



COOPERATIVE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND REGULATIONS

Introduction

The goal of the University of North America (UoNA) is to provide students with an outstanding, integrated education linking the latest academic theories to real world applications. Applied learning is central to all programs. The academic on-ground and on-line classrooms provide a rigorous environment, and students are expected to perform at a high level. To make certain that each student understands the relationship between theory and practical application, students are expected to participate in co-operative education throughout their tenure at UoNA, and a minimum of two academic years of professional experience in a position directly related to the student's field of studies, gained either prior to enrollment or through the university's Co-operative Education Program, are required for all on-ground students for graduation. This work experience provides the direct link between theory and practice and enhances the application of the student's learning. Because the university is committed to applied learning throughout the student's program and because the university believes that academic theory can best be understood when students understand the context in which theory is applied, students are expected to begin their co-operative learning experience during their first semester at the university.

The university's degree programs require participation in a professional work experience in order to provide a coordinated learning opportunity for students. This linkage allows students to integrate theories learned into practical applications, gain professional work experience, establish contacts with other professionals in their fields, improve their interpersonal skills, and enhance their marketability after graduation. The employers who are a part of this program, in turn, receive motivated and eager student-employees with academically current skills. To maximize their applied learning, students begin their co-operative education program on the first day of enrollment at the university.

The Cooperative Education Program maintains direct interaction between the employer, the student, and the university through the establishment of the Cooperative Learning Agreement (available as a download from our website) which is signed and adhered to by all parties. Ultimately, this team approach to cooperative education provides a unique experiential learning opportunity for the student while simultaneously benefitting the employer.

The Purpose of Cooperative Education

The purpose of cooperative education is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate academic theory with practice through a professional work experience under the guidance of both an academic faculty member and a work place mentor.

Participation in Co-operative Education

All students enrolled in an on-ground program are required to complete a minimum of two academic years of directly-related professional experience as one of the requirements for the Master's or Doctoral Degree. The only exceptions to this requirement are:

- The student's SEVP status precludes participation, The student has a minimum of two years of prior professional work experience in a position or positions directly related to the student's field of study. The relevance and applicability of a student's work experience will be evaluated by the Director of Co-operative Education or the student's program dean. The student is enrolled in a Degree Completion program requiring one year or less for accomplishment.

The Structure and Expectations of Cooperative Education

Pre-enrollment

1. Students are automatically enrolled in Co-operative Education at the beginning of their degree studies unless they are granted a waiver. Therefore, all students are required to submit a copy of their resume as a part of their application process, and this resume is used in the evaluation of any waiver request. Unless a waiver is approved by either the Director of Co-operative Education or the student's program dean, the student is required to participate in the program.
2. There is no additional or separate charge for participation in cooperative education as this is a required and integral part of the degree program. There is no additional payment for participation in either COOP 500/600, COOP 510/610, or COOP 520/620.

Semester 1

1. During the first semester, all Co-operative Education Master's Degree students enroll in MGMT 510 and TECH 510, the university's Foundation courses, as well as COOP 500. Doctoral students enroll in COOP 600. Both levels of students begin their search for an appropriate professional placement under the guidance of Cooperative Education staff.
2. The COOP 500/600 Course:
The purpose of COOP 500/600 is to prepare students to identify, obtain, and succeed in a professional work experience that is directly related to their academic and career objectives. Participation in COOP 500/600 is required unless waived by the Director of Co-operative Education. The course may be waived only if the student has:
 - a. Completed an equivalent course at another university, or
 - b. One year of work experience in the United States, or
 - c. One year of work experience with a U.S.-based organization abroad
3. Students who enter COOP 500/600 and who obtain an approved position during the semester must none-the-less successfully complete the course.
4. Once a student has enrolled in COOP 500/600, successful completion of the course is required for graduation. Should a student fail COOP 500 for any reason, the course must be repeated the following semester. A second failure will result in the termination of the student from the university.
5. Students who have an approved job offer prior to the start of COOP 500/600 must enroll in the course concurrently unless the requirement has been waived (see #2, above). This situation may exist for students transferring to the university from another university with a cooperative education program.
6. Students must be in satisfactory standing with the university at the time they begin their work experience. Satisfactory standing is defined as a satisfactory cumulative grade point average (as defined in the university's Catalog), being current with all financial obligations, and not being on probation for any reason. This requirement may be waived only if a student has demonstrated substantial improvement in his or her GPA and the Director of Co-operative Education approves the waiver.

Semester 2 onward

Students with an Approved Professional Placement

1. Students must participate in and successfully complete COOP 510/610 each semester in which they participate in a work experience. No cooperative education student may be waived from this requirement.
2. The purpose of COOP 510/610 is to provide students with the opportunity to document the relationship of their work experience with their academic course work and for the university to monitor student performance in the work experience.
3. Students who do not successfully complete COOP 510/610 will not be permitted to continue their job placement.
4. Students who take a vacation from academic classes but who wish to continue working while on vacation must enroll in COOP 510/610 during the semester of vacation.
5. Students are expected to obtain their own co-op position with the guidance of Cooperative Education staff. Students may obtain job opportunities directly through their own efforts, through the Cooperative Education Department, or through a placement service.
6. Students typically begin their work placement experience during Semester Two and continue this each semester afterward. The work placement must be approved in advance by the Cooperative Education department as being directly related to the student's field of study.
7. In situations where students receive a job placement opportunity either through their own efforts or through a placement service, a Cooperative Education Department staff member must conduct an interview of the potential employer to assess the relevance of the position to the student's academic program. Interviews may be conducted in person or via electronic media, but the interview must be conducted with the students' actual day-to-day supervisor.
8. Should a student wish to change his or her job placement, prior approval must be received from the Cooperative Education Department to assure that the new position meets the requirements for a cooperative education experience.
9. Students must complete the final Reflective Report following university guidelines each semester while on work placement.
10. Students must submit their professional performance appraisal each semester while on work placement.
11. Students whose grade point average falls below 3.0 for any semester will be counseled by Cooperative Education Program staff to identify any possible work-related impediments to successful academic performance and, should any exist, to work with the student and the employer to eliminate these problems.
12. Students must achieve Satisfactory Academic progress. Because the university takes academics and graduation seriously, students who are placed on Academic Probation as defined in the UoNA Catalog will, in addition to being counseled by his or her academic advisor, be counseled by Cooperative Education Program staff and may be required to end the work experience.

Students without an Approved Professional Placement

1. Students without an approved professional placement must participate in and successfully complete COOP 520/620 during the time of their non-employment. No cooperative education student without an approved professional placement may be waived from this requirement.
2. The purpose of COOP 520/620 is to provide ongoing guidance and assistance to students during their search for an appropriate position such that each student is able to find an appropriate placement.
3. Students meet with Cooperative Education Program staff in a classroom setting.
4. Students must maintain a log of all job search activities. The log must be submitted for review during each class session.
5. Grading in the course is either Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). Students who do not successfully complete the course may be terminated from the Cooperative Education Program and hence the university.

Standards of Conduct

The first and foremost concern of the Co-operative Education Program is to provide students with an integrated learning experience wherein theory and practice meet and mutually reinforce each other. To assure this, all participants in the program including but not limited to university staff, employers, and students must fully comply with all university, academic, and SEVP regulations. Any student who violates the law or the intent of this program will have his/her CPT I-20 terminated. Any employer which violates the law or the intent of this program will have its contract/agreement terminated and will be responsible for any damages to UoNA.