CO-OP QUICK START GUIDE
Architecture

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 paid employment directly related to your field of study. It can be full-time or part-time as long as it meets the minimum requirement of 350 hours. All students must be in *good academic standing* to be eligible to participate in RIT's co-op program.

You are eligible for co-op after you have completed one year of coursework in your academic program. Co-op generally occurs during the summer but can occur on a part-time basis while you are taking courses during the academic year. However, it is recommended that you not work more than 12 hours per week while carrying a course load of no more than 15 credit hours.

Getting Ready for the Job Search

To prepare for the co-op job search process, you should attend the co-op meeting held by the Architecture Program to learn how to develop the tools (e.g. resume, cover letter, and portfolio) and the job search strategies (application and interview techniques) to undertake your search. You will also learn how to use Handshake, the online job posting database available through the student page of our site. The Architecture meeting is offered to all students late in the fall and again early in the spring semester.

How Your Career Services Coordinator Helps

A career services coordinator is assigned to the Architecture program to assist students with the job search process. You can meet with your individual coordinator for personalized service as well as attend regularly offered seminars and workshops. Career services coordinators work closely with your academic department and foster relationships with employers and develop employment opportunities. To look up your career services coordinator, go to the Career Services Home page and select "Staff Directory"; then enter your program in the search field. We are here to assist you in securing a co-op position and remain available to you and your employer while you are on co-op.

When to Begin the Job Search

It's never too early to begin your co-op job search! For full-time co-op jobs, start in the Fall semester before you are scheduled for co-op and prepare to submit your resume to employers who require early resume submission. The semester right before your co-op is typically the busiest with resume submissions, interviews and related job search activities. If you plan to complete co-op on a part-time basis, you can start your search at any time.

Create A Profile on Handshake and Upload Your Resume

Handshake is the web-based system used by the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education and selected employers to post both co-op and full-time job opportunities. Login to Handshake at http://rit.joinhandshake.com 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 Handshake, you can view job descriptions and apply to all positions for which you are qualified. 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 Handshake. 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. Handshake 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. Apply for positions found "on your own" and keep a record of your job applications. Two additional sources of job listings are the Rochester Chapter of the American Institute of Architects: www.aiaroc.org and usajobs.com.

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). Make sure you have appropriate interview attire and arrive for the interview 15 minutes before scheduled time. Research employers and practice, practice, practice. 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, verbally or in writing, 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 in Handshake under the Resources tab).

Reporting Your Co-op Job and Registering for Co-op

Generally, any job in the architecture, engineering, and construction industry is acceptable, however you need Department of Architecture approval for the job to count towards your co-op requirement. It is recommended that you get verbal approval from the Department of Architecture co-op coordinator for a job before you start discussing job offers with a potential employer. To ensure that you will receive the appropriate co-op credit for each term you will be on co-op be sure to:

1. Get approval from the co-op coordinator for your co-op job by submitting a Co-op Approval Form with the offer letter attached to it.
2. Report your co-op information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education using www.rit.edu/ReportCo-op. 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
3. Register on SIS: Contact your academic department to be registered for: ARCH-699 Co-op Architecture.

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/

Your Co-op Evaluation – Receiving Credit

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

To receive a "Satisfactory" ("S") grade for co-op on your transcript, the following evaluation documents must be completed and returned to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education, and approved by your academic department for each academic term that you are on co-op. A double block requires a separate employer evaluation and student work report for each term.

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 through our office website, on the Student page. Complete this form during the midpoint of each term you are on co-op. You can also access a record of your co-op history, submitted evaluations and work reports through the student page of our site. You will get a reminder email during the midpoint of each co-op term.

International Students

1. Report your employment information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education through the student page www.rit.edu/ReportCo-op
2. Register for co-op or internship with your academic department in the SIS system.
3. 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.

How Financial Aid Works While You Are on Co-op

While you are enrolled for a co-op assignment, you are not charged RIT tuition for the semester. Therefore, with the exception of the Federal Pell Grant, you are not eligible to receive financial aid for the co-op semester. If you are eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant for your co-op Semester, this grant will credit to your student account after the drop/add period for the semester and after you register your co-op on the Registrars' system and report your co-op on Handshake. Financial aid includes federal and private alternative loans as well as grants and scholarships. 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, you should 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 about 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 or to just tell us how things are going!

Appointments and Office Hours

Personalized Advisement

Log in to Handshake or 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-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