CO-OP QUICK START GUIDE
Packaging Science

About Co-op

Cooperative Education, or co-op, gives you the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience before you graduate! It will also help you further define your career path and fully realize the value of what you are learning in the classroom.
Cooperative education at RIT is full-time (Minimum 35 hours a week), paid employment directly related to your field of study for a minimum of a single term. The completion of two terms of co-op is required for BS degree certification.

You are eligible for co-op after you have completed the first two years of coursework in your academic program. You will alternate terms of coursework with terms of co-op during the last two years of your program.

Getting Ready For The Job Search

To prepare for the co-op job search process, attend the Packaging Science Career Seminar class to learn how to develop the tools (e.g. resume and cover letter) and the job search strategies (application and interview techniques) to undertake your search. You will also learn how to use RIT Job Zone, the online job posting service available through the student page of our site. You will be able to review and apply to co-op job postings and on-campus interview opportunities through Job Zone.

How Your Career Services Coordinator Helps

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 individual career services coordinator for personalized service as well as through regularly offered seminars and workshops. Career services coordinators work closely with your academic department and foster relationships with employers and develop employment opportunities. We are here to assist you in securing a co-op job and support you while you are working. Use the staff list on our site to identify your career services coordinator.

When To Begin The Job Search

It's never too early to begin your co-op job search! Starting 2 terms before you are scheduled to co-op will prepare you to submit your resume to employers who require early resume submission. The term right before you co-op is typically the busiest with resume submissions, interviews and related job search activities.

Create A Profile On RIT Job Zone And Upload Your Resume

RIT Job Zone is the web-based system used by the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education and selected employers to post co-op job opportunities. (You will use this same system later on to search for full-time positions upon completion of your degree). Login to Job Zone at www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/students using your RIT computer account and password. Complete your profile and store your resume in the system. Developing a new resume is easy: start by reading through the Intro To Resume Writing page of our site (www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/resume-writing). That page also provides you with samples for inspiration. Have your career services coordinator review your draft so that it is error-free and effective.

Learning About And Applying To Job Opportunities

Using Job Zone, you can view job descriptions and apply to all positions for which you are qualified. Create a search agent to receive notification of new job openings that match your job search profile and apply with a click of a button! Pay attention to the requirements listed by the employer. Some employers will direct you to submit your resume through the company web site – be sure to follow these directions carefully. Keep your options open and avoid limiting yourself to a specific employer or geographic location.

Employer on-campus information sessions, interviewing schedules and special events are also posted on Job Zone. You can also view the details of upcoming career fairs and related activities, including workshops on job search topics.

Broadening Your Job Search

The best job search is a comprehensive one. RIT Job Zone is *only one* source of co-op 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 recommend checking our Web Resources page (www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/resources/packaging)
Apply for positions found "on your own" and keep a record of your job applications.

You should always continue your search until you have been offered and accepted a position!

Prepare For Interviews

Brush up on interviewing skills and attend mock interview programs to prepare for the real thing. For sample interview questions, typical interview formats and interviewing tips, please see our interviewing page: (www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/interviewing). 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. Make sure you have appropriate interview attire and arrive for the interview 15 minutes before scheduled time.

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.
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 on your Job Zone Profile under the Privacy Tab).

Reporting Your Co-op Job 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 co-op credit:

1. Report your co-op placement information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education through our student page. See the left hand column under "Report Your Co-op Job" and complete the online form.

2. Register on SIS: All students must register for co-op on the RIT Student Information System (SIS), following the same process used to register for academic courses. See the Course listings for the appropriate course number for co-op. If you find a co-op on your own, be sure to discuss with the Packaging Department to make sure it meets department approval.

International Students
STEP 1:
- Must obtain work authorization from International Student Services (ISS) before going on CPT (Curricular Practical Training) or co-op!
  You will be getting work authorization after:
- You have been maintaining full-time student status for 9 months and
- You have obtained academic department approval for CPT
- You have registered for CPT in SIS and, students must also have
- Registered their job on the Student page of our Career Services website

STEP 2:
- International students must bring their job offer letter to ISS to obtain off-campus work authorization which means getting a new I-20 from ISS (www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/iss/) specifying employer name, dates of employment and location of employment.

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.

Your Co-op Evaluation – Receiving Credit
To receive a "Satisfactory " ("S") grade for co-op on your transcript, the following evaluation documents must be completed online for the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education:
1. *Employer Evaluation* of your performance. A link to a customized evaluation form is emailed to your employer by the co-op office during the midpoint of each term you are on co-op.
2. *Student Co-op Work Report.* This report is available to you via our Student web page during the midpoint of each term you are on co-op.

You can access a record of your co-op history, submitted evaluations and work reports (if applicable), through the student page of our site.

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.

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

Students who co-op in Rochester may stay in RIT housing. Students who co-op out of town are typically responsible for finding their own housing near the employer's location. Some companies provide housing assistance in the form of subsidies or housing allowances, or space in locations they own or rent for this purpose. Most employers will at least provide a list of apartments or housing options to assist students.

Students who return from co-op are guaranteed on-campus housing, *if they were in RIT housing prior to leaving for co-op*, however, preferences are not guaranteed. RIT Housing Operations communicates with students via email and provides information on how to apply for housing when you return to campus finweb.rit.edu/housing/.

While You Are On Co-op

Stay connected with your career services coordinator. Call or email us if you have any questions or concerns, or just to tell us how things are going! You will receive an email from your academic department and an invitation to our office Welcome Back From Co-op Luncheon. Remember to make the most of this opportunity to not only gain valuable work experience but also to make connections that will help you develop your career.

Appointments And Office Hours

Personalized Advisement:
Call 585-475-2301 to make an appointment with your career services coordinator who will assist you on a one-on-one basis with any aspect of your job search and related activities.

Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm; Friday: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Summer Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday.

Walk-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.