

RISD Career Center

Undergraduate Internship Discovery Grant

Summer 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Application Deadline: Thursday, April 2, 2026, 12:00 PM NOON ET

Application opens: February

Awards are announced: Mid-April

Internship to take place: Between June and August 2026

Please make careful note of the deadline date, time, and time zone. In order to be fair to all RISD applicants who submitted on time, we do not accept incomplete or late applications. It is important to not submit applications at the last minute. If you submit early and reach out to us because you have a technical issue, uploaded the wrong document, realized you made a mistake, or get stuck in any way, we can likely help you. We want you to successfully submit! It is good practice to submit 2-3 days before an application deadline. Be sure to not only start the application before the deadline but complete it. If you do not hit the submit button before the deadline time, your application will not go through and will not be accepted.

DESCRIPTION

What do you want to discover? RISD provides \$3,000 grants to undergraduate students who have secured unique summer internships that allow them to explore a specific topic or area of interest. This may be an opportunity to dive deeper into your current studies or have an experience that takes you out of your comfort zone as you expand your skills and knowledge. Your internship may expose you to innovative art and design practices beyond your studio work or lead to future impacts within your discipline. Experiences that move beyond standard internship offerings and demonstrate research and self-initiation are encouraged.

Experiences may be with companies, organizations, artist studios, and galleries among others. Internships in which students actively seek and develop the experience based on their skills and interests, rather than a "standard" internship that already exists in the organization's structure are preferred.

Of note:

- **ARTWORKS REGISTRATION:** All recipients must register their internship in Artworks by the June internship deadline and submit a final evaluation in Artworks by August. Internships can be taken not for credit but must still be registered in Artworks. Those for credit must be registered in Artworks and receive departmental approval for the credit.
- **HEALTH INSURANCE:** U.S. citizens and international students traveling outside of the U.S. will have health insurance coverage provided by RISD unless the experience is in their home country.
- **FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS:** Following U.S. government regulations, all institutional funding has to be considered in financial aid packages. If you are a recipient of financial aid and not graduating June 2026, this award may impact your financial aid package for 2026-2027. It is important that you meet with RISD Student Financial Services (SFS) to discuss the impact **BEFORE** you apply. Make an appointment with SFS at <https://sfs.risd.edu/contact>.

- **TAX IMPLICATIONS:** For tax purposes, this award is considered a fellowship, and is considered taxable income by the IRS.
*ALL Students: RISD adheres to the U.S. government tax law for all grants and fellowships offered by RISD.
*International Students: Please note that a portion for your award may be withheld and your award amount may be decreased based on IRS requirements.
 - This link provides details from RISD: <https://www.risd.edu/sites/default/files/2025-05/controllers-tax-guidance-for-fellowships.pdf>
 - This link provides details from the IRS: <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc421>

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants:

- Applicants must be currently enrolled undergraduate students. Undergraduates must be sophomore or junior status, Brown/RISD Dual Degree and Architecture students in years 2-4, or senior/5th year students who are not graduating June 2026.
- Applicants must be an enrolled RISD student the semester before the summer of the internship and returning to RISD the fall after the internship. Students graduating June 2026 are not eligible. Students graduating December 2026 or after are eligible.
- Applicants must be in good academic and community standing.
- Applicants can be of any major and work in any medium.
- Applicants of any citizenship are eligible. For international students, if the internship is in the United States and you are returning for Fall 2026, you must have Employment Authorization in the form of Curricular Practical Training (CPT) before beginning work as an intern and you must take the internship for credit.
- Students may only receive one of Undergraduate Internship Discovery Grant during their RISD career.
- Students can apply for, but can only receive, one of these grants in the same year: Maharam, Discovery, or Turner. However, students can receive the RISD Internship Support Grant along with the Discovery Grant in the same year.

Internships:

- Internships can be local, in the U.S., overseas, or in your home country. If your internship is outside your home country, it will be important to demonstrate a strong support system.
- Internships may be on-site, hybrid, or remote.
- This award will be applied to one internship experience with one organization.
- The internship can be taken for credit or non-credit. Unless you are an international student and the internship is in the United States; then it must be for credit.
- The internship must take place during the Summer, June to August.
- The internship must be at least 6 weeks, ideally 8 weeks.
- The internship must be at least 100 hours overall. 20 hours or more per week is preferred.
- Weeks/hours for Architecture students: You are highly encouraged to work a total of 280 hours if possible to meet your department's requirements; typically, this is 35-40 hours per week for 7-8 weeks.
- Internships that are arranged for by an internship placement service or through a third-party organization are not eligible. This includes any organization that requires fee-for-service, fee-for-materials, or mandatory donations to the organization.

RISD Nondiscrimination Statement: Rhode Island School of Design does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law in admission to, participation in, or administration of its educational programs and activities; in employment; or in its other programs and activities.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Please keep in mind that this is a competitive grant and funding is limited. All components of the application are considered in selecting recipients.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Application materials must be complete by the due date.
- All requirements must be met and instructions followed.
- Attention should be paid to the quality and presentation of materials. Attachments are formatted neatly and scanned documents are legible.
- Responses must answer the questions asked and must be clear, concise, and comprehensive.

STUDENT READINESS

- Articulates a solid understanding of and interest in the proposed internship site.
- Demonstrates the ability to be successful and shows interest in being challenged in new ways.
- Demonstrates initiative, creativity, and maturity.

STRENGTH AND FIT OF INTERNSHIP SITE

- Organization is prepared and qualified to create a learning environment and provide appropriate supervision.
- Organization acknowledges an understanding of the student's interests.
- Internship is arranged so the intern can contribute in meaningful ways.

ACTIVITIES & FEASIBILITY

- Activities and responsibilities are clearly described.
- The goals articulated and achievable.
- Expenses are realistic. This should be addressed in your Application Response for Expenses.
- Applicant has appropriate support in place for the internship experience.

IMPACT

- The internship provides a professional opportunity that complements the student's RISD coursework.
- The opportunity will have an impact on the student and further their work.

HYBRID/REMOTE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

- Hybrid and remote internship experiences should adhere to RISD's Guidelines for Remote Internships for an effective experience: <https://careercenter.risd.edu/guidelines-remote-internships>

APPLICATION PROCESS & COMPONENTS

- Students must fill out and submit the RISD Application online by the deadline. The link to the online application can be found at <http://careercenter.risd.edu/risd-managed-grants> The application components are:

➤ APPLICANT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC INFORMATION

➤ INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

➤ RESPONSES to the following in 1 PDF. Please include the question text as headers before your responses, and use 1 inch margins, Times New Roman 12-point font, and single spaced rows:

– ESSAY 1) What is the name, location, and services of the organization? How familiar are you with their mission? (250 word max)

– ESSAY 2) How did you find the internship? Describe how you made the connection and your communication with the organization. (250 word max)

ESSAY 3) What will be your main activities and responsibilities? (250 word max)

– ESSAY 4) What is it you want to discover from this experience? Describe if you're taking a deeper dive into your current studies or having an experience that takes you out of your comfort zone as you expand your skills and knowledge. Tell us if you will be exposed to innovative art and design practices beyond your studio work or how this experience may lead to future impacts within your discipline. Describe the impact this internship will have on you - academically, artistically, professionally, and/or personally. (250 word max)

– ESSAY 5) How are you prepared to work and live in the community where the internship is located? If you are proposing an internship outside of Rhode Island or your home state or country, describe your support system. (250 word max)

– EXPENSES) Provide an overview of your expenses and anticipated costs which may include travel, housing, meals, materials, supplies, equipment, or other related expenses. Show your expenses in a table format with columns for "Item," "Description," and "Amount." AND, do the math – include totals. (1 page max)

* Include the pay rate (hourly, weekly, monthly rate, or stipend) if applicable.

- This funding is to help you realize your proposed summer internship experience. Therefore, expenses listed should demonstrate the use of the \$3,000 during the summer to fulfill the internship.

- If your expenses are significantly over or under, please address in a short narrative below your Expenses table. Consider that this is a grant for \$3,000 and feasibility is a factor in selection.

- If your experience is hybrid or remote, you may still include housing, meals, materials, supplies, and equipment.

- This funding should NOT be applied to cover organization program participation fees or materials/equipment that benefit the day-to-day organization such as paper, printing, or items that will be staying with the organization. This funding is for you!

➤ INTERNSHIP OFFER LETTER. In order to understand commitment and feasibility, the RISD Selection Committee places value on details and structure provided by the organization in the offer letter. The offer letter, ideally on official organization/business letterhead and signed by the letter writer, should be a formal invitation from the internship supervisor and include:

- Contact information including the contact's title
- The pay rate should be included or, if unpaid, that should be noted
- The specific time period (weeks and hours)
- Indication there is a position and appropriate work for the student
- List of potential activities
- Description of potential outcomes
- Agreement to mentor/support the student and provide appropriate resources

For hybrid or remote internship experiences, the organization should review RISD's Guidelines for Remote Internships and include details for these guidelines in the offer letter on how they will support a hybrid or remote experience: <https://careercenter.risd.edu/guidelines-remote-internships>

- RESUME. Include most recent employment, community involvement, volunteer service, exhibitions, awards, achievements, and other accomplishments.
- Unofficial TRANSCRIPT. This can only be accessed on a computer; not through the mobile or iPad app.
 - 1) Go to Workday, then Menu, then Academics.
 - 2) Under Academic Records, select Generate Unofficial Transcript.
 - 3) File outputs as a PDF. Save this PDF.
 - 4) Review the transcript. Your submitted transcript should include the courses you are registered for in the Spring 2026 semester.
 - 5) Check the size of this document. The transcript file you receive is often quite large. You will likely need to compress this file considering your application cannot exceed 25MB in uploads.
 - 6) Upload this PDF into your application.

TIPS FOR APPLICANTS:

- **Each attachment can be up to 3MB, however, please note that the TOTAL upload cannot be over 25MB.**
- **Avoid submitting at the last minute. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.**
- Review the guidelines and required materials carefully before you begin the application.
- Follow all directions carefully.
- Prepare your application in advance in a word document and check your spelling. **The application form will not save your answers once you leave the page.**
- Documents/Responses within a PDF should be in the same order as listed in the guidelines. Please include the question text as headers before your responses, and use 1 inch margins, Times New Roman 12-point font, and single spaced rows.
- Attachments should be named appropriately as file names are visible to reviewers.
- After you submit you will see a submission screen and receive an email confirming a successful submission.

TIMELINE

February

- Review the application guidelines and application form carefully.
- Review the potential internship site's website and materials carefully to understand their mission, services, and language in order to articulate why you are a good fit and why they might need you.

- Prepare an outline of your skills, experiences, and interests showing the value of your work to submit to the organization.
- Make an appointment with a RISD Career Advisor to talk about your internship idea, essay responses, resume, securing the offer letter, and/or eligible expenses.
- Contact internship sites to discuss opportunities for creating or modifying an internship within their structure.
- If you are a recipient of financial aid and not graduating June 2026, make an appointment with RISD Student Financial Services (SFS) to discuss the impact this award may have on your financial aid package for 2026-2027. Make an appointment with SFS at: <https://sfs.risd.edu/contact>

March

- Draft responses to essay questions. Keep in mind the key factors in selection: readiness, strength and fit, activities and feasibility, and impact.
- If writing is not your strong suite, we suggest you reach out to the RISD Center for Arts & Language.
- Continue conversations with organizations to secure an offer letter. We recommend that you have a verbal offer from an internship site by **March 19**. This gives you time to work with your supervisor(s) on the offer letter. We recommend that you have the letter in hand by **March 26**. This gives you time to fine-tune and upload to the application by the deadline.
- Finalize essays, expenses, and all application materials.

April

- Complete the online application by **12:00pm NOON ET on Thursday, April 2, 2026**. Incomplete or late applications **WILL NOT** be accepted.

May

- Applicants will be notified of the RISD Selection Committee's decision **in mid-April**.
- International students should check in with RISD's International Student & Scholar Affairs (ISSA) Office and have their I-20 signed. If the internship is in the United States, you must have Employment Authorization in the form of Curricular Practical Training (CPT) before beginning work as an intern and you must take the internship for credit.
- Internships taken for credit must receive departmental approval.
- All recipients must register their internship in Artworks regardless of whether they are taking the internship for credit or not. Keep in mind the upcoming June internship deadline.
- After you have registered your internship in Artworks and it has been approved, and you have submitted your grant agreement, RISD Careers will issue your grant payment. You will receive your funding **AFTER** these steps and RISD payment processing. It is your responsibility to budget your grant funding as needed throughout the summer.

June-August

- Recipients engage in their internships.
- Recipients should take notes throughout their experience in order to complete a final evaluation.
- Recipients and supervisors submit final evaluations in Artworks.

RISD CONTACT

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