

# Professional Readiness Experiential Program (PREP)

**Connecting Students, Industry, and Faculty Through Real-World Projects**

The Professional Readiness Experiential Program (PREP) is an experiential learning initiative within George Mason University's Costello College of Business that bridges academic theory and industry practice through hands-on collaboration. PREP places honors and high-performing undergraduate and graduate students in agile, real-world environments where they partner with industry professionals to solve business and technology challenges while building critical professional skills.



Projects in the past have focused on **"Solving Business Challenges with Technology Solutions,"** emphasizing systems analysis and design, process improvement, data analytics, and cybersecurity. Students gain practical, résumé-ready experience, while industry partners benefit from **fresh perspectives, innovative insights, and actionable solutions.** By connecting students, faculty, and industry through real-world problem solving, PREP strengthens partnerships, expands the regional talent pipeline, and empowers organizations to advance innovation with data-driven insight.



Explore the range of past **Professional Readiness Experiential Program (PREP)** collaborations and get a sense of the types of projects you can propose:



## Why Now: Seizing the Moment

Each **team of 3–4 students** dedicates about **10–15 hours per week** to develop professional-quality **solution recommendations or prototypes** aligned with partner goals. Participation is **cost-free**, requiring only a brief weekly commitment from mentors for guidance and feedback. PREP's model and outcomes have been featured at the International Conference on Information Systems ([2024](#)), American Society for Engineering Education ([2024](#)), Americas' Conference on Information Systems ([2023](#)), and the International Information Systems Security Association ([2023](#)).

## Program Structure

### PREP's Undergraduate Program

**(Fall and Spring Semesters)** focuses on information systems, operations management, and business analytics students. Each cohort runs over 15 weeks, consisting of:

- 2 weeks of onboarding and client introductions
- 10 weeks of project execution
- 3 weeks of presentations and reflection

### Undergraduate Project Focus Areas:

- Business process improvement (with a potential technology solution)
- Technology innovation and system design
- Data analytics, reporting, and visualization
- Cybersecurity and risk management

### PREP's Graduate Program

**(Summer Semesters)** focuses on data-driven, analytics-based projects in the Master's in Business Analytics (MSBA) program. This 8-week course is structured as follows:

- 1 week of onboarding and client introductions
- 6 weeks of intensive project work
- 1 week of final presentations

### MSBA Project Focus Areas:

- Data mining, aggregation, and processing
- Exploratory data analysis and visualization
- Prescriptive modeling and decision-support analytics
- Forecasting and time-series modeling

## How to Get Involved

PREP welcomes industry participants eager to mentor students while exploring innovative solutions to their own organizational challenges. If you'd like to participate, please submit your request through our online **[PREP Interest Form](#)** to include the following:

- **Overview of Your Business Challenge**
  - A short summary of the issue or opportunity to explore.
- **Ideal Solution Requirements**
  - A few ideas or success criteria to help scope the work.
- **Potential Solution Idea** (*Optional*)
  - If you already have a direction or proof-of-concept in mind.



**PREP**  
**Interest Form**