

## DEFINITIONS

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### Internships

The most commonly used umbrella term for all forms of experiential learning is internship. However, not all employers or universities use the terms internship with consistent meanings. An internship usually refers to a one-term work assignment and while it happens most often in the summer, it may occur at any time during the year. Internships can be full- or part-time, paid or unpaid, depending on the employer and the career field. These experiences must be major- or career-goal related defined by learning objectives, appropriately supervised by qualified staff, allow for student reflection, provide evaluation and feedback consistently from their supervisor, and include a minimum of 60 hours.

### Cooperative Education (“Co-op”)

Cooperative education is a structured method of combining classroom-based education with practical work experience. A cooperative education experience, commonly known as a “co-op”, provides academic credit for a structured job experience. Co-op experiences are either full-time (40 hours per week) alternating periods (semester, quarter) of work and school or part-time (20 hours per week) combining work and school during the same time period. Co-op experiences are paid, supervised by a professional in the same career field and are evaluated similarly to other full-time employees. Most co-ops require a student to complete multiple work terms (often a minimum of three), called rotations, with the same employer. The co-op student traditionally alternates every semester/quarter between full-time course load and full-time employment. Occasionally, students accept parallel co-ops, working 20 hours per week while also attending classes. Students that complete co-ops can expect to prolong their four-year degree program to five-years. Co-ops are open to all majors, yet completed primarily by students pursuing careers in manufacturing (engineering, logistics, packaging, etc.). Once extremely popular with business and engineering majors, many students have opted to pursue internships instead of co-ops to provide flexibility of opportunities and to graduate within four years and diversify their employment experience with multiple employers. These experiences are heavily regulated requiring extensive faculty oversight, site reviews, curated employer and job postings, and are extremely staff and cost intensive for both the institution and the employer.