



GRAD CO-OP POLICIES 2021/2022

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1. PREFACE

A. GRADUATE CO-OP CYCLES

The graduate co-op cycle is formally six months, spanning the Summer and Fall terms. A three-month Summer option or other exceptions are considered as appeals. Co-op information, including assigned co-op advisor and co-op cycle, can be viewed through DrexelOne.

B. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with a documented disability. If a student believes they will need a reasonable accommodation to apply for a co-op position or to perform essential job functions, they must register with Drexel's Office of Disability Resources.

2. GRADUATE CO-OP ELIGIBILITY

A. Enrollment Requirements

Only students studying on-campus full-time in a participating MS program, and successfully striving to make academic progress of a 3.0 GPA (minimum needed to graduate) are eligible to register for or participate in the co-op concentration. Final academic decisions regarding co-op participation are evaluated by the student's Academic Advisor.

B. COOP 500 Requirement

All students must satisfactorily pass this required course before they can participate in any part of the co-op process. Please see *Grad Co-op Policy 5 – COOP 500 Course Policies* for more information.

C. Academic Progress

In order to be eligible for co-op, students must be making good academic progress as determined by their academic department. If a student is academically dismissed and reinstated, the academic department may not allow the student to participate in co-op.

D. Pre-Registration Session

The final step for a student to be eligible for the co-op job search process is to attend a pre-registration session with their co-op advisor. This is a requirement to pass the Co-op 500 course. During this meeting, students' eligibility and resumes will be reviewed. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the student's co-op advisor will allow him/her access to the SCDCOnline system to search for co-op jobs.

3. HOLD POLICIES AND DISMISSAL FROM UNIVERSITY

A. Holds Generally

If a student's records in Banner reflect an institutional hold, (i.e., health & immunization, academic, or judicial), utilization of the SCDCOnline system may be prohibited.

All holds must be resolved with the proper department before access to the system can be restored.

Unresolved holds placed on a student's account before or during co-op can result in removal from the graduate co-op concentration; this may include removal from a co-op position if one has already been obtained and registered.

It is each student's responsibility to be aware of any holds that have been placed on his/her account, in addition to the impact that each hold may have on participation in graduate co-op.

B. Career Blocks

Steinbright may also place a hold on students' accounts in cases where a student fails COOP 500 or fails to follow policies or procedures. This hold is called a "Career Block" and will prevent further use of the SCDCOnline system. It is the student's responsibility to contact his/her assigned co-op advisor and to

take the appropriate steps to have the hold resolved in a timely manner. A Career Block does not impact the ability of a student to register for courses or to access academic records.

C. Academic Dismissal and Reinstatement

If a student is academically dismissed from Drexel University prior to the start of a co-op term, the student's co-op may be removed.

(1.) If a student is academically dismissed and NOT reinstated, then the student's co-op employment registration, co-op cycle, and COOP 501 course registration are removed. If employed, Steinbright will notify the employer in writing that the student is no longer an active student at Drexel University. Students with F1 visas are not legally permitted to continue employment if they have been academically dismissed (See *Policy 4 -- Policies for International Students*).

4. POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A. Co-op Requirements for International Students

Students are permitted to participate in co-op while in the United States on an F1 visa, provided that their co-op experience is directly related to their major and is approved by their co-op advisor. When a co-op is secured and registered, students must meet with their co-op advisor to begin the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization paperwork. Work authorization, processed by International Students and Scholars Services (ISSS), is required before beginning the co-op work experience.

If students do not already possess a social security card and are going to work in a paid position, they must apply for a social security card with the Social Security Office. (Please note that some jobs also require social security cards for background checks conducted prior to a formal offer of employment.) A social security card can be obtained after a paid position is registered by both Steinbright and ISSS.

For any visa-related questions or concerns, students should contact ISSS directly at iss@drexel.edu.

Students with other visas or other exceptional circumstances must contact ISSS immediately. Eligibility to work needs to be established by ISSS prior to being assigned a co-op cycle and co-op advisor. Students with an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) need to ensure that the EAD is current and must present a copy of their current EAD to their co-op advisor.

Resident Aliens (green card holders) have no special work authorization requirements.

B. Consequences of Working without Authorization

Failure to obtain appropriate authorization before beginning employment can jeopardize students' visa status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Without proper work authorization, students will be "out of status" with the University, making their visas invalid. If this occurs, students must apply for reinstatement, which can take time, and as a result they may be required to leave the United States. If found to be "out of status", students are not permitted to work in any capacity and will be removed from the co-op concentration.

5. COOP 500 COURSE POLICIES

A. COOP 500 Overview

COOP 500 is a one-credit non-billable course. It is designed to prepare master's degree students enrolled in the co-op program to achieve success, personally and academically, in their cooperative education experience. Topics covered include career exploration, resume development, interview techniques, job search strategies, success in the workplace, and professionalism.

*Graduate students who have successfully completed Coop 101 are exempt from the course. Students in a co-op concentration are required to pass this class prior to beginning the co-op experience.

B. Scheduling of COOP 500

The COOP 500 course is automatically scheduled for co-op students at least three terms before their assigned co-op cycle. Changes to COOP 500 registration cannot be made without the prior approval of the students' academic advisor and the Steinbright Career Development Center. Students have ultimate responsibility for checking their schedules to ensure they know when and where their scheduled class will be held.

C. Withdrawing from COOP 500

Students may not withdraw from COOP 500 without compelling circumstances.

In order for COOP 500 to be dropped from a student's schedule, the student must complete a Change of Curriculum and Status form with their academic advisor to drop from the co-op concentration. All paperwork must be fully processed by the university such that the co-op concentration is removed by the withdrawal deadline. Communicating the intent to withdraw from COOP 500 and/or the co-op concentration verbally or via email is not sufficient, and students cannot withdraw from the class without the required paperwork making the change official being submitted and processed.

D. Failing COOP 500

When a student fails COOP 500, they jeopardize their ability to participate in the graduate co-op program.

E. Appeals to a COOP 500 Grade or Policy

Please refer to *Policy 13.B – Graduate Co-op Appeals Process*.

6. CO-OP JOB SEARCH POLICIES

A. SCDCOnline

SCDCOnline is a web-based system for the Steinbright Career Development Center to facilitate the co-op hiring process for both employers and students. This system permits students to develop and upload resumes, as well as search for co-op jobs. Students seeking co-op employment through the SCDCOnline system must adhere to all Graduate Co-op Policies. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in a Career Block and loss of access to SCDCOnline (See *Policy 3.B – Career Blocks*).

B. Application Policy

Before a student can apply to jobs through SCDCOnline, they must successfully complete the COOP 500 course with at least one resume and have that resume approved by their co-op advisor in a pre-registration meeting.

C. Interview Policy

Students should attend all interviews granted. Once granted an interview, students are responsible for scheduling an interview time with the employer. In the event that students are unable to attend an interview, they should notify the employer immediately. Students are not permitted to miss classes for co-op interviews. Students should schedule interviews accordingly.

D. Offer Acceptance Policy

Students are discouraged from negotiating salary with a co-op employer. Because the purpose of co-op is educational, any salary received from a co-op employer is an added benefit the student receives from participation in the program. Salary negotiation can sometimes lead to the withdrawal of an offer for employment.

Once students have accepted an offer from an employer, they may not renege on that agreement or accept other offers. Failure to observe this policy may include consequences such as co-op probation, removal of co-op credit for that work experience, issuance of a Career Block, and/or removal from the co-op concentration. These measures can affect the student's transcript.

E. Co-op Employment Not Guaranteed

The University cannot make any guarantee of employment. Therefore, students who do not secure a position through the SCDCOnline system must conduct a self-directed job search until a suitable co-op is secured. The employment process is competitive, and academic performance, skills, motivation, maturity, attitude, and employment potential may determine whether a student is offered a job. If a student is having difficulty securing a co-op position, their co-op advisor is available to assist them with their job search. If a student is unable to secure a co-op position by the start of their first term of co-op, the student will be removed from the co-op concentration (See *Policy 10.C – Co-op Reflected on Transcript*).

7. CO-OP JOB REGISTRATION POLICIES

A. Jobs Secured Through SCDCOnline System

If a student obtains their job through the SCDCOnline system, they must submit the following documents to be eligible to receive credit:

- Completed and signed Student Co-op Registration Agreement Form;
- Comprehensive offer letter, on employer letterhead, including salary information, expected hours per week, and start/end dates of employment;
- International students need to complete the CPT section of the Student Co-op Registration Form (see the International version on the scdc.edu website).

B. Jobs Secured Through Self-Directed Job Search

If a student obtains a job independently, they must submit the following documents to be eligible to receive credit:

- Completed and signed Student Co-op Registration Agreement Form;
- Detailed job description
- Comprehensive offer letter, on employer letterhead, including salary information, expected hours per week, and start/end dates of employment;
- Signed Employer Agreement Form from the student's employer;
- International students need to complete the CPT section of the Student Co-op Registration Form (see the International version on the scdc.edu website).

A blank Student Co-op Registration Agreement Form and Employer Agreement Form can be found on the Steinbright website.

C. Timeline

All documents listed in the sections above must be submitted prior to the start of employment. If all paperwork is not submitted by this deadline, the student may be removed from the graduate co-op program.

8. CO-OP POSITIONS

A. Paid Positions vs. Unpaid Positions

Typically, co-op is a paid, full-time work experience. However, this sometimes varies based on industry, job market, or other special circumstances.

Co-ops paid at a rate at, or above minimum wage are required to work full time (no fewer than 32 hours/week). Co-ops that are unpaid or are paid less than minimum wage are only required to work a minimum of 20 hours per week. Circumstances may arise that do not fall into either category listed above. If a situation warrants special consideration, students should contact their co-op advisor.

B. Co-op Must be Degree-Related

All co-op positions must be related to a student's degree or concentration. Students who locate a co-op position independently must have their co-op advisor review and approve the position, in advance, to ensure that it is degree-related. Decisions regarding co-op positions will take into account the long-term objectives of the student, the employer, and the University.

C. Commitment of Time

Students are expected to work full-time (at least 32 hours/week) for their co-op employers. If a student accepts an unpaid position, they are only expected to work 20 hours per week, though they can elect to work full-time in an unpaid capacity if they wish. Students must work the full six-month cycle and must follow the employer's work schedule. Students who plan to be absent from their co-op job for an extended period of time or who terminate their co-op employment prior to the end of the co-op term must receive advanced approval from Steinbright and from their co-op employer (See *Policy 11 – Changes in Co-op Duration*).

D. Health Insurance

All students are required to have health insurance throughout the academic year, including such time as while they are on co-op. As a result of different interpretations of the Affordable Care Act ("ObamaCare"), employers may offer students health insurance coverage as a part of their benefits of employment. It is a student's decision whether or not to enroll in an employer's health insurance plan. Further, it is a student's responsibility to understand any implications, financial or otherwise, of enrolling in said employer's health insurance plan. Students should direct questions regarding an employer's offer of health coverage to the employer and, where necessary, the policy holder of the student's current insurance policy.

9. STUDENT STATUS WHILE ON CO-OP

During a registered co-op cycle, students are full-time and eligible for continued financial aid and University services. In addition, students are required to maintain health insurance and follow all University Policies and the University Code of Conduct. Students will pay the full-time graduate activity fee each term on co-op but there is no cost associated with the Drexel Co-op Units earned while on co-op.

A. Classes While on Co-op

In an effort to better couple academics with a student's co-op experience, graduate students are encouraged to limit the number of classes they take while on co-op. Students can work directly with their academic advisors to register for classes while on co-op. Students in the graduate co-op program pay-per-credit to take classes while on co-op.

Students electing to take classes should ensure that the requested course does not interfere with their co-op assignment. Registration is further subject to course availability within established enrollment limits. No new course sections will be added to accommodate a student on co-op.

10. CO-OP CREDIT POLICIES

A. Co-op Concentration Requirements

In order to graduate with a co-op concentration, students must complete a total of 18 Drexel Co-op Units (DCU's). A total of 9 DCUs can be earned for each term of successful co-op employment. Students will pay the full-time graduate activity fee each term on co-op but there is no cost associated with the Drexel Co-op Units. Successful co-op employment for each term of a student's assigned co-op cycle will result in completion of this requirement. Successful co-op employment is co-op employment fulfilling all requirements and guidelines outlined within these policies.

B. Co-op Registration and Credit

In advance of a scheduled co-op term, the University registers students for COOP 501 based on their co-op concentration. As a result, students are considered full-time and are eligible for continued financial aid and University services during co-op terms. To be eligible to earn co-op credit, students must register their co-op employment with Steinbright (See *Policy 7 – Co-op Job Registration Policies*).

C. Co-op Reflected on Transcript

Graduate students enrolled in a co-op concentration will have 9 DCU's and the name of their employer reflected on their official University transcript for their co-op terms. Co-op credit is earned after successful completion of a co-op experience and completion of the corresponding Employment Summary and Planner (ES&P) (See *Policy 12.A – Finalizing Co-op Credits*).

The successful completion of all co-op requirements is necessary to graduate; however, co-op does not factor into cumulative GPA, nor do the credits factor into the total academic credits required for degree completion and graduation from Drexel University.

Key components to note regarding co-op credit as reflected on Drexel University transcripts:

- **DCU (Drexel Co-op Units)** – This notation indicates that a student has received credit; students receive 9 DCUs per three-month co-op term.
- **NF (Not Finalized)** – This notation is temporary and means that a student has registered a co-op experience that is currently ongoing. DCUs will be granted upon successful completion of the work experience and completion of the required ES&P.
- **NCU (No Co-op Units)** – This notation means that a student's co-op was terminated prior to the end of the co-op cycle, no co-op was registered for the indicated co-op term, or, if an experience was registered and completed, the ES&P is incomplete. In any of these instances, because the student failed to successfully complete their co-op experience, a failed work term is given.

11. CHANGES IN CO-OP DURATION

In order to be eligible to receive full co-op credit, a student must work for the entire assigned co-op period. There may be some cases where a student is unable to meet this requirement. Some of the most common instances are addressed below. In the event that the co-op time period needs to be adjusted, a student must contact their co-op advisor immediately to discuss the necessary steps to be eligible to receive co-op credit or to discuss withdrawing from the co-op concentration.

A. Layoff from Co-op

If a student is laid off from a co-op position, he/she will need to contact his/her co-op advisor immediately. Student situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students may be required to work with their co-op advisor to locate another co-op position for the remainder of their scheduled co-op cycle, to complete an assignment to earn co-op credit, or to consider withdrawing from the co-op concentration.

B. Termination of a Co-op Experience

In the event that a student is terminated from a co-op position, the student must contact their assigned co-op advisor immediately. The co-op advisor will investigate the situation with both the student and the employer. Once this process is complete, the student will be required to attend a probation meeting with their assigned co-op advisor and a member of the Steinbright leadership team (See *Policy 13.A – Co-op Probation*).

If, during this meeting, the student is placed on co-op probation, the terms of the probationary period will be outlined. The student will also receive email notification from Steinbright defining the terms of the probationary period and the conditions to which the student must adhere for resolution of the probation. If a student does not adhere to the terms of the probation, the student will receive a failed work term and No Co-op Units (NCU) will appear on the University transcript. If, as a result of the probation meeting, it is determined that probation is not appropriate, the student may be removed from the co-op concentration or may receive a failed work term and No Co-op Units (NCU) will appear on the University transcript.

If a student chooses to end their co-op employment early, without approval from Steinbright, a co-op probation meeting will also be necessary.

C. Military Service Obligations

Short term active duty, reserve training, or deployment due to an emergency situation or natural disaster may be approved for co-op credit on a case-by-case basis or may require removal of the student's co-op concentration.

D. Medical Leave of Absence

To initiate a Leave of Absence, a student must first meet with their academic advisor. Missed co-op terms may require the student to withdraw from the co-op concentration.

12. COMPLETING CO-OP

A. Finalizing Co-op Credits

Students will finalize their co-op credit during the last month of their co-op experience by completing the Employment Summary and Planner (ES&P) through the SCDCOnline system.

Successful completion of the ES&P results in a grade of Drexel Co-op Units (DCU's) for each term of co-op. The student must also attend a post co-op meeting with their assigned co-op advisor upon returning to campus.

Failure to complete the ES&P may result in a failed work term, reflected as No Co-op Units (NCU) on the student's transcript. Lack of required DCU's may impact degree requirements for graduation.

B. Failure of Co-op

Students can fail co-op for a variety of reasons. These reasons include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to register an approved co-op position,
- Failure to complete the ES&P to finalize co-op credit, or
- Termination of a co-op experience.

A failure is designated by "NCU" on the transcript, which stands for "No Co-op Units." (See *Policy 10 – Co-op Credit Policies*). Should a student fail co-op, he/she may need to withdraw from the co-op concentration in order to graduate.

C. Claiming Unemployment

Cooperative education is for a limited time only and will end automatically. Eligibility for unemployment compensation is governed by state law, and in most circumstances co-op students are not eligible for unemployment compensation at the end of their co-op experience. In the event that a student is terminated from a co-op position prior to its originally scheduled end date, eligibility for unemployment compensation, if any, will be determined by the specific facts of the termination and applicable state laws.

13. CO-OP PROBATION AND APPEALS

A. Co-op Probation

If a student does not adhere to the policies of Drexel University, Steinbright, and/or the co-op employer during the co-op process, that student may be required to attend a probation meeting during which the terms of co-op probation are determined.

Reasons for a probation meeting may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Termination from a co-op experience;
- Engaging in inappropriate behavior anytime during the co-op process;
- Failure to obtain approval for a co-op position;
- Failure to obtain proper work authorization;
- Violations of Steinbright policy; or
- Violations of University policy.

Co-op probation is designed to help students learn from their mistakes before graduating and to be better prepared for the professional workplace. Probation is tailored to the individual situation. If a student is placed on co-op probation, the terms of the probation may include a probation letter, denied access to SCDCOnline, additional assignments, removal from the co-op concentration, and/or a failed work term(s).

B. Graduate Co-op Appeals Process

Students can appeal for an exception to the standard Graduate Co-op Policies if there are significant extenuating circumstances (medical, academic, financial, etc.) sufficient to warrant review.

Appeals should be discussed with the student's assigned co-op advisor prior to submission and then submitted directly to the co-op advisor. The co-op advisor will then guide the student through the process to determine if an appeal is warranted. All submitted appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Co-op Appeals Committee.

Appeals should include a one-page, formal letter explaining the extenuating circumstances (medical, academic, financial, etc.) sufficient to warrant an exception to standard policies and must include the following information: name, student ID number, major, current co-op cycle, and reason for appeal.

Students should include appropriate supporting documentation, such as a plan of study, a letter of support from their academic department, etc., as applicable. The Appeals Committee meets as needed to review completed appeals and to make decisions accordingly. Students will be notified via email of all appeal decisions.