



Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 27, Revision 2

To: Virginia Tech Faculty and Graduate Students
From: Timothy D. Sands
Date: March 13, 2023
Subject: Enrollment Requirement for the Graduate Cooperative Education Program

Approved by the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies & Policies:	February 1, 2023
Approved by the University Council:	May 13, 2023
Approved by the President:	May 13, 2023
Effective Date:	May 13, 2023

University Council approved a resolution regarding the enrollment requirement for the Graduate Cooperative Education Program.

Following is the text of the resolution.

WHEREAS, the current policy describes the following seven guidelines to govern the graduate co-operative education program:

1. Students in the graduate co-operative education program make reasonable academic progress toward degrees while on co-op.
2. The Graduate School must manage the co-op program.
3. The department or program must be involved in negotiating the co-op agreement.
4. Co-op proposals must be approved by the department or program.
5. Academic advising, registration, plan of study, and other details remain in the purview of the department or program.
6. The co-op agreement may not supersede the privileged relationship between student and faculty advisor.
7. Graduate students approved for co-op must enroll in GRAD 5944/7944, currently defined as a zero-credit course.

8. Co-op engagements may be full-time, or short-term and/or part-time. Co-op approvals and enrollment in the appropriate course/section shall be managed by the Graduate School.

WHEREAS, the work completed during the co-op experience is not monitored or evaluated by Virginia Tech faculty, and students do not complete academic work that would justify the one-credit allocation.

WHEREAS, the completion of the co-op experience and grade assignment is based upon an employer evaluation submitted by the student at the conclusion of their co-op experience.

WHEREAS, undergraduate students are able to enroll in co-op experiences for zero academic credit during their terms.

WHEREAS, graduate co-op/internship opportunities are on the rise in number and variety, including shorter-term and part-time engagements.

WHEREAS, our current requirements of full-time and semester-long co-ops disqualify our students from some of the available opportunities.

WHEREAS, many of our peer institutions allow part-time and/or shorter-term opportunities.

WHEREAS, US citizens and permanent resident students are likely participating in internship opportunities (some of which may be part-time and/or short-term while maintaining their graduate enrollment) without reporting these to the Graduate School and registering them as co-op, while in contrast, international students must apply for co-op for the same (currently full-time only) internship opportunities in order to secure off-campus work authorizations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the graduate co-op program definition should be updated to allow short-term and part-time engagements and the one-credit value of the co-op course should be removed and made into the value of a zero credit.

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