

# COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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The VCU College of Engineering cooperative education program is an optional experiential learning program in which a student works in an approved, full-time, paid industrial position. The student works two or more semesters starting during the sophomore or junior year to meet specific learning objectives while gaining practical experience relevant to their major and earning money to offset educational expenses. The employer may prefer for the student to alternate semesters of work and school or to work consecutive semesters. An approved co-op experience can substitute for a departmental internship requirement.

Students interested in co-op must first complete ENGR 395 to prepare them to find a job and succeed in a professional environment. When a student is hired into a co-op position, he or she enrolls in ENGR 398 to maintain student status during work terms. He or she also documents progress toward learning objectives and writes about the learning experience. Following the final work term, the student enrolls in ENGR 498 to document that all co-op program requirements have been satisfied. Upon completion of this course, the student's transcript will indicate that the co-op program has been completed.

Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to begin participating in co-op work terms:

- Earned at minimum 24 credit hours, with at least 12 credit hours completed at VCU
- Good academic standing
- Overall minimum GPA of 2.7
- College of Engineering major
- Completed ENGR 395

Employers may require additional credits, higher GPAs or other criteria for eligibility. Also, because employers make the hiring decisions, VCU cannot guarantee that an eligible student will be hired into a co-op position.

A student may request an exception to the eligibility criteria as soon as they receive a co-op job offer or, at the latest, on the first day of the semester that the student will participate in a work term. All requests must be submitted on a form that can be obtained from the College of Engineering Career Services office. Requests will be considered by a committee, and a decision will be rendered on or before the last day of add/drop of that semester. In the case of exceptional circumstances, the committee may allow the student to enroll in ENGR 398 without meeting all of the eligibility criteria.

For more information about the co-op program, visit the College of Engineering Career Services (<http://www.egr.vcu.edu/careerservices/>) website.