

# The "Co-op or Equivalent" Requirement

## What is a co-op?

A Cooperative Education, or co-op, experience provides the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience related to your psychology education before you graduate. Co-ops are meant to give students hands-on experiences in their field of study. The co-op is an opportunity to develop strong career skills and apply the knowledge you are learning in the classroom. An official co-op (PSYC 499) is a non-credit bearing, full-time, paid employment position directly related to psychology. Completion of a co-op (or equivalent) is a requirement of the B.S. in Psychology program at RIT.

## What does "or equivalent" mean?

In the Psychology program, students may meet the co-op requirement by completing a co-op (PSYC 499), an internship (PSYC 498), or an undergraduate research experience (PSYC 550). Co-op equivalents differ from co-ops in specified ways, such as being unpaid. Throughout this handout, the term 'co-op' is used to mean 'co-op or equivalent' unless otherwise specified. See the diagram on the reverse side for more details.

## How do I find a co-op?

Meet with your faculty mentor to discuss potential opportunities as early as possible (at least one year prior to the planned co-op). You can also talk to other psychology faculty as well; this is vital if you want to set up an undergraduate research experience.

Attend the Internship Search Workshop for CLA majors or contact the CLA Career Services Coordinator; both are offered through the Office of Co-op and Career Services

Search regular job sites (i.e., Indeed, Monster, etc.) for jobs that fit the co-op timeframe.

Visit the Psychology Co-op and Career Center (Eastman 2378) to browse lists of prior student co-ops.

Directly connect with individuals at relevant workplaces or organizations in your community to discuss potential co-op opportunities.

## How do I know if a placement qualifies?

All placements (co-op or equivalent) must be at least 350 hours, require you to do applied work, and be directly related to psychology. You should try to find a position that provides you with hands-on experiences in psychology that you have not had before. If your preferred co-op is not obviously and directly relevant to your education in psychology, then you need to clearly demonstrate how your supervisor can teach you the psychological principles of the experience you are obtaining. Final determination is made by the Co-op coordinator and/or the department chair.

## How do I prepare for and complete co-op?

1. You must first complete at least two years worth of coursework. Students are strongly encouraged to complete co-op in the summer.
2. Locate a potential co-op (see below). Complete the approval form on the psychology department website and submit to [psychology@rit.edu](mailto:psychology@rit.edu) for approval. This step should be completed at least 1 month prior to the start of the summer semester (or semester when you'll be working).
3. You should be automatically enrolled in the relevant class (PSYC 498, 499, or 550). Double-check in SIS
4. Register your co-op in the Office of Co-op and Career Services system by going to <http://www.rit.edu/reportco-op> and completing the form on this site. This is required for co-ops and internships (499 and 498), but not for undergraduate research experience (550).
5. Upon completion of your co-op, you will be directed to complete a summary of your work experience.
6. Finally, your employer will receive a request to complete an evaluation of your job performance. This request will be sent by the Handshake System.

For more details, visit the psychology department website.



# Does it count for co-op?

*A Flowchart for the Confused*

Start Here

