



## ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

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### ACTION REQUESTED:

Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion/Direction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Information	<input type="checkbox"/>

**DATE:** 24 May 2022

**FROM:** Experiential Learning Committee

**SUBJECT:** Directives for Co-operative Education, Internship, and Practicum Development

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### COMMITTEE MANDATE:

- Under the Policy Framework, Policy Owners must consult with deliberative bodies before presenting draft policy instruments to the approval authority for approval
- Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) and Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) have a mandate of maintaining the academic standards set by Academic Council and to serve as a deliberative body for academic policy instruments, and have delegated authority from the Board of Governors under the Terms of Reference to approve Procedures, Directives, and Guidelines
- The Experiential Learning Committee has reviewed the attached Directives and is presenting the Directives to Academic Council for consultation prior to presenting for approval at USC and GSC

### BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

In 2010 Academic Council approved a co-op framework designed to match the requirements of the Science cooperative program that was in existence at the time. That framework has not been substantively changed since its development and was not reviewed when the new University Policy Framework was introduced. Since that time, the University has made improvements to the Co-op process, and approved new Co-op programs for BEng and BComm students as well as Master's students in Software Engineering.

During the approval process for the new BEng and BComm Co-op programs some concerns were noted around inconsistencies between different co-op options in multiple programs. The feedback was noted, and a commitment was made to develop new policy instruments related to experiential learning that reflect the current needs of the University. The development of the Co-op section of the new Directives has considered the issues raised as well as province-wide best practice.

Additionally, the University continues to offer other formal experiential learning opportunities in the form of internships and practica. In order to ensure consistency across the institution, a

common set of requirements, which match the current offerings from multiple Faculties, have been included in these new Directives.

The new Directives will supersede the Cooperative Education Framework/Procedures: [ACD 1599.06](#).

### **Comments/Discussion for Consideration During the Consultation Period**

- Substantive comments received as of 17 May during online and written consultation have been incorporated where possible into the current draft document
- Additional suggestions related to making statements more clear, which do not change the intent of those statements, are being reviewed and may be reflected in the final version sent for approval
- These Directives set a minimum standard and provide flexibility for Faculties and programs to add additional requirements where appropriate
- Internships in some areas must be paid; does the definition that they may be paid or unpaid leave us open to having employers only offer unpaid Internships? The Directives minimally apply to all possible options at the University, and therefore need to have some flexibility. The Purpose section indicates that Faculties may impose additional requirements as needed
- 7.1 b) Some graduate programs have Internships that are 6-credit hours for a one-term placement. Should this be revised to say “Be recorded as **at least** a three-credit hour course for every 12-week or 280-hour work placement...”?
- Should a maximum number of Internships or Work Terms be included in the document?

### **CONSULTATION:**

In conjunction with the Policy Office, the following consultation and approval path was determined:

Experiential Learning Committee: April 2022, May 2022

Online Consultation: May 2022

Administrative Leadership Team (written consultation): May 2022

Approval Authority: USC and GSC May 2022 (consultation), June 2022 (approval)

Academic Council for consultation: May 2022, For information: June 2022

- The Board of Governors has delegated approval authority for Academic Directives to USC and GSC through its approval of Terms of Reference for the committees. This was done purposefully and in consultation with Academic Council, following a plan recommended by Academic Council (AC) to keep discussion and activities of AC focused on the more strategic level
- Where a policy instrument impacts both graduate and undergraduate study/students, it will not have effect until approved by both USC and GSC
- Because AC has an interest in these Directives due to institution-wide impact, consultation with AC before approval by USC and GSC is recommended best practice

### **NEXT STEPS:**

After all consultation is completed, these Directives will be presented to USC and GSC for approval, submitted to Academic Council for information, and become effective immediately.

### **SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:**

- Directives for Co-operative Education, Internship, and Practicum Development



Classification Number	<i>To be assigned by Policy Office</i>
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy
Framework Category	<i>To be assigned by Policy Office</i>
Approving Authority	<i>To be assigned by Policy Office</i>
Policy Owner	Vice-President, Academic and Provost
Approval Date	
Review Date	
Supersedes	Cooperative Education Framework/Procedures: ACD 1599.06

## DIRECTIVES FOR CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION, INTERNSHIP, AND PRACTICUM DEVELOPMENT

### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Directives is to assist faculty and staff in the implementation of Co-operative education, Internship, and practicum opportunities at Ontario Tech, by providing direction around identifying and developing these programs and/or program components.
2. These directives define the minimum institutional requirements. Programs and Faculties may elect to require higher standards as they see fit. The Program and Faculty specific requirements will be clearly communicated to students on the relevant Experiential Learning website(s).

### DEFINITIONS

3. For the purposes of these Directives the following definitions apply:

**“Co-operative Education”** refers to programs that provide a significant opportunity for career exploration, development and exposure to varying work environments. Co-operative Education Programs, or Co-op(s), are programs that integrate three or more paid Work Term periods through the course of a student’s studies, and result in a degree designation upon successful completion of both academic and Co-operative education program requirements.

**“Internship”** is disparate to Work Term and Co-operative Education. It refers to an opportunity that provides a student with a single discipline-specific work experience or placement that is normally supervised and structured, and for academic credit. Internships may occur in the middle of an academic program or after all academic coursework has been completed and prior to graduation. Internships may be paid or unpaid and can be of any length, but normally have a minimum length of 12 weeks or 280 work hours plus additional related academic deliverables.

**“Major Program Modifications”** refers to modifications that constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program, as defined in the University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy.

**“Practicum”** refers to a part-time/short term intensive, practical experience in a professional setting relevant to a student’s subject of study. A practicum is a curricular or co-curricular, normally unpaid, practice-based work experience that is in a supervised setting. Normally, a

practicum is supervised by an experienced registered or licensed professional, and may contribute to the practice-based work needed for professional accreditation or licensure.

**“Work Term”** means a period of applied work-based learning that is part of a student’s overall academic program. Students may participate in a series of Work Term placements as part of their Co-operative Education program.

To be designated as a Work Term, the placement will:

- a. Require that students be in clear academic standing and that undergraduate students have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.3, and have completed at least 24 credit hours to be eligible to participate and graduate students have completed at least 9 credit hours, or one semester of study.
- b. Normally be a minimum of 12 weeks and/or 420 hours full-time paid experience. Programs and Faculties may choose to establish rules and procedures to allow students to take a limited number of courses during the Work Term.
- c. Be recorded as three credit hour course; and
- d. Be graded on a pass/fail basis that is recorded on the transcript but not included in the calculation of the grade point average.

#### **SCOPE AND AUTHORITY**

4. These Directives apply to faculty and staff, at the undergraduate and graduate level, who are involved in the implementation and/or development of Co-op, Internship and practicum opportunities.
5. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Directives.

#### **DIRECTIVES**

Co-operative Education, Internships and Practica are experiential learning opportunities that are aimed at providing students with work-integrated learning tailored to suit the specific disciplinary and professional context of their respective programs. The development and implementation of each must be consistent.

All Ontario Tech Co-operative Education, Internship, and Practicum programs must be developed in accordance with the university’s [Curriculum Change Procedures](#).

#### **6. COOPERATIVE EDUCATION**

- 6.1. Co-operative Education Programs, or Co-op(s), are programs that typically integrate three or more Work Term periods through the course of a student’s studies. These programs provide a significant opportunity for career exploration, development and exposure to varying work environments.

When including a Co-op in the development of a new academic program, please refer to the [New Program Procedures](#).

To add cooperative education to an existing academic program, proposals must be developed as a Major Program Modification in accordance with the university's [Curriculum Change Procedures](#) and include New Course electronic proposals for each Work Term (e.g., Work Term I, Work Term II, Work Term III).

To be designated as an Ontario Tech Co-operative Education Program, the following criteria must be met:

- a)** Include a Co-operative Education designation on the transcript and degree parchment.
- b)** Require that students meet the academic requirements for each placement to be defined as a Work Term.  
  
Work Term placements are competitive. Possession of the minimum requirements does not guarantee a Work Term placement.
- c)** Involve alternating periods of academic study with Work Term placements. When run consecutively, Work Term placements can not exceed 4 terms or a total of 16 months.
- d)** Require the successful completion of a Work Term report and employer evaluation for each Work Term placement that receives a pass/fail grade that is recorded on the transcript.
  - i.** For consecutive work terms with the same employer, a progress report must be submitted at the end of each Work Term, and final Work Term report at the end of the placement's duration.
- e)** Meet the following criteria, which are consistent with the current accreditation requirements as set out by the Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada):
  - i.** Each Work Term meets the requirements defined above and is developed in partnership with the employer and approved by the cooperative education program as a suitable learning environment.
  - ii.** The student is engaged in productive work for which the student receives remuneration.
  - iii.** The Co-op curriculum supports student learning goals, personal evaluation, and reflection.
  - iv.** The student's performance in the workplace is supervised and evaluated by the student's employer.

- v. The student's progress during their Work Term is monitored by the cooperative education program.
- vi. Both work and academic terms are full-time and follow a formalized sequence. The required total amount of Co-op work experience to receive a degree designation is normally at least 30% of the time spent in academic study. For programs of two years or less the total amount may be a minimum of 25%.
- vii. Cooperative education programs begin and end on an academic term.
- viii. The student completing multiple Work Terms is normally exposed to the work environment during more than one season of the year.

## **7. INTERNSHIP**

- 7.1.** Internships provide a student with valuable work experience or placements that are normally supervised and structured.

When including an Internship or Internships in the development of a new academic program, please refer to the [New Program Procedures](#).

To add an Internship or Internships to an existing academic program, proposals must be developed as a Major Program Modification in accordance with the university's [Curriculum Change Procedures](#) and include New Course electronic proposals for the Internship course.

To be designated as an Ontario Tech Internship, the following criteria must be met:

- a)** Be a minimum length of 12 weeks or 280 work hours (plus additional related academic deliverables) in duration.
- b)** Be recorded as a three-credit hour course for every 12-week or 280-hour work placement, and must fit within the degree requirements of the student's current academic program.
- c)** Does not lead to a degree designation.
- d)** Receive a letter grade that is included in the calculation of the grade point average, or pass/fail that is recorded on the transcript but not included in the calculation of the grade point average.
- e)** If more than 12 weeks in duration, include cumulative assessments with a final summative assessment.

## **8. PRACTICUM**

- 8.1.** A Practicum provides students with a part-time/short-term intensive, practical experience in a professional setting relevant to their subject of study. The length and associated academic credit hours of a Practicum may vary depending on the program of study, and/or any professional licensure, certification, or accreditation requirements. Practica normally receive a letter grade that is included in the calculation of the grade point average.

When including a Practicum in the development of a new academic program, please refer to the [New Program Procedures](#).

To add a Practicum to an existing academic program, proposals must be developed as a Major Program Modification in accordance with the university's [Curriculum Change Procedures](#) and include New Course electronic proposals for each Practicum designation (e.g., Practicum I, Practicum II, Practicum III).

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 9.** These Directives will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost's Office, through the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement, coordinates the day-to-day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and assessing academic programs. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- 10.** This section intentionally left blank

## **RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS**

- 11.** [CEWIL Canada Co-operative Education accreditation standards](#).

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (ACD 1501)  
Curriculum Change Procedures (ACD 1501.01)  
New Program Procedures (ACD 1501.03)  
Program Nomenclature Directives (ACD 1501.01)