

DRAFT Policy language on Twin Cities academic credit for courses associated with internship and co-op experiences.

Policy Statement

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities awards academic credit for academic coursework associated with internship, co-op, and related professional experiences.

1. Up to 3 academic credits may be awarded for an academic course associated with an internship or co-op experience.
2. Academic credit is commensurate with the content and instructional time in the academic course. Time completed at the experience can account for up to two-thirds of a student's out-of-class work time.
3. The academic expectations of an internship or co-op course must be documented in a course syllabus and reinforced in a contract or agreement.
4. The academic course must have an instructor who is not the internship or co-op supervisor.

Reason for Policy

Uniformity of expectations for academic credit for courses associated with internships and co-op experiences is in the best interest of students, faculty and staff. Consistency allows for compliance with federal financial aid regulations and accreditation requirements.

FAQ's

How are credit hours determined?

One credit is equivalent to one hour of instructional time and two hours of outside-of-class work time per week. The time a student spends at an internship can account for up to two-thirds of the expected out-of-class student work.

The work engaged in the internship class by the instructors and students can be considered as sustained commitment either weekly or by term. While the instructional time need not be evenly distributed each week of the term, course engagement should occur throughout the term.

Credit* by term	Instructional time per term	Student out-of-class academic work per term	<i>Internship hours that may be applied to out-of-class work**</i>
1 credit	15 hours	30 hours	20 hours
2 credits	30 hours	60 hours	40 hours
3 credits	45 hours	90 hours	60 hours

*1 credit = 1 hour of instruction plus a minimum of 2 hours out-of-class student work per week over 15 weeks.

**Up to two-thirds the “Student out-of-class academic work per week” can be from internship hours. Students likely complete more internship hours than those allowable toward the academic credit standards.

Can students complete more hours at an internship than are eligible to count toward the student out-of-class academic work?

Yes. This policy concerns academic credit for academic coursework associated with internship, co-op, and related professional experiences. Students are likely to complete varied hours at an internship site based on factors not directly related to academic credit. A course or program may require students to complete a minimum number of hours at an internship site that exceeds those that count toward student out-of-class work. One reason for a minimum hour requirement may be related to accreditation standards.

Is a contract or agreement required for courses associated with this policy?

Yes. It is an expectation that an internship or co-op experience associated with academic credit has an approved contract or agreement in place prior to or at the beginning of the internship.

Does the academic course need to be taken concurrently with the internship?

Academic credit for an internship course should be earned concurrently or in the subsequent term, immediately following the internship, if allowed by the college offering the academic course.

Does the academic course need to be taken concurrently with the co-op?

Yes. Academic credit associated with a co-op program must be completed concurrently with the co-op experience.

Can a student receive academic credit for an associated paid internship experience?

Yes, if they are enrolled in an internship-related academic course.

May a student receive pay for an internship associated with academic credit?

Yes, internship credit is awarded for the academic course associated with the internship, not the hours spent at the internship. Students are eligible to be paid for hours spent at an internship.

If a student is completing a summer internship and planning to take the internship course in fall semester, who do they contact at the University as needed during the internship experience?

Students participating in an internship must have a department or college contact person available during the time they are completing their internship. Typically this is the instructor. This person should be identified on the contract.

Can a student receive financial aid while participating in a paid internship?

Yes, as long as the student is enrolled in academic credit toward their degree. The academic credit does not need to be related to the internship.

Can a student receive University (colleges, departments) scholarship funds for a paid or unpaid internship experience?

Yes, if there is enrollment in academic credit for the term funding is being provided.

Is there a way for a college to pay a student for an unpaid internship without enrollment in academic credit?

Yes, but it is not a best practice due to potential tax or financial aid related impacts. If the internship is for a non-University entity, payments must be made by setting the student up as a vendor. This is not an option for international students.

How does the U.S. Department of Education define Internship or Co-Op programs?

The Department of Education does not formally define what constitutes an internship. For a Co-Op the work portion of a cooperative education program is one in which the amount of work performed is equivalent to the academic workload of a full-time student ([34 CFR668.2\(6\)](#)).

Is my Department’s course an internship or co-op?

Whether a course accompanies internship or co-op experiences, is dependent on the factors in the table below.

Description	Internship	Co-op
Full-time professional experience during the academic year (Fall/Spring).	Sometimes	Yes
Associated with coursework in excess of the 1-2 credit experience-related course.	Sometimes	Rarely
Considered full-time for financial aid purposes when academic credit is present.*	No	Yes
Continued degree progress through full-time course enrollment.	Yes	No
Full-time professional experience during summer term.	Sometimes	Yes
Considered full-time for financial aid purposes when academic credit is present.*	No	Yes
Part-time professional experience during the academic year.	Yes	No
Associated with coursework in excess of the 1-2 credit experience-related course.	Sometimes	No

Continued degree progress through course enrollment.	Yes	No
Part-time professional experience during summer term.	Yes	No

*Internship credit not accompanied by a full-time course load is insufficient for financial aid eligibility.

Does this policy encompass student teaching?

No, student teaching practice is guided by the Minnesota Office of Teacher Education and the Minnesota Department of Education in conjunction with the College of Education and Human Development.

My department puts students on a Leave of Absence (LOA) when they are participating in a full-time internship. Is this good for students?

A benefit of using an LOA is that it does not use up terms of aid eligibility. Potential consequences include:

- A LOA may affect the need for consecutive enrollment requirements of individual aid programs.
- If longer than the allowed 6 month Grace Period, direct student loans enter repayment status from a deferred status.
- Students enrolled at least half time in the spring and following fall semester use the summer as a bridge and do not enter repayment and do not use up months of their Grace Period.
- No access to Student Service Fee Healthcare and other student benefits.
- International students on F-1 and J-1 visas may not take an LOA when participating in a full time internship or co-op.

How does a Co-op impact federal financial aid eligibility?

A Co-op calendar term uses federal financial aid eligibility. Students should be encouraged to talk with One Stop about their individual financial aid package as related to taking a Co-op and the potential of not maximizing available aid, in particular Minnesota State Grant.

How does this policy affect international students?

International students on F-1 visas are allowed to work off campus as long as they have received ISSS authorization, known as Curricular Practical Training (CPT), in advance. Enrollment in a course that requires work is a key criteria for ISSS's CPT authorization, so this policy aligns with F-1 work rules. Students who have an off campus internship offer must follow the [steps for applying for CPT](#) and consult with an ISSS advisor with questions.

Similarly, students on J-1 visas may be allowed to work off campus after they have been approved for Academic Training authorization.

Definitions

Internship

An internship experience is a short-term position that provides students with the opportunity to gain career-related professional experiences while pursuing an undergraduate degree.

Co-op

Co-ops are a structured way to combine academic knowledge with practical work experience and are often completed over two terms. A Co-op is an experience that is the financial aid equivalent of being a full-time student. It is an immersive experience that precludes a student taking concurrent courses during the academic term. Co-ops are specifically named in Department of Education regulations and therefore have unique financial aid eligibility.

Related Policies

- [Course Numbering](#)
- [Instructional Time per Course Credit](#)
- [Expected Student Academic Work per Credit](#)
- [Grading and Transcripts](#)