

## **COOPERATIVE EDUCATION POLICY**

Cooperative Education “Co-ops” are full-time, paid positions lasting one semester or summer term. (Other experiences such as entrepreneurial experiences, summer Military Leadership Training, and faculty sponsored research, may be used to satisfy the co-op requirement. Academic advisors can work with students on options.)

A Saunders College undergraduate student must have a co-op experience based on the policies outlined below:

- a. One semester or summer term of full-time employment (35-to-40 hours a week for 12 weeks); OR
- b. Two semesters or summer terms of part-time employment (15-to-20 hours a week for a total of 24 weeks)

Students must notify their academic advisor of their intention to enroll in a co-op for the term. This will allow students to work with their advisor to plan for the timely completion of their coursework and degree as not all courses are offered each term.

Students on a visa must have completed two full time semesters (not including summer) of course work before they are eligible for a co-op.

Students must obtain approval for their co-op and enroll in the co-op by the end of add/drop week for that term (first 7 calendar days excluding Sundays and holidays). Students may not withdraw from a class during the term in order to start a late co-op. Co-ops must start and finish in the term in which they are enrolled.

No academic credit is granted for the co-op, but formal recording of the co-op is made on the student’s transcript indicating a grade of “S” or “F”.

Students cannot take more than 6 semester credits of academic coursework during any term he or she is registered for a full-time co-op.

Students cannot take more than 12 semester credits of academic coursework during any term he or she is registered for a part-time co-op.

A co-op registration form must be completed online by the student and approved before the co-op is started.

Within the last two weeks of the term in which the co-op is completed, the student must submit a co-op work report.

## **OBJECTIVES OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION**

- To expose students to the work environment.
- To give students the opportunity to assess career opportunities in the industry.
- To assist students in planning their remaining curriculum in order to achieve their career goals and objectives.
- To develop students' ability to analyze and integrate the academic cognitive knowledge in their major field of study with the experience gained from the co-op employment.

## **UNDERGRADUATE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION POLICY**

- All Saunders College undergraduate students are required to complete their cooperative educational experience after their sophomore year but prior to their final academic term. Saunders will not award its degree until the co-op has been completed to the satisfaction of the faculty.
- A co-op experience must be in a work setting approved for the student's major and directly related to that major.
- Some students may choose to co-op more than the required one term of co-op. Extra co-ops will not be permitted if they delay on-time graduation.
- Students will complete their co-op requirements prior to their last term.
- Students will successfully complete SCBI 35 Careers in Business or ACCT 305 Accounting Profession course prior to the start of their co-op.
- An exception to the co-op policy must be approved by the assistant dean of student services.

## **UNDERGRADUATE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY**

- To be eligible for co-op, a the student must:
  - Be in good academic standing (i.e., not be on academic probation or suspended).
  - Have an overall GPA of 2.0 or higher
  - Complete SCBI 35 Careers in Business or ACCT 305 Accounting Profession.
  - Have at least one academic term remaining in their program.
- International students with an F or J visa must have completed at least two consecutive terms of full-time study at RIT.

## **GRADUATE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION POLICY**

- Co-ops are optional for Saunders College MBA and MS students. However, MBA and MS students without substantial job experience may want to complete a co-op.
- Any MS student who wishes to complete a co-op must understand that courses required for graduation may only be offered during certain terms. It is therefore important for any MS student to discuss program completion steps with an advisor prior to departing on a co-op. Co-ops are encouraged, as long as students work with their advisor to ensure completion of their program. Students with a visa must adhere to CPT policies.
- An exception to the co-op policy must be approved by the assistant dean of student services.

## **GRADUATE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY**

- To be eligible for co-op, a the student must:
  - Be in good academic standing (i.e., not be on academic probation or suspended).
  - Have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
  - Have successfully completed at least six Saunders College graduate-level courses.
  - Have at least one academic term remaining in their program.
- Students must meet with their academic advisor and discuss the policies and procedures around the co-op and program completion prior to accepting and enrolling in the co-op. International students with an F or J visa must have completed at least two consecutive terms of full-time study at RIT not including a summer term.

## **CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) and OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) FOR STUDENTS WITH F OR J VISA:**

1. Curricular Practical Training (CPT):
  - a. One year per degree level, i.e., BS, master's PhD;
  - b. Cannot exceed 364 days or the student may forfeit OPT;
  - c. Can do part-time up to 20 hours per week, full-time is more than 30 hours per week;
  - d. The work must relate to the academic program; students must be making normal progress through the degree.

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- e. Optional Practical Training (OPT):
  - i. Eligible for one year through all degree programs;
  - ii. Eligible for an additional two years for STEM programs both bachelor's and master's level ("STEM extension");
  - iii. Saunders does not currently have any STEM undergraduate degrees, but a student doing a double major may qualify if one of the undergrad majors is a stem program.
- f. Students on a visa may only be less than full time for their final term.

## **CO-OP RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Students:**

- Shall get approval for the co-op prior to accepting an offer from the employer.
- Shall register the co-op using the link on the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education website.
- Shall complete, in preparation for and prior to the co-op, workshops offered by the Co-op Office.
- Shall prepare a suitable resume.
- Shall think about the real suitability of a particular position for his/her own objectives.
- Shall prepare for and be on-time for interviews.
- Shall relate the experience they are gaining to their course work.
- Shall evaluate the career potential of the company and professional discipline in which the co-op is located.
- Shall write and submit the co-op report.

Credit for the co-op experience is based upon:

- Satisfactory completion of the co-op.
- Timely and satisfactory completion of the required co-op report. (NOTE: Students receiving federal financial aid must receive a grade for the co-op within 10 days of the end of the term.)
- Receipt by the college of the employer's performance evaluations rating student performance "satisfactory" or better.
- An evaluation of the experience by the student.

### **Faculty Advisors:**

- Should, when asked or as the opportunity presents itself, advise students regarding relevant career fields. Have the responsibility to counsel co-op students regarding a relevant career field or professional discipline question. This is an advising or counseling role, not a consulting role.
- Should provide, when possible, "contacts" for co-op development, to the Co-op Office.

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- Will review and approve co-op reports.

#### **Student Services Department:**

- This unit of the college will serve as the administrative bridge between faculty, students and the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education, and will work with these groups to develop new co-op placements.
- Student Services staff will coordinate and process all paperwork necessary for co-ops and co-op waivers.

#### **Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education:**

- Shall work with Saunders College and employers to develop co-op positions.
- Shall teach careers in business, provide workshops and counseling to prepare students for the non-academic aspects of co-op and assignments.
- Shall help the college audit, on a continuing but selective basis, the suitability of active co-op positions.

#### **Co-op Employers:**

- Shall provide accurate, reasonably complete descriptions of co-op job positions and expectations.
- Shall provide the position and experience “as advertised.”
- Shall help students achieve co-op objectives with respect to integrating academic and work experience and relating to career opportunities.
- Shall maintain records of student performance sufficient to enable a sound evaluation at the end of the co-op.
- Shall notify the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education immediately of any questions or problems that arise during co-op, for which college participation would be appropriate.
- Are responsible for providing a written evaluation of co-op student performance to the college within 10 days of the end of the co-op using the form provided by the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education.

#### **CO-OP EVALUATION GUIDELINES**

The college believes that exposure to the work environment will help students assess their career objectives, enhance the development of their academic skills and develop attitudes necessary for success in a chosen profession.

The college utilizes the following evaluation procedures:

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- A formal written report by the student to be completed at the end of the academic term in which the student is doing their co-op. The report will be evaluated by the co-op area liaison. The liaison will also review the employer-provided evaluation and the student-provided evaluation of the experience.
- An evaluation of the student's performance by the co-op employer. This evaluation is sent by the employer directly to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education before the last week of the co-op term.
- An evaluation of the experience by the student.

#### **CO-OP REPORT GUIDELINES**

Co-op reports must be submitted online by going to the Office Career Services and Cooperative Education website.

<https://www.rit.edu/careerservices/students/co-op>

#### **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS TRANSFERAL OF CO-OP**

A student may request an exemption from co-op based on previous co-ops completed in another major.

If a student is changing majors within Saunders College, any completed co-ops will be counted toward the requirement for graduation.

If a student is entering Saunders College from another college within RIT, a business co-op may be required. Once accepted into the college, the student may petition for exemption from the co-op requirement by submitting documentation of the experience.

#### **UNDERGRADUATE WAIVER OF CO-OP**

In certain situations, it may be appropriate for the co-op experience to be waived from the student's degree requirements. This may occur when the student shows evidence of having met the objectives of co-op through prior experience(s). Review of these requests is on an individual basis. Waivers can only be for work completed while the student was enrolled at RIT.

Waivers must be submitted before the student's final term.

## **UNDERGRADUATE WAIVER CRITERIA**

The student's formal request should be reviewed to determine whether or not the work experience described meets the objectives of the co-op work requirements. These objectives are as follows:

- Exposure to work environment.
- Assessment of career opportunities in a discipline and/or industry.
- Assistance in planning their own curriculum to achieve career objectives.
- Development of the ability to analyze and integrate academic knowledge in a major field with work experience or when the experience is complementary to the student's field of study or career interests.

Achievement of these objectives via prior experience may be presumed to exist if a person has two or more years (equivalent) of responsible work experience in the military. Summer training camp for R.O.T.C. students may also be used to waive one summer of co-op.

Part-time matriculated students, who are currently working full time and have been for at least two years, can request a waiver of the co-op requirement.

Work experience must have been completed after the student begins college. High School work experience will not be used towards a co-op waiver.

## **UNDERGRADUATE WAIVER PROCEDURE**

Students will submit a co-op waiver form, resume, and co-op report to the assistant dean of student services. Once the paperwork is received and the job is verified, the waiver request will be forwarded to the department chair for approval. If the waiver is approved, Student Services will submit the waiver paperwork to the Office of the Registrar. If the waiver is denied, the assistant dean of student services will notify the student of the decision.

## **UNDERGRADUATE CO-OP WAIVER WORK REPORT GUIDELINES**

The report should be organized utilizing the following subheadings. It should be a well-developed narrative report rather than a listing. The following should serve as guidelines for organizing the paper.

### **I. Introduction**

- A. Name of organization
- B. Description of the ownership (e.g., single proprietorship, division of corporation, etc.)

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### **II. Nature of the Business**

Describe the core business activities.

### **III. Customer/Competitor Information**

- A. Identify major customers.
- B. What approaches are used in attracting and retaining the customer or end user?
- C. Identify major competitors and evaluate how the organization is doing relative to them (e.g., revenue, market share, etc.)

### **IV. Organizational Structure and Management**

- A. What is your organization's relationship to any ownership group (e.g., a subsidiary)?–
- B. Describe your position and that of your immediate supervisor (include detailed description of your job responsibilities).
- C. How would you describe your relationship with your immediate supervisor?
- D. How would you describe employee morale within your division?

### **V. Integration of Course Work (It is critical that you develop this section in detail).**

- A. What courses taken prior to your co-op experience were the most helpful to you in your position and why?
- B. Was there a course or courses that could have better prepared you for your co-op? Please discuss.
- C. What skills or knowledge do you want to acquire before your next work experience? Why are these skills and knowledge important to you?

### **VI. Your Suggestions**

What creative ideas or suggestions do you have for this organization (e.g., any ideas for a better organizational structure to facilitate better flow of communication or reduce conflict)?

### **VII. Summary**

How did this experience contribute to your career exploration/plans?

Your co-op work report should be short-to-moderate length (minimum of 5 pages, maximum of 10 pages).



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### **ACCEPTANCE OF INTERNSHIPS (UNPAID CO-OPS), INTERNATIONAL CO-OPS, UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CO-OPS, FOR CO-OP CREDIT**

Desirably, co-op credit should be given only for paid positions. However, there may be situations in which the nature and length of an internship opportunity may be equivalent to the experience obtained in a paid co-op position. In such cases, as with regular co-op positions, pre-authorization that a position is acceptable for co-op credit is provided by the co-op area liaison. Other qualifying conditions for achievement of co-op credit for an internship are identical to those of a regular co-op.

Students doing research with an approved RIT faculty member may use this experience towards their experiential education requirement. The position does not need to be paid, but the work hours should follow co-op requirements.

Students may use pre-approved work through The Simone Center, towards their co-op requirement. Pre-approved research may also be used towards a co-op requirement.

*(Source: Administrative Council Meeting Minutes, April 21, 2009)  
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