



Carnegie Mellon University

Washington Semester Program

PROGRAM GUIDE

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AT A GLANCE

The Carnegie Mellon University Washington Semester Program (CMU/WSP), sponsored by the Carnegie Mellon Institute for Strategy & Technology, is a semester-long program in which students live, intern, and take CMU classes in Washington, DC. Full-time undergraduates from any course of study at the university may participate in the program. Students earn forty-eight units for the Carnegie Mellon University Washington Semester Program, interning about twenty-four hours per week in any sector or field of interest within Washington, DC, while taking classes taught by Carnegie Mellon faculty.

From embassies to nongovernmental organizations, think tanks to advocacy organizations, government agencies to congressional offices, and consulting firms to media outlets, Washington, DC, is the center for many political, international relations, and public policy activities. Students in the program come into direct contact with political, business, and industry-specific leaders and learn about the most pressing policy issues of the day.

During my time in the Washington Semester Program, I have learned so much; not only about DC, politics, and government, but also about myself. I was able to identify my strengths and weaknesses through my challenges and successes, hone in on my true academic and professional interests, set new goals for my future, build what I believe are life-long friendships, realize what things in life are most valuable to me, and gain a deeper understanding of the field of politics.

- Keilani Barba, Friedman Fellow, Fall 2022
Internship: The White House: Executive Office of the President

Through this experiential learning program, CMU/WSP participants develop professional and networking skills, explore how coursework connects to the real world, learn to give and receive constructive feedback in the workplace and classroom, and intentionally reflect on their learning and growth. CMIST also sponsors events and policy-oriented opportunities in Washington for students participating in the program to further enrich their experience and enhance their understanding of how Washington functions as a hub for international and national policy-making.

CMU/WSP Opportunities

Eligibility

Full-time undergraduates from any CMU college are eligible to apply. Applicants should demonstrate a strong academic record with a minimum cumulative QPA of 3.0. Exceptions may be made for students with lower QPAs based on strong recommendation letters and application materials. The junior year is the ideal time to participate in the CMU/WSP, but the program is open to second-semester sophomores, juniors, or seniors. Students must declare a primary major before attending the CMU/WSP.

Internships

CMU/WSP students intern approximately twenty-four hours per week in an internship in any sector or field within Washington, DC. The CMU/WSP staff works closely with students to develop individualized internship search strategy plans, review cover letters, resumes, writing samples, and practice interviewing. The internship is the experiential core of the CMU/WSP.

Tomorrow's Professionals Seminar

Students who are admitted to the CMU/WSP will be automatically enrolled in the Tomorrow's Professionals Seminar (84-215) in the mini semester directly preceding their time in DC. This seminar is designed to facilitate students' thinking about professionalism, so that they can: begin to practice it upon entry into their respective internships and avoid decisions or behaviors that could hamper their success, build their unique brands, identify opportunities to excel, and ensure overall excellence in their careers. Discussion topics will include professional conduct, leadership, teamwork, interview techniques, and strategies for success.

Academic Coursework

CMU students earn forty-eight units during the CMU/WSP. Each course meets once per week to allow for maximum flexibility with student internships. The academic coursework includes:

- Internship Seminar (24 units)
- Seminar on Public Policy Research, Writing, and Implementation (12 units)
- Seminars on American Politics, Governance, Institutions, and Law (12 units)

Minor in Politics & Public Policy

Students who participate in the CMU/WSP are eligible to earn a minor in Politics and Public Policy. The minor investigates US public policy issues and other matters of domestic politics while providing students practical learning experiences. In addition to the coursework during the CMU/WSP, students must complete one foundational course in CMIST and one data science or economics course in order to earn the minor. Full curricular details are available on the CMIST website and in the undergraduate catalog.

Housing in the District

Students live in CMU-sponsored housing in the heart of Washington, DC. The residences are fully furnished and equipped with standard kitchen appliances, cookware, and dinnerware, as well as an in-unit washer and dryer, cable, and high-speed internet. Housing is minutes away from grocery stores and Metro stations, providing easy access to the CMU/WSP classroom, internship sites, and the city beyond.

Networking

The CMU/WSP introduces students to a vast alumni network in Washington, DC. These interactions help students gain unique access to the nation's capital and perspectives on career trajectories.

Program Cost

Students who attend the CMU/WSP will continue to pay Carnegie Mellon tuition, the standard double room fee, and other fees to Carnegie Mellon for the semester in which they are in Washington, DC. Students are eligible to receive the same financial aid packages they receive while attending Carnegie Mellon.

Friedman Fellowships

Students with strong academic records and financial need who are accepted to the CMU/WSP are also eligible for a Friedman Fellowship, which helps to offset the cost of a semester in Washington, DC. The grants support student participation in internships located in the nation's capital. During the fall and spring semesters, fellowships are available to undergraduates accepted into the CMU/WSP. There is no separate application process for the Friedman Fellowship. Decisions are made by the admissions committee based on the strength of students' CMU/WSP applications.



CMU/WSP APPLICATION FORM CHECKLIST:

- One-page essay
- Current resume
- Approval from academic advisor
- Unofficial CMU Transcript
- Two letters of recommendation
- Statement of financial need for Friedman Fellowship consideration (optional)

All CMU/WSP application materials are available at cmu.edu/cmist/washington-center.

FINAL DEADLINES:

Spring: Oct 1

Fall: March 1



Applications are reviewed and students are accepted to the program on a rolling admission basis. Early applications are highly encouraged. Please submit your application through the online portal. Letters of recommendation should be emailed directly to cmuwsp@andrew.cmu.edu.



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Professor Audrey Kurth Cronin,
Director, Carnegie Mellon Institute for
Strategy & Technology

CMIST Deputy Director: Emily Half
ehalf@andrew.cmu.edu

Washington Program Manager: Ashley Barnes
ashleyba@andrew.cmu.edu



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