

Washington, D.C. Off-Campus Program FAQs

What are the dates of the program?

- The program starts the weekend before the official start of Dartmouth's spring term and ends around the same time as spring term ends. Check the [Registrar's website](#) for specific dates.
- Plan to arrive in D.C. the Saturday before classes begin.
- You will intern Monday through Thursday regular business hours during that 10-week period.
- You may choose to start your internship before then or to end it after then, but Dartmouth will only provide housing for you for the dates that classes are in session.

What will the DC program be like?

- You will live in an apartment in Northern Virginia and commute to work by Metro four days a week. Your work schedule will likely be a regular business day, 9-5. This means getting up early, dressing for work, eating breakfast, and commuting to your office. You'll be on your own for lunch and dinners most days. Two nights a week you'll have class from 7 to 9 pm, which makes for a long day. You'll be living with a small group of Dartmouth students whom you likely won't know in advance. You'll need to figure out how to make time for your work for class, exercise, and free time. Balancing these things will prove challenging—but you will figure out a routine, build your confidence, and likely get a good sense of what life after college is like.

What will the balance between classwork and internship responsibilities be like?

- You work at your internship 9-5 Monday through Thursday.
- Fridays are reserved for in-person meetings, guest speakers, and excursions.
- Our classes will meet Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m.
- There will be group excursions during the first two weekends of the program, but your weekends will be free after that.

Will we do any pre-departure orientations?

- Yes. I will schedule 2-3 pre-departure orientations, either in-person, via Zoom, or both, in the fall and winter terms prior to departure.

How should I go about finding an internship?

- The process of getting an internship is a key component of the program. Identifying internships, writing cover letters and a resume, contacting potential

employers, submitting applications, and interviewing are all practice for getting jobs after graduation.

- The Program Director will provide you with support in identifying potential internships, preparing your application materials, and putting you in touch with contacts—but ultimately it is your responsibility to obtain an internship.

What kind of internships should we look for?

- The only stipulation is that the internship has to be connected to *politics*, defined broadly. This can mean working in Congress or a government agency, a lobbying firm or trade organization, political consulting or media organization, non-governmental organization, international organization, etc.
- Your cover letter needs to indicate that you are doing an internship as part of a Dartmouth program and that you are only available to work M-Th during regular business hours.
- Many internships require students to do research and writing, which can take up time beyond the regular 8-hour day. You should inquire about this in advance and communicate with your supervisor about expectations for your working hours. Keep in mind that you will have to balance that work against the reading and writing for your two classes, as well as your internship log.

What kinds of internships have students had in the past?

- Students have interned for members of Congress, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, political consulting firms, trade associations, and community service organizations.

What should I tell potential employers about the terms of the internship?

It is important to provide this information to potential employers up front, in your cover letter. Here is some text you can use:

- I am available to work from March 27 to May 31, 2023. My schedule allows me to work regular business hours from Monday through Thursday.
- I will be receiving academic credit for my internship and I am not permitted to be paid for the work.

Some internships don't line up with the dates of our program, especially ones with members of Congress. How have students navigated this in the past? Have some students had their internships start in the middle of the program?

- Students have dealt with this in a variety of ways. Some take an off term in winter, start their internship in January, and continue through the spring. Others have contacted the internship coordinator to ask if they can apply for an internship starting in late March/early April. Other students just

apply anyway and make it clear in their cover letter that they can't start until later in late March/early April.

- In the past, students have done internships in DC during their off term and continued them into the spring (this is the case with the State Department, I think). Sometimes students continue their spring internships into the summer as well.
- Most places have honored the four-day limit without any issues.

I'm worried about getting an internship!

- Every student who has ever participated in the program has been able to find an internship. Even in cases where students end up doing something very different from what they had planned, they have had a good experience. Remember that part of my job as program director is to help you get an internship.

I got an internship! Now what should I do?

- Send a thank you note to your supervisor and anyone else who helped you during the interview process. Ask whether there is anything you should do in advance to prepare for the job. A few weeks before you start, contact your supervisor to remind them about your start date and express your excitement about the position.

Are the syllabi for the courses available?

- Here are the syllabi from Govt 94 and Govt 95. These will be updated close to the start of the program.

What will Govt 93 entail?

- The aim of Govt 93 is to build intentional learning into the experience of the internship. You will write a weekly log describing and reflecting on the work you do in your internship. I will provide writing prompts for you to respond to.
- Govt 93 is pass/fail. You must complete all the work in order to pass.
- You will meet with me 1-2 times over the term to talk about how things are going.
- The final assignment is a reflection paper that connects the academic learning you did in the classes (and prior classes) to the internship experience.

Will the courses be considered seminars, in terms of credit in the Government major?

- Yes. Govt 94 and Govt 95 count as seminars for the Government major.

Where will we live in DC?

- We will live in an apartment building Pentagon City, in Northern Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The apartments have lots of

natural light and are very nice. There are several nice common areas in the building where you can work and study alone and in small groups.

- Students generally live in two-bedroom apartments, with 4 students per apartment.
- The Pentagon City Metro stop is a five-to-ten-minute walk from the building.
- I will live in my own apartment in the same building as you.

How will roommate assignments be made?

- I will send out a survey to you in winter before we depart and make roommate assignments based on your responses.

What should we plan in terms of meals?

- Learning to navigate without a meal plan or a family who cooks for you is a key part of the D.C. program. Your apartment will have a full kitchen and you should plan to cook on your own to the extent that you can. There is a Whole Foods grocery store close to our building. There are many restaurants and fast-food places within walking distance of the apartment; how often you eat out or get take-out will depend on your personal budget.
- If you've never cooked before, I would encourage you to learn to cook 2-3 simple meals before you arrive in DC. Tik Tok is an amazing cooking resource!
- The program will provide two meals a week for you: dinner before class on Thursday and lunch on Friday.

What kinds of things will we do on Fridays?

- Meet with guest speakers
- Go out to lunch as a group
- Visit standard DC tourist sites and/or attend events that are relevant to what we're studying in class
- Do community service work as a class

What other kinds of outings will we do as a class?

- Attend sports events (Wizards, Nats, soccer team)
- Performances and cultural events
- Bowling
- Picnics