



Roles and Responsibilities of the Internship Host Site

Step 1: Application

The host sites can apply to be on the list of eligible host sites by sending information to the Food Studies Program Internship Coordinator (IC), including the organization's contact information, an outline of its mission and goals, a description of the sector of the food system, and the types of projects/tasks that might be assigned to an intern. Host sites may have more than one job description.

Step 2: Determining Intern Readiness

If a student expresses an interest in working at a particular site, the host site should plan to interview the student to determine internship readiness, qualifying skill set, and appropriate fit with the host site.

Step 3: Determining Faculty Advisor and Host Site

If/When a student is interested in a host site, the IC will contact the host site to ascertain if the opportunity is still available. If it is, then the IC will send an e-introduction and set up an introductory interview. At this point, the host site should confirm with the IC the projects and activities that are available. This process may include some edits to the internship job description and task list. The student and Faculty Advisor (FA) begin connecting these activities to the student's learning objectives.

Step 4: Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement outlines the student's internship experience. It includes intern, FA, and Host Site Supervisor contact info, the project description, responsibilities and tasks assigned, and the learning objectives. The IC fills out the known information of the Learning Agreement and passes it onto the student, FA, and host site supervisor to complete.

FAs are responsible for the completion of the Learning Agreement, contributing expertise to develop appropriate learning objectives. The host site will review job description, agree on a specific start date and regular weekly schedule, and establish the day/time of the weekly supervision meeting with the student.

The Learning Agreement must be completed, signed by all parties, and submitted to the Administrative Specialist (AS) before the student may register for the course and begin the internship.

When signing the Learning Agreement, the host site supervisor is committing to the following:

- **Time Commitment:** Commit to providing student interns with a minimum of 150 hours of work-based training as outlined in the Learning Agreement, ensuring that the interns do not work more than 20 hours a week during the academic year, and not more than 39 hours a week during the summer.
- **Meaningful Project:** Provide a rigorous and hands-on work experience that will enable the student intern to apply academic learning to real-life problems in a work setting. The work must be meaningful and supervised, and foster learning and skill-building. The internship must not be structured to simply advance the operations of the host community partner or be a substitute for work that a regular employee would routinely perform.

- **On-Site Supervision:** Provide one identified, on-site intern supervisor who has knowledge and a professional background in the industry of the internship.
- **Safe Environment:** Provide a safe working environment in a professional on-site office. The office may not be in a private residence.
- **On-Site Visits:** Upon request, consent to visits by USM personnel.
- **Support:** Facilitate goal-setting, provide appropriate resources and feedback to support the student.
- **Networking:** Build an environment that integrates the student intern into work and social activities and help the intern interact with colleagues throughout the organization and within their field of interest.
- **Student Performance:** Host Site Supervisors should conduct a supervisory meeting at least biweekly/every other week to provide feedback on the interns performance. Host Site Supervisors will complete an evaluation of the student at the end of the internship via the Food Studies Program website (<https://usm.maine.edu/food-studies/intern-evaluation-host-site-supervisor>).
- **Compliance:** 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.

Step 5: Educational Affiliation Agreement

During the internship, students are considered employees of USM. In order to host a USM employee, the authorized organizational representative must sign an Educational Affiliation Agreement between the University System and the host site.

Step 6: On-Boarding

Nothing is required of the host site.

Step 7: Bi-Weekly Journal Entries

All interns are required to submit journals bi-weekly throughout the internship, starting week 2 of the internship. The journals will be sent to the FA, the Host Site Supervisor, and IC. If a student has not started on-site as of week 2, then the journal entry should say so and there should be a clear indication of when the actual start date will be.

The FA and the Host Site Supervisor should review the bi-weekly journals throughout the semester. If an intern has more than one outstanding journal entry, then the internship will be put on an immediate hold and the host site supervisor will be notified. The hold will stay in place until the required journal entries are submitted. During this hold, the student will not be able to return to their work site until they are caught up on journal assignments.

Step 8: Check-In with Internship Coordinator

The IC will check in with the Host Site Supervisor at least three times during the course of the internship: week 2, week 7 (the halfway point), and week 12. Similarly, FAs check in with interns.

Step 9: Networking Meeting

Interns are required to attend a mid-semester networking meeting with their cohort. This meeting will be facilitated by the IC and attendance will be taken.

Step 10: End-of-Semester Presentations

Host Site Supervisors are encouraged to attend the end-of-semester presentations which are usually scheduled for the last Friday of the semester. Guidelines for the presentation format can be found here: <https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/food-studies/InternshipPresentations.pdf>.

Step 11: Final Project

Interns are required to complete a final project. This is often a 5-10-page written paper that ties research done at the host site to key concepts learned in the classroom. However, the final project does not need to be a paper. Students may end up producing documents that the host site has use for, such as press releases, annual reports, or research findings. FAs will coordinate with host sites and plan ahead to identify research projects that may be of use to the host site. Host sites are encouraged to share their ideas for useful projects as they are working to develop the Learning Agreement.

Step 12: Revised and Updated Resume

Nothing is required of the host site.

Step 13: Evaluations

Host Site Supervisors are asked to complete an evaluation of the student's performance.