesters.

Parallel CoOp students will work approximately 20 hours per week for three consecutive semesters. Undergraduate Parallel CoOp students will enroll in 9-12 credit hours each semester (Fall or Spring), and 6-9 credit hours during the summer. Graduate Parallel CoOp students will enroll in 6-9 credit hours each semester (Fall or Spring), and 3-6 credit hours during the summer. Student must continue to

make progress in their courses while participating in the Parallel CoOp Program.

Students that are submitted to employers as CoOp candidates, and accept Cooperative Education positions, are expected to follow program guidelines. A minimum of two alternating or three parallel work terms is required to satisfactorily complete the CoOp Program. Each work term Cooperative Education students enroll in a Cooperative Education credit hour. CoOp Students are paid by the employers.