

Experiential Education Options

College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

Experiential education has been a part of RIT's tradition of a career-focused education. It gives students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real-world experiences apart from their academic environment. This valuable experience builds on their educational foundation, at the same time, confirming and clarifying career goals. In the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences there are several options for experiential education.

➤ WHAT IS CO-OP?

Co-op or cooperative education is typically full-time, paid employment that directly related to a student's major, lasting one or two consecutive terms. (Fall, spring, or summer semesters *each* equal one term; intersession is *not* counted as a term). A co-op is a type of experiential education that allows students to gain valuable experience that helps clarify career goals, hone skills, and at the same time earn a salary. Students register for co-op just like they would a course and it will appear on their transcript with a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade. Students are not charged tuition for co-op.

Who Can Co-op In CIAS?

BS	All majors -- mandatory (<i>except Motion Picture Science which is optional</i>)
BFA	All majors -- optional
MFA	All majors -- optional
MS	All majors -- optional

Eligibility

Undergraduate Students must be in good academic standing with a minimum of a 2.5 GPA and have completed their sophomore year. Students are *not* eligible for co-op after they have completed all their degree requirements.

Graduate Students must be in good academic standing with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and have completed one academic year. Students are *not* eligible for co-op after they have completed all their degree requirements. Total blocks of co-op should not exceed one year or three terms (fall, spring, or summer semesters *each* equal one term; intersession is *not* counted as a term).

➤ WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship course exposes students to the professional environment through outside job opportunities with an acceptable organization/agency/company in their field. Students will work under the guidance of a manager (ex.: artist, art director, creative director, senior graphic designer, product development manager or marketing communications manager) and perform work that is educational and meaningful for their short-term academic goals as well as their long-range career preparation. Documentation of the experience is required and a final review is obtained from the employer. The appointed faculty advisor will meet with the student upon completion for final evaluation for a grade. Students must obtain pre-approval from their faculty advisor by completing the Internship Approval Form. Credit earned is typically applied towards elective credits.

➤ CO-OP VS 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 experience is tied to a student's academic record. As long as a job meets the definition of co-op or internship at RIT it does not matter what the employer calls the position. A student's career services coordinator in Office of Career Services & Co-op is available as a resource to help them work through the options.

Academic credit (which incurs tuition charges) is the main difference between co-op and internship.

Based on a student’s circumstances, if they need academic credit, then they may choose to register the experience as an internship. If they do not need academic credit, then they may choose to register for co-op, which is tuition-free.

➤ **INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Curricular Practical Training (“CPT”)

Work experiences which are an integral part of an academic program are considered "curricular practical training." These experiences may include alternate work/study programs, internships, cooperative education, and practicum experiences. To be eligible for CPT, students must receive course credit or be in a recognized co-op program.

To apply for Curricular Practical Training, international students are required to do the following:

- 1) Register for co-op or internship with their academic department in SIS.
- 2) Report their employment information to the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education through the student page of the site.
- 3) Additional permission to participate in curricular practical training must be granted by the International Student Services office, prior to the employment start date. Students must provide ISS with a copy of their job offer letter, and will receive a new SEVIS I-20 with CPT Authorization.
- 4) Students interested in participating in curricular practical training should make an appointment to see an ISS advisor.

➤ **EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION OPTIONS IN CIAS**

Qualifying Work, Compensation, Opportunities, Tuition, Approval, Registration and Reporting, Financial Aid, Evaluation, Grading

	Mandatory Co-op Full-time	Optional Co-op Full-time	Internship Credit-bearing
Qualifying Work	Related experience. Full-time (minimum 35 hours per week), the length of a term.	Related experience. Full-time (minimum 35 hours per week), the length of a term.	Related experience. Part-time or full-time, length of a term.
Compensation	Paid.	Typically paid. (Exceptions must be approved by academic department).	Paid or unpaid.
Opportunities	Jobs – students can search through co-op job listings through Office of Career Services & Co-op site (RIT Job Zone) or find on own.	Jobs – students can search through co-op job listings through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site (RIT Job Zone) or find on own.	Academic department may have leads, students can search listings through the Office of Career Services & Co-op site (RIT Job Zone), or find on own.
Tuition	No tuition charged for co-op.	No tuition charged for co-op.	Tuition charged for credit hours the same as any other course. <i>Note: For more info, students should visit Student Financial Services Billing Information.</i>

Approval	Pre-approval through academic department is required.	Academic department approval is not required.	Pre-approval through academic department is required.
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	Mandatory Co-op Full Time	Optional Co-op Full Time	Internship Credit-bearing
Registration and Reporting	<p>Registration and reporting a co-op is required prior to the start of the co-op. SIS registration is done through the student's academic department.</p> <p>Reporting employment is done through the Office of Career Services & Co-op web site.</p> <p><i>Note: Full time student status is maintained (as relates to housing, Pell Grants, gym, etc.).</i></p>	<p>Registration and reporting a co-op is required prior to the start of the co-op. SIS registration is done through the student's academic advisor in Student Services.</p> <p>Report employment through the Office of Career Services & Co-op web site.</p> <p><i>Note: Full time student status is maintained (as relates to housing, Pell Grants, gym, etc.).</i></p>	<p>Receive approval in advance by faculty advisor. SIS registration is done through the student's academic department.</p> <p><i>Note: A student must be registered for the class during the same semester in which the work occurs.</i></p>
Financial Aid	<p>Typically students do not get financial aid as they are not paying tuition. Exception may be Pell Grants.</p> <p><i>Note: Students should meet with their financial aid counselor to verify this information as it relates to their aid or to discuss any questions they may have related to this topic.</i></p>	<p>Typically students do not get financial aid as they are not paying tuition. Exception may be Pell Grants.</p> <p><i>Note: Students should meet with their financial aid counselor to verify this information as it relates to their aid or to discuss any questions they may have related to this topic.</i></p>	<p>Financial aid status would stay the same.</p> <p>If credit hours exceed 18 credits additional charges will be assessed.</p> <p><i>Note: Students should meet with their academic advisor and financial aid counselor to verify this information as it relates to their aid or to discuss any questions they may have related to this topic.</i></p>

<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Initiated by the Office of Career Services & Co-op evaluation system. Employer is sent a Work Evaluation that they must complete and submit online. Student is sent a Work Report, completion is required. Academic department chair (or assigned faculty) has access to review.</p>	<p>Initiated by the Office of Career Services & Co-op evaluation system. Employer is sent a Work Evaluation that they complete online. Student is sent a Work Report complete about their experience. Career services coordinator in the Office of Career Services & Co-op and academic department has access to review.</p>	<p>Currently initiated by student's academic department.</p> <p>Evaluation from employer or samples of student work with written summary and meeting with faculty advisor required to receive a letter grade.</p>
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	Mandatory Co-op Full Time	Optional Co-op Full Time	Internship Credit-bearing
Grading	<p>Managed by academic department chair or assigned faculty. Appears on transcript with assigned Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade.</p> <p>The academic department assigns grade based on Employer Work Evaluation and the completed Student Work Report.</p>	<p>Managed by career services coordinator in the Office of Career Services & Co-op. Appears on transcript with a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade.</p> <p>A Satisfactory grade is given if student successfully completes the co-op.</p>	<p>Managed by academic department chair or assigned faculty. Receive grade and credit hours.</p> <p><i>Note: Credit can only be awarded during the semester in which the work experience occurs, consistent with RIT policy.</i></p>