

FINANCIAL AID & CO-OP

Questions often arise regarding the influence of participation in the Co-op program on financial aid a student receives. Co-op earnings may impact some aid sources and not others. For example, federal aid eligibility generally will not be impacted by such earnings, but state aid programs most likely will be. Rensselaer financial aid is rarely impacted by co-op earnings. If you have any questions about financial aid, we encourage you to meet with a staff member in the Office of Financial Aid before leaving for your co-op job.

Co-op students seeking financial aid upon return from their work experience are still expected to meet all financial aid filing deadlines. We will send a reminder notice about how to apply for financial aid for the 2012-2013 academic year in early January 2012 to any student currently receiving need based financial aid and has a FAFSA on file. Please note that we recommend that all students complete the 2012-2013 FAFSA by March 1st.

1. Should I notify the Financial Aid office that I am on Co-op?

No. The Center for Career and Professional Development will confirm your status with the Financial Aid Office.

2. Am I eligible for financial aid while I am away on Co-op?

Co-op students are registered as “full-time” students, taking “0” credits while on co-op. Since you are not taking classes and paying tuition, you are not eligible for any financial aid. Your time in the co-op program does not impact your future eligibility for financial aid.

3. How do I report earnings on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?

You must indicate total calendar year earnings in “the student income section of the FAFSA,” including any co-op earnings. You must also provide the dollars you earned from your co-op position under “Student’s Additional Financial Aid Information” on the FAFSA.

4. What effect could a co-op job have on my financial aid?

The income that you earn in a particular calendar year may impact the following years’ aid package (for example, income earned in 2011 could affect eligibility for aid in the 2012-2013 aid year).

5. What specific types of aid could be affected if I go on co-op?

As mentioned elsewhere, earnings from work under the co-op program generally do not impact federal aid, or Rensselaer aid. Rensselaer merit aid programs are never impacted. State awards most likely will be impacted.

6. May a student on co-op still qualify for an ROTC- RPI Room and Board Scholarship or the Rensselaer Room and Board Scholarship?

No, a student is not eligible for either of these programs as the student is not enrolled full time nor charged tuition.

7. How many credits must I take during summer school to qualify for financial aid?

With the exception of the Federal Pell Grant program, you must be at least a half-time (six credit hours) student to qualify for aid. This may be broken down

into one course each for Summer Sessions I and II.

8. How is my student contribution from earnings computed for financial aid?

The formula required by RPI to use by the Department of Education, will first look at your total annual income reported on your W2 forms. From this amount, it subtracts your reported co-op earnings, federal income taxes, an allowance for state taxes (varies by state) Social Security taxes (7.65% of your salary), and finally an income protection allowance (for basic living needs). Your student contribution from income will be 50% of the remainder.

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