Proposal to revise the Undergraduate Cooperative Education Program Policy
Submitted by the Registrar’s Office and Office of Scholarships/Financial Aid, 4/9/18; approved by the Undergraduate Council, 4/10/18; College Academic Administrators Council, 4/24/18; Provost’s Council, 5/4/18.

Proposed revisions to the Undergraduate Cooperative Education Program policy, http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/undergraduate-cooperative-education-program:

Undergraduates seeking work experience related to their academic program and career goals prior to graduation may apply for the Cooperative Education Program through Student Engagement and Career Development (link is external). Cooperative education (Co-op) enables students to alternate semesters of full-time course work with a semester and/or summer of full-time paid professional experience in the field. Co-op helps students explore and confirm their career choice.

Co-op Requirements

To qualify, students must have full-time status and a minimum cumulative 2.500 GPA. Students with senior status may participate in Co-op as long as one full-time semester of course work remains to complete their degree requirements after they return from a co-op experience. Once approved for the program by Career Services, students may register for COOP 100, Career-Related Experience, a 1-unit course taken for audit (i.e., no credit). COOP 100 maintains a student's active status at the University, similar to a Leave of Absence. While COOP 100 may be repeated, enrollment is limited to non-consecutive regular semesters, consecutive summer sessions, or one regular semester combined with summer sessions. Enrollment in COOP 100 does not maintain full-time status for financial aid or insurance purposes. Interested students should check with their scholarship or financial aid counselor to find out how a co-op experience will affect their scholarship award or financial aid status.

Students registered for COOP 100 will be considered full-time for enrollment verification purposes. This will include verification to the National Student Clearinghouse for loan deferment purposes. However, COOP 100 does not count towards enrolled hours needed for financial aid disbursement.

Successful completion of a co-op experience or internship (link is external) is encouraged in many UA degree programs. To ensure that a career-related work experience will support their academic and career goals, interested students should consult with their major academic advisor (link is external).

Justification:

An official co-op experience is sanctioned by the student’s major department and serves as a legitimate learning opportunity within the degree program. Co-op students are considered full-time at the University through their work experience. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid has determined that the current policy surrounding financial aid is too restrictive. This determination is based on an analysis of how other universities handle co-op programs, as well as clarification of Department of Education Title IV regulations. The proposed change maintains a restriction on using co-op for the eligibility and disbursement of Title IV funds; however, it allows co-op students to be considered full-time for enrollment verifications and loan deferments.

Effective Term: Fall 2018 for all undergraduates