

# Cooperative Education Program

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## A Unit of Career Opportunities

*Dr. Gerald Williams, Director of Career Opportunities  
Second floor, Powell Hall-West*

Cooperative Education (Co-op) is an academic program that allows students to combine classroom instruction with degree-related work experience. Co-op students are able to confirm their choice of major, to apply classroom instruction to professional employment settings, and to strengthen their marketability upon graduation. Students also develop professional work skills and habits, earn competitive salaries, and make valuable career contacts. Co-op program employers encompass a vast network of local, state, and national employers.

## Mission

The mission of the Valdosta State University Office of Cooperative Education is to support the academic, career, personal, and work-skills development of VSU students through structured work-based learning experiences.

## Definition of Terms

Valdosta State University subscribes to the Attributes of Cooperative Education Programs (<http://www.ceiainc.org/about/mission-vision-values>), a national standard for co-op program administration and policies. Program models that meet the ACEP guidelines are available to VSU students:

## Co-op Programs

### Alternating

Students work full-time for a minimum of two semesters, rotating one work semester with one school semester for two rotations.

### Parallel

Students work 10-20 hours per week for a minimum of four semesters while being concurrently enrolled in at least six hours of academic coursework. The four work semesters may be completed with two different employers.

### Part-time Internship

Students work 10-20 hours per week while attending VSU a minimum of half-time one to three semesters.

### Full-time Internship

Students work full-time, one semester or two semesters.

## Kappa Theta Epsilon

The VSU Kappa Theta Epsilon Eta Chapter serves a dual purpose: to promote the Cooperative Education program at VSU by enhancing contact between students, faculty, industry, and other co-op programs, and to honor those VSU Co-op participants who demonstrate distinguished industrial and academic performance.

## Eligibility

Students from a wide range of majors are eligible to participate in the Cooperative Education Program. The following majors have significant numbers of co-op placement opportunities: accounting, art, biology, chemistry, communication arts, computer science, computer information systems, early childhood education, economics, finance, management, marketing, pre-engineering, and psychology. In addition, individual students from other majors are placed in co-op positions on a limited basis. Students may be accepted into the Cooperative Education program via the following options:

### Regular Admission

Students must earn a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average, must be in Academic Good Standing, and must have completed 30 semester hours of course work at Valdosta State University.

### Transfer Admission

Students must provide documentation of completion of at least 30 semesters hours with a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average for all transfer credits.

### Co-op Probation

After placement in a co-op position, students must

1. Maintain a minimum cumulative 2.0 grade point average each work semester;

2. Return to good academic standing within one semester if placed on academic probation;
3. If placed on probation for a second semester after placement, students will be removed from the Cooperative Education program until they return to good academic standing with the institution.

Co-ops and interns are considered as being enrolled full-time for insurance purposes and enrollment certification (loan deferment) for federal student loan programs during their work semesters if they are enrolled in the proper COOP course. Eligibility for financial aid programs is based on the number of paid hours enrolled, just as for other students.

## Co-op Courses

Co-op is an academic program and, as such, includes the completion of specific coursework. Each placed student must be enrolled in the appropriate COOP course each work semester. Credit and non-credit program options are available. Students completing the credit option are eligible to earn the Diploma Seal of Advanced Cooperative Education. Students completing the non-credit option are eligible to earn the Certificate of Cooperative Education. Students' initial work term will not precede their first academic term, nor will any work terms follow students' final academic term.

## Selected Educational Outcomes

1. Students will write and present a career vision statement that includes goals and objectives.
2. Students will demonstrate appropriate work skills related to their major or career goals on a co-op job site.
3. Students will identify their strengths and weaknesses related to career employment by completing a self-assessment.
4. Students will create a career development plan based on the self-assessment.

## Examples of Outcome Assessments

1. Using a criterion-based program checklist, the co-op faculty coordinator, the Assistant Director of Cooperative Education, and the work place supervisor will assess the career vision statement.
2. The student's work-site supervisor will assess the student's work skills, using the employer evaluation form.
3. The Assistant Director of Cooperative Education and the Cooperative Education Coordinators will review students' responses to the self-assessment, using student evaluation.
4. Students will implement their career development plan and document their progress in the evaluation of their learning objectives, using student evaluation.

## Requirements for the Certificate of Cooperative Education

The certificate is awarded to students who complete the equivalent of two full-time semesters of cooperative education work experience. During these work experiences, students will enroll each semester in COOP 2300 or COOP 2310.

### Certificate of Cooperative Education

COOP 2300	Alternating Cooperative Education Work Experience	0
or COOP 2310	Parallel Cooperative Education Work Experience	

## Requirements for the Diploma Seal of Advanced Cooperative Education

### Diploma Seal of Advanced Cooperative Education

COOP 1101	Introduction to Parallel Cooperative Education	1
COOP 1102	Evaluation of the Parallel Cooperative Education Work Experience	1
COOP 1103	Integration of the Parallel Cooperative Education Work Experience	1
or COOP 2500	Evaluation and Integration of Alternating Cooperative Education	
COOP 4990	Applied Research Project in Co-op Work Experience	3
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Total Hours		6

More information about the Co-op Program, including a listing of Co-op Education employers and job listings, is found on the website (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/services/cooperative-education>) . Telephone: 229-333-7172. E-mail: [coop@valdosta.edu](mailto:coop@valdosta.edu) .