



FAQ's

Q: What is the Internship Institute?

The Internship Institute is a semester-long professional development program, open to all majors and class years, managed through the O'Brien Center for Career Development. Students participate in three Boot Camps to engage in topics including Professional Communication Skills, Interview Skills, Leadership, Teamwork, Work Ethic, and Professional Etiquette in the workplace. The boot camps are based on the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Professional Competencies. Employers have identified the areas they find gaps in students' skills. The Internship Institute was developed to bridge that gap and provide targeted professional readiness training to differentiate Merrimack College students by providing sought skills to help students land an internship and succeed in the workplace. Each fall and spring semester, the Internship Institute will also host a networking event to connect students with industry professionals and give students the opportunity to practice their networking skills. Additionally, students will engage with their career advisors for career management, to identify, and apply to internship opportunities. Students also have the option to receive continued support and feedback throughout the course of their internship experience following the completion of the boot camps.

Q: How do we describe Internship?

Merrimack College describes an Internship as "professional experience in industry or a discipline related to a student's career aspirations/area of study." These experiences can be paid/unpaid and credit/non-credit bearing. The Internship experience can be full-time/part-time and varies in duration for either all or part of a semester/summer. In some instances where the experience is relevant, the internship experience can be on-campus, with approval from the Internship Institute staff.

Q: What does a boot camp consist of?

The career readiness bootcamps are short-term, intensive workshops that will help students be able to identify, articulate and practice the career competency being presented. Boot camps are 3 hours in length and will be highly interactive, providing students with immediate feedback they can incorporate into their skill set.

Q: How does the Internship Institute prepare students for Internship?

Students who participate in the Internship Institute are required to participate in three Professional Development Boot Camps, taught by the Internship Institute staff. The Internship Institute and an O'Brien Center Career Advisor will partner with the student in the internship preparation and search process. It is the student's responsibility to identify and apply to internship opportunities, including all follow-up correspondence.

Q: What is the difference between an Internship and a Co-op?

An internship is an experiential learning opportunity that varies in requirements and duration with or without compensation. Co-op is an educational program in which students alternate periods of academic study in the classroom with periods of paid, full-time co-op employment in positions related to their academic and/or career interests.

Q: When does a student start their Internship?

Once the student has completed the Internship Institute Boot Camps, they will begin working with their Career Advisor, meeting individually with their Advisor to review appropriate positions and apply for internships that are of interest to the student and for which the student is qualified. Similar to any job search, employers review applications and select students for interviews. Employers (not the O'Brien Center for Career Development staff) make the final hiring decision. Students at Merrimack College do not need to participate in the Internship Institute in order to participate in an internship opportunity, however, participation in the Internship Institute is encouraged. All students have the option to meet with their Career Advisors at any time to search for and apply to internships.

Q: How many hours does a student need to participate in an Internship?

Hour requirements will vary depending on if the student is pursuing an internship through their specific major. Students who are seeking credit-bearing opportunities for their internship are encouraged to collaborate with their Academic Advisor and Career Advisor to gain clarity on options and requirements. Students who wish to register a non-credit bearing independent internship with OBR1000 must complete a minimum of 100 hours over the course of a single semester/summer.

Q: What requirements do students have as participants in the Internship Institute?

Internship Institute students must complete all three Professional Development Boot Camps and participate in one internship during their time at Merrimack College (preferably within one year of completing the Boot Camps).

Q: Do students receive credit for participating in the Internship Institute?

The Internship Institute does not award students credit for participating in an Internship. There are some majors that require students to complete an internship for academic credit. In such cases, these academic internships qualify as the guaranteed internship for the Internship Institute. All students who complete an internship at Merrimack College can register the experience in Handshake and receive the "OBR1000" non-credit course on their transcript to signify the experience. Students who wish to register OBR1000 must complete 100 hours over the course of one semester/summer.

Q: Are Internships paid?

Merrimack will continue to seek paid internship opportunities for students, however, the college values the learning experience of internships and therefore does not technically require interns to be paid. The primary purpose of the internship is to provide a learning experience of substance in a professional setting. Compensation is a matter left entirely to the Employer and the intern.

Q: Are students expected to continue their classes while in Internship?

Students who participate in the Internship Institute are expected to continue their regular course load/schedule. This may vary depending on the students major.

Q: Who supervises the student while they are on Internship?

As a professional industry experience, Internship Institute students are supervised by the Employer while out on internship. There are some majors in which the departments offer additional support and supervision while students are out on internship.

Q: What is the difference between the Internship Institute and the O'Brien Center for Career Development?

The O'Brien Center for Career Development is comprised of Career Advisors who work one-on-one with students on all matters of career development, from exploration and resume creation, to internship/job search, interviewing and more. The O'Brien Center also hosts networking events throughout the year, coordinates on-campus Career Fairs, manages the Professional Development Retreat (PDR), and works with employers to populate Handshake with internship and full-time jobs for Merrimack students. The Internship Institute is the latest signature program offered through the O'Brien Center.

The Internship Institute prepares students to be not only successful in their Internship, but excel as leaders in the workplace. The Internship Institute addresses key skills employers have specifically identified as those most important for "graduate preparedness for the world of work". The Internship Institute works with students to ensure all participants of the institute secure an internship, thereby guaranteeing an internship as a promise of the program.

Merrimack College recognizes that the process of applying and securing an internship is as important a life skill as the learning that takes place in the internship itself. Therefore, students are not placed, matched, or assigned to an internship. Rather, the boot camp training elevates a student's skillset, differentiates them from competing applicants, and gives students a competitive edge. The Internship Institute commitment is to work with students as needed to ensure they secure a position and are utilizing the many resources available to them at Merrimack College.

QUESTIONS: Contact our staff

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<https://www.merrimack.edu/obrien-center/>