



## Program Guide

Last updated: December 2020

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

WildCats at the Capitol is the University of Kentucky's academic and internship program in Washington, DC. The program provides students the opportunity to enroll in the program during the traditional academic year or summer term; remain a full-time student during the spring and fall semesters by taking credit-bearing courses with UK faculty; benefit from program-organized housing in DC; and engage with faculty, staff, and alumni through a robust professional development program. Internship opportunities are open to students from any major.

With this program, the university continues its dedication to improving people's lives through excellence in education, research and creative work, service, and health care. Stewards of the program empower all to be their best selves and strive to create a sustainable climate where everyone can benefit from the highest quality education, care, and work environment. Participants are expected to uphold these missions as well.

The following program guide provides an overview of academic responsibilities and expectations, the selection and placement process, program preparation, and contact list.

### ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

WildCats at the Capitol is open to all majors. Participants remain full-time students earning 12 academic credit hours through an internship and classes (excluding summer) that take place in Washington, DC. During the fall and spring terms, a UK-affiliated instructor teaches two courses in his/her/their field, enhancing the coursework with the educational, cultural, and natural resources available in the nation's capital. The Department of Political Science selects the DC instructor for the academic year and provides financial support for the position in collaboration with the Office of the President.

Participants engage in evening classes twice a week which include opportunities to hear from prominent speakers and reflect on their internship experiences. Students are responsible for writing a research paper on a topic related to their internship. Students in the fall and spring terms earn six credits for the coursework taught by the UK-affiliated instructor and six credits for the internship. Participants enroll in the following courses:

- PS 399: Political Science Internship in Government or Politics (6 hours)

- PS 391: Special Topics in Political Science (the course offering varies from semester to semester depending on the expertise of the lead faculty member – 3 hours)
- PS 391: Professional Development in Washington DC (3 hours)

Students may also arrange additional or related coursework or internship credit with their individual department. Students may take advantage of online and distance learning options in consultation with their academic advisor and the Internship Director. If a student is planning to graduate immediately following their Washington, DC semester and needs more than the 12 hours of credit offered through the program to graduate, we encourage them to work with their advisor and/or the Internship Director to make appropriate plans.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

The WildCats at the Capitol Steering Committee consists of representatives from the Department of Political Science, UK Student Government Association, UK Federal Relations, and the Office of the President. See Appendix I for a list of current members and contact details.

## SELECTION/PLACEMENT PROCESS

Admissions decisions for the program are made on a rolling basis until the program is full or the program application deadline is reached. The selection committee is comprised of members of the steering committee or their designees. Generally, the selection committee collects and interviews applicants by the following deadlines:

- January 29 for summer
- April 15 for fall
- September 15 for spring

These are guiding deadlines designed to get applicant information to partner offices early in their selection process. The selection committee, however, has traditionally continued recruiting and interviewing applicants until available internship slots are full.

The most successful applicants will have a minimum 3.0 GPA and a strong application. If an applicant's GPA is lower than 3.0, they are still encouraged to apply and discuss their application with the Internship Director. The selection committee considers the following factors in addition to cumulative GPA: completed application, cover letter, resume, transcript, one letter of recommendation from a UK faculty member, and interview with the selection committee. Applicants should work with the UK Career Center to review their cover letter and resume prior to submission. Applicants should send all materials to [psintern@uky.edu](mailto:psintern@uky.edu). The selection committee will contact selected candidates for an interview.

Following candidate interviews, the selection committee notifies applicants of their decision and the placement process begins. As a general guideline, the placement process concludes before the last day of the semester prior to the internship experience. Once students are placed in an office, the steering committee informs the student and makes the necessary course arrangements.

During the placement process, accepted applicants, regardless of whether they have been placed in an office, are required to participate in two orientation programs on campus and one in Washington, DC. The first program is designed to help students make financial plans for the DC experience. The second program is geared toward helping students succeed when they are away from campus and campus-based resources, as well as provide the requisite logistical information for moving to DC. The third program takes place the first weekend in DC and offers a refresher on program expectations, team building exercises, and an orientation to schedules, sites, and local resources.

## FINANCIAL AID

In addition to scholarships and financial aid that applicants have previously earned, all students are automatically considered for additional support offered by the Department of Political Science, Office of the President, and UK Student Government Association. The steering committee makes scholarship and financial aid decisions collaboratively.

The internship application serves as the student's funding application. Recipients are notified of an additional scholarship as soon as funding decisions are made. Awards are contingent upon final placement.

## HOUSING

Fostering a continued sense of community is an important part of the program experience. The university encourages students to manage interpersonal relationships, gain a better understanding of themselves and the diversity of their peers, and promote connections with campus by requiring participating students to live in program-organized housing. The university works with local providers to place participants in students-only, fully furnished, Metro accessible housing, located in downtown DC. The University of Kentucky Code of Student Conduct rules apply to students living in DC housing during their internship period.

Properties generally include utilities, cable TV, wireless internet access, full kitchens, dishware, cookware and appliances (toaster, microwave, coffeepot, etc.), free laundry facilities (irons/ironing boards), and emergency maintenance. Residents are required to provide their own phone service, bed linens, and towels. Parking accommodations are not included with housing. Students are discouraged from bringing a vehicle to DC as parking is limited and expensive.

The university determines how student rooms are assigned. Students participating in the program may request roommates, however, there is no guarantee of receiving this assignment. Students must communicate this request in writing to the steering committee at the earliest time possible. The steering committee will give full consideration to all requests when making assignments.

Upon acceptance into the program, the steering committee distributes and requests completion of individual housing contracts from each student. Students are required to pay the semester rent and the refundable security deposit. The university pays for the processing fee. The Office of the President arranges a lump sum payment of the entire cohort's rental fees to the DC

housing provider and individual housing charges are assessed on the student billing statement. This allows students the flexibility to use financial aid and scholarships to defray program costs.

Prior to arriving in DC, students must correspond with the housing provider via email to coordinate their arrival plans, including the date and time they will arrive to retrieve keys and sign any housing rules agreement. Students should inform the Intern Director and DC Program Coordinator of their arrival plans.

## PROGRAM COSTS

Participants pay the same UK tuition and fee rates while living in Washington, DC, but because WildCats at the Capitol interns remain full-time students, they can utilize their financial aid and scholarships.

Housing cost are billed through the regular UK billing process. Estimates are subject to change, but as of January 2021, it is approximately \$5,000 for the semester, plus a \$200 refundable security deposit. This rate covers a shared room in a shared apartment or townhome<sup>1</sup>. There are no separate activity or event fees.

The average cost of living in DC is greater than in Lexington, KY. To prepare participants for this environment, the steering committee requires students meet with staff from the [Student Financial Wellness Office](#) and develop an individualized budget.

## PLANNING FOR DEPARTURE

The university encourages all participants to take advantage of the Student Wellness Center and resources as they plan their transition to DC. The [Wellness Coaching](#) program offers free access to professional health educators who help students set priorities and create an individualized action plan to improve well-being. Actively preparing for a healthy lifestyle and identifying strategies for time and stress management will position students for increased program success.

For professional clothing assistance, the University offers a career closet for students. The [Wildcat Wardrobe](#) aims to alleviate the financial burden of purchasing professional attire by providing students up to three items on a stock available basis.

## TRANSPORTATION IN DC

In partnership with the [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority](#) (WMATA), the University of Kentucky adopted WMATA's [University Pass Program](#) (U-Pass), which allows unlimited access to metrorails and metrobuses throughout the semester for fulltime students. The U-Pass program allows full-time UK students to use all metro services for a flat-fee of \$1 per day. This mandatory fee is a benefit covered by the Office of the President during the fall and spring semesters.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to public health protocols

The U-Pass MetroCards have a unique serial number associated with each student. Students pick up their U-Pass MetroCards from the DC Program Coordinator at the DC orientation. The U-Pass MetroCard is operational through move-out day of the semester. Students must pick up a new U-Pass MetroCard every semester.

## APPENDIX I: STEERING COMMITTEE CONTACT LIST

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