

RIT | Division of Academic Affairs Student Employment Office

Co-op Definitions

Cooperative Education, or co-op, is a unique kind of education at RIT. As the keystone to an experiential education, a co-op gives you the opportunity to apply what you're learning in the classroom through meaningful work experience. Directly related to your field of study, co-op will help define your career path after graduation.

RIT co-op is:

- Full-time (35 hours or more per week)
- Paid employment (unpaid is not typical)
- Directly related to your field of study
- Single term to two consecutive terms in length
- Tuition-free
- Complex and challenging work assignments that align with your academic program
- Part of your academic schedule

Co-op gives you the opportunity to:

- Help define your career path after graduation
- Apply the theory you are learning in your course work to real, professional situations
- Earn a reasonable salary, which will help finance your education
- Develop additional technical skills and enhance vital soft skills such as critical thinking, professional communication, teamwork, and more.
- Network with team members and professionals in the company to help accelerate your future job search
- Stand-out to recruiters in your full-time employment search after graduation with an experience that can elevate your starting salary, compared to other entry-level candidates

Eligibility:

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

Graduate students 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 blocks of co-op should not exceed one year or three terms (fall, spring, or summer semesters each equal one term). Exceptions can be made only with departmental approval.

RIT Co-op Definitions:

- 1.) RIT Co-op – Full time paid work experience at RIT. Students performing an RIT Co-op are considered RIT employees. Hire paperwork is processed by the Student Employment Office.
- 2.) Entrepreneurial Co-op – Registered full-time experience (unpaid or stipend) offered at RIT. Students performing an Entrepreneurial Co-op work for themselves rather than an employer, and are not considered employees of RIT. Entrepreneurial Co-ops must have prior approval, and stipend paperwork is processed through Accounts Payable.
- 3.) Industry Co-op – Full-time work experience in a professional setting other than RIT. Industry Co-ops may be paid or unpaid experiences. Any employment relationship is between the student and the organization at which they are working.