Awarded Program of the Year from the National Society of Experiential Education, the Co-op Program is at the fore of contemporary experiential education pedagogy. Co-op provides students with real-world experience, confirms and refines career objectives, while bringing innovative technical and design skills to their internship work environments.

To become a Co-op Employer and hire SAIC student interns, follow the procedures below.

1. Fill out a Co-op Employer Profile form and return it to the Co-op office by fax or mail. We will review your profile and call you if we have questions. After your position has been approved, you will be mailed a contract confirming your participation in the program and confirmation of our business policies. Once the signed contract is received, we will list your position and refer qualified students to apply, on an ongoing basis.

Co-op Employer Policies: When you sign the Co-op Employer Contract you will agree to the following:

- **Work From Home** - Co-op students are **not** allowed to work remotely or from home when completing any of their required Co-op hours. Students must be working at the Co-op Employer’s workplace or work-related job site.

- **Equipment** - Co-op students are **not** allowed to use any of their personal equipment (including personal laptops, software, etc.) to complete any tasks that are related to their Co-op Internship position. You must provide a work space and all equipment, etc. that the student will need to complete their tasks during the internship.

- **Student Supervision** - We require Co-op Employers to provide supervision and mentorship to students while they develop job skills beyond those taught in the classroom. Employers must provide expertise in the field that the student is working. This supervision is integral to the student mentorship and the understanding of workplace culture and professional arts practice. Co-op students should be supervised for all of their required hours.

- **Update Your Position** - Notify the Co-op Staff any time that your internship position changes. This can include: change in student’s duties, change in address or other contact information, change in supervisor or contact person, etc.

- **Student Safety and Liability** - The Co-op Employer is expected to provide a safe, low-risk work environment for their student intern. (For more information about these requirements please contact a Co-op Staff member and/or refer to the Employer Contract.)

- **Employer/Student Orientations** - You must provide students with an orientation that includes information about hours of work, place of work, working conditions, standards of conduct and office procedures; explanation of duties, performance requirements in terms of quality, quantity, methods, and priorities, and the necessary progressive training.

- **Other Information**: The Co-op Program asks that you keep the following restrictions in mind when supervising your Co-op student. These are stipulations that help us ensure that students are obtaining a safe, professional, mentored work experience that is worthy of earning academic course credit.

- **Use of a Motor Vehicle** - Co-op students are **not** allowed to use their own or an employer provided vehicle for any purposes relating to their Co-op internship position. Students may only use their own vehicle to travel to and from their home to the Co-op Employer work site.

- **Students as Employers** - Many of our students maintain and/or start their own businesses while attending the School. Since Co-op Employers are given the responsibility of guiding, evaluating and ultimately contributing to the course credit the student receives, Co-op Employers **cannot** simultaneously attend the School of the Art Institute and be an employer with the Co-op Program (regardless of student status, degree program, age, etc.).

Note: The Cooperative Education Internship Program will recommend as many qualified students as possible for your internship; however, there can be no guarantees.
What to Expect: The following are expectations of every Co-op Employer for each semester that they hire a Co-op Student.

1. **Acknowledgement** - Once you have hired a student to work as your intern, you will be sent an acknowledgement confirming the terms of the internship that you have agreed upon with your student. This will be mailed after the start of each semester.

2. **On-Site Visits** - All Co-op students will be assigned a Faculty Advisor responsible for awarding course credit. During the semester, the Faculty Advisor will conduct a site visit to your place of employment. Site visits allow Faculty Advisors to see students perform on the job. They also provide an opportunity to speak informally with students’ supervisors. Masters of Art in Arts Administration & Policy (MAAAP) students do not have a site visit.

3. **Student Credit Timesheet** - You will be required to sign a timesheet to confirm students’ internship hours. The student must submit this for course credit. (If you are paying your student through FWS, you will also be required to sign an authorization form and bi-weekly pay timesheets.) To earn 3 course credits (the equivalent of one class), a student is required to work 210 hours during the semester. MAAAP students are required to work 225 hours during the semester.

4. **Evaluations** - At the end of the semester, you will be sent an evaluation asking you to evaluate your student and their performance by filling out a written evaluation form and returning it to the Co-op Office.

**Student Payment**: Compensation is based on one of the following options. We recommend some compensation, if possible.

- **Federal Work Study** - In order for a student to be paid through the FWS Program, you must be a not-for-profit, tax exempt organization and provide a copy of your IRS letter. Your organization will be invoiced for 25% of the student's authorized earnings, corresponding to their Co-op credit load. The student’s hourly rate is predetermined by Student Financial Services at $9.00 for undergraduate students and $9.50 for graduate students. Any hours worked over the authorized amount will be invoiced at 100%. The student is paid through the School’s student payroll system and receives a paycheck from the School. Your organization will be mailed an invoice for your portion of the wages at the end of each semester.

- **Employer Paid** - Most Co-op positions offer hourly rates of pay determined by each participating employer and generally are set in the range of $9.00 to $12.00 per hour.

- **Unpaid** - We understand if you are unable to offer an hourly rate. We will list your position and try to meet your needs. However, each student ultimately makes the decision as to what type of position they will accept.

**Student Requirements**: Students have a basic set of requirements in order to be eligible and earn their course credit for Co-op.

- **Student Eligibility & Work Requirements** - All Co-op candidates are degree seeking students enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Co-op is a class, for which students register and pay tuition. To earn 3 course credits (the equivalent of one class), a student is required to work 210 hours averaging 14 hours per week during the 15 week Fall and Spring semesters. Students work an average of 18 hours a week during the 12 week Summer semester. MAAAP students are required to work 225 hours.

- **Student’s Course Credit Requirements** - Course credit is based on five (5) points: Initial and Final Seminars, Student Evaluation, Student Timesheet, Professional Project and an updated Resume. (Note: Students are required to attend both initial and final seminars with their Faculty Advisor. If they are scheduled to work at their internship at this time, we ask that you allow them to leave in order to attend these meetings.) MAAAP students are required to write a final paper.

- **The Offer** - After you have offered an internship to a student and they have accepted, you should discuss with them the terms of the internship (i.e. how many hours/day(s) a week, etc.). Once you have agreed upon the terms of the internship, the student will need to return to the Co-op Office to register and receive the necessary student paperwork. You will then be mailed an acknowledgement at the start of the academic term to confirm the Co-op internship terms. (See Academic Calendar for term dates.)