RIT | Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education

Experiential Learning Options - College of Art and Design

Experiential education has been a part of RIT's tradition of career-focused education. It gives students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real-world experiences apart from their academic environment. This valuable experience builds on their educational foundation, at the same time, confirming and clarifying career goals. In the College of Art and Design there are several options for experiential education. Cooperative Education (co-op) and Internships are the most common.

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What is a Co-op?

Co-op or cooperative education is typically full-time, paid employment directly related to a student's major, one or two consecutive semesters/terms. (Fall semester, spring semester, or summer term). Start and end dates must coincide with RIT's recommended co-op work schedule. A co-op is a type of experiential education that allows students to gain valuable experience that helps clarify career goals, hone skills, and at the same time earn a salary. A co-op student's level of work responsibilities often are equal to an entry level employee's work responsibilities. Students register for co-op just like they would a course and it will appear on their transcript with a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade. Students are not charged tuition for co-op.

Who Can Co-op In the College of Art and Design?

BS	Photographic Sciences -- mandatory
BFA	All majors -- optional co-op
MFA	All majors (except Photography and Related Media) – optional co-op
MS	All majors (except Integrative Designs, Media Arts and Technology) -- optional co-op

Eligibility

Undergraduate Students must be in good academic standing with a minimum of a 2.0 GPA and have completed their sophomore year. Students are not eligible for co-op after they have completed all their degree requirements.

Graduate must be in good academic standing with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and have completed one academic year. Students are not eligible for co-op *after* they have completed all their degree requirements.

Total work blocks of co-op <u>should not exceed 2 semesters/terms</u>. Any exceptions, for special circumstances, need departmental approval.

What is an Internship?

An internship course exposes students to the professional environment through outside job opportunities with an acceptable organization/agency/company in their field. Students will work under the guidance of a manager (ex.: artist, art director, creative director, senior graphic designer, product development manager, or marketing communications manager) and perform work that is educational and meaningful for their short-term academic goals as well as their long-range career preparation.

Documentation of the experience is required and a final review is obtained from the employer. Students must obtain pre-approval from their program director by completing the Internship Approval Form for Grad and Undergrad. Upon completion of the internship, the appointed program director will request deliverables for final evaluation and grade. Credits earned will be determined by course substitution selected by program director. You can register for the internship class one time.

Co-op vs. Internship – What is the Difference?

From an employer's point of view there often is no difference, but it is often important for an employer that the experience is tied to a student's academic record. As long as a job meets the definition of co-op or internship at RIT it does not matter what the employer labels the position.

Academic credit (which incurs tuition charges) is the main difference between co-op and internship. Based on a student's circumstances, if they want academic credit, then they may choose to register the experience as an internship class. Note: full tuition charges will be incurred if the internship takes place during the summer term. If a student does not need academic credit, it is usually wise to choose to register for co-op, which is tuition-free. Both will appear on a student's transcript.

Internships for credit require approval from their program director, co-op does not require approval.

If a student registers for an internship class or co-op, the experience must occur during that same semester. Credit and a grade can only be awarded for an internship during the semester/term in which the work experience occurs. Internships are not a continuation of a job or co-op.

A student's career services coordinator in the Office of Career Services & Co-op is available as a resource to help them work through the options.

Information for International Students

Curricular Practical Training ("CPT")

Work experiences that are an integral part of an academic program are considered "curricular practical training." These experiences may include alternate work/study programs, internships, cooperative education, and practicum experiences. To be eligible for CPT, students must receive course credit or be in a recognized co-op program.

International students interested in participating in Curricular Practical Training should make an appointment to see an ISS advisor. Start and end dates must coincide with [RIT's recommended co-op work schedule](#). Also, keep in mind that a co-op work term(s) cannot extend into the next semester -- past RIT's add/drop deadlines.

To apply for Curricular Practical Training, international students are required to do the following:

1. **Register** for co-op or internship with their academic advisor in SIS.

2. **Report** their employment information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education online.

3. **Get CPT Authorization**. After completing steps 1 and 2, **permission** to participate in curricular practical training must be granted by International Student Services, prior to the employment start date. Students must provide ISS (in person or via email) a copy of their job offer letter/email, and will receive a new SEVIS I-20 with CPT Authorization.

Experiential Education Options in College of Art and Design

Qualifying Work, Compensation, Opportunities, Tuition, Approval, SIS Registration, Financial Aid, Reporting Procedures, Evaluation, and Grading

	Mandatory Co-op Full-time	Optional Co-op	Internship Credit-bearing
Qualifying Work	Related experience. **Mandatory Full-time Co-op:** (minimum 35 hours per week), the length of a term (minimum of 10 weeks) is recommended. [Co-op start and end dates](#) align as closely as possible to semesters or summer term.	Related experience. **Full-time Co-op:** Minimum 30 hours per week, the length of a term (minimum of 10 weeks*) is recommended. Taking classes is not encouraged. Special academic approval is needed if you wish to take a course while on co-op. **Part-time Co-op**: 10-15 hours per week (not to exceed 20 hours), the length of a term, carrying a load of at least 6 credit hours, not to exceed 12 credit hours. (PT Co-op equals 6 credit hours.) [Co-op start and end dates](#) align as closely as possible to semesters, or summer term*.	Related experience. Part-time or full-time, length of a term. Credit hours are determined by program director based on course substitution. Start and end dates align as closely as possible to semesters, or summer term*. Students will work under the guidance of a manager (ex.: artist, art director, creative director, senior graphic designer, product development manager or marketing communications manager). Internships are not a continuation of a job or co-op.
Compensation	Paid.	Typically paid. (Exceptions must be approved by the academic department).	Paid or unpaid.

	Mandatory Co-op Full-time	**Optional Co-op**	**Internship Credit-bearing**
Opportunities	Jobs – students can search through co-op job listings through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site career platform: Career Connect, or find on own.	Jobs – students can search through co-op job listings through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site career platform: Career Connect, or find on their own.	Students can search through internship listings through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site career platform: RIT Career Connect, or find on own.
Tuition	No tuition charged for co-op.	No tuition charged for co-op.	Tuition charged for credit hours the same as any other course. *Note: For more info, students should visit the Financial Aid office.*
Approval	Pre-approval through academic department program director is required.	Undergraduate programs: academic department program director approval is not required. Graduate programs: Academic Program Director approval is required.	Approval through academic department program director required.
Registration and Reporting	Registration and reporting a co-op is required prior to the start of the co-op**. SIS registration is done through the student's academic advisor. Reporting employment is done through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site. *Note: Full-time student status is maintained (as relates to housing, Pell Grants, gym, etc.).*	Registration and reporting a co-op is required prior to the start of the co-op**. SIS registration is done through the student's academic advisor. Report employment through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site. *Note: Full-time student status is maintained if registered for full-time co-op (as relates to housing, Pell Grants, gym, etc.).*	Receive approval in advance by program director. Register in SIS as the Internship class (in place of open elective, professional/ studio elective, or course substitution). Credit hours determined by program director. Report experience through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site. *Note: A student must be registered for the internship class during the same*

	Mandatory Co-op Full-time	Optional Co-op	Internship Credit-bearing
			semester in which the work occurs.
Financial Aid	Typically students do not get financial aid as they are not paying tuition. An exception may be Pell Grants. *Note: Students should meet with their financial aid counselor to verify this information as it relates to their aid or to discuss any questions they may have related to this topic.*	Typically students do not get financial aid as they are not paying tuition. An exception may be Pell Grants. *Note: Students should meet with their financial aid counselor to verify this information as it relates to their aid or to discuss any questions they may have related to this topic.*	Financial aid status would stay the same if registered for an internship class used in place of an elective. If the internship is registered differently, it may impact financial aid and status – check with Financial Services regarding possible impact on aid. If credit hours exceed 18 credits fall or spring semester additional charges will be assessed. Full tuition charges will be incurred if registered for internship class during summer term. *Note: Students should meet with their academic advisor and financial aid counselor to verify this information as it relates to their aid or to discuss any questions they may have related to this topic.*
Evaluation	Initiated by the Office of Career Services & Co-op evaluation system. Employer and student are each sent a Work Evaluation that they complete online. Academic department (program director) has access to review.	Initiated by the Office of Career Services & Co-op evaluation system. Employer and student are each sent a Work Evaluation that they complete online. Academic department (program director) has access to review.	This may include: evaluation generated by Career Services' Evaluation System) and/or other deliverables required by program director to receive a grade.

	Mandatory Co-op Full-time	Optional Co-op	Internship Credit-bearing
	Completion is encouraged, by not required, for a passing grade assigned by program director.	Completion is encouraged, by not required, for a passing grade assigned by program director.	
Grading	Managed by academic department (program director). Appears on transcript with a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade. The academic department (program director) assigns grade based on submitted Employer Evaluation and the completed Student Work Report and complete of co-op.	Completed by academic program director or career services coordinator in the Office of Career Services & Co-op. Appears on transcript with a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade. A Satisfactory grade is given if student successfully completes the co-op. Evaluations are not requited.	Managed by academic department program director. Receive grade and credit hours based on approval terms. *Note: Credit can only be awarded during the semester in which the work experience occurs, consistent with RIT policy.*

 Work start and end dates: 10-week minimum, aligning with RIT semesters/terms. Students are permitted to start as early as the first day of the break before their co-op semester/term begins, and end by the first day of classes of the following semester/term.

**Co-op enrollment must occur before week 6 of the term. Co-op will not be registered (SIS) if submitted past the drop/add period of the term that follows. You can report (not register) your co-op two terms after the work term.

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Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education