

Draft Policy: Technical Elective Credit for Co-Op & Internship Students

Background

Students taking a co-op/internship assignment may be eligible for receiving technical elective credit as part of their BSEE program. This credit is awarded for the student completing a project and submitting deliverables as specified with the agreement of a NMSU ECE faculty mentor. Students are required to take two technical electives and the co-op/internship project may be used for one and only one of these technical elective credits. It may not be used to fulfill any other elective category in the BSEE program.

The student wishing to receive credit for the co-op/internship phase is required to have a faculty mentor to work with the student to validate that the proposed research is worth the technical elective credit and will evaluate the student's work for the class credit. The student will also need to have a mentor at the co-op/internship site to oversee the work. The proposed project must be approved by the ECE Undergraduate Studies Committee as described below.

Definitions

An *internship* is a formal off-campus assignment (including working at PSL while not taking regular classes but not including general work-study types of assignments) lasting either a summer or a semester; nominally at least 12 weeks but no more than 18 weeks.

A *co-op* is an off-campus assignment (including working at PSL while not taking regular classes but not including general work-study types of assignments) lasting a summer and a semester; nominally over six months or more than 20 weeks.

Deliverables

Each student must work with the faculty and industry mentors to agree upon a set of deliverables to document the project and form the basis for a grade. It is up to the faculty mentor to ensure that the project is worth 3 credit hours and it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the deliverables are met in the agreed-upon time frame. Generally, the deliverable will include a research report (the normal departmental standard format should be used for the report) as a minimum requirement. Having the student prepare a paper for a conference student paper entry is also a reasonable deliverable in addition to the report. Hardware/software prototypes, etc. can be required as deliverables if they are part of the agreement.

Curriculum Credit

Students participating in this program are eligible for 3 credit hours of EE 400. It is suggested that the student take 2 credit hours during the co-op/internship phase and 1 credit hour upon return. The sum of the two EE 400 segments would be combined to form the Technical Elective class. Students may only receive credit for one Technical Elective class for participating in this program. The credit will only be awarded upon successful completion of the deliverables and receiving a passing evaluation by the faculty mentor.

Review and Evaluation

The faculty mentor is to evaluate the deliverables for completeness and technical content. This evaluation is to be completed before the mid-semester point of the next regular academic semester following the co-op/internship phase. The faculty mentor will assign a grade for the deliverables. A grade of “C” or better is required to receive technical elective credit as part of the BSEE program.

Proposal

Each student wishing to participate must submit a proposal to the Undergraduate Studies Committee. This proposal must be approved in order to receive credit. If the student is requesting credit for an internship assignment, then the proposal must be approved at least one month prior to beginning the internship phase. Any requested clarifications or changes to the proposal must be resolved prior to starting the internship phase.

If the student is requesting credit for a co-op assignment, then the preferred method is still to have the proposal approved at least one month prior to beginning the co-op phase. We recognize that this is not always the case and the Undergraduate Studies Committee will entertain proposals submitted no later than one month after the start of the co-op phase. Any requested clarifications or changes to the proposal must be resolved prior to the one-month date after the start of the co-op phase.

The proposal is to contain the following items at a minimum:

1. Signature page with the student’s signature, the industry mentor’s signature, the faculty mentor’s signature, and space for the department head to sign after Undergraduate Studies Committee approval is given.
2. A description of the project to be performed in sufficient detail to assess if this project can be used for technical elective credit. This description should not normally exceed two pages.
3. A description of which core and electives are left to be taken as part of the student’s program of study. The student will need to address how he/she has sufficient background knowledge to work on the project at the required level.
4. A description of the deliverables for the project. The description should include due dates for the deliverables.
5. A description of how the deliverables will be evaluated by the faculty mentor.

Timetable

The process for the program is as follows:

- Student proposes co-op/internship phase research to both an industry and faculty mentor and obtains the agreement of both the faculty and industry mentor to work with the student on the specified project.
- Student prepares write-up of research objectives and deliverables for faculty and industry mentors’ approval.
- Student submits faculty and industry-approved proposal to Undergraduate Studies Committee for departmental approval. If this is for an internship, the approval must be completed before the start of the internship. If this is for a co-op, the

- approval must be secured no later than one month after the start of the co-op phase.
- Student registers for 2 credit hours of EE 400 to be taken during the co-op/internship phase.
 - Student performs project as part of the co-op/internship phase with the assistance of the industry mentor. It is suggested that the student keep in contact with the faculty mentor during the co-op/internship phase to help ensure that the project is keeping on track.
 - Student registers for 1 credit hour of EE 400 to be taken upon return from the co-op/internship phase.
 - Student returns from the co-op/internship phase and presents the deliverables to the faculty mentor as agreed to.
 - The faculty mentor evaluates the deliverables and assigns a class grade.
 - The Undergraduate Studies Committee reviews the project results and the assigned grade. If acceptable, the Technical Elective credit is awarded as part of the student's program.