

Winter Work Term

Frequently Asked Questions



Webb Institute

Preface: One of the objectives of Winter Work that isn't immediately obvious to both students and parents is that we want the students learn to use various resources available to them at school and their own initiative to figure out what they need to do in preparation for their winter work. We help them with some things during the first two years (job opportunities, contact information, orientation briefings, etc.), but in the latter two years they should become increasingly independent. That said, parents can still be helpful if funding or other support is needed.

The following FAQ's were developed by the newly formed Parents' Association:

What is Winter Work?

Webb students are required to work for 8 weeks each January and February in certain areas of the marine industry. Freshmen act as helper/mechanics in shipyards and sophomores as cadet/observers at sea. Webb acquires the positions for freshmen and sophomores and lets the student sort out among themselves who will go to what companies. Juniors and seniors seek out their own internships in various engineering firms and design offices. All contact with these companies and discussions on salary/overtime, housing, and transportation arrangements are worked out between the students and employers once all positions have been sorted out. Student responsibility for making their arrangements is part of the learning and growth experience Webb expects students to gain during this period.

What are the dates of Winter Work?

The Winter Work period is expected to be 8 weeks in length. For most students this is the period from January 2nd through the end of February. Sophomores can expect the need for rapid flexibility regarding joining and leaving ship due to the common practice of Fleet Manning offices changing crews on the fly and treating Webb students like maritime cadets. There will be some ship operating companies who will want the students aboard before January 2nd. Those students will end their work term in late February with enough time to take a break at home before coming back to Webb.

What are the Winter Work assignments and how are they chosen?

The assignments are as stated in the first paragraph above and they are always national for freshmen. The freshmen and sophomore classes create their own methods for how these positions are chosen. It can be by class rank, lottery,

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drawing, and/or deferring to classmates who have an interest in a specific yard or ship. Problems that arise during the process are usually worked out by the class or sometimes referred to the Dean for resolution if needed.

For what expenses are the student/family responsible and what are the options for housing and transportation at the Winter Work sites?

The freshmen and sophomores will incur costs associated with medical exams, drug tests, clothing and safety gear. Freshmen will have to pay their own transportation to and from their work. Most juniors and seniors will also be responsible for their own transportation; however some companies will pay or reimburse for this expense. Rent and food is also an expense to the students and their families but, again, some freshman assignments will provide housing and some engineering firms will also pay a housing allowance. Sophomores requiring transportation to a specific port will have their expense paid for by the shipping company. Meals and a berth are provided as part of their assignments.

What does the school do to prepare students for Winter Work and what are the safety concerns?

The freshmen and sophomores will be working in environments full of potential hazards, but Webb makes sure they are properly outfitted for these assignments and thoroughly briefed about the working conditions they will enter. Sophomores will receive fire fighting training and other Coast Guard specified training and education here at Webb during the fall semester. Webb also has a student winter work data base where students can look over previous student experiences at the yards and companies who've previously employed Winter Work students. For juniors and seniors, the alumni network is very valuable.

What happens if a student is unable to participate in Winter Work?

Any medical condition, family crisis, or other emergency that might cause a student to be unable to work in the January or February period will be dealt with as it arises. Since this is a degree requirement, Webb administration and faculty will determine alternative solutions to this missing time. Most often this will be made up in the summer after the spring semester and prior to the start of a student's next academic year.

How is communication with students handled during Winter Work, especially with students aboard ships?

The only real issue that may arise from winter work assignments is the availability of text or email capability. Ships have gotten much better in providing access to the internet although students' may have their available time and file sizes (for pictures) restricted. The juniors and seniors who go abroad will all have email. They can also get free internet phone

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service from a company called Skype (see the [Skype website](#) for details). Phone company international phone plans a full of hidden costs so be careful. Students and/or their families should make sure that any problems that arise during Winter Work are communicated with Webb right away so resolution can come from our end if needed.

[What are the Coast Guard prerequisites/requirements for Winter Work? What are the Medical restrictions?](#)

For sophomore students, the Coast Guard has medical requirements that might be a barrier to sailing if a student has been taking certain medications for such things a depression or a chronic illness. In terms of physical abilities students must be able to climb ladders, walk up and down stairs without problem, pick up and carry nominal loads, and stand for extended periods of time. If you have specific questions, call Bill Murray. Webb will determine the right alternative work experience if any student condition arises that precludes sailing in January and February. They are usually made up in the following summer, but remember that these are graduation requirements without exception.

[What should parents be doing in anticipation of Winter Work?](#)

Parents should make sure their son or daughter shares with them the Webb provided list of clothing and supplies they need. Make sure their son or daughter spends time talking to the students who have been there before them as soon as they've made their pick of assignment. Encourage them to make a list of all questions and start with from inside of Webb before going to the Human Resources department of their chosen company. This is part of the learning experience for Webb students so coach them, be a resource, and help them brainstorm.

[Who is the point of contact for parents in the event of a family emergency/situation during Winter Work?](#)

Parents should contact Bill Murray, at 516-671-2213 ext. 104, if any type of emergency or unsatisfactory work situation arises. Students will be given an emergency contact list to take with them for the winter.