



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 seven 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 & agriculture
- Biotechnology
- Aquaculture and marine technology
- Composite materials technology
- Environmental technology
- Information technology
- 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.
- Compensation: All internships are paid, regardless of whether they are credit or noncredit bearing.
- Minimum Hourly Pay: Students will be paid bi-weekly, based on a minimum hourly pay of \$18. This amount could be higher depending on the discipline. This will be paid directly to the student by USM.
- Minimum Hours: An internship requires a minimum of 150 hours. 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.
- Tuition Assistance: In combination with student payments, programs may provide tuition assistance at the approved USM in-state rate.
- Communication between USM and Host Site Community Partner: Your Program Director/Internship Coordinator 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.

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. The Program Director/Internship Coordinator 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 may 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 through your Program Director.
- Monthly Status Report: Each month, submit to your Program Director/Internship Coordinator and Host Site Supervisor a status report that includes (a) tasks performed and skills/knowledge acquired in service of your learning outcomes; (b) challenges to address and goals for the next month; (c) days, dates, and hours worked.
- Final Presentation: Submit to your Program Director/Internship Coordinator 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: The Program Director/Internship Coordinator is the USM representative 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. The application and selection process is competitive and will also involve the Host Site Community Partner.

- Application: Complete an internship application and submit a resume and customized cover letter for each position to which you are applying.
- Matching: The Program Director/Internship Coordinator will guide you through a process that will help you evaluate potential internship opportunities and determine a potential match that meets your academic and professional goals.
- Selection Process: You will be asked to interview with the host site before a final selection is made. Make sure you can speak clearly about your career goals and aspirations and how the internship would help you reach your goals. This interview gives you and the host site the opportunity to see if there is a good fit.

- **Internship Workplace Agreement:** As part of the process, you will be asked to sign an Internship Workplace Agreement for your internship. This agreement outlines the partnership agreement between the Host Site Community Partner and USM, and is also signed by the student.
- **Internship Learning Agreement:** This agreement will outline the specifics of the internship, such as the research-based project(s) to be completed, required number of hours, requirements of the Host Site Community Partner, academic components (if applicable), and intended learning outcomes. The Internship Learning Agreement will be signed by the Program Director/Internship Coordinator, 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.
- **Paperwork for Getting Paid:** Your Program Director/Internship Coordinator will ask you to complete several forms that will ensure you are paid bi-weekly during your internship experience.

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 anonymous 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.