Graduate Cooperative Education

Cooperative education is a unique opportunity for graduate students to gain valuable on-the-job experience to enhance their academic training while pursuing a degree program. Professional employment allows co-op students to apply the knowledge they have acquired in class and gain a new perspective on their major fields of study. Therefore, a co-op experience is intended to be an integral part of a graduate student’s academic program.

1. Eligibility Criteria for Graduate Cooperative Education
   - Have completed at least one semester of academic work in their program of study
     - International students may qualify after two academic semesters in F-1 status
   - Have an approved plan of study with the co-op course on it
   - Be in good academic standing, with a GPA of at least 3.0 (B average)
   - Have a full-time employment offer, related to your field of study, for one academic term (6-12 weeks during summer, 14-16 weeks during fall and spring semesters)
   - Have the approval of your academic advisor, including the completed and signed Academic Advisor’s Recommendation form.
   - Work full-time for at least one academic term, but not more than 12 months
     - International students who accumulate 12-months (365 days) of co-op (CPT) will forfeit the Optional Practical Training (OPT) benefit.

2. Procedures for Participation in a Graduate Co-op Program:
   - Contact prospective employers and discuss the suitability of a job offer with your academic advisor
   - Complete the Co-op Application and attach the following documents to the form:
     - Academic Advisor’s Recommendation form;
     - Employment offer letter stating the terms (including dates) of employment, job duties, and supervisor’s name;
     - Copy of your approved plan of study that includes the co-op course GRAD 5944 or GRAD 7944
     - Copies of all previous I-20 forms, if you are an international student.
   - The Graduate School will add the one-hour co-op course to your schedule, which will designate you as a full-time student while on your Co-op assignment.

3. Application deadlines:
   - **Fall or Spring Semester**: Monday, one week before classes begin
   - **Summer**: Applications will be accepted until June 30.
   - Since applications require approximately two weeks of processing time, early submission is highly encouraged.

For further information contact International Graduate Student Services
120 Graduate Life Center  •  540/231-8486  •  igss@vt.edu