Summer Arch

Summer Arch is a unique approach for student development and growth that prepares students to meet the multifaceted challenges of the 21st century. The Summer Arch will augment academic and experiential programs, and provide an even more robust—and transformative—educational experience for undergraduate students.

SUMMER ARCH

The Summer Arch is a restructure of the Rensselaer academic calendar that builds additional opportunities for experiential learning that complement curricular and co-curricular offerings at Rensselaer.

Rising juniors will attend a full summer semester, the Summer Arch, between their sophomore and junior years, followed by an “away” semester taken during either the fall or spring of the student’s junior year. This will allow students to take advantage of the numerous co-curricular and experiential activities available off campus, including international travel, internships, co-ops, research opportunities, and engagement in community service projects.

In 2017, Rensselaer will launch the first of two pilots of the Summer Arch, and rising juniors (members of the Class of 2019) from the School of Engineering and from select programs in other schools will have the opportunity to stay on campus and participate in the Summer Arch.

In 2018, Rensselaer will launch the second pilot, and rising juniors (members of the Class of 2020) enrolled in all schools will have the opportunity to participate in the Summer Arch. The ultimate launch will take place in 2019 and will include all members of the Class of 2021.

In most cases, matriculation to degree completion is not intended to take more than eight terms of Rensselaer attendance. To accelerate their academic progress, students may take classes elsewhere prior to enrollment at Rensselaer, obtain AP/IB credit from high school, take summer courses in subsequent summers, or some combination of these options.

MAXIMIZING RENSSLEAER’S SIGNATURE STRENGTHS

The Summer Arch will be an important element of Clustered Learning, Advocacy, and Support for Students, or CLASS. The Summer Arch enhances the Rensselaer educational experience through an academic plan of study that focuses on three specific outcomes: enhanced student-faculty interactions at a pivotal phase of the undergraduate experience; pathways for students who wish to augment their academic programs through the availability of a year-round academic calendar; and flexibility in the academic schedule for all students to explore their passions and interests in a way that positions them for future success.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is creating a distinctive approach for student development and growth, the Summer Arch and junior “away” semester, which add flexibility to the undergraduate curriculum to create The New Polytechnic graduate: a global, multicultural, and self-aware leader; a critical and creative thinker; an exceptional communicator; and an inventive and enterprising problem solver who is prepared to lead in addressing the challenges and opportunities of society.
When will I be expected to take Summer Arch?
Students in the Class of 2021 will be required to participate in the Summer Arch program in summer 2019.

Does this mean it will take more than four years to graduate?
With the exception of students in the five-year bachelor of architecture program, you should be able to graduate in eight terms at Rensselaer. To accelerate your academic progress, you may take classes elsewhere prior to enrollment at Rensselaer, obtain AP/IB credit from high school, take summer courses in subsequent summers, or some combination of these options.

What will I do on my semester “away” from Rensselaer?
You can take advantage of numerous co-curricular and experiential activities available off campus, including international travel, internships, co-ops, research opportunities, and engagement in community service projects.

Will I have help in finding a co-op or internship?
Students seeking a co-op or internship experience during their “away” semester will have the full resources of the Center for Career and Professional Development available to assist them in their search.

What if I want to study abroad?
Study abroad has become an integral part of a well-rounded undergraduate experience. The Summer Arch provides additional experiential learning opportunities for students to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures and customs. The Rensselaer Education Across Cultural Horizons (REACH) program provides semester-long study abroad and exchange opportunities, short-term and faculty-led international programs, and other international experiences such as internships and service learning.

The Summer Arch and the junior year fall or spring “away” semester will offer you other meaningful educational experiences and developmental opportunities that include the following:

- Increased options for students interested in pursuing dual majors or accelerating their academic progress, possibly pursuing co-terminal graduate degrees.
- Increased opportunities to pursue internships, co-ops, and collaborative research, as well as athletic, entrepreneurial, philanthropic, and community service activities.
- Additional experiential learning opportunities for you to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures and customs through arrangements with institutions across the globe.
- Availability of diverse intellectual and cultural opportunities over the summer months for you to explore new worlds through myriad on-campus events and programming, and off-campus events across the greater Hudson-Mohawk Region and beyond to New York, Montreal, and Boston.

SUMMER ARCH AND THE NEW POLYTECHNIC GRADUATE
For nearly 200 years, the hallmark of a Rensselaer education has been a student learning experience that incorporates a robust emphasis on developing foundational strength in a chosen field of study.