

This optional, educationally-based program was founded in VU's College of Engineering in the summer of 1983. Admission to the co-op program requires a minimum grade-point average of 2.4/4.0.

The placement and progress of students are closely monitored by faculty Departmental Co-op Coordinators. Students receive academic credit.

Beginning with the summer after the sophomore year, students spend up to five periods (i.e., three summers and two semesters) with the same employer and function as paid para-professionals. A typical schedule is:

Year	First Semester	Second Semester	Summer Session
1	School	School	Work
2	School	School	Co-op
3	Co-op	School	Co-op
4	School	Co-op	Co-op
5	School	School	

Numerous variations are possible to meet particular educational objectives. For example, electrical engineering majors usually co-op during the second semester of year three (rather than the first semester) and during the first semester of year five (rather than during year four.)

Co-op Advantages

To the Graduating Engineer

- Improves academic performance
- Increases educational motivation
- Develops interpersonal skills
- Provides funds to support and complete college education
- Integrates academic theory with practical work experiences
- Enriches total education resulting in a more well-rounded individual
- Tests career interests
- Assists participants in making informed decisions about career goals and prospective employers
- Enhances graduation placement status
- Establishes a potential post-graduation employer
- Traditionally results in a higher starting salary as compared to non-co-op graduates
- Typically results in more rapid advancement as compared to non-co-op associates

To the Co-Op Employer

- Allows screening, selection, and recruitment of students for permanent positions
- Provides a cost-effective source of para-professional staffing
- Provides a more effective and less expensive recruitment strategy
- Increases employee retention rate

- Allows evaluation of students for full-time positions after graduation
- Improves overall employer-university relationships

To the College & University

- Creates better prepared, more competitive and marketable graduates
- Facilitates and improves relations with the employing community
- Provides better feedback on the adequacy of students' academic preparation

EXCERPTS FROM "CO-OP = SUCCESS"

By Norm Jensen

College of Engineering Co-op Coordinator, 1983-1998

The purpose of your education is to lead you into a productive life. . . a career of your choice. The work that will command so much of your time in life ought to be as satisfying and rewarding as you can make it. For many students, the closing months of college are fraught with anxious times, concerns for career job placement, graduate school, or professional schools.

Co-op removes much uncertainty. It gives your learning direction and meaning and/or purpose and fulfillment. As co-op students approach graduation, they know where they're going and why.

Co-op has a profound effect on the way your learning takes place. It is interactive and reinforcing. You start to make sense of what you've learned in college because, either in principle or in practice, you're putting it to the test of a real job. The added ingredient is experience. And whatever the experience, co-op is highly regarded as a valued educational enterprise.

CO-OP IS THE ULTIMATE IN PERSONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT