



RIT CROATIA
CAREER AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
HANDBOOK
AY 2026/2027

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WELCOME

Dear RIT Croatia students,

In today's competitive business world, finding employment is a long process, and you have to start preparing from the very beginning. At RIT Croatia, we are especially aware of this fact; therefore, we have prepared this handbook for you.

The handbook will guide you through the cooperative education program standards and policies and provide the information you may need, including an overview of the cooperative education program.

Familiarize yourself with the handbook and review it thoroughly.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Career Services & Alumni Relations Office: cscro@rit.edu

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Good luck and welcome to the RIT Croatia work component of your undergraduate degree program.

RIT CROATIA CAREER SERVICES & ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE

Role of the Career Services & Alumni Relations Office

Cooperative education operates as a competitive recruitment process designed to replicate real-world labor market conditions. The Career Services & Alumni Relations Office serves as your partner and guide along the way. Our mission is to empower you with the tools, advice, and connections needed to successfully navigate the job market and achieve your personal career goals.

Resources and Services available

Our services can help you take ownership of your career development and student life during your studies and after graduation:

- **Individual career advising** – personalized guidance to help students explore career options, set goals, and make informed career decisions;
- **Co-op support and placement assistance** – guidance throughout the co-op process, including identifying opportunities, preparing applications, and connecting with employers;
- **Co-op and career opportunities** – access to co-op positions, job opportunities, and opportunities to gain professional experience and explore different career paths;
- **Career Education Days** – opportunities to connect with employers, explore career and co-op opportunities, and build professional networks;
- **Professional development and networking events** – workshops, panels, presentations, information sessions, guest lectures, company visits, and other activities designed to develop students' professional skills and industry knowledge;
- **Career resources and information** – information about career opportunities, professional development activities, graduate programs, and other opportunities available to students throughout the year;
- **Resume and cover letter support** – individual assistance with resumes and cover letters
- **Interview preparation** – guidance and practice to help students prepare for job and co-op interviews and present themselves confidently and professionally;
- **Alumni engagement and career support** – opportunities to connect with RIT Croatia alumni through mentoring, networking, career conversations, and professional events. Our support continues beyond graduation through the RIT Croatia Alumni Community, which provides alumni with opportunities to stay connected, exchange professional experiences, access career-related information and professional development activities, participate in events and webinars, and build meaningful connections with fellow alumni, students, employers, and industry professionals.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Introduction to cooperative education

The purpose of the cooperative education program (co-op) is to help students gain a better understanding of how the professional world operates outside the classroom by applying theoretical knowledge and concepts learned in their studies to real-world work situations. The co-op program at RIT Croatia provides students with the opportunity to gain practical work experience, apply classroom knowledge in a professional setting, develop relevant skills, and build professional relationships that can support their future careers. Co-op is a **mandatory component of all undergraduate degree programs at RIT Croatia**. Students are responsible for actively searching for, applying to, and securing a co-op position that is relevant to their field of study and career interests. **RIT Croatia does not assign or guarantee co-op placements**. While the Career Services & Alumni Relations Office provides career guidance, resources, employer connections, and shares co-op opportunities and job postings with students to support their co-op search, the responsibility for identifying, applying for, and securing a co-op position, as well as completing the co-op, rests with each student.

Students are encouraged to begin planning for their co-op well in advance, explore different opportunities, attend career events, engage with employers, and make use of the support and resources provided by Career Services & Alumni Relations Office throughout the process.

Cooperative education partners

There are **three main partners in every cooperative education program: employers, students, and the educational institution**. In order for a co-op program to be successful, all three parties play an important role and derive substantial benefits from the program.

RIT Croatia's roles and responsibilities

RIT Croatia functions as a liaison between students and the business community. The Career Services & Alumni Relations Office is responsible for the management component of the cooperative education program, including the following:

- Providing guidance and support throughout the co-op search process and addressing career-related questions and concerns;
- Meeting individually with students to provide career advising and support with resume and cover letter preparation, interview preparation, and other career-related matters;
- Sharing co-op opportunities, job postings, and information about potential employers with students;
- Organizing career development workshops, seminars, guest lectures, and other activities designed to prepare students for the workplace;
- Providing opportunities for students to connect and network with employers, alumni, and other professionals;
- Reviewing and approving co-op registrations and monitoring the completion of co-op requirements;
- Collecting and reviewing co-op evaluations and providing support when needed throughout the co-op experience;
- Conducting co-op check-ins and addressing work-related questions or concerns that may arise during the co-op term;

- Maintaining and developing relationships with employers and promoting RIT Croatia students and graduates as potential talent;
- Communicating the value of RIT Croatia's academic and cooperative education programs to current and prospective employers and encouraging employers to create co-op and other career opportunities for RIT Croatia students.

Students' roles and responsibilities

Your main role is to **take responsibility for finding and completing the co-op program** in order to further professional career development, including the following:

- A student is responsible for securing a co-op placement, registering it in the RIT Croatia Student Portal, and submitting all required documents available in the application by the given deadline
- When working on co-op, you are an ambassador for RIT Croatia; thus, you must always fulfill the contractual obligations and act professionally;
- Optimizing the learning opportunities that appear;
- Fulfill necessary co-op requirements before graduation;

Employers' roles and responsibilities

The prospective **employer serves as an educator in the workplace**:

- Ensuring appropriate co-op positions along with a mentor that match students' field of study;
- Providing students and the RIT Croatia Career Services & Alumni Relations Office with appropriate co-op guidance and performance evaluation;
- Hosting a visit from a Career Services & Alumni Relations Office representative during the co-op term;
- Enabling students to complete their co-op requirements during the required time of the year, ensuring the work tasks match students' academic and work experience level.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Professional development sessions and workshops

RIT Croatia will facilitate professional development sessions, guest speakers, and workshops throughout the academic year. The purpose of these networking opportunities is continuous learning and bringing the job search process closer to you.

RIT Croatia Career Education Day(s)

RIT Croatia annually **organizes *Career Education Day(s)* - CED**, which enables direct communication between employers and prospective employees and introduces you to the needs and opportunities of the job market. The event is taking place in the spring semester of the academic year.

Career Education Day(s) consist of different networking opportunities, such as company presentations & pitches, panel discussions, workshops, networking sessions, booths, and interviews. The dress code for the event is business formal.

As Career Education Day brings together employers from different industries and with different workplace cultures, **students are expected to dress professionally and appropriately for a business setting**. Your outfit should be polished, neat, and suitable for meeting potential employers.

Recommended attire:

- Business casual or professional attire;
- A shirt, blouse, polo shirt, sweater, or other neat professional top;
- Dress pants, tailored trousers, chinos, or an appropriate skirt or dress;
- A blazer or jacket is optional and can be added for a more formal look;
- Clean, professional-looking shoes;
- Simple and appropriate accessories;
- Neat and well-groomed hair and overall appearance.

Please avoid:

- Sweatpants, tracksuits, or athletic clothing;
- Shorts or beachwear;
- Flip-flops or slippers;
- Clothing that is excessively casual, revealing, or inappropriate for a professional setting;
- Clothing with offensive language;
- Dirty, wrinkled, or visibly worn-out clothing.

You will be meeting multiple employees throughout the day, so dress for the occasion, not for one specific company. When in doubt, choose a slightly more professional option. You do not need to be suited up, but you should look like someone who is ready to enter a professional workplace.

RIT CROATIA COOPERATIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

GBM/IB, HTM, WMC and CSEC programs: Co-op policies

Cooperative education is mandatory for all undergraduate GBM/IB, HTM, NMD, WMC and CSEC students, and **it begins after you have completed the first two years of coursework in the academic program (when you have earned a minimum of 55 credits)**.

Effective for students first enrolling at RIT Croatia as of the 2021-22 academic year, for each completed co-op course, students will earn 12 ECTS points. For students enrolled prior to the 2021-22 academic year, no ECTS points are assigned to co-op. For students enrolled in the HTM program prior to the 2021-22 academic year, no ECTS points are assigned to co-op.

Key Learning outcomes for GBM/IB, WMC, HTM and CSEC programs

Coop #1- Key learning outcomes:

CLO1: Apply acquired knowledge and skills from previous academic courses in co-op tasks.

CLO2: Perform in accordance with the instructions and feedback in the process of solving co-op tasks in a real environment.

CLO3: Explain the activities, work processes, and the market environment of the co-op organization.

CLO4: Reflect on professional and personal growth, and work-related competencies gained during co-op.

Coop #2- Key learning outcomes:

CLO1: Apply the relevant ethical principles and work-environment behaviors within the co-op position and organization.

CLO2: Propose solutions to challenges within the area of co-op specialization.

CLO3: Integrate the creation and communication of professional content in oral and written forms.

CLO4: Utilize appropriate tools, methods, and techniques used in the co-op tasks or projects.

GBM, HTM, WMC, and CSEC undergraduate students must complete the co-op program based on the following criteria:

- **Complete two co-op terms during summer semesters: first after the Sophomore year and second after the Junior year.**
- The absolute minimum working requirement for a co-op course is 10 weeks and 400 hours (a minimum of 40 hours per week for a minimum of 10 weeks). You do have the option to complete more co-op hours than the minimum requirements in a given co-op course, but the work will still be registered as one co-op.
- To be eligible for co-op, students must:
Achieve Junior-level student status with the spring semester prior to the start of cooperative education (with at least 55 credits earned);
If you have not achieved Junior-level status (have less than 55 credits) you will not be eligible to fulfill the co-op requirements.;
- Be in good academic standing (if you are on academic suspension, you are not eligible to complete the co-op requirement until you are back from the suspension and until you improve your academic standing);
- When taking a *Leave of Absence* - you are not eligible to complete co-op.
- When on academic suspension, you are not eligible to complete co-op.

NMD program: Co-op policies

Cooperative education is mandatory for all undergraduate New Media Design students. Effective for students enrolling at RIT Croatia as of the 2022-23 academic year, to obtain a four-year degree in the NMD program, a minimum of 400 working hours is required (two co-op courses), and students will earn 6 ECTS points for each co-op course.

Coop #1- Key learning outcomes:

CLO1: Apply acquired knowledge and skills from previous academic courses in co-op tasks.

CLO2: Perform in accordance with the instructions and feedback in the process of solving co-op tasks in a real environment.

CLO3: Explain the activities, work processes and the market environment of the co-op organization.

CLO4: Reflect on professional and personal growth, and work-related competencies gained during co-op.

Coop #2- Key learning outcomes:

CLO1: Apply the relevant ethical principles and work-environment behaviors within the co-op position and organization.

CLO2: Propose solutions to challenges within the area of co-op specialization.

CLO3: Integrate the creation and communication of professional content in oral and written forms.

CLO4: Utilize appropriate tools, methods, and techniques used in the co-op tasks or projects.

The NMD undergraduate students must complete the co-op program based on the following criteria:

- **Complete two co-op terms during summer semesters: first after Sophomore year and second after Junior year to obtain a Croatian diploma.**
- The absolute minimum working requirement for a co-op block is 5 weeks and 200 hours (a minimum of 40 hours per week for a minimum of 5 weeks). You do have the option to complete more co-op hours than the minimum requirements in a given co-op block, but the work will still be registered as one co-op.
- To be eligible for co-op, students must:
- **Achieve Junior-level student status with the spring semester prior to the start of cooperative education (with at least 55 credits earned);**
- If you have not achieved Junior-level status (have less than 55 credits) you will not be eligible to fulfill the co-op requirements.;
- Be in good academic standing if you are on academic suspension, you are not eligible to complete the co-op requirement until you are back from the suspension and until you improve your academic standing;
- When taking a Leave *of Absence* - you are not eligible to complete co-op.
- When on academic suspension, you are not eligible to complete co-op.

Cooperative education registration process

Starting from the 2025/2026 academic year, students register their co-op exclusively through the **RIT Croatia Student Portal**.

The RIT Croatia Student Portal is available both as a mobile app and a desktop version. Use your AAI credentials to log in. If you are unable to log in, please send an email to our ITS department at its@croatia.rit.edu with your full name and OIB.

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Below are the instructions for registering your co-op.

Before starting a co-op, every student can choose one of the 5 types of co-op:

1. **Traditional** – you are going to the office every day, working in person
2. **Remote** – you are working fully remote
3. **Project-based** – you have been working on a project as part of your studies with a professor as a mentor, and you will keep developing that project over the summer
4. **Entrepreneurial** – You have your own company or a start-up

5. **Hybrid** – Agreement between you and your mentor, half remote, half in person

Documentation

Before co-op:

1. **Acceptance letter** – that is your **FIRST step**. The template is available at the Student portal. A student should download the document, send it to the employer/mentor/HR, and upload it back to the Student portal once the Acceptance letter is filled out. There is a version written in Croatian, and the other is English (choose whichever version works better for the employer)
2. **Registration form** – once you are logged into the portal, you have to fill out all the necessary fields (and upload the Acceptance letter at the bottom of the page) – everything is explained in the other PDF called „How to register a co-op“

*Career Office can't register a co-op without these 2 documents

After co-op:

1. **Student evaluation form** – a form that will be available to all students AFTER the co-op, so the student can evaluate the company they have been working for.
2. **Employer evaluation form** – a form in which the employer/mentor will evaluate a student

IMPORTANT: Unless all 4 documents are submitted, a student will not receive a satisfactory grade!

Students who are not eligible for a co-op are:

- Students who are **currently suspended**
- Students who **are on a leave of absence (LOA)**
- Students who have **less than 55 credits**

Dates

The exact dates for starting and registering for co-op will be announced in the spring semester. The important information is that every student has to be done with the co-op before the start of the new academic year.

Process

1. Find a co-op
2. If you are not sure whether your position is acceptable for a co-op, check with the Career Office
3. Download the Acceptance letter template from the Student portal and send it to your company
4. Fill out the registration form (in the Student portal), upload the Acceptance letter, and click submit
5. Work during the summer

6. Once you are done with your co-op, fill out the Student Evaluation Form, and your mentor should fill out the Employer Evaluation Form. Once both forms have been submitted, we will see them in the system
7. The grade is either FAIL or SATISFACTORY and will be entered in SIS in September 2026.

Study abroad (Global Scholars) and cooperative education

RIT Croatia students have the opportunity to spend up to two semesters studying abroad at RIT's main campus (Rochester, NY), RIT Kosovo, and RIT Dubai. While you are studying abroad, you are encouraged to focus on your course load and engage in campus activities.

At the RIT Main Campus, students may complete a summer co-op after two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring) of studying abroad at the main campus. After confirming a co-op, the Main Campus support staff will assist students with extending their I-20 visa documents. Costs for extending the stay are covered by the student. If you are interested in this option, please inform your Career Services and Study Abroad advisors early - ideally at the beginning of the Spring semester - since the visa process takes 3-4 months and must be completed promptly.

At RIT Dubai, students can decide to do a co-op after spending one semester as Global Scholars. The campus staff will assist students with their visa requirements by providing the relevant documentation to employers.

During their studies, students at the Main Campus can work up to 20 hours a week on campus. Students at RIT Dubai can also work up to 20 hours a week, and RIT Dubai staff will assist them with managing their immigration requirements in such cases.

If you need more information and details regarding Study abroad and the visa process, please contact our International Office at interational.office@croatia.rit.edu.

FAQ

1. **Can I be enrolled for classes and co-op at the same time?**
 - No. You have to finish your exams and then enroll in co-op.
2. **Can I still do my co-op if I enroll in Maymester or June mini-semester?**
 - Yes. After you finish with Maymester and/or June mini-semester, you can enroll in co-op, and you will still have enough time to work full-time for 10 weeks. If you are going to enroll in one or both of the semesters, please come to the Career Office to notify us.
3. **Can I work this summer for 15 weeks, so that next summer I work only 5 weeks? (GBM, WMC and HTM students)**
 - No. It has to be min. 10 weeks each summer
4. **Can I work at 2 different companies, or does it have to be only one? (GBM, WMC and HTM students)**
 - You can work for 2 different companies, but you have to spent min. 4 weeks at one company. e.g. 4 weeks in Erste bank, 6 weeks at Coca-Cola

5. Does a co-op have to be paid?

- It can be paid or unpaid, depending on what you agree on with the employer.

6. Am I granted a co-op?

- No, finding a co-op is your responsibility. The Career Services Department is here to support you. We share opportunities on our Instagram page. If you need any specific contact, come to our office.

7. Can I work abroad?

- Yes, you can work anywhere as long as it's aligned with your study program. You can apply for an Erasmus Traineeship and get additional funds to go abroad. However, finding a job is your responsibility.

*The difference between Erasmus studying abroad and Erasmus working abroad is following:

- **If you are going to study (Erasmus)**, RIT Croatia has a list of partner institutions, and you have to choose one institution from that list

- **If you are going to work abroad (Erasmus traineeship)**, RIT Croatia doesn't have a list of potential employers in the EU. Meaning that the responsibility of finding a job in a country of your choice is completely yours. When applying for the Erasmus traineeship program, first you have to have a confirmed job, and then apply to the program in order for Erasmus to give you funds. One more thing to remember is that in this option, you can have 2 incomes – one is Erasmus funds, and the other is your salary

- **If you would like to do your co-op in the USA (this is for non-USA students and students who wish to be part of the Study Abroad program)**, you have to be in the study abroad program in Rochester for 2 consecutive semesters (fall and spring) in order to get the right to complete your co-op there

- **If you would like to participate in the Work and Travel/J1 program in the USA (This applies for the students who do not wish to be part of the Study Abroad program, but only would like to work there)**, please be aware that most of the jobs are for HTM students, whereas for the Career Office to recognize this as a co-op, it has to be aligned with your study program. E.g., The Broadmoor hotel offers a 1-year internship with a J1 visa. This can be recognized as a co-op, but only 10 weeks out of the 1-year spent there.

8. Can I work in a family-owned business?

- Yes, you can.

9. How can I find a co-op?

- You can find a co-op over the company's website, students' portals (Studentski centar, DING), LinkedIn, applying to job ads that have been shared by Career Services, or through your acquaintances. Additionally, what you can do is to detect industry/ies and/or companies that

you like (by yourself or with the use of ChatGPT) and reach out directly to them or ask the Career Office if we may have a contact from someone working in the company of your choice.

10. Are there any restrictions on industries or roles?

- No, every student can work in any industry that they like as long as the job position is aligned with the study program.
- E.g., a GBM student can't work as a waiter for a co-op

11. Does RIT Croatia provide assistance in finding a co-op?

- Yes, RIT Croatia provides assistance, but finding a job is completely the student's responsibility, and going through the selection process is the student's responsibility as well. We don't provide a list of companies and jobs that a student can choose from, and that a student is guaranteed that the company will take them. We can provide you with a contact from the company (if we have it), and help you identify other companies in your desired area.

12. Can I work for a company that is not a RIT Croatia partner institution, and what is the process?

- A student can work for any company of their choice, regardless of whether if the company is a partner with RIT Croatia or not. There are no additional steps that the company or student has to take.

13. Do I receive ECTS points for co-op?

- Effective for students first enrolling at RIT Croatia as of the 2021-22 academic year in the HTM, GBM/IB, WMC, and CSEC programs, 12 ECTS points are earned for each co-op course. For students enrolled prior to the 2021-22 academic year, no ECTS points are assigned to co-op. Students enrolled in the NMD major will receive 6 ECTS points for each co-op course.

If you have any additional questions, please come to your Career Advisor. We are here every day from 8 AM until 4 PM, or you can schedule a Zoom meeting.