

# 1. COOPERATIVE EDUCATION OVERVIEW IN THE EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DUE TO COVID-19.

**-VALID FOR SUMMER SEMESTER 2019/20 ONLY-**

## 1.1. Introduction to cooperative education

The purpose of cooperative education program is to help you better understand how the real business world outside of the classroom functions. The co-op program at RIT Croatia provides you with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop practical skills through work experience that will be necessary to build your future career. Work experience and business relationships gained on co-op will become very valuable when you graduate and start searching for a job. **The co-op program is mandatory for every student.** Thus, you are advised to plan ahead and find your co-op. **RIT Croatia will facilitate many co-op opportunities, but ultimately the responsibility of finding and completing a co-op rests with you.**

## 1.2. Cooperative education partners

There are **three main partners in every cooperative education program: employers, students and the educational institution.** In order for co-op program to be successful, all three parties play an important role and derive substantial benefits from the program.

### 1.2.1. RIT Croatia's roles and responsibilities

**RIT Croatia functions as a liaison between students and the business community.** The Career Services Office is responsible for the management component of the cooperative education program, including following:

- Assistance in the co-op search process/career-related concerns;
- Individual meetings with students and assisting with CV/cover letter preparation, practicing interviewing skills, career advising;
- Providing workshops, seminars and guest speakers that cover a wide range of topics;
- Registering and evaluating students' cooperative education;
- Conducting co-op checks and monitoring students' performance during the co-op term;
- Providing guidance to students on work-related matters;
- Promoting the benefits of the academic and co-op program to perspective employers.

### 1.2.2. Students' roles and responsibilities

Your main role is to **take responsibility for finding and completing the co-op program** in order to further professional career development, including following:

- When working on co-op, you are an ambassador for RIT Croatia, thus it is crucial that you fulfill the contractual obligations and act professionally at all times;
- Optimizing the learning opportunities that appear;

- Fulfill the co-op program as per RIT Croatia co-op policies (this handbook and Cooperative Education Bylaw/*Pravilnik o stručnoj praksi*). Cooperative Education Bylaw is not applicable to summer semester 2019/20 due to COVID'19 pandemics, for this summer only handbook policies are in place);
- Fulfill necessary co-op requirements before graduation;
- Use the co-op experiences to evaluate specific organizations as prospective employers and focus on the right career choice.

### 1.2.3. Employers' roles and responsibilities

The prospective **employer serves as an educator in the workplace:**

- Ensuring appropriate co-op positions that match student's field of study;
- Providing students and RIT Croatia Career Services Office with appropriate co-op guidance and performance evaluation;
- Host a visit from a Career Services Office representative during the co-op term (applicable for traditional, in company co-op assignments);
- Virtual reporting meetings with the Career Services Office representative (applicable for project based co-op assignments);
- Enable students to complete their co-op requirements during the required time of the year ensuring the work tasks that match students' academic and work experience level.

### 1.3. Frequently asked questions

**Q:** *What type of work qualifies for co-op?*

**A:** The co-op position has to be related to your field of study and match your previous work experience level (if you have any). If you obtain a co-op position on your own, you need to submit the offer letter to the Career Services Office (before accepting the actual job). Once your co-op is approved, you may continue with the co-op registration process.

**Q:** *Am I granted a co-op?*

**A:** No. The co-op program is mandatory at RIT Croatia and the responsibility of finding and completing the co-op rests with you. Also, you are not directly placed into a co-op position, but rather you apply and go through the same hiring process you will have once you start looking for a job after graduation (which is great practice). The Career Services Office will facilitate many co-op opportunities and help you with the search and placement procedure.

**Q:** *What is the length of a co-op?*

**A:** The minimum co-op requirement per single co-op block is at least ten weeks at 40 hours per week (total of 400 working hours over the course of ten weeks).

Summer 2019/20 adjustment: Due to the extenuating circumstances with COVID-19, the minimum co-op requirement is 7 weeks, full time work (applicable only for summer 2019-20 as pandemics adjustment).

However, all students who are completing the co-op in summer 2020 are encouraged to work 10 weeks if given the opportunity.

**Q:** *Do I receive a credit for co-op?*

**A:** Standard academic credit is not given for co-op. However, you will receive a grade for a registered co-op. Based on the employer evaluation and co-op requirements, you can get two grades: “S”-satisfactory or “F”-failure. You will receive grade “S” if the minimum co-op requirements have been met and employer evaluation is satisfactory. You will receive grade “F” if the minimum co-op requirements have not been met and if: a) employer evaluation is unsatisfactory; b) Career Services Office witnesses that during a co-op check you are not working at your registered coop; c) you do not follow the reporting procedure for the project based co-op assignment.

**Q:** *How much do I get paid?*

**A:** Not all co-ops are paid and this varies from employer to employer. The level of co-op salary also differs and it is ultimately up to the employer to decide. Mostly, employers base it upon comparable co-op salaries and a candidate's experience. As a benchmark, below you may find the hourly rates of co-op salaries from Student Centre under regular circumstances: Administrative jobs approximately 15-25 kn; Restaurant jobs app 16-18kn; Tourism app 16-25kn; Sales app 14-18kn; IT app 15-30kn. In the extraordinary circumstances and due to the COVID-19 it is expected that many coop placements will be unpaid, especially project based coop.

**Q:** *What happens if I do not get the co-op placement?*

**A:** You are advised to contact the Career Services Office as soon as you feel concerned about your co-op placement. We will evaluate the co-op search, make suggestions, and provide additional service that will assist you in meeting your goals. Please make sure you address your concerns with Career Services Office immediately when you experience any difficulties and at least two months before the final possible co-op start date, so we can look into assisting you.

**Q:** *When can I start with my co-op placement in summer 2020?*

**A:** The earliest date to start the co-op in summer 2020 is May 18<sup>th</sup> if the student will not be enrolled in the Maymester or in June mini-mester. The last possible date to start with the co-op and complete 7 weeks by the beginning of the next Academic year is July 6<sup>th</sup> 2020.

## **2. ADJUSTED CO-OP MODELS AVAILABLE IN SUMMER SEMESTER 2019/2020 DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMICS**

In regular circumstances traditional format of the co-op placement is required. Students are required to work from employer's premises, minimum co-op length is 10 weeks and students need to work full time.

Due to COVID-19 alternative co-op formats will be approved for summer 2019/20 only:

- **Traditional co-op format (self- found or through Career Services Office)** - regular working assignments from employer's office premises;
- **Remote co-op format (self- found or through Career Services Office)**- regular working assignments for employer but from remote premises;
- **Project based co-op format (self- found or through Career Services Office)** - working on a project-based assignment that substitutes for co-op work assignment. The project assignments will be provided by employers and work will be done from remote premises if not requested differently by the employer;
- **Entrepreneurial experience co-op format (self- found)** - working in a self-found, established business. The entrepreneurial co-op assignment has to adhere to certain standards and will be assessed and on a case-by-case basis;
- **Faculty- student research co-op format** - working on an extensive research project with a faculty member(s). It is not related to courses, such as Senior Development project, Event Management class project etc. Valid for students who have or find extensive, full time research opportunities on their own.

### 3. RIT Croatia COOPERATIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

#### 3.1. IB and IT/WMC programs: Co-op policies

Cooperative education is mandatory for all undergraduate IB and IT/WMC students, and **it begins after you have completed the first two years of coursework in the academic program (when you have earned a minimum of 55 credits).**

The IB and IT/WMC undergraduate students must complete the co-op program based on the following criteria:

- **Complete two co-op blocks in summer semesters: first after the Sophomore year and second after the Junior year.**
- To be eligible for co-op, student must:  
**Achieve Junior-level student status with the spring semester prior to the start of cooperative education (with at least 55 credits earned);**  
 If you have not achieved Junior-level status (have less than 55 credits) you will not be eligible to fulfill the co-op requirements;  
 Be in good academic standing (if you are on academic suspension you are not eligible to complete the co-op requirement until you are back from the suspension and until you improve your academic standings);  
 Have at least one academic term remaining in the program before graduation;  
 When taking a *Leave of Absence* - you are not eligible to complete co-op.

*IB and IT/WMC cooperative education program policies:*

- **All IB and IT/WMC students are required to complete the cooperative education after their Sophomore year but prior to their final academic term;**

- **No academic credit is granted for the co-op, but formal recording of the co-op is made on your transcript indicating grade “S” or “F”;**
- **You will not be awarded with the BS degree unless all co-op requirements have not been met;**
- Your co-op position has to be approved on behalf of the Career Services Office before you start with the program- to ensure the co-op is in line with your major and degree program;
- IB Students: ensure that chosen co-op has an international component (either working abroad or working for domestic company that has branches worldwide);
- In certain situations, it may be appropriate for the co-op experience to be waived from your degree requirements. This may occur when you show evidence of having met the co-op objectives through prior work experiences (a minimum 3 years of full time employment related to your major). Review of these requests is on an individual basis and must be approved by the Career Services Office and Associate Dean. For more details on the co-op waiver you should visit the Career Services Office.

### **3.2. HTM program: Co-op policies**

Cooperative education is mandatory for all undergraduate Hospitality and Tourism Management students and **it begins after you have completed the first year of coursework in your academic program (when you have earned a minimum of 27 credits).**

The HTM undergraduate students must complete the co-op program based on the following criteria:

- **Complete three co-op blocks in summer semesters: first after the Freshman year, second after Sophomore year and third after Junior year.**

- To be eligible for co-op, student must:

**Achieve Sophomore-level student status with the spring semester prior to the start of cooperative education (with at least 27 credits earned);**

If you have not achieved Sophomore-level status (have less than 27 credits) you will not be eligible to fulfill the co-op requirements;

Be in good academic standing if you are on academic suspension you are not eligible to complete the co-op requirement until you are back from the suspension and until you improve your academic standings);

Have at least one academic term remaining in the program before graduation;

When taking a *Leave of Absence* - you are not eligible to complete co-op.

*Hospitality and Tourism Management cooperative education program policies:*

- **All HTM students are required to complete the cooperative education after their Freshman year but prior to their final academic term;**
- **No academic credit is granted for the co-op, but formal recording of the co-op is made on your transcript indicating grade “S” of “F”;**
- **You will not be awarded the BS degree unless all co-op requirements have not been met;**
- Your co-op position has to be approved on behalf of the Career Services Office before you start with the program- to ensure the co-op is in line with your major;

- In certain situations, it may be appropriate for the co-op experience to be waived from your degree requirements. This may occur when you show evidence of having met the co-op objectives through prior work experiences (a minimum 3 years of full time employment related to your major). Review of these requests is on an individual basis and must be approved by the Career Services Office and Associate Dean. For more details on the co-op waiver you should visit the Career Services Office.

### 3.3. Co-op responsibilities: IB, HTM and IT/WMC students

*Student co-op responsibilities:*

- **Shall register the co-op properly and on time. Failing to register co-op properly and on time will result in co-op being considered invalid;**
- **Shall submit the co-op report (student and employer evaluation) timely and properly. Failing to send required co-op reports properly and on time will result in co-op being considered invalid;**
- Work in the period and on workplace indicated in the co-op registration form;
- Make sure chosen co-op is in line with the study program;
- **Make sure to earn enough co-op hours in every co-op block (a minimum of 10 weeks and 400 hours) in order for co-op to be considered valid;**
- **Make sure to work a minimum of 40 hours per week and 8 hours per day;**
- Shall prepare a suitable resume and be on-time for interviews;
- Ensure that co-op does not overlap with the academic schedule; **co-op cannot start before the final exams are over in spring semester/ has to end before the first week of classes in the fall semester;**
- **If a student is enrolled in Maymester or June mini-mester, cannot be enrolled in a co-op at the same time. In this case a student can start with a co-op as soon as Maymester/June mini-mester are completed;**
- A student cannot be registered for co-op and for regular semester (Fall, Spring or Summer) classes at the same time;
- If a student decides to work during the academic semester (while scheduled for classes), the work hours cannot be counted towards a registered co-op;
- **Self-found co-op's:** in case a student finds co-op on his/her own, the co-op has to be approved by the Career Services Office before a student can formally accept the co-op and proceed with the co-op registration.

### 3.4. Cooperative education registration process

#### 3.4.1. Registering cooperative education

After you have accepted a co-op offer, you have to report your co-op information to the Career Services Office and notify the Office that you have successfully found co-op placement.

Before the beginning of a co-op semester, Career Services Office will inform you about the procedure and deadline of co-op registration.

You need to follow the procedure and submit required form(s) by the given deadline(s).

**There are two different procedures for co-op approval and registration:**

- **Co-op placement found through RIT Croatia:** The first form you will have to submit is the co-op registration form, which has to be properly signed and stamped by the employer and include accurate information. Only a properly completed registration will be taken into account and you will receive the appropriate co-op credit;
- **Self-found co-op placements:** The first form you will have to submit is the co-op offer letter from your employer, which has to contain all the information about your co-op placement:
  - a. **Offer letter for Traditional/Remote work/Entrepreneurial co-op placement offer should contain the following information:** *dates of your placement (start/end date and number of working hours per week), detailed position description, company/department, location of your co-op, mentor's position and name.* The offer letter has to be properly signed and stamped by the employer and include accurate information. Once the Career Services Office approves your co-op, you can proceed with the co-op registration process. In this case, co-op registration form is the second form you will have to submit (it has to be properly signed and stamped by the employer and include accurate information).
  - b. **Offer letter for Project based co-op placement should contain the following information:** *project description and purpose, project timeline, desired project goal, project leader name, student's role on the project, student's responsibilities on the project, expected project duration and student's expected daily working hours.*

**If the project-based assignment is facilitated on behalf of the Career Services Office, employers will be submitting this document to the Office directly.**

**If the project-based assignment is self-found one, the student should submit this documents to the Office.**

The offer letter has to be properly signed and stamped by the employer and include accurate information. Once the Career Services Office approves your project based co-op, you can proceed with the co-op registration process. In this case, co-op registration form is the second form you will have to submit (it has to be properly signed and stamped by the employer and include accurate information).

**You need to make sure the following is completed for the registration process:**

- Any registration submitted after the given deadline will result in the co-op being considered invalid: **co-op registration is entirely your responsibility, so it is imperative to pay attention to registration deadlines;**
- **In case you are doing your co-op for one employer but from different or remote locations- this needs to be clearly indicated in the registration form** (exact location matched with appropriate dates);
- Co-op registration form needs to contain accurate information: date and location of co-op, company and mentor with contact details, description of co-op position;
- **If for any reason you plan to change co-op placement during the co-op semester you need to advise the Career Services Office beforehand for prior approval;**
- **You can take a vacation during the co-op period** only if your mentor is taking a vacation and there is no other person in the company who might mentoring you. The vacation period **cannot be**

**longer than two weeks.** If you were on vacation during the co-op period, your co-op needs to be extended in order to fulfill 10 weeks requirement (or min 7 week requirement for summer 2019/20);

- When taking/registering for a *Leave of absence* you cannot register for co-op at the same time;
- When on academic suspension you cannot register for co-op;
- If you do not meet co-op requirements (minimum number of credits needed before the start of a co-op) you cannot register for co-op.

Please be reminded that **in case you do not submit co-op registration properly and on time, you will not get credit for cooperative education** and will not be able to graduate until you make up the missing block(s) of cooperative education.

### **3.4.2. Cooperative education grading**

In order to receive a grade for a registered co-op, two report forms must be submitted to the Career Services Office: Student Evaluation Report and Employer Evaluation Report. This is valid for all co-op options students participate in summer 2019/20. These forms should be filled out at the end of the co-op. Career Services Office will inform all students in a timely manner when the report forms are due (please make sure to follow the given deadlines and submit your reports on time). In case you are unable to submit your reports by the given deadline for some reason, please make sure to notify the Career Services Office before the official submission deadline ends.

Notifications about the official deadlines will be sent during the co-op semester **via e-mail, so it is crucial that you regularly check your RIT Croatia e-mail accounts.**

**Additionally valid for summer 2019/20 only:** Depending on a co-op model (traditional, remote, project-based, entrepreneurial, research) there will be additional reports that students will need to submit during the course of their co-op. Once a student decides which co-op model to move with, all reports will be shared by Career Services Office before the co-op start. Each co-op model has different reporting forms and structures.

**In order for a student to be graded with an S grade, all forms have to be submitted to the Career Services Office by the given deadlines (offer letter, registration, reports during the co-op and evaluation forms).**

There are two grades you can get for your co-op: S (satisfactory) and F (failure):

- **S** if a minimum co-op requirements (a minimum of 7 weeks and approximately 280 hours in summer semester 2019/2020 only) have been met and if you submit all reports within the given deadline;
- **F** if a minimum co-op requirements have not been met; if report forms are unsatisfactory or if during the random co-op checks Career Services Office cannot witness you are working for the registered company.

### 3.4.3. Cooperative education monitoring visits

#### A. Traditional/Entrepreneurial co-op placements - monitoring

The Career Services Office conducts random co-op checks, so make sure to properly register the actual place and time of your co-op.

**If the Career Services Office checks your co-op and discovers that you are not working at the registered place, your co-op will not be counted.** Taking this into consideration, it is extremely important that you provide the correct information on the co-op registration form.

In case that during a co-op check the Career Services Office witnesses that you are working for the registered employer, but were not at the indicated location, the Career Service Office will send a written visit report and require you to provide written evidence of the co-op.

**In case you are doing a co-op for one employer but from different locations- this needs to be indicated on the registration form (exact location matched with appropriate dates), so that the Career Services Office is aware of the location.**

If for any reason you plan to change the co-op placement during the course of co-op semester, you need to advise the Career Services Office beforehand for the approval. Once the Career Services Office has been notified and co-op change has been approved, you may start working for another employer and need to send the new registration form to the Career Services Office immediately. The transfer period between two companies cannot be longer than 5 working days. If you will have a pause (5 days maximum) while changing the company during the co-op period, your co-op needs to be extended in order to fulfill min.7 weeks of the co-op requirement.

#### B. Project based/Remote/Research co-op placements – monitoring

The Career Services Office developed reporting procedures for the project-based co-op's, for students and employers to fill out, so it is imperative that you carefully read all the instructions. For the project-based, remote and research co-op, the reporting structure will vary.

If for any reason you plan to change the co-op placement during the course of co-op semester, you need to advise the Career Services Office beforehand for the approval. Once the Career Services Office has been notified and co-op change has been approved, you may start working for another employer and need to send the new registration form to the Career Services Office immediately. The transfer period between two companies cannot be longer than 5 working days. If you will have a pause (5 days maximum) while changing the company during the co-op period, your co-op needs to be extended in order to fulfill min 7 weeks of the co-op requirement.