

**VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION/INTERNSHIP
COURSE OF STUDY**

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

197 OR 297 – Co-op/Internship
Experiential Learning

Faculty Co-op Advisor
P.O. Box 828
Abingdon, VA 24212-0828
Telephone: Local (276) 739-2400
Toll Free Number (877) 207-6115 From (Bristol,
Bluff City, Blountville, Dickensonville, Lebanon,
Scott County and Smyth County) Exchanges

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Experiential Learning is an academic program for credit designed to provide work-based learning through a practical work experience. The primary purposes of Co-op and/or Internships are to integrate experiential learning with classroom instruction and to give inside views of the real world of work. Students work part-time in supervised and structured job settings which relate to their chosen programs of study and/or career goal(s). Students are paid by their employers (except for Internships at nonprofit entities). College credit is earned for the successful completion of the work experience and its related activities. Students may enroll as part of their curricular studies (as an elective/requirement) or as add-on credit. Associate Degree students are encouraged to participate for two (2) semesters. Credit: work hours ratio is 1:5. Variable credits (1-5) per semester. Prerequisite - see COURSE ELIGIBILITY below.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Opportunity to realistically test career objectives, clarify career goals, and provide academic motivation.
- Opportunity to develop inter-personal skills, professional work habits, self-reliance, and other general education goals (page 15).
- Opportunity to integrate classroom theory and workplace practice.
- Opportunity to earn college credit.
- Opportunity to earn an income (except for Internships).
- Opportunity to improve after-graduation employment by giving students valuable work experience and contact with potential employers.
- Opportunity to gain valuable job search skills such as career assessment, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

COURSE ELIGIBILITY

- Students must be enrolled in a curriculum plus complete and return an ‘Application for Cooperative Education/Internship and the Assumption of The Risk Form.’
- Students must meet the requirements to complete a work experience in his/her program of study (see the program requirements section of the [VHCC Catalog](#)) or have special permission from their Faculty Co-op Advisor.
- Students must have at least a 2.0 curriculum GPA average and be employed or employable.
- Students must obtain approval from the Faculty Co-op Advisor of his/her work site for the purpose of earning academic credit.

COURSE CONTENT

- Students must complete required semester activities per the Cooperative Education/Internship Syllabus.
- Students must be employed at a work site which relates to his/her course of study or career goals that is approved by their Faculty Co-op Advisor.
- Students must develop approved Measurable Learning Objectives.
- Students must work the following required hours per semester: 75 hours for 1 credit, 150 hours for 2 credits, 225 hours for 3 credits, 300 hours for 4 credits, or 375 hours for 5 credits.
- Students must be supervised and evaluated by the Job Supervisor (the Mentor) and assigned a grade by their Faculty Co-op Advisor.
- Students must be paid at least the minimum wage or the prevailing wage (except for Internships).
- Students must submit a completed Experiential Learning Workbook to their Faculty Co-op Advisor.

COURSE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Students must be familiar with and adhere to all the policies, activities, and procedures set forth within this Experiential Learning Workbook.

METHOD OF EVALUATION/GRADE CRITERIA

At the end of the academic semester a grade of A, B, C, D, F, or I will be assigned for the credits earned. Work experience grades are determined by the Faculty Co-op Advisor after a review of the student's Experiential Learning Workbook and contacts with the student and his/her Job Supervisor. The following grading system holds true for experiential learning: A = Excellent Work Experience; B = Above Average Work Experience; C= Average Work Experience; D = Below Average Work Experience; F = Failing Work Experience; and I = Incomplete Work Experience.

BENEFITS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

To gain the maximum benefits from a work experience, students should learn as much about their position and employer as possible. The overall work experience should help reinforce the student's career choice and provide motivation to complete his/her program of study. The experiences of working in an authority/responsibility relationship and as a member of a group or team seeking common goals allow students to have an "insider view" of the real work world. Students, who complete a successful work experience, enhance their marketability for the future with the development of 'foundation skills' (personal qualities, basic skills, and thinking skills), 'workplace competencies' (resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology), and other general education skills. In summary, work-based learning combined with classroom theory serves to enhance the development and professional preparation of Co-op/Internship students.