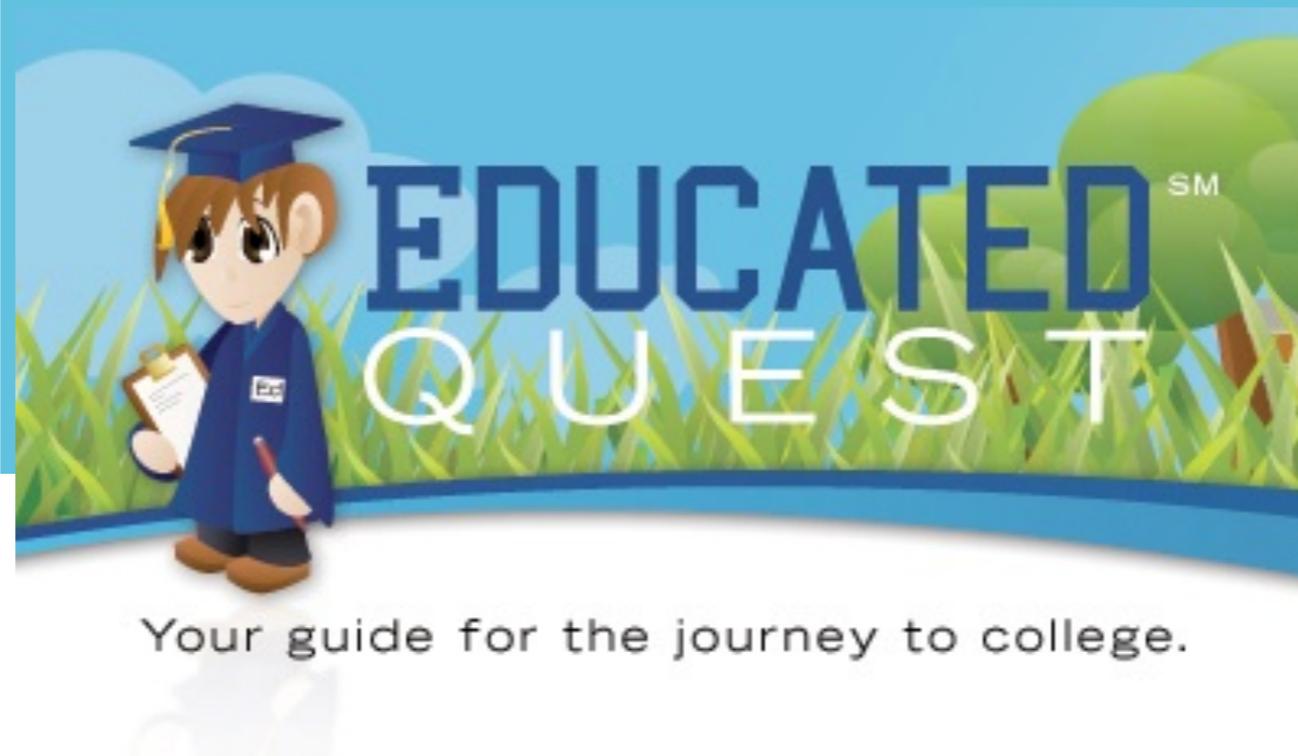


First Impressions: Drexel University



Your guide for the journey to college.

Background

**Introduction to Drexel
University**

Background

Drexel University was founded in 1891 with a \$3 million gift from financier and philanthropist Anthony Drexel. The University introduced cooperative education for all students in 1919. During the 21st century Drexel has gone through rapid expansion for a private university. In 2002, Hahnemann University, a Philadelphia-based medical institution became the Drexel University College of Medicine, College of Nursing and Health Professions, and the School of Public Health. In 2006, it established only the second law school (Northeastern's is the other) around a cooperative education model. In 2011, Drexel established an affiliation with the Philadelphia-based Academy of Natural Sciences, the nation's oldest natural science museum and research organization. In 2000 Drexel was the first university campus in the U.S. to be completely wireless.

With more than 26,000 students, including nearly 5,200 who study online, Drexel is one of the largest private universities in the U.S. Nearly 13,000 are undergraduates pursuing bachelors degrees. More than 90 percent participate in four-year or five-year cooperative education programs. There are strong upsides to cooperative education, mainly the opportunity to gain very significant work experience, and possibly an advanced degree, before receiving a bachelor's degree, although there are downsides. A fifth year adds costs and possibly a missed opportunity for full-time entry-level employment during a good economy.

Among universities that offer cooperative education Drexel is one of the few that offers it for every major. Public institutions often cross-shopped against Drexel, including Georgia Tech, Penn State and Rutgers-New Brunswick limit cooperative education to business, engineering and the sciences. Drexel, like Northeastern University in Boston and Rochester Institute of Technology in upstate New York, bases its educational model around this practice. These schools invest the most in providing career development resources to match students with the best available opportunities and to

work with the students and employers to help ensure a meaningful work experience, as opposed to clerical and “gopher” duties. Few colleges and universities do better than Drexel with respect to placing and looking out for the interests of co-op students. While other schools ask students with lower GPAs--not uncommon in the scientific and technical majors--to take classes if they cannot be placed in a co-op, Drexel is able to place all but one to two percent of eligible students in paid or unpaid assignments.

It has been relatively easy for a very good (B+/1150 to 1200 SAT) student to get into Drexel, unless s/he is interested in one of the more competitive programs such as computer science, engineering or nursing. However, it's tough to stay in. Drexel operates on a quarter system. With the exception of the summer after freshman year, all students attend school or work in their co-op assignments over four ten-week quarters with three-week breaks in between. Those who go the five year route will have two quarters of work and two quarters of school during their sophomore, pre-junior and junior years. They will take five or six courses over the ten weeks they are in school, versus the 16 weeks students take the same number of courses over a semester at Northeastern, as well as other large public and private universities.

[This grueling pace, combined with high tuition, fees and living costs has led over 30 percent of past Drexel freshman classes to transfer or drop out of school.](#) While Drexel's freshman retention rate of 84 percent and its six-year graduation rate of 65 percent appear respectable, they are much lower than Northeastern's (94 and 79 percent, respectively) and are also lower than the two larger Philadelphia-area public universities, Temple and West Chester. In addition, according to College Results Online, a database managed by The Education Trust, [Drexel's five-year graduation rate for the class that entered in 2006, the last year data was available, was 63 percent, about the same as Temple, but lower than West Chester.](#) Temple, which is in the city proper, also offers cooperative education as an option

within its business, education and engineering as well as fieldwork opportunities in its health science programs.

Drexel is changing its admissions process for 2014-15 from an easy online application to one that requires more thought and information. The intention is that prospective students will “self-select” Drexel based on what the University has to offer. The University will also require the College Board's CSS Profile for students who want to be considered for need-based financial aid. These changes are expected to reduce the number of applicants, especially those who are “stealth,” and apply without any prior contact with the school, but also increase the quality of the applicant pool. This is a step in the right direction. Providing advanced information about the available amounts for merit-based aid would be helpful. [Currently, Drexel tells little about A.J. Drexel Scholarships, although it does provide good news: students need to maintain only a 2.75 to keep them.](#)

Given the importance of cooperative education, it is no surprise that the pre-professional majors are more popular than liberal arts majors. Among undergraduates who earned degrees in 2013, the most popular majors were Mechanical Engineering, Nursing, Finance, Marketing and Civil Engineering. The Biological Sciences and Psychology were the most popular liberal arts majors. Drexel also offers majors such as Architectural Engineering and Music Business that are difficult to find at larger school, as well as a unique custom-designed major program limited to ten students each year.

Competition



**What does it take to get in?
Who decides to go?
What other schools do
applicants consider?**

Competition

It has not been hard to get into Drexel in prior years. According to *U.S. News Compass*, three-quarters of the approximately 40,600 students who applied for the class that entered in 2012 were offered admission. However, the yield rate, the percentage of accepted students who decided to enroll was less than eight percent. Approximately 43,000 people applied for the freshman class that entered in 2013. Since the class size was approximately the same, around 3,100 students, the yield rate was obviously lower. These volumes suggest that Drexel was not a first choice among most of the people who applied. They also explain why the University is moving away from the “easy” applications. The added investment in time to read them did not get the Drexel the student body it wanted.

For the new process, Drexel will have three Early Action deadlines: November 5th, December 5th and January 15th as well as Regular Decision. Admissions are considered competitively, not on a rolling basis as they have been in the past. School-based committees--Drexel has 13 undergraduate schools as well as the Perroni Honors College--will read and consider applications. Drexel will still have its own online application and also use the Common App.

Given the new process, which is expected to reduce the volume of applications for the class entering in 2015, it is wise for students interested in Drexel to apply early if they are interested in being considered for merit-based scholarships or if they wish to

be admitted to one of the more competitive programs including Architecture, Engineering, Computer Science, Media Arts and Nursing as well as the Honors College. Drexel requires all applicants to indicate a major; it's likely some programs will fill up early, especially those that lead to co-ops that pay exceptionally well, or are very hard to get at other schools.

Indication of expressions of interest in Drexel, including a campus visit as well as well-constructed essays will be more important as well. Attempts at academic rigor, including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses may be more helpful here than at most other large research universities because the work goes faster through the quarter system.

A private school with a large student body and a diverse set of majors that attracts an applicant pool this large also ends up attracting students with a wide range of SAT scores. At Drexel the middle 50 percent of the students who applied to enter in 2012 had SAT scores between 1120 and 1320, about the same as larger public universities such as Delaware, Penn State and Rutgers-New Brunswick, but better than Temple and West Chester according to *U.S. News Compass*. The average Math score was approximately 630, higher than it was for all of these schools, perhaps due to the interest in the science and technical degree programs.

While the SAT range is lower than several more selective urban universities including Boston University, Carnegie Mellon and

NYU, it is fairly high considering the volume of applications that Drexel received (about 12,000 more than either Delaware or Rutgers), and the number that the University had to accept to get an entering class of 3,100. However, once admitted, it could be argued that the quarter system exposed many of these students to a more difficult workload than they could handle.

Students who have applied to Drexel consider not only the nearby large public universities; they also look at schools in or near other large East Coast cities such as Boston University, Boston College, Carnegie Mellon, Northeastern, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and New York University. In terms of undergraduate student size and breadth of academic programs Drexel is quite similar academically to Rochester Institute of Technology, which also offers cooperative education. However, that institution is located in a region that has a much weaker job market for co-op students than Philadelphia.

Costs

3

Tuition and Fees
Scholarships
Debt

Costs

Drexel is expensive for a first-year student who attends school on the main campus. For the coming year the university will charge approximately \$14,900 per quarter for tuition and fees. Over three quarters--freshmen will not be in school during the summer of their first year--this translates to \$44,700. Room and board charges--all first-year and second-year students not living with parents must live on campus--is approximately \$14,700. Add in costs for books, supplies, transportation and incidentals, and the total cost of attendance can surpass \$65,000. Charges for tuition and fees as well as room and board have gone up by just under four percent for each of the last two years.

Once a student moves from the freshman to the sophomore year, s/he has the choice of pursuing a traditional four-year degree (no co-op), a one co-op four-year degree or a three co-op five-year degree. S/he does not pay tuition while on co-op but must pay student fees, just over \$800 a quarter. The co-op student must also pay for housing while on co-op unless the co-op assignment offers subsidized housing or is near the home of family or friends who can provide it for little or no charge. The University reports that a student pays no additional tuition over five years if they choose to pursue a three co-op degree. However, they will pay for four additional quarters of student fees (over \$3,000) and possibly a year of additional housing costs. Drexel, however, will offer a limited number of freshmen stipends to do research during their fourth (summer) quarter.

Some keys to completing the Drexel degree while graduating with as little debt as possible are:

- To earn enough to cover room and board for the year through co-op wages or obtain housing for little or no cost. Ideally, the co-op should be in Philadelphia, near Drexel, or close to the student's home.

- To be offered the opportunity to work for the co-op employer during breaks between quarters. Aside from the Christmas-New Years holiday week, it is possible for a five-year Drexel student to work as many as 25 weeks during their Sophomore, Pre-Junior and Junior Years.
- To be offered the opportunity to work part-time for the co-op employer or do a project for academic credit with that employer during the senior year.
- To take advantage of the opportunity to take one class during each co-op quarter (again for the five-year student) for no charge so that the student can take a reduced load during the senior year to work more hours, or to earn credits towards a master's degree.
- To be offered an athletic scholarship. Drexel competes at the Division I level in sports. Athletes do their co-op assignments outside of the season that they play their sport.
- To receive a ROTC scholarship. The University offers Air Force, Army and Navy ROTC programs. In this case the chosen branch of the Armed Forces could be the co-op employer. ROTC students do co-op on a Spring-Summer schedule.
- Be fortunate to receive a combination of merit-based and/or need-based aid that will bring tuition and fees closer to the in-state charges of the Pennsylvania public universities.
- Consider pledging a fraternity or sorority and living in its house to lower housing costs versus leasing an apartment from the sophomore through senior years.

There are other considerations with respect to wages earned through co-op. While these wages are not counted in calculating a family's income for

the FAFSA they are taxed are treated on a family's income for a tax return. It is unknown how co-op wages will impact Drexel's future financial aid decisions that involve using the CSS Profile. Every school that uses the Profile may use their own proprietary formula to estimate need. Another consideration is that co-op wages may not increase as much as tuition and fees or room and board do.

The University reports that it will try to fill more need through scholarships and grants as opposed to student loans and jobs. The current plan is to use institutional grants to fulfill 40 percent of need at first after the Expected Family Contribution and government grants (Federal and Pennsylvania) are considered, then have the percentage rise as more funds can be raised. This year, Drexel is taking a unique step of awarding a one-time \$1,000 award to incoming freshmen who submit their FAFSA early.

While student indebtedness information was not available from the University, the College Board or the Project on Student Debt, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* had Parent PLUS loan information for Drexel. According to this source the average parent borrower borrowed approximately \$24,200 to help their student cover educational costs during 2011. By comparison, parents of Northeastern students borrowed, on average, just under \$20,000. Parents of students at Rochester Institute of Technology borrowed, on average, just under \$14,000.

One possible reason for the differences in parent debt might be the size of the school's endowments, which provide funds for institutional need-based and merit-based aid. In 2012, according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers, Drexel's endowment was approximately \$556 million compared to \$630 million for the Rochester Institute of Technology and \$619 million for Northeastern.

Comforts

4

On-Campus Housing
Local Housing Market

Comforts

Drexel requires all freshmen and sophomores to live in university housing, unless they reside within ten miles of campus or receive approval to commute from the home a family member or legal guardian for financial or medical reasons. The University actually provides a list of zip codes that fall within the ten-mile radius.

All freshmen must live in the residence halls. Calhoun Hall, Kelly Hall, Myers Hall, Towers Hall, and Van Rensselaer are reserved for first-year students while the Race Street Residences, North Hall, and Caneris Hall may house first-year and returning students. Freshmen must also purchase one of the [All-Inclusive meal plans](#)--these cost between \$1,900 and \$2,000 a quarter--that are a combination of dining hall meals or Dining Dollars that can be used at cafes or “grab and go” locations on campus. Two added pluses in living in residence halls: each room has adjustable heating and air conditioning controls while laundry is included in room charges. First-year students have a choice of corridor (several rooms sharing a common lounge and bathroom) or suite-style (a smaller number of rooms sharing them) living.

Sophomores have more options under the two-year residency requirement. They may live in the residence halls, fraternity or sorority housing, University-affiliated apartments owned by American Campus Communities, a private developer or University-approved housing, which is also privately owned. In

addition to the halls available to freshmen, Axis and University Crossings are open to sophomores as well as pre-juniors, juniors and seniors.

Altogether, less than a third of Drexel students live on campus, less than ten percent of the men are members of fraternities and less than ten percent of the women are in sororities. Drexel has 13 fraternities and sororities, nine of which live in university-owned housing in a row on 34th Street or on Powelton Avenue. The other four Greek organizations, which are on the same streets, own and manage their houses.

Given Drexel's emphasis on co-op, housing decisions in the sophomore, pre-junior and junior years are critical. When costs are a major consideration and the student cannot commute the least expensive option will be to alternate between living in a residence hall for classes and living at home while on co-op. The second least expensive option is to have classes and co-op assignments in the city of Philadelphia. Greek life is probably the least expensive option within this option, since several students share responsibilities for upkeep and living expenses in a house. Co-op students should avoid obligations for a lease in Philadelphia while paying rent to live near their co-op employer in another place.

Drexel participates in the student fare discount program with SEPTA, Philadelphia's public transportation agency that allows a ten percent savings on monthly bus and rail service passes,

purchased two months in advance. These passes can help reduce the costs of commuting from campus to co-op assignments in the metropolitan area. The availability of these passes also allows upper-class students to consider living further from campus, provided they can reduce their rental expenses.

Community

5

Campus
Environs
School Spirit

Community

There are few better college towns than Philadelphia. The city is the fifth most populous in the U.S. after New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston, as well as one of the most diverse. Access to cultural and social opportunities as well as airline, bus, subway and train services from Drexel is excellent, although students receive discounts on monthly passes, but not one-way or round-trip fares. There is simply no reason for a Drexel student to bring a car to school if s/he lives on or near campus. In addition, according to the Pew Charitable Trust, [the cost of living in Philadelphia is lower than it is for Boston and Washington D.C.](#), which are also popular college towns, [although the crime rate is higher.](#)

City universities tend to encourage students to take advantage of their surroundings as opposed to becoming engaged on campus. This is especially true at schools such as Drexel and Northeastern that have so many students on co-op at any given time. It is more difficult to build school spirit, for example, around an athletic program. Philadelphia, like Boston, New York and Washington D.C. is a city that follows professional teams more closely than college teams. Drexel's most recent successes in the Colonial Athletic Conference have come in Men's Soccer and Men's Lacrosse. [Men's basketball attendance averaged around 2,000 fans per game during the 2012-13 season, according to the NCAA, about 1,000 below the conference average. Within Philadelphia the Dragons have a smaller fan base](#)

[than LaSalle, St. Joseph's or Penn. The women's basketball team averaged just under 1,100 fans per game, though they outdrew Penn, Villanova, St. Joseph's and LaSalle within the Philadelphia area.](#) The women were conference champions in 2008-09. Students who want the benefits of an urban location combined with more competitive college sports might be happier looking at schools in the Midwest, especially the University of Cincinnati if they are also interested in cooperative education, or going to Temple University on the opposite end of town.

Drexel's campus is not dominated by tall buildings like other schools in large cities, including cross-town Temple, though there is no dominant architectural theme nor considerable green space. The University has built modern facilities in media arts, science and recreation, among others, in recent years. There are few streets that cross campus; this school is relatively easy for campus police to patrol. While the campus is clean, and has some attractive structures, location is its strength. Drexel's main campus in University City is next to the University of Pennsylvania and close to the University of the Sciences, making it possible for the city to develop broader educationally-focused strategies for the neighborhood and for developers to offer a large selection of housing options near both campuses.

Considering the size of Drexel's student body (around 13,000 undergraduates) and the school's urban location, reported ar-

rests for possession of alcohol (21 most recent in 2012, though *none* in 2010), drug possession (Eight in 2012 though only three in 2010) are very low on the main campus, according to the University's most recent [Clery Report](#). The University prefers to take matters in its own hands. There were more than 300 disciplinary actions taken in 2011 as well as 2012 for liquor law violations. There were 72 reported disciplinary referrals for drug law violations in 2012, up from 28 in 2011. Burglaries and robberies are more commonplace here than at less urban schools. There were also 14 reported forcible sex offenses from 2010 through 2012, but seven occurred during the last year.

While incoming students enter Drexel not knowing where their co-op assignments will take them, it appears that the ones who will benefit the most socially will be those who can work within the city during the day, then participate in clubs and organizations or take advantage of the off-campus scene during the evenings and weekends. Currently, more than 80 percent of co-op placements are in the metro area, though not always in Philadelphia proper.

Curriculum

6

Academics
Honors Programs
Experiential Learning

Curriculum

It would take too many pages to describe the undergraduate degree programs at Drexel's 13 schools as well as the accelerated degree options that are available. However, it is important for students to consider, then select, their program as early as possible. While a five-year, three co-op option allows the most time to gain work experience, only three of the bachelor's/masters options allow it unless the student enters Drexel with sufficient advanced standing: BS/MS in Engineering (including Biomedical Engineering which is part of the Health Sciences school), BS/MS in Communications and the BS/MS in Computing and Informatics. An accelerated bachelors/MD program does not allow co-op at all while the other five and six-year joint degree programs allow for only one co-op (during the junior year).

Unlike many schools that offer co-op to a limited set of majors, usually business, computer science, engineering and technical subjects, Drexel offers co-op for every major. While this exposes students, especially in creative fields, to more employment opportunities than a more traditional academic experience, not all co-op students receive generous salaries. Employers who are used to paying no salary for interns such as those in sports and entertainment may still pay co-op students no salary. The University limits the number of hours that students may work in an unpaid assignment to 20, so that they may work at another job, if necessary.

Drexel students should be prepared to commit early is that courses move faster in a quarter system. While students take five courses, similar to a school that operates on semesters, they must master the 14 to 16 weeks of material taught at those schools in just ten weeks. Further, they must fulfill their school's requirements as well as those of their major. A transfer, for example, from a design or engineering program to a

business program can become very difficult to make after four quarters of classes, unless that student wants to attend Drexel longer than s/he originally hoped.

In addition, students who are placed in a fall-winter co-op cycle are assigned to co-op employers during the first quarter of their sophomore year. They enter co-ops with two less quarters of completed courses. Those who are sure of what they want can still use the co-op to build their resume. Those who are not may be using that co-op to test the waters. Co-op is more advantageous for a student who can build upon the experiences and knowledge gained in classes from year-to-year in order to qualify for a better entry-level position, as well as a higher entry level salary, than a peer who has not had the benefits of taking co-op. This is especially true for the students who opt for the five-year, three co-op cycle.

Another consideration at a school like Drexel that offers so many pre-professional degrees is that enrollments in several major programs have to be capped due to the number of faculty, available laboratory spaces, and in the case of health-related majors, available clinical opportunities. Students who are directly admitted into a major as freshmen and maintain the appropriate academic standing are at an advantage. Those who seek admission into a major after completing three to five quarters of classes must compete against them to earn the grades they need.

As a result of the choice of programs as well as their pace, Drexel might not be the best choice for an undecided student unless s/he has narrowed their possible major to subjects that are taught in the same school within the University. It is not unusual, for example, for students interested in engineering to not know which engineering field they want to study--and Drexel has all engineering students take a common set of

core courses to help them make a decision. The same would be true for a business student considering between majors in the business school.

While Drexel, with approximately 13,000 undergrads, has a smaller enrollment than the state universities such as Delaware, Rutgers, Penn State and Temple, it does have large classes in the introductory courses. There can be as many as 175 students in an introductory "gatekeeper" class such as Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Physics or Psychology where a professor delivers the lecture and the teaching assistant, who might be a doctoral candidate at Drexel, does the actual teaching. However, upper-division classes in the major may be smaller than they are at these large schools because so many students are on co-op.

Drexel students gave their faculty a rating of 3.59 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com. By comparison, students at Northeastern gave their faculty a rating of 3.57 while students at Rochester Institute of Technology gave theirs a rating of 3.64. However, Drexel students held their faculty in less regard than students at Delaware (3.73), Penn State (3.71), Rutgers-New Brunswick (3.74) and Temple (3.70). They also held them in less regard than students at Boston University (3.7), Carnegie Mellon (3.76) and NYU (3.75). They did hold them in higher regard than students at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (3.55), Stevens Institute of Technology (3.53) and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (3.51).

Connections

Alumni Relations
Career Services

Connections

Many schools that support cooperative education programs, including Penn State, manage them through the schools within the university or through academic departments. At Drexel, co-op is handled through a single office that has 60 full-time career development professionals who match students with positions available. Virtually everyone, even students with low GPAs, is placed in a co-op, though some assignments may pay little or no salary. Approximately 1,600 employers post positions with Drexel before each co-op cycle. Students may apply to up to 25 positions after completing a Co-op 101 preparatory class that covers resume writing, interview preparation and job search skills. They may also apply for positions on their own with the help of the Career Services librarian.

While some co-op programs such as those at Penn State and Georgia Tech will try to match students with assignments with the same employer over three co-op cycles, Drexel does not make this promise. The preference is to listen to students and their observations about different work settings. Those who are not happy in their first setting are matched to others where the student and counselor believe that success is more likely. Students can also be fired during a co-op cycle. They must write a letter of apology to their former employer before they can be placed in a new position. The employers are evaluated as well as the students so that their talents and skills are properly utilized.

Engineering and Information Sciences positions pay the most, followed by Biomedical Engineering, Science and Health Systems. Chemical engineering students have earned as much as \$1,200 a week during their co-op assignments. However, students in education will, on average, earn about half as much. In other cases, Media Arts being one example, they might earn no salary at all. In these situations, students work only 20 hours per week as opposed to full time. [Co-ops may also be entrepreneurial opportunities where students receive start-up stipends of \\$15,000 to implement a business plan](#), or they may be research opportunities. They have also been made available in fields where positions are hard to get such as Fashion Design and Music Business. International co-ops typically carry a stipend for air fare, as well as housing arrangements similar to study abroad programs where students live in university housing on a host campus. The stipends and subsidized housing are necessary because these co-ops are among the lowest paid for salaried positions.

Approximately half of Drexel students who participate in co-op are hired by one of their co-op employers. Others may find work through the University's Fall and Spring Career Fairs, each of which attracts approximately 250 employers or the Engineering Career Fair. Drexel opens the Fall and Spring events to students enrolled at other schools, creating additional competition for their own students.

Nearly 42,000 of the approximately 72,000 Drexel alumni registered in LinkedIn live in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. This is interesting because more than half of the undergraduate student body at Drexel came from states other than Pennsylvania. The New York area ranks a distant second with just under 7,000 alumni. According to LinkedIn, nearly 16,000 alumni work in either Engineering or Information Technology. Operations, which includes engineers, scientists and business professionals ranks next followed by Education. While the alumni base registered in LinkedIn is impressive, it also considers alumni who have graduate as well as undergraduate degrees. Drexel is a very popular destination for graduate students who commute from within the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

Drexel separates student and alumni career services, although the number of alumni networking events is impressive for graduates who live in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Graduates may join the University's alumni association for no charge while other large schools, public and private, charge dues.

Given Drexel's emphasis on co-op and the share of alumni near campus, it is wise for a student to develop their own LinkedIn profile as s/he progresses through co-op assignments. A Drexel student is given a better opportunity to build a resume than peers at other schools that do not offer co-op or are not in large cities. S/he can also build their network earlier in order to build it for life.

Conclusions

Summing up



Conclusions

Drexel tries to offer what parents and students often ask for: a sure pathway to a good job. It operates one of the largest and best-established cooperative education programs in the country and provides career development opportunities to every student, regardless of their major. It is hard not to graduate, even as a liberal arts major, without having a requisite skill set for immediate employment. Further, an excellent student who enters with advanced standing can graduate with a high level of work experience as well as a master's degree within five years.

It is impossible to praise Drexel without mentioning the advantages of being at its location in Philadelphia. While city life can be gritty, the Philadelphia metropolitan area has more cultural and social opportunities than a college student could experience during their education. The city also an important center for financial services, health care, pharmaceuticals and many other industries. The experience of living and working in the city while in college can help Drexel students mature faster than their peers who attend schools in college towns. This will make them more marketable to employers, even beyond their first jobs.

Cooperative education at Drexel works if you are a commuter, can earn enough to cover the costs of living in Philadelphia (definitely possible for computer science and engineering majors) or you are offered a position where the housing costs are subsidized by the employer. While Drexel promises to charge

only four years of tuition over five years, there is an extra year of room and board to consider, as well as student fees--now approximately \$800--every quarter. The costs of the extra year must be weighed against the added wages that a student can earn on their co-op assignment as well as lost income that might have been earned if the student could have found a full-time job after four years, instead of five.

In recent years Drexel tried to recruit students by making the on-line application process very easy. The University did not get the positive results that they hoped, so the admissions office has wisely gone in a new direction. The hope is that applicants will take more time to learn about Drexel, especially the workload during the semesters on campus as well as the cooperative education options, before they apply and decide that it might be one of their best educational options. The University also made a commitment to improve its customer service to students as they transition from school to work then back again over four or five years. This should reduce the fairly high transfer-out rate over time.

The Drexel experience can be very rewarding. But costs must be managed with good planning and a mature approach to handling a demanding workload. Those who can do both can be extremely successful at this school.

| Ed Quest's Report Card | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Drexel University | | | | | | |

| Four-Year/ Six-Year Grad Rates | Freshman Retention | Costs | Comforts | Community | Curriculum | Connections |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| N/A and B | B+ | C | B+ | A | A | A |

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|--|
| Co-op is available for any major | There are less expensive ways to do co-op, especially if you're an engineer |
| There are majors that you won't find at many other large schools such as architectural engineering | Five courses a quarter is a brutal workload. Very tough to fall behind and recover here |
| Come in with AP credits and you can walk out with co-op experience and a master's degree in five years | Not all co-ops pay well, and some might pay nothing at all |
| There are few better college towns than Philadelphia--and most graduates stay in the area | On-campus housing is expensive, even for a university in Philadelphia |
| Location is right by Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and easy ride to an international airport | If you don't like city life, look elsewhere. |
| You can design your own major--and plan co-op around it | This school is changing for the better, but will have to live with the fall out from past admissions practices |
| There are more accelerated and combined advanced degree programs than you'll find at most large schools | If you want a school built around social activities, spirit and sports, look elsewhere. |
| Co-ops in science and engineering pay very well. | |

The End



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