

CO-OP QUICK START GUIDE

College of Art and Design

About Co-op

Gaining experience in the career field you are hoping to enter after graduation is valuable in many ways – and taking advantage of cooperative education (co-op) is just one of the options available to you.

What Is Co-op?

Co-op or cooperative education is full-time or part-time, typically paid employment, directly related to your major that lasts one or two terms. It is a type of experiential learning that allows you to gain valuable experience that may help you clarify career goals, hone your skills and earn some extra cash. You register for co-op just like you would a course and it will appear on your transcript with a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade. You maintain full-time student status but *do not* pay tuition for co-op.

Who Can Co-op?

Co-op is optional for students in the College of Art and Design. To be eligible you must be a student in good academic standing with a minimum of a 2.0 GPA and have completed your sophomore year. Masters students are typically eligible to co-op after 2 terms. You are *not* eligible for co-op after you have completed all your coursework.

Co-op Versus Internship – What Is The Difference?

From an employer point of view there often is no difference - but it *is* often important for an employer that the work experience is tied to your academic record. As long as a job meets the definition of co-op it does not matter what the employer calls the position. Co-op should be paid and related to your major. For full-time co-op you must work at least 35 hours per week. For part-time co-op, you must work 10-15 (not exceeding 20) and also be registered for 6 credit hours. Many of you also have an option to register for an internship as a class; so depending on your circumstances, you need to decide which option is best for you.

Co-op	Internship
Related Experience	Related Experience
Paid (unpaid is the exception)	Unpaid or paid
Do not pay tuition	Pay tuition receive credit/grade (use in place of a class)
Jobs – search through co-op job listings through Career Services and Cooperative Education site (Handshake) or find one on your own	Internships – your academic department may have leads, search in Handshake or find one on your own
Full-time (minimum 35 hours/week) or part-time (10-15 hours/week not to exceed 20 hours), length of a school term	Part-time or full-time, length of school term (intersession does not count)
Register for co-op course through your academic advisor or career services coordinator. Appears on transcript with a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade	Register for internship class. You may need to complete paperwork/form and receive pre-approval and signatures from your academic dept. chair
Co-op is handled by Career Services and Cooperative Education with academic department chairs	Internship is handled totally by academic department
Your employer is sent a work evaluation that they complete online, students will also be sent a work report to complete	Your faculty sponsor will let you know what you need to provide in order to receive a grade. Class deliverables should be defined

Where Can I Find Help?

You should meet with your career services coordinator assigned to your major to discuss your job search. They can help you get prepared and answer any questions or concerns you may have. They have offices in the Bausch & Lomb Center. To make an appointment, call 585-475-2301. If your major is: Graphic Design, Interior Design, New Media Design & Imaging or Visual Communication Design, then your career services coordinator is Gretchen Burruto (geboce@rit.edu). If your major is Art Education (Visual Arts-All Grades), Ceramics, Fine Arts Studio, Furniture Design, Glass, Metals & Jewelry Design, your career

services coordinator is Morgan Faas (mcfoce@rit.edu). If your major is Industrial Design, your career services coordinator is Shauna Newcomb (shnoce@rit.edu). If your major is 3D Digital Graphics, Illustration, or Medical Illustration, your career services coordinator is Jim Bondi (jtboce@rit.edu).

Through the student page of our site (www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/students) you will get lots of valuable job search info. Login to Handshake with your RIT email address (ending with @rit.edu) at rit.joinhandshake.com. On Handshake, you can view and apply to job postings and on campus interviews and make appointments.

Why Co-op?

Experience will give you the edge over your competition. When you co-op you gain industry experience, clarify career goals, expand your network, and beef up your portfolio.

When Can I Co-op?

You are eligible to co-op after you have completed your first two years of coursework. Most of you are only able to co-op full-time during the summer because of the way your courses are sequenced; you should start your co-op search at least two terms in advance.

How Do I Find A Co-op Job?

Start by visiting our site for co-op job listings on Handshake. Complete your profile and upload your resume. If you don't have a resume – check through the resume samples on our site and see your career services coordinator for feedback. Once you have completed these steps you can start applying to jobs. Apply to as many as you can (try not to limit yourself geographically). If you feel you need support or help at any point in your job search, make an appointment to meet with your career services coordinator in our office. The best job search is a comprehensive one. Handshake is *only one* source of co-op or internship job openings. Look for co-op jobs utilizing other sources: your network of friends, professors, past employers, coaches, clubs and professional associations, and various web sites. We urge you to check our Recommended Web Resources: www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/resources/design and www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/resources/art-crafts for a list of other job sources for your major. Keep a record of your job applications outside of Handshake (Handshake keeps track of this for you). Following up with potential employers is key.

Co-op Job Search To Do List:

- Meet with your career services coordinator at least two terms in advance
- Write or edit a resume – email it to your career services coordinator for review
- Pull your portfolio together. You need to be able to provide employers with a link to an online version
- Register and upload resume in Handshake
- Apply to all possible jobs and keep track
- Develop list of employers where you will send your resume out (separate from Handshake)
- Write cover letter that can be adapted/personalized for each employer
- Send out a slew of resumes
- Follow up with all resumes
- Set up interviews
- Accept position; let other interested employers know you are no longer available
- Report job to Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education: www.rit.edu/reportexperience and register for co-op through your academic advisor

Preparing For Interviews

For sample interview questions, typical interview formats and interviewing tips, we have a lot of that info on our site for you. If you are nervous, set up a practice interview with your career services coordinator to prepare for the real thing. Make sure you have appropriate interview attire and are ready for the interview 15 minutes before the scheduled time. Remember to send employers a brief thank you note after the interview 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! Make sure you confirm your start and end dates, work hours and other work site expectations with your employer prior to starting your job. Your career services coordinator can help you navigate successfully through this process; be sure to tap into their expertise.

Co-op employers expect RIT and its students to operate according to accepted business ethics and standards. Further, RIT expects your behavior at all times, whether on or off campus to be in accordance with the standards articulated in the RIT Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook: www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/rr.php and the Student Agreement Policy (found in Handshake under the Resources tab).

Important: Once you have accepted a co-op job you need to take these steps to make your co-op official:

1. Register for co-op (it has its own unique course number) through your Academic Advisor.
2. Notify the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education where you will be working -- submit the brief Report Your Co-op/Internship form through the student page of our site: www.rit.edu/reportexperience
3. Extra step for International Students only: Additional permission to participate in curricular practical training must be granted by an ISS advisor prior to the employment start date. Students must **either**:
 - a) Submit the Online CPT Request Form along with a copy of your job offer letter and a screen shot 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 International Student Services.

Should you arrive on co-op and your supervisor is different than what you reported, our website gives you instructions for updating your supervisor's name and email address if needed: <http://www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/notification-registration>

Even though co-op is not required for your major, reporting/registering your co-op is important for a number of reasons. A work evaluation will be sent and completed by your employer; a record of your success can be used for future employment. Many employers require you to be registered for their position. In rare cases, if any work-related issue arises, we can work with you and the employer. It is beneficial for the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education and your academic department to have a record of where RIT students are working so we can maintain a relationship with that employer and encourage them to hire future RIT students or graduates! If at any time you have questions or need help do let us know — we look forward to working with you as you take advantage of the co-op experience at RIT.

Your Co-op Evaluation – Co-op On Your Transcript

To receive a “Satisfactory” (“S”) grade for co-op on your transcript, a Work Evaluation should be completed by your supervisor and returned to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education. A link to this work evaluation is emailed to your employer during the mid-point of your co-op. Many employers will review your performance based on this evaluation before you complete your co-op.

Your Co-op Salary And Income Tax Information

Your employer determines your compensation level. Salary rates are based on a number of variables, including your academic major, year level, prior work experiences and established company policies. There may be some room for negotiation based on circumstances. Check our web site for the latest co-op salary data listed by academic program:

(www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/salary). According to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), salaries/wages paid to co-op students are fully subject to applicable federal and state income taxes. **1099s and W-2s: Breaking Down the Difference**

Simply put, 1099s and W-2s are two separate tax forms for two different types of workers. If you're an independent contractor, you get a 1099 form. If you're an employee, you receive a W-2.

As a W-2 employee, payroll taxes are automatically deducted from your paycheck and then paid to the government through your employer. If you're a contractor, you are responsible for calculating your own payroll taxes and then submitting the sum to the government on a quarterly basis. (Source: <https://www.learnvest.com/knowledge-center/the-difference-between-a-1099-and-a-w-2/>)

How Financial Aid Works While You Are On Co-op

RIT does not charge tuition for enrollment in cooperative education. With the exception of the federal Pell Grant, most forms of financial aid are not awarded for semesters of co-op employment. Financial aid includes federal and private alternative loans as well as grants and scholarships. If you have concerns pertaining to your living expenses during your co-op term, please contact your Financial Aid Counselor to discuss some various strategies as to how to cover these costs.

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. Your co-op earnings will not negatively impact your eligibility for federal student aid in the subsequent year. You are asked on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to report earnings from a co-op. The reported co-op earnings will automatically be excluded from your adjusted gross income when calculating your expected family contribution (EFC). If you have any questions regarding your co-op earnings and financial aid, please contact your Financial Aid Counselor at ritaid@rit.edu.

International Experiences

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

Housing While On Co-op And When You Return To Campus

Students who co-op in Rochester or have a co-op that can be completed remotely may stay in RIT housing during their co-op term. A student going on co-op for fall semester that must relocate has two options related to securing RIT housing for spring semester:

- Students may apply for spring semester housing in November while they are out on co-op at myhousing.rit.edu. These students are guaranteed RIT housing for the spring semester and will move into their housing the week of spring semester move-in. Specific housing preferences cannot be guaranteed.
- Students who have participated in Housing Selection and reserved a space in housing for fall semester may hold their space in RIT housing while gone on co-op during fall semester. This way guarantees the space that a student selected during Housing Selection will be waiting for them when they return to RIT for spring semester. In order to hold the space the student's co-op must be located 45 miles or more from Rochester and requires the student to relocate to the co-op location. The cost of holding a housing space for fall semester is one-half the term's rent of the type of housing the student is assigned to. Please contact Housing Operations at housing@rit.edu to make arrangements to hold your space. This option is only available for fall semester.

Concerns On Co-op

Dealing with stressful and uncomfortable situations can be part of the workplace learning experience. As with every other aspect of experiential learning, the university and your career services coordinator are here to support and guide you as necessary. If you encounter a concern, we encourage you to contact your career services coordinator so we may offer advice or assistance in resolving the matter. It is important to address issues as they arise, rather than postpone such a discussion or ignore the problem. Examples of workplace issues that we can assist with range from coaching you on how to talk with supervisors regarding your work related concerns, how to address conflicts on your team as well as discrimination and harassment complaints. Be sure to call or email us if you have any questions or concerns.

Appointments And Office Hours

Personalized Advisement

Handshake allows you to make an appointment online with your career services coordinator or call 585-475-2301 to set one up. Coordinators will assist you on a one-on-one basis with any aspect of your job search and related activities.

Office Hours: Monday- Friday: 8:00am – 4:30pm

Office Drop-In Hours

Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays 9:30am - 11:30am & 1:30pm - 3:30pm; Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30am – 11:30am. These are times set aside where one of our career services coordinators is on duty to answer any quick questions you may have. Check in at the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education reception desk.

Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education

RIT, Bausch & Lomb Center, 57 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623-5603

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