CO-OP QUICK START GUIDE
College of Engineering Technology

What is Co-op?
Cooperative Education, or co-op, gives you the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience before you graduate.
Co-op at RIT is:

Full-time (35 hours or more)   Directly related to your field of study
Paid Employment   Single term to two consecutive terms in length
Tuition Free

Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible to participate in RIT's co-op program.

Co-op Eligibility
Co-op is **required** for all undergraduate students within the Kate Gleason College of Engineering.

Eligible for Co-op: Completed the first 5 semesters of coursework in your academic program
Completion Requirement: Four terms
Out on Co-op: Meet with your academic advisor to learn your co-op schedule

Graduate students have optional co-op. Check with your academic department to confirm your approved length of time to work.

Job Search Preparation
The Engineering Technology Career Orientation Course is offered to third-year and transfer students. Through this course, you will learn how to develop the tools and the job search strategies to conduct a successful job search. You will also review the Career Connect platform, our online job database, to review and apply to job postings as well as on-campus interview opportunities.

Create a Career Connect Profile
The Career Connect platform is our central database to connect students with selected employers for co-op opportunities. Log in to Career Connect with the single sign-on feature. Update your profile with your skills, experience, and resume for employers to see. Need help navigating Career Connect? Go to our website to learn more about this platform and job search strategies.

When to Begin the Job Search
We recommend starting two terms before you plan to co-op. Prepare for the term before you co-op as it will fill your schedule with resume submissions, interviews, career fairs, networking events, and workshops.

Please note: Some organizations, mainly the federal government and research universities, have early application deadlines. If you are interested in these, check the organization's career site, and meet with your assigned career services coordinator.

Applying To Job Opportunities
Through Career Connect, you can view job descriptions and apply to positions based on your qualifications. RIT has approved all co-op jobs in Career Connect. New algorithms provide job suggestions based on your field and interest. As you apply to different companies, review the requirements listed per post as some employers direct you to submit your resume through their company web site. Keep your options open and avoid limiting yourself to a specific employer or geographic location for the best results. Most importantly, always continue your search until you have been offered and accepted a position!

Broadening Your Job Search

Career Connect is the most trusted source for co-op jobs that fit RIT's requirements. Expand your search through your family and friends, professors, past employers, and professional associations. Keep a record of jobs you applied for and the employers. If you unsure a position qualifies as an RIT co-op, present the job description to your academic department before you accept the position for approval.

If you or the employer have any questions about the co-op program, contact your career services coordinator for assistance.

Prepare For Interviews

Practice your interview skills by participating in mock interviews and attending our workshops. Prepare through our website by reviewing commonly asked questions, etiquette, and strategies. Find on-campus interviews on Career Connect to schedule time with employers. We highly suggest sending a brief thank you note after the meeting and follow-up with employers to check on the status of your application.

Accepting a Job Offer

Once you accept a co-op job offer, even verbally, you are expected to honor this commitment. **You must not back out**, or renege on the job, to work for another employer! Before starting your co-op, confirm your start and end dates, work hours, and other worksite expectations with your employer. Co-op employers expect RIT students to operate according to accepted business ethics and standards. Further, RIT expects your best behavior at all times, whether on or off-campus to be by the standards articulated in the RIT Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and the Student Agreement Policy.

Reporting and Registering for Co-op

After you have accepted a co-op job, **two steps** are required to ensure that you will receive the appropriate credit for each term you will be on co-op:

1. **Report your co-op**
   Provide your information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education through our website. Should you arrive on co-op and your supervisor is different than what you reported, you can update your submitted report.

2. **Register on SIS:**
   Once you have reported your co-op to our office, you will be registered for co-op on the RIT Student Information System (SIS) by your academic department. All students must meet their department's co-op eligibility requirements before the SIS registration, which includes passing the Engineering Co-op Preparation Course.

If you're an **international student,** you have one more step to ensure co-op credit:

An International Student Services (ISS) Advisor must grant permission to participate in a curricular practical training (CPT) before the co-op start date. Students must either:

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

b. Bring the documents listed above to International Student Services.

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 the International Student Services office.

Your Co-op Salary and Income Tax Information

Your employer determines your compensation level. Salary rates are based on several variables, including your academic major, year level, prior work experiences, and established company policies. Check our web site for the latest co-op salary data.

According to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), salaries or wages paid to co-op students are entirely subject to applicable federal and state income taxes. You may encounter different tax forms:

1099 Tax Form: You are hired as an independent contractor, and you are responsible for calculating your payroll taxes. You then submit the sum to the government on a quarterly basis.

W-2 Tax Form: You are hired as an employee, and payroll taxes are automatically deducted from your paycheck and then paid to the government through your employer.

Financial Aid

RIT does not charge tuition for enrollment while on co-op. Except for the federal Pell Grant, most forms of financial aid are not awarded for semesters of co-op employment. Your co-op earnings will not negatively impact your eligibility for federal student aid in the subsequent year. FASFA will ask you to report earnings from your co-op, and the reported earnings will automatically be excluded from your adjusted gross income.

If you are a Pell grant recipient, the grant will credit to your student account after the drop/add period for the term. You must register your co-op on the Registrar's system and report your co-op on our website.

If you have any questions regarding your financial aid, co-op earnings, or living expenses during your co-op term, contact your Financial Aid Counselor.

Housing

Students who co-op in Rochester or have a remote co-op may stay in RIT housing during their co-op term. A student going on co-op for fall semester outside of Rochester has two options related to securing RIT housing for spring semester:

1. Students may apply for spring semester housing in November while they are out on co-op. These students are guaranteed RIT housing for the spring semester and will move in the week of spring semester move-in. Specific housing preferences cannot be guaranteed.

2. Students who have participated in Housing Selection and reserved a space for the fall semester may hold their space in RIT housing while gone on co-op during the fall semester. The Housing Selection will be waiting for them when they return to RIT for the spring semester. The co-op must be located 45 miles or more from Rochester and require the student to relocate to the co-op location. It costs one-half the term's rent to hold to Housing Selection. Contact Housing Operations to make arrangements to hold your space. This option is only available for the fall semester.

Concerns on Co-op

Entering a new workplace learning experience can be stressful and uncomfortable. If you encounter a concern, contact your career services, coordinator. They may offer advice or assistance in resolving the matter. It is essential to address issues as they arise rather than postpone a discussion or ignore the problem. We can assist with: how to talk with supervisors about your work-related concerns, how to address conflicts on your team, as well as discrimination and harassment complaints. Call or email us if you have any questions or concerns.

Receiving Credit

The following documents must be completed and submitted to our office for each term you are on co-op to receive a "Satisfactory" (S) grade for co-op on your transcript. Your academic department will review and award a grade.

1. **Employer Evaluation of your performance**
   A customized evaluation form is emailed to your supervisor by our office during the midpoint of each term you are on co-op.

2. **Student Co-op Work Report**
   This report is available to you on our website during the midpoint of each term you are on co-op. You will receive a reminder email during the midpoint of each co-op term.

For a record of your co-op history, submitted evaluations and work reports, log in through the "View Your Co-op Evaluations" link on our website.

International Experience

If you are working outside of the United States and are not returning to your home country, you are required to meet with an International Experiences Coordinator to make sure you sign all the correct paperwork before leaving the US. Schedule an appointment in Career Connect or call 585-475-2301 to set up an appointment.

Career Services Coordinators

Career services coordinators are assigned to each major and are available year-round to assist and advise students with the job search process and any career-related concerns. You can meet with your coordinator for personalized advising. We work closely with your academic department and build and maintain relationships with employers to develop co-op opportunities. We are here to assist you in securing a co-op position and remain available to you while you are on co-op.

Personalized Advisement
Log in to Career Connect or call 585-475-2301 to make an appointment with your career services coordinator.

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

Drop-Ins
Meet with a Peer Career Advisor to review your resume and seek guidance on your job search without making an appointment. You can also drop-in with a coordinator on duty to evaluate job offers and discuss salary negotiations.

Monday - Thursday | 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Friday | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education
RIT Bausch & Lomb Center
57 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester NY
14623-5603
careerservices@rit.edu

RIT | Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education

rit.edu/careerservices