

Students who successfully complete MEIF-supported internships will emerge as leaders who drive the growth of Maine's economy

Career Pathway Internship Programs (MEIF-Supported) Host Site Community Partner Guidelines

The Maine Economic Improvement Fund (MEIF) represents Maine's ongoing commitment between the state and the University of Maine System to advance research and development, commercialization, workforce development, and economic development.

To support the workforce needs of Maine, *MEIF@USM* sponsors research-based Career Exploration internships in industries and businesses in an MEIF-targeted sector, across multiple sectors, or sector support ecosystems, paying the wages of the interns through the MEIF fund. The "support ecosystems" refer to the key players external to USM that are involved in, rely on, or support a target area. Targeted sectors:

- Advanced Technologies for Forestry & Agriculture
- Aquaculture and marine technology
- Environmental technology
- Precision manufacturing technology
- Biotechnology
- Composite materials technology
- Information technology

The Student Internship Experience

The student internship workplace experience will be an extension of his/her classroom learning. The internship will give the student the opportunity to gain valuable experience and to make connections in a professional field he/she may be considering for a career path. It also gives the Host Site Community Partner the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. The student will be involved in professional research-oriented projects that meet the real world needs of the business; the internship activities will not substitute for work routinely performed by a regular employee. The skills or knowledge learned must also be transferable to other employment settings.

- **Sites:** All internships must take place in Maine.
- **Compensation:** All MEIF-sponsored internships are paid, regardless of whether they are credit or non-credit bearing.

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- **Minimum Hourly Pay:** Students will be paid bi-weekly, based on a minimum hourly pay of \$14. This amount could be higher depending on the discipline. This will be paid directly to the student by USM.
- **Host Site Community Partner Cost-Sharing¹:** As the relationship between Host Site Community Partners and USM grows, community partners will be asked to contribute to the cost of providing an intern at the Host Site.
- **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.
- **Program Director:** Each student intern will have a Program Director who will maintain communication with the Host Site Community Partner. The Program Director will work with the student and the Host Site Community Partner to ensure that the internship experience is a fulfilling one for all involved.
 - The student intern will submit a weekly/bi-weekly report to the Program Director (see Weekly Bi-Weekly Status Report below).
 - The Program Director will check in regularly with the Host Site Community Partner to see how the student is progressing and what supports he/she might need. This can be done through phone conversation, email contact, or site visits.

Student Eligibility and Expectations

- **Major:** Students from all majors at USM will be eligible to apply for MEIF-supported internships.
- **Matriculation and Academic Standing:** Students must be matriculated at USM as 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.
- **Existing Employer:** A student intern cannot complete an internship with a community partner who is his/her current employer.
- **Professionalism:** Student interns must maintain professionalism in all internship interactions and respect office policies and project deadlines.
- **Weekly/Bi-Weekly Status Report:** Every week (minimum every two weeks) student interns will submit to their Program Director a status report that includes (a) research project tasks/activities/duties performed; (b) skills/information learned; (c) problems encountered and how they were solved; and (d) days, dates, and hours worked.
 - The student will share the Status Report with the Host Site supervisor so that the supervisor can validate the hours worked.
- **Communication with USM:** The Program Director is the USM representative to contact should any problems occur.

¹ Program contributions in lieu of salary payments are necessary to avoid student interns becoming employees of the Community Partners, which would trigger additional liability insurance requirements on the part of the Community Partner.

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Responsibilities of a Host Site Community Partner^{2,3}

Workplace internships can be a win-win experience for both the student and the employer/business. Having an intern on-site can help a business connect with and build relationships with students early in their academic careers; build a pool of potential candidates who have business experience and a relationship with employees; and contribute to the economic and workforce growth of Maine. It is expected that all Host Sites for USM interns will be responsible for the following:

- **Research-based Workplace Experience:** Commit to providing student interns a minimum of 150 hours of research-based project work that will enable them to enhance their skills and prepare for their future careers. The student should be involved in professional research-oriented projects that meet the real world needs of the business.
- **Safe Environment:** Provide a safe working environment in a professional office that must be on-site and cannot be in a private residence; explain organizational culture and structure; and foster an environment free of discrimination, where the intern enjoys the same respect as other team members.
- **On-Site Supervision:** Provide one identified, on-site intern supervisor who has knowledge of and an educational and/or professional background in the industry of the internship.
- **Meaningful Projects:** Provide meaningful projects that foster learning and allow the student intern to apply the knowledge and skills he/she has learned.
- **Resources:** Provide the necessary resources to ensure the intern can complete his/her projects.
- **Goal Setting, Mentorship, and Feedback:** Facilitate goal setting with each intern, monitor and provide feedback regularly about progress; facilitate opportunities for the intern to apply academic skills and knowledge to the workplace environment; identify the intern's successes and strengths, offering constructive feedback on progress toward goals; and cultivate an environment that promotes mentorship for career planning that includes advice, counseling, and support.
 - The student may share his/her Academic Map, a tool that can help students link their academic coursework requirements; developmental work-based activities, such as internships; and career pathways.
- **Inappropriate Work:** Ensure that the student intern does not perform personal errands or clerical work for the Host Site's employees, duties that require any sort of license or certification, or roles that are commission-based.
- **No Overtime Work:** Ensure that the student intern does not work more than 20 hours in a week during the academic year and 39 hours a week during the summer.

² Good Internships Are Good Business: Employer Guide to Structuring a Successful Internship Program (2013). Prepared by BRIDGE, a collaborative effort of all of Rhode Island's colleges and universities.

³ Internship Bill of Rights and Responsibilities: The Model Partnership for Students, Employers and Educational Institutions. The Washington Center. Retrieved on June 2, 2017 from <http://internshipbillofrights.com>

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- **Networking:** Build an environment that integrates the student intern into work and social activities and help the student intern interact with colleagues throughout the organization and within his/her field of interest.
- **Consent to Communication with USM:** Consent to phone conversations, emails, or site visits during the student internship with the Program Director.
- **Weekly/Bi-Weekly Status Report:** The student will submit to the Program Director a status report every week (minimum every two weeks) that includes (a) tasks/activities/duties performed; (b) skills/information learned; (c) problems encountered and how they were solved; and (d) days, dates, and hours worked.
 - The student will share the Status Report with the Host Site supervisor so that the supervisor can validate the hours worked.
- **Feedback Survey:** Respond to an online community partner survey at the end of the internship and provide constructive comments to help improve the internship experience for the student, for the Host Site Community Partner, and for USM. Information about the feedback survey is included at the end of this document.
- **Applicable Federal, State and Legal Standards, and UMS Policies:** Comply with all federal labor and state laws pertaining to student interns and to the University of Maine System's Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment policies in all interactions with the student intern.

Application and Selection Process

Students will submit an application to become an intern where they will indicate their interest in particular MEIF sectors. The Host Site Community Partner will also be required to apply to become a Host Site. See below for the application and selection process.

- **Application:** Complete a Career Pathway Internship Host Site application that can be found here: <https://usm.maine.edu/career-and-employment-hub/meif-supported-internships>
- **Education Affiliation Agreement:** After submitting an application, the Host Site Community Partner will receive an email response with information about completing an Education Affiliation Agreement, if not done so previously. This agreement outlines the partnership agreement between the Host Site Community Partner and USM. This agreement needs to be signed only once.
- **Matching:** A Career Adviser, Faculty Adviser, or Program Director will guide the Host Site Community Partner through a process that will help to evaluate potential interns and determine a potential match to meet business needs.
- **Selection Process:** The Host Site Community Partner will interview potential interns to make a final selection. This interview will give both the Host Site Community Partner and the student the opportunity to see if there is a good fit for both.

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- **Internship Workplace Agreement:** This agreement will outline the specifics of the internship, such as the research-based project(s) the interns will be involved in, required number of hours, requirements of the Host Site Community Partner, academic components (if applicable), and intended learning outcomes.
 - The Internship Workplace Agreement will be signed by the Career Adviser or Program Director, the student intern, and the Host Site Community Partner.

Program Monitoring: Evaluation/Data Collection

- MEIF is working with a team from the Data Innovation Project (DIP) at the Cutler Institute at the University of Southern Maine to help assess the quality, impact, and effectiveness of our internship program. The intent of the MEIF internship program monitoring plan is to track outputs and key short-term outcomes and to provide a structure for future evaluations. The data will be used to inform future programming and decision making and to highlight the successes and lessons learned from the program.
- The Host Site Community Partner will be asked to complete an online survey at the end of the internship that captures data about the experience of having a USM student intern at the workplace. The survey will ask for reflections on the performance of the intern, his/her work, and communication in the workplace. Additionally, the survey will ask about the interaction with USM during the internship and the potential for future internships at the workplace.

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