Cooperative Experiential Learning Program
Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the Cooperative Experiential Learning Program?**
  - This program supports Engineering and Computing students in applying knowledge from their program of study to real-world work experience with a company. By participating in the program, students are able to work full-time in rotational co-op positions and return to the same company for 2+ work semesters while in college.

- **How is a Co-Op different than an internship?**
  - Internships are shorter-term work experiences, and typically do not involve working multiple semesters with a company like a Co-Op position does. Co-Op experiences involve full-time work, and allow students to eventually function much like any other permanent employee in the organization.

- **Why should I consider a Co-Op?**
  - Co-Ops are a great way to build your resume and gain full-time work experience. Co-op students are able to gain progressively more responsibility over their work and projects during each semester working at their site. Students who complete co-ops often receive offers for full-time, permanent positions with the companies they work for and are very competitive when looking for jobs.

- **Are Co-Op positions paid?**
  - Yes. Co-op students are paid a competitive wage of over $22/hour on average. Many students also receive other benefits from their employers such as paid time off and relocation/ housing assistance.

- **What are the eligibility requirements to participate in the co-op program?**
  - The program requires that students a qualifying offer of co-op employment to start the enrollment process. Additionally, students need to have a minimum overall GPA of 2.8 or above. Students are also required to have 30+ hours of university-level course credit prior to starting their first rotation.

- **Can intended engineering and computing students enroll in the co-op program?**
  - Yes, intended students who meet the general eligibility requirements can participate in the program, even if they have not been fully admitted into their major via the High Demand Major process.

- **When should I start looking for and working in a co-op position?**
  - Students are generally eligible to start working in a co-op after they complete their first two semesters of university coursework (30+ credit hours). It is recommended that students interested in the Co-Op program begin seeking positions in their 2nd year of study. However, many begin to work in co-op roles during their 3rd year and beyond.

- **Will participating in the Co-Op program delay my graduation?**
  - Yes. In most cases, participation in the Co-Op program will delay graduation by at least 1 year. All situations are different and the impact of co-op on a student's graduation timeline depends on many factors such as when a student begins in their co-op role, rotation schedule, and course timing and availability. Your engineering academic advisor can provide guidance on your specific situation.

- **How many rotations will I need to work?**
  - Co-op students are expected to work at least 2 rotations with the same company. Most students work 3 rotations while enrolled in the program.

- **How are rotation schedules determined?**
  - The semesters in which students will be expected to work in a co-op rotation are determined by employer needs as well as student availability. The program does not require students to work on any particular rotation schedule- it is flexible. However, it is very common that employers will expect students to work an alternating rotation schedule where they alternate between work semesters and classes in Athens each semester. Students are highly encouraged to work at least one rotation during the fall or spring semesters.

- **Can I work multiple semesters back-to-back?**
  - Yes, it is possible for students to complete rotations in subsequent semesters back-to-back. It is not uncommon for students to work both a Spring and Summer rotation in a row, staying with their employer from January- July, for instance. In these cases, the program views each semester as a separate rotation. When considering back-to-back rotations, it is especially important for students to speak with their academic advisor and be sure to enroll in ENGR 3910 for each rotation.

Cooperative Experiential Learning Program
Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the co-op class? Why is it important to enroll?**
  - The co-op class, ENGR 3910, is the academic component of the co-op program. This class serves to keep students enrolled full-time while they are away from campus during work semesters. It is important to enroll in 3910 to track your co-op rotations, and to keep you at full-time student status while completing a co-op. Enrollment in ENGR 3910 is also required to apply co-op to any degree requirements and to use co-op to fulfill Experiential Learning.

- **Can I take other classes while completing a co-op?**
  - No, we encourage students to concentrate on work during the semesters they are on rotation, as their schedules will be very full with tasks related to their employment. Occasionally, a student who is on their 2nd or 3rd co-op rotation may be considered for an exception to this rule and allowed to take a single class while completing co-op. All requests for exceptions will need to be approved by the employer and the Office of Student Success.

- **Will I be charged tuition for ENGR 3910?**
  - No. ENGR 3910 is set up to be an unbillable and tuition-free class. Students enrolled only in ENGR 3910 should not be charged for the class, and should not have to pay university fees during the semester of their co-op rotations.

- **How will ENGR 3910 impact financial aid and the HOPE/Zell Miller scholarships?**
  - Co-Op is an unbillable class, which means it does not count against HOPE or Zell hours. Students enrolled only in ENGR 3910 are not eligible for financial aid or loans while on rotation. Financial aid is paused for rotation semesters and will resume when students return to traditional classes. Specific questions about financial aid should be directed to the Office of Student Financial Aid.

- **Will I be able to fulfill any degree requirements by completing a co-op?**
  - Successful completion of a co-op and the ENGR 3910 course meets the UGA Experiential Learning requirement for all Engineering and Computing majors. Select majors also allow a student to fulfill additional degree requirements via co-op. Students should speak with their academic advisor to determine whether ENGER3910 counts toward major-specific requirements.

- **Is it possible to participate in other experiential learning opportunities, such as study abroad, in addition to the Cooperative Experiential Learning Program?**
  - Yes. Students participating in co-op can also engage in other opportunities for experiential learning during the semesters they are not on rotation.

- **Is it required to work for specific employers or companies in order to be eligible for the co-op program?**
  - No. Students are not restricted to work only for specific employers. Students are able to work for any employers they are interested in, as long as the organization agrees to follow the structure and requirements of the Cooperative Experiential Learning Program. The Office of Student Success will determine whether each student's employment complies with program expectations.

- **What resources are available to help students secure co-op employment?**
  - There are numerous job search resources available for students through the UGA Career Center and the College of Engineering Office of Student Success. Students can access co-op job postings and announcements in Handshake and through weekly emails to the college listserv. Students are also eligible to receive individual assistance with their job search including resume reviews, practice interviews, etc. through appointments with their Career Consultant. The College of Engineering offers many opportunities to connect with co-op employers during university recruiting events such as the Engineering and Computer Science Career & Internship Fair, Employer of the Day, Engineering Expeditions, etc.

Office of Student Success
College of Engineering
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA