CO-OP QUICK START GUIDE
Architecture

About Co-op
Cooperative Education, or co-op, gives you the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience before you graduate! It will also help you further define your career path and fully realize the value of what you are learning in the classroom. Cooperative education at RIT is paid employment directly related to your field of study. It can be full-time or part-time as long as it meets the minimum requirement of 350 hours. Students must be in **good academic standing** to be eligible to participate in RIT's co-op program.

When Do Students Go Out On Co-op?
You are eligible for co-op after you have completed one year of coursework in your academic program. Co-op generally occurs during the summer but can occur on a part-time basis while you are taking courses during the academic year.

Part-Time Hour Commitment
A part-time co-op should be an 8-12 hour per week commitment while you are taking courses. It is recommended that you not work more than 12 hours per week while carrying a course load of no more than 15 credit hours. It may take more than one semester to complete the 350 hour requirement.

Is Co-op Required?
Yes, co-op is a required part of the degree program but it may be waived if a student has prior work experience. Work with the architecture co-op coordinator directly on waiver questions.

Can Co-op Be Done in a Current Place of Employment?
Yes, work with the architecture co-op coordinator directly in this situation.

In What Industries Can a Co-op Be Completed?
A co-op can be completed in any work environment related to the building industry (development, design, or construction) - the sector of national economy engaged in preparation of land and construction, alteration, and repair of buildings, structures, and other real property.

Getting Ready for the Job Search
To prepare for the co-op job search process, you should attend the co-op meeting held by the architecture program to learn how to develop the tools (e.g. resume, cover letter, and portfolio) and the job search strategies (application and interview techniques) to undertake your search. You will also learn how to use RIT Career Connect, the online job posting database available through the student page of our site. The Architecture meeting is offered to students late in the fall and again early in the spring semester.

How Your Career Services Coordinator Helps
A career services coordinator is assigned to the architecture program to assist students with the job search process. You can meet with your individual coordinator for personalized service as well as attend regularly offered seminars and workshops. Career services coordinators work closely with your academic department and foster relationships with employers and develop employment opportunities. Your Career Services Coordinator is Maureen Thompson, mpaoce@rit.edu, 585-475-5081.

When to Begin the Job Search
It's never too early to begin your co-op job search! For full-time co-op jobs, start in the fall semester before you are scheduled for co-op and prepare to submit your resume to employers who require early resume submission. The semester before you co-op will be busy with resume submissions, interviews and related job search activities. If you plan to complete co-op on a part-time basis, you can start your search at any time.

Create A Profile on RIT Career Connect and Upload Your Resume
RIT Career Connect is the web-based system used by the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education and selected employers to post both co-op and full-time job opportunities. Login at https://rit-csm.symplicity.com/students/ using your RIT computer account and password. Complete your profile and store your resume in the system.

Learning About and Applying to Job Opportunities
Using RIT Career Connect, you can view job descriptions and apply to all positions for which you are qualified. Some employers will direct you to submit your resume through the company web site – be sure to follow these directions carefully.

Broadening Your Job Search
The best job search is a comprehensive one. RIT Career Connect is **only one** source of co-op job openings. Look for co-op jobs utilizing other sources: your network of friends, professors, past employers, coaches, clubs and professional associations, and various websites. Apply for positions found on your own and keep a record of your job applications. Two additional sources of job listings are your local AIA Chapter website, such as the Rochester Chapter of the American Institute of Architects: www.aiaroc.org and usajobs.com.

Prepare for Interviews
Brush up on interviewing skills and attend mock interview programs to prepare for the real thing. For sample interview questions, typical interview formats and interviewing tips, please see our interviewing page: www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/interviewing. Make sure you have appropriate interview attire and arrive for the interview 15 minutes before scheduled time. Research employers and practice, practice, practice. Remember to send employers a brief "thank you" note after the interview and follow up with employers to check on the status of your application.

Accepting a Job Offer
It is recommended that you get verbal approval from the Department of Architecture Co-op Coordinator for a job before you start discussing job offers with a potential employer. Once you accept a co-op job offer, verbally or in writing, you are expected to honor this commitment. **You must not back out**, or renege on the job, to work for another employer! Make sure you confirm your start and end dates, work hours and other work site expectations with your employer prior to starting your job.

Co-op employers expect RIT and its students to operate according to accepted business ethics and standards. Further, RIT expects your behavior at all times, whether on or off campus, to be in accordance with the standards articulated in the RIT Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook: www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/rr.php and the Student Agreement Policy (found in Career Connect > My Account > Privacy.

Reporting Your Co-op Job and Registering for Co-op
To ensure that you will receive the appropriate co-op credit for each term you will be on co-op be sure to:

1. Get approval from the co-op coordinator for your co-op job by submitting a Co-op Approval Form with the offer letter attached to it.

2. Report your co-op placement information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education using www.rit.edu/ReportCo-op.

3. Register on SIS: Contact your academic department to be registered for: ARCH-699 Co-op Architecture.

Your Co-op Salary and Income Tax Information

Your employer determines your compensation level. Salary rates are based on a number of variables, including your academic major, year level, prior work experiences and established company policies. There may be some room for negotiation based on circumstances. Check our website for the latest co-op salary data listed by academic program: www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/salary.

According to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), salaries/wages paid to co-op students **are fully subject** to applicable federal and state income taxes.

1099s and W-2s: Breaking Down the Difference

Simply put, 1099s and W-2s are two separate tax forms for two different types of workers. If you're an independent contractor, you get a 1099 form. If you're an employee, you receive a W-2.

As a W-2 employee, payroll taxes are automatically deducted from your paycheck and then paid to the government through your employer. If you're a contractor, you are responsible for calculating your own payroll taxes and then submitting the sum to the government on a quarterly basis.

Source: https://www.learnvest.com/knowledge-center/the-difference-between-a-1099-and-a-w-2/

Receiving Credit

To receive a "Satisfactory" ("S") grade for co-op on your transcript, the following evaluation documents must be completed and approved by your academic department for each academic term that you are on co-op. A double block requires a separate employer evaluation and student work report for each term.

> **1. Employer Evaluation of your performance.** Career Services emails your supervisor a link and directions to complete an employer evaluation near the end of each term you are on co-op. You must receive a minimum 3/5 for "overall performance."
>
> **2. Student Work Report.** Students must submit a work report on their experience for their academic department to review. The work report is emailed to you toward the end of each term you are on co-op. You can also access a record of your co-op history, employer evaluations and work reports, log in through the "Student Work Report" link on our Students Co-op webpage.

International Students

> **1.** Register for co-op or internship with their academic department in the SIS system.
>
> **2.** Report their employment information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education through the student page www.rit.edu/ReportCo-op.
>
> **3.** Additional permission to participate in curricular practical training must be granted by an ISS advisor prior to the employment start date. Students must:

Submit the Online CPT Request Form along with a copy of their job offer letter and a screen shot of their registration in SIS. The registration must be for the term(s) in which you are requesting Curricular Practical Training.

When this information is received an ISS advisor will create a new SEVIS I-20 with CPT Authorization on it. You will receive an email when the new I-20 is available to be picked up in International Student Services.

How Financial Aid Works While You Are on Co-op

While you are enrolled for a co-op assignment, you are not charged RIT tuition for the semester. Therefore, with the exception of the Federal Pell Grant, you are not eligible to receive financial aid for the co-op semester. If you are eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant for your co-op semester, this grant will credit to your student account after the drop/add period for the semester and after you register your co-op on the Registrars' system and report your co-op on Handshake. Financial aid includes federal and private alternative loans as well as grants and scholarships.

Your co-op earnings will not negatively impact your eligibility for federal student aid in the subsequent year. You are asked on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to report earnings from a co-op. The reported co-op earnings will automatically be excluded from your adjusted gross income when calculating your expected family contribution (EFC). If you have any questions regarding your co-op earnings and financial aid, you should contact your financial aid counselor at ritaid@rit.edu.

Work Abroad

If you are working outside of the United States and are not returning to your home country, you are required to meet with Maria Richart to make sure you sign all the correct paperwork before leaving the US.

Meetings can be arranged by calling 475-2301 or email maria.richart@rit.edu.

Concerns on Co-op

Dealing with stressful and uncomfortable situations can be part of the workplace learning experience. As with every other aspect of experiential learning, RIT and your career services coordinator are here to support and guide you as necessary. If you encounter a concern, we encourage you to contact your career services coordinator for advice or assistance in resolving the matter. Examples of workplace issues that we can assist with range from coaching you on how to talk with supervisors regarding your work-related concerns, how to address conflicts on your team as well as discrimination and harassment complaints.

Personalized Advisement

Log in to Career Connect or call 585-475-2301 to make an appointment with your career services coordinator who can assist you one-on-one with any aspect of your job search and related activities.

Career Services Hours

Monday – Friday | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Drop-in Advising

Have a quick question about your job search or want your resume reviewed without making an appointment? Attend drop-ins virtually or in person at Bausch & Lomb Center to meet with a career services coordinator.

Monday , Tuesday, and Thursday | 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday and Friday | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education

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585-475-2301
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rit.edu/careerservices