



Cooperative Education

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Cooperative Education (Co-op) is a unique academic plan in which students blend classroom learning with practical work experience. This is accomplished through supervised work assignments outside the formal classroom environment.

Co-op is based on the theory that education does not confine itself to just the classroom and should include the vital input that students may gain from participation in the world of work. The program is designed to make a student's educational program more relevant and meaningful by integrating classroom study with planned and supervised practical experience in business, industry, government, and professional or service organizations. It is called "Cooperative Education" because educators and outside agencies work together to design a superior total educational program for students.

There are two co-op enrollment plans available to students and employers:

1. **Alternating Plan** – The student alternates semesters of full-time work (40 hours per week) and full-time college enrollment.
2. **Parallel Plan** – The student works part-time (10-30 hours a week) and attends school.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the Cooperative Education program, students must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Have completed one semester (12 credit hours) of college work with at least three credit hours in major field of study.
2. Have a minimum of 2.25 overall GPA and be in good academic standing (Nursing and Early Childhood require a 2.5 overall GPA).
3. Be recommended and approved for co-op participation by the Co-op faculty coordinator.
4. A transfer student must complete 12 semester hours at RCCC before applying for the Co-op program.
5. Demonstrate the ability to profit from the experience and meet the employer's requirements.
6. A student enrolled in the Co-op program must be registered for three hours of credit during the semester(s) he or she is participating. (*Exceptions are for Summer Term*).
7. All students must be willing to co-op a minimum of 160 clock hours.
8. If released from a prior Co-op position, eligibility to reapply will be determined by the Co-op Director with special permission from the system office.

A student who does not meet the eligibility criteria may be admitted to the program at the discretion of the Co-op Director and the Co-op faculty coordinator.
(*Certain degree programs may specify additional requirements.*)

The Cooperative Education program has an interrelated work experience and classroom content, carefully planned and supervised to produce quality educational results for each student involved. The institution assumes the responsibilities for finding assignments which are related to the student's professional objectives, thus providing experience that enhances knowledge acquired in the classroom.

Application Procedure

Interested students should obtain an application from the Office of Work-based Learning and Cooperative Education and make an appointment with the Co-op Director. Co-op applications must be approved by Co-op faculty coordinators.

Students who are currently employed may seek to have their present employment approved for Cooperative Education; however, such employment will be required to meet all Co-op criteria, and the student and employer must be willing to be governed by the Co-op policies and procedures. Cooperative Education credit will not be given for previous employment held prior to registration for the course.

Registration

Before attempting to register for a COE course (except COE 110), students should complete a Cooperative Education Approval Form, secure approval from the Co-op Director, and take the approval form to registration. Students who are approved and are placed in the Co-op program must register before going to their Co-op Work Assignment.

Academic Credit

Credit hours for Co-op work periods are determined by the number of hours worked per semester. For example, students working an average of 20 hours weekly (320 hours per semester) earn two hours of credit per semester. Grades given by the faculty coordinator will be based on the student's specific learning objectives, reports, and evaluations submitted by the student and the employer. The student's transcript indicates that practical work experience has been integrated into his/her academic program.

The Office of Work-based Learning and Cooperative Education also assists students in securing adult apprenticeships and internships. For more information on how to get involved in the Co-op program and other work-based learning opportunities, contact the **Office of Work-based Learning and Cooperative Education**, Building 300, Room 309 (North) or 2303 (South), (704) 637-0760, Ext. 725; or (704) 788-3197, Ext. 455; or **E-mail: derrickc@rowancabarrus.edu**.

NOTE: Co-op options are listed under each participating program as outlined in the RCCC Catalog/Student Handbook.