

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
Co-op Program Change
Resolution 2022-23A

Draft Notice Sent to University Council Cabinet	October 25, 2022
First Reading by CGPSP	December 7, 2022
Approval by CGPSP	February 1, 2023
First Reading by Faculty Senate	December 9, 2023
Approval by Faculty Senate	February 10, 2023
Staff Senate Comment	November 4, 2023
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	January 11, 2023
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Comment	November 17, 2022
Undergraduate Student Senate Waived Comment	February 20, 2023
First Reading, University Council	February 20, 2023
Second Reading, University Council	March 13, 2023
Approved, President	March 13, 2023
Effective Date	Upon Approval

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 one-credit course.

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.

NOW, 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.

Registrar view on zero-credit co-op course

Rick Sparks, February 24, 2022

- Supportive of aligning graduate co-op zero credit with current undergraduate co-op zero credit denomination on transcript
- Co-op zero credit course denotes the academic relevance of co-op without assigning credit
- Co-op can be the equivalent of full-time work; assigning credit distorts full-time/part-time co-op evaluation
 - If credit-bearing course, the integrity of evaluation of work must be examined
- We may schedule different sections for the course – use section title to denote specifics
- Zero-credit course for co-op existed for a long time for undergrads
 - Use course level title to denote full-time or part-time co-op
- Consider providing a reflection question at the end of co-op experience, potentially embedded in evaluation submission
- Instead of P/F grade, consider S/U grade

- Full time co-op = 32 hours or more/week, 14-18 weeks in fall and spring
- Full time assistantship = 20 hours/week (requires enrollment in 12-18 credit hours)
- Zero-credit full-time co-op enrollment satisfies continuous enrollment requirement
- Part-time vs. full-time co-op enrollment must be denoted with course number or section
- Part-time co-op must be combined with other enrollment in order to maintain student status and satisfy continuous enrollment requirement

	Full time co-op (≥32 hrs/wk) enroll in 0-credit co-op course		Part-time co-op (<32 hrs/wk) enroll in 0-credit co-op course	
	Short term (less than 14 weeks in fall/spring; less than 6 weeks in summer)	Full term (14-18 weeks in fall/spring; 6-14 weeks in summer)	Short term (less than 14 weeks in fall/spring; less than 6 weeks in summer)	Full term (14-18 weeks in fall/spring; 6-14 weeks in summer)
Full time assistantship (20 hrs/wk) Enroll in 12-18 hrs	Not allowed	Not allowed	US citizens any time International students in summer	US citizens any time International students in summer
Partial assistantship Enroll in 12-18 hrs	Not allowed	Not allowed	US citizens any time International students for combined maximum 20 hrs/wk in fall and spring, no limit in summer	US citizens any time International students for combined maximum 20 hrs/wk in fall and spring, no limit in summer
No assistantship Enroll in 0-18 hrs	Fall/spring: does not satisfy continuous enrollment requirement unless combined with other enrollment Summer: unlimited time	Fall/spring: satisfies continuous enrollment requirement May enroll in 3-6 credit hours in addition to 0- credit co-op course	Anyone, any time US citizens must enroll in min. 3 credit hours to satisfy continuous enrollment requirement in fall/spring; International students must enroll in min. 9 credit hours to maintain immigration status in fall/spring	

As of the second reading, we received comment from the AP Faculty Senate.

They asked the following questions:

Q: If approved as "zero credit," does evidence of the completed co-op appear on the student's transcript?

A: Yes, the co-op experience remains on the transcript

Q: I think there should be some input from the Graduate School given this states that the Graduate School would manage the co-op program. It states that grade assignment would be submitted by the student from an employer evaluation. I feel like the employer should submit directly to the Graduate School and not through the student.

A: The Graduate School initiated this change. While co-op engagements are generally related to a student's academic program, 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. The Graduate School relies on employer evaluation regarding the completion of the co-op experience in order to assign an EQ grade for the one credit. The current process has the student submitting the evaluation, we believe that is the process used in the undergraduate co-op.

Q: What are the implications of a 0-credit hour course? Is it possible/allowed by registrar?

The Registrar is aware of and supportive of the change. This aligns with the undergraduate process for coop—this has existed for a long time for undergrads.

Q: For graduate students who are engaged in thesis or dissertation research (R&D hours) while enrolled in a 0-credit co-op, as per this policy, would they also need to enroll in R&D hours?

If they are on full time co-op, they cannot enroll in research hours. If they are part time they could register for research but it is not a requirement unless they are on assistantship.



Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate

<https://apfacultysenate.vt.edu>

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January 11, 2023

To: Vice President of Policy and Governance

From: A/P Faculty Senate Polices and Issues Committee

The A/P Faculty Senate Polices and Issues Committee has reviewed and approves/endorsees the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies Resolution 2022-23A to make Changes to the CO-OP program. The committee collected the following comments:

- If approved as "zero credit," does evidence of the completed co-op appear on the student's transcript?
- I think there should be some input from the Graduate School given this states that the Graduate School would manage the co-op program. It states that grade assignment would be submitted by the student from an employer evaluation. I feel like the employer should submit directly to the Graduate School and not through the student.
- What are the implications of a 0-credit hour course? Is it possible/allowed by registrar?
- For graduate students who are engaged in thesis or dissertation research (R&D hours) while enrolled in a 0-credit co-op, as per this policy, would they also need to enroll in R&D hours?

We have no further comment.

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.

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NOW, 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.



**Graduate and Professional Student Senate
(GPSS)**

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gpss.vt.edu



GPSS read CGPSP Resolution 2022-23A on November 17th, 2022 and offers the following comment:

The GPSS is in full support of this resolution.



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Staff Senate

<http://www.staffsenate.vt.edu/>

November 4, 2022

To: Vice President of Policy and Governance

The Staff Senate Committee on Policy and Issues has reviewed and approves CGPSP Resolution 2022-23A. There was a question about specifically how this change would impact international graduate students and the requirement that they obtain a work authorization. Does the ability to arrange a shorter term opportunity or the lack of a 1 credit enrollment requirement make it easier for international students to arrange a co-op? Clarification on these points could be helpful.

We support this resolution and have no further comment.

**Thank you,
Amber Robinson, Chair Staff Senate Policies and
Issues Committee**