

## **60.20.00 Internships and Cooperative Education Field Experiences**

### **.01 Rationale**

The university provides an opportunity for qualified, degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students to enroll in credit-bearing substantive work assignments, either internships or co-ops, under the guidance of a faculty member.

### **.02 Objectives**

- A. Explore options within or outside the student's field of study (major-related or elective credit)
- B. Put theory into practice, combining academic and work assignments
- C. Gain skill and experience that build career development awareness

### **.03 Definitions**

An internship or co-op is a combination of academic study and substantive work experience, approved by a faculty member in advance of the beginning of the assignment, which follows the basic guidelines established by the university. Internships are decentralized, administered by academic departments that elect to offer them. Co-ops are centrally administered by the Career Center and include career advising, job-seeking skills development, the posting of substantive, often paid co-op positions, and a co-op seminar conducted by co-op staff. In both cases, faculty from the teaching units supervise the experience for credit.

### **.04 Eligibility**

- A. To enroll in credit-bearing field experience courses, students must be in good academic standing in their respective programs. The minimum GPA for undergraduate students is 2.0. The minimum GPA for graduate students is 3.0. Teaching units may designate higher minima.
- B. Undergraduate students enrolling in credit-bearing field experience must have completed 30 credit hours at the University, or, as a transfer student, at least one semester (12 credits). Graduate students must have completed one semester (9 credit hours) in their respective programs at American University. Teaching units may establish a higher minimum for credits earned before enrolling.

### **.05 Registration procedures**

- A. Registration for field experience credit will be during the regular registration period for a semester or any summer session. A student may add one of these courses until the end of the second week of classes in the spring semester or summer session and the third week of classes in the fall semester.
- B. Before processing registration for one of these courses, the student and the supervising faculty member must agree upon and document the credit value (1-6) of the field experience.

### **.06 Standards for credit for internship and co-op field experience**

- A. All field experience courses should have both an academic component and a work component. Evaluation of the field experience is the responsibility of the faculty member, who considers the evaluation of the work supervisor in determining the appropriate grade. Faculty should use the evaluation of the work supervisor as no more than 50% of the student grade, with greater emphasis on the academic component of the assignments whenever possible.
- B. Field experience courses may be taken for variable credit. With faculty and teaching unit approval, students may enroll for from 1 to 6 credits, depending on the nature of the academic component and the number of hours required for the work component. With special permission, co-op students may be able to enroll for 9 credits for a single co-op assignment.
- C. The recommended standards for academic credit may vary depending on the requirements of the academic component, but typical minimums for the field experience are: 8-10 hours per week for 1-2 credits, 15-16 hours per week for 3 credits and 20-24 hours per week for 6 credits. In each case students work throughout the term (12 weeks or more). Academic units may designate higher minima.

### **.07 Limits on field experience credit**

- A. The maximum field experience credit that undergraduates may count toward their degree requirements is 12 credit hours (of the 120 minimum required).
- B. The maximum field experience credit that graduate students may count toward their degree requirements is 6 credit hours.
- C. The maximum number of field experience credits that a student may count toward the academic major, minor, or graduate program is determined by each academic unit. This limit may be lower than the university's maximum but may not be higher.

**.08 Field experience credit earned abroad**

Undergraduate and graduate students who enroll for credit-bearing field experience courses abroad (either internship or co-op) will make contact with the international coordinator of the Cooperative Education Program in order to provide an additional contact point as well as pre-departure preparation and assistance with re-entry, as needed. This does not include students enrolled in American University's World Capitals Program, which manages its own internships abroad.