



Focus on Rochester Institute of Technology

The Rochester Institute of Technology is noteworthy as much for its numerous programs that blend technology with art as for its more conventional engineering programs. Its 18,900 students, 15,200 of whom are undergraduates, are pursuing degrees ranging from BFAs in such fields as 3-D Digital Design, Furniture Design and Glass (to name a few) to BS degrees in a wide variety of subjects within the spheres of Business, Engineering, Science, and Photography, Film and Animation.

Hallmarks of an RIT education are hands-on experiences and opportunities to learn at the intersections of disciplines. Its most unusual division is the School for Individualized Studies where students design their own programs. The students here are creative and career-driven, looking for ways to transform their innovative thinking into practical applications.

Students who come through the Art and Design School must have strong portfolios in addition to an interest in using technology to create something with their art that is relevant to the economy and job market.

Offerings in the division of Health, Life and Medical Sciences include BS degrees in Nutrition and Exercise Science, a Physician's Assistant BS/MS, and an array of Biology-related majors including Bioinformatics and Computational Biology and Biotechnology and Molecular Science.

These latter degrees are designed to provide skills that will make students marketable immediately upon graduation, but RIT also boasts of its graduates' 70% admit rate to medical school.

For those who enjoy technology but are not up to the demands of a full engineering curriculum, RIT's College of Engineering and Technology has a popular major in Packaging Science. Graduates in this field are said to be in high demand.

The new MAGIC Spell Studios is putting RIT on the map for film and animation studies too. This 52,000-square-foot facility is where faculty and student game designers, programmers, filmmakers, and animators collaborate with industry partners.

Eighty percent of RIT's programs require "co-ops," which are paid internships. Students who do these take 5 years to earn their degree, but they can study abroad in the course of that time no matter what their major, and they graduate fully prepared to enter the workforce.

Even though the graduate programs are growing, administrators say that undergraduate teaching is the focus of this university and undergraduate research opportunities are an institutional priority. RIT's stated mission is to ensure that all students acquire skill sets beyond their particular discipline and the capacity to work with experts across many fields. They want their graduates to be innovators who will be sufficiently skilled and flexible to figure out new applications for what they have learned.

Applicants who know their general interests but are unsure what exactly they wish to major in may enter an "Exploratory" program in any of the university's divisions and delay their choice until the middle of their second semester, at which time they are guaranteed admission to whichever they select.

A sense of community is strong at RIT. The residence halls, all recently updated, are connected by tunnel with each other as well as with convenience stores, computer labs, and a multitude of dining halls and coffee shops. For those who want them, special interest and lifestyle floors as well as Greek options are available.

Hockey, which is Division I for both men and women, is the big sport on campus, RIT's equivalent of football elsewhere. Hockey games draw crowds of fans who fill the stadium. This is less true of the school's other teams, which are in Division III, but participatory athletics are popular with 50% of the students participating in intramurals.

Community service is also big at RIT, which has 300 clubs and organizations, including 29 fraternities and sororities that attract 8% of the student body. The clubs and organizations mount over 1300 events on and off campus each year. RIT also runs a shuttle bus to downtown Rochester twenty minutes away.

The RIT community is diverse and welcoming. It currently includes 2,700 international students from more than 90 countries and 2,000 students from traditionally underrepresented minorities. The university's disability services have been listed among the nation's top ten, and students at the adjacent National Technical Institute of the Deaf may cross-register at RIT. RIT also gets high marks for its friendliness to the LGBTQ community and support for transgender students.

Selectivity and admission requirements vary by program, but in general the high school record plays the largest role in admission decisions, with the SAT or ACT playing a smaller role (although for the most competitive programs a lower score can keep a student out). Admissions officers look not only at academics, but also evidence of engagement as they seek students who have been active members of their high school community.

RIT offers Early Decision I and II, November 1st and January 1st respectively, and Regular Decision January 15th.