



## USM Career Exploration Internship Program: Student Guidelines

Through the Career & Employment Hub, USM funds career exploration internships that offer students opportunities for applied learning and professional development with community partners in ten target sectors. Students who successfully complete these internships will emerge as leaders who drive the growth of Maine's economy.

Target sectors:

- Advanced Technologies for Forestry and Agriculture
- Aquaculture and Marine Technology
- Arts
- Biotechnology
- Composite Materials Technology
- Environmental Technology
- Humanities
- Information Technology
- Nonprofits
- Precision Manufacturing Technology

### The Student Internship Experience

The student internship workplace experience will be an extension of your classroom learning. The internship will give you the opportunity to gain valuable experience and to make connections in a professional field you may be considering for a career path. You will be involved in professional research-oriented projects that meet the real world needs of the business.

- Sites: All internships must take place in Maine, with partners external to USM.
- Travel: Work at locations other than the approved host site location is not permitted. Under special circumstances, travel for brief site visits or field trips may be allowed with advance permission from the relevant Program Director/Internship Coordinator and USM's HR Department on a case-by-case basis.
- Compensation: All internships are paid, regardless of whether they are credit or noncredit bearing.
- Hourly Pay: Students will be paid bi-weekly, based on a minimum hourly pay of \$18.50. This will be paid directly to the student by USM.
- Minimum/Maximum Hours: An internship requires a minimum of 120 hours total. An intern cannot work more than 20 hours in a week in an academic year and more than 39 hours per week during the

summer\*. Overtime work is not allowed.

*\*Beginning in January 2026, interns in arts, humanities, and nonprofit sectors must work exactly 120 hours per semester, no more and no less.*

- Communication between USM and Host Site Community Partner: Your USM internship contacts at the Career Hub will maintain communication with your host site to see how you are doing and what supports you might need. This can be done through phone, email, videocall, or site visits.

### Student Eligibility

- Major: Students from all majors at USM will be eligible to apply for Career Exploration Internships.
- Matriculation and Academic Standing: Students must be matriculated at USM full- or part-time and have at least a 2.7 GPA and a minimum of 30 credits prior to the start of an internship. Students must maintain their good academic standing throughout the internship experience.
- Residency: All USM students regardless of residency are eligible to apply for Career Exploration Internships.
- Existing Employer: A student intern cannot complete an internship with a community partner who is their current employer.
- Term limit: Student interns may not receive more than 12 months of internship funding through the Career Exploration Internship Program.

### Expectations of Student Interns

In order to get the most from your internship experience, it is important that you become familiar with the expectations listed below. Your USM internship contacts at the Career Hub and Faculty Advisor or Career Advisor will always be available to help you during the internship.

- Good Academic Standing: Maintain good academic standing throughout the internship experience.
- Professionalism: Maintain professionalism in all internship interactions and respect office policies and project deadlines.
- Professional Development Activities:
  - Orientation: The Internship Orientation will outline the expectations for your internship and provide initial guidance on professionalism and career development.
  - Other Workshops: During your internship, you will be offered professional development activities that will help you reflect on your internship experience and academic learning. These activities may be offered through the Career & Employment Hub or other community partners.
- Monthly Journal: Each month student interns will complete a monthly journal documenting their hours and learnings for the month, and share it with their host site supervisor for a signature before submitting to USM.
- Final Presentation: Submit to your USM internship contacts a brief presentation documenting your internship work and accomplishments, skills developed, and benefits gained from the internship, including any outcomes related to the achievement of your learning objectives. The presentation must not contain proprietary information.
- Communication with USM: Your internship contacts at the Career Hub are the first USM representatives to contact should any problems occur.
- Post-Internship Career Pathway Discussion: After the internship, plan to meet with your Faculty Advisor or Career Advisor to reflect on your internship experience, review and revise your Academic

Map, and update your resume.

### Application and Selection Process

Prior to submitting an application for an internship, speak with your Faculty Advisor or Career Advisor to discuss potential internship opportunities that align with your academic and professional goals.

- **Application:** You will complete an internship application form and then meet with a [Peer Career Guide](#) to develop a resume and customized cover letter for each position to which you are applying.
- **Interview & Selection Process:** You will be asked to interview first with the Career Hub, and then with the host site before a final match is made. Make sure you can speak clearly about your career goals and aspirations and how the internship would help you reach your goals. These interviews give you and the host site the opportunity to see if there is a good fit.
- **Internship Learning Agreement:** This agreement will outline the specifics of the internship, such as the research-based project(s) to be completed, requirements of the Host Site Community Partner, academic components (if applicable), and intended learning outcomes. The Internship Learning Agreement will be signed by your USM internship contact, the student intern, and the Host Site Community Partner.
- **Survey:** You will also be asked to complete an online survey at the end of your internship to help assess the quality, impact, and effectiveness of the internship program.

### Program Monitoring: Evaluation/Data Collection

The USM Career Exploration Internship Program conducts data collection and analysis annually to assess the quality, impact, and effectiveness of the program. Students and host sites are surveyed at the end of each internship term to track outputs and key short term outcomes. This data is used to highlight successes and lessons learned, and inform decision-making as we continue to adapt and grow the program. Students are expected to complete an online survey at the end of the internship that will capture data about the internship experience, such as how the internship enhanced their academic experience, helped them acquire or improve professional skills, and gain greater clarification about their career path.