

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Bachelor of Arts Cooperative Education Program

The Faculty of Arts offers a cooperative (COOP) education option for the Bachelor of Arts 120 credit hour degree. The COOP degree option is a dynamic approach to university education which integrates academic classroom studies with related practical work experiences outside the formal university environment. The principle upon which this concept is based is that learning and individual development are greatly enhanced when the concepts studied in the classroom are periodically applied, tested and observed by the students in meaningful work situations. Furthermore, through this program, students have an excellent opportunity to observe and learn how to function in professional work environments.

Admission Requirements for Undergraduate Cooperative Education Programs

1. Enrolment in the cooperative education option is limited and admission is on a competitive basis. The requirements listed below are the normal minimums. Satisfying these requirements does not guarantee admission.
2. Students are considered for admission to the cooperative education option after the completion of forty-five (45) credit hours (normally, this will occur at the end of the first semester of the second year) and declaration of a Major (or admission to an Honors).
3. The normal admission requirement to the cooperative education program is a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50.
4. Candidates will be admitted to a cooperative education program on the basis of their interest, aptitude, and assessed ability to combine successfully the academic requirements of a major program together with the special work-term requirements of the program.

Requirements for Continuance in and Graduation from the Cooperative Education Program

1. Students must complete all of the regular requirements for a Bachelor of Arts 120 credit hour degree. Students are advised that pursuing a cooperative education option may delay degree completion. It is the student's responsibility to schedule their courses to satisfy major/honors requirements.
2. In addition to the above requirements, students must officially register for and complete three work terms.
3. To continue in and graduate from the cooperative education program, students must earn a minimum degree grade point average of 2.50.

Policies and Regulations Governing Cooperative Education Work Terms

1. The University will make every effort to locate work term positions for cooperative education students in academically related areas of employment, but cannot guarantee placements. Employment settings may also be identified by cooperative education students, but require the approval of the Arts Faculty.
2. The satisfactory fulfillment of cooperative education work terms requires:
 - a. the completion of three terms of work experience in academically related paid employment situations of 13 to 16 weeks' duration.

Under certain circumstances, and with the approval of the appropriate department, students may be permitted to satisfy their work term requirements in an unpaid position. Self-employment will be considered.

- b. a satisfactory employer evaluation for each cooperative education work term (self-employed students will be evaluated by an individual selected by the department);
 - c. the satisfactory completion of a written report in the required format, submitted 30 days after the end of each work term detailing the student's work experience.
3. A notation will be included on students' academic transcripts following satisfactory completion of each work term.
 4. Graduating students who have successfully completed their cooperative work term requirements will have this noted on their academic transcripts. If, in addition, all other normal academic requirements are fulfilled, a "Cooperative Education" notation will be printed on their parchments.
 5. Students may be required to withdraw from the cooperative education option of their degree if:
 - a. they are dismissed from, quit, or fail to accept an appropriate and approved cooperative work term position;
 - b. they fail to submit or successfully complete a work term report;
 - c. they do not maintain the required grade point average necessary for continuance in the Cooperative Education Program;
 - d. in the judgment of the faculty, they are no longer suited for the particular requirements of the Cooperative Education Program.
 6. Students who voluntarily withdraw from or who are required to withdraw from the Cooperative Education Program may remain enrolled in and continue with the major or honours degree program offered by their department.
 7. Cooperative Education students will be expected to attend any special seminars or colloquia developed by the Arts Faculty or the Cooperative Education Department, which deal with employment orientation and the application of formal academic study to work experiences.
 8. Academic study during work terms is discouraged. No more than six (6) credit hours may be taken during a work term. Up to six (6) credit hours within the student's major subject may be taken on a Letter of Permission at another institution. This waiver of normal University policy is permitted only for study during work terms and only if the courses cannot be taken at Saint Mary's University due to program sequencing.

Registration and Fees for Cooperative Education

1. Students are required to register for all work terms, according to normal registration procedures, including all stipulated deadlines. Work terms will be officially designated on students' transcripts as:
 - Work Term 1 = COOP 1000
 - Work Term 2 = COOP 2000
 - Work Term 3 = COOP 3000
2. Students pay for their academic courses and work terms as they take them.

Timing and Sequencing of Work Terms

The basic principles behind a co-op education are that (a) work terms should build upon the studies in the preceding semester(s) and (b) work terms should enrich subsequent study terms. Ideally, work terms

and study terms should alternate after the student has an academic foundation suitable for the first work term.

1. Normally, the first work term will commence after the completion of the requirements for years 1 and 2 of the BA degree program.
2. A "study term" is a semester of full -time study [minimum of 3 courses (nine (9) credit hours)]. Normally students must end their program with a study term.
3. Normally, at least one work term must be in the fall or winter semester. That is, students are not permitted to complete all work terms in the summer.
4. Back to back work terms are permissible only with prior approval of the Arts Faculty and the Cooperative Education department. These work terms must be with different employers or require significantly different job descriptions if with the same employer. Students must make application to the Cooperative Education department not less than one month before the start of the second work term, providing justification for back to back work terms and a job description for the second work term.
5. Three work terms in succession, with no intervening full-time study term, are not permitted.
6. Students may "stop out" for a semester, i.e., have a semester that is neither a work term nor a study term. Students must make application to the Cooperative Education department at least one month before the start of the "stop out" semester.