



INTERNSHIP GUIDE





*Career*center
Division of Student Life

INTERNSHIP GUIDE

What are internships? 2

Internship guidelines 2

Who needs an internship? 3

Will an internship help me gain employment? 3

Student benefits and responsibilities 4

Employer benefits and responsibilities 6

How to find an internship 8

Learning contract 10

Ethical and legal issues 12

Internships are great opportunities for developing resumes, getting hands-on experience, and building a professional network. Participating in an internship requires a commitment of time, energy and resources. The following information will help University of Maine students, internship coordinators, faculty, staff and employers navigate the process.

75%

of post-secondary students graduate with at least one internship (collegerecruiter.com)

What are internships?

Internships are work experiences related to a student's major or career interests. Opportunities can be paid or unpaid, full time or part time, for academic credit or not for credit. When possible, monetary compensation is recommended.

When utilizing an internship experience for academic credit, faculty must endorse the student. This includes developing and agreeing to a learning contract, monitoring the student's progress throughout the duration of the experience, and grading the student's work. Students may utilize the INT 196 course to receive academic credit for their work if their major does not offer an internship course.

Internship guidelines

The Career Center screens internships prior to posting. It recommends faculty and staff who receive postings review the quality of the internship prior to referring students. Please forward the internship to the Career Center for posting. Students also should know who their point of contact is at UMaine, if they encounter any difficulties during their internship. The Career Center can help a student identify this contact person.

The center recommends that internship employers follow the [National Association of Colleges and Employers \(NACE\)](#) guidelines for best internship practices and that all internship coordinators familiarize themselves with these [guidelines](#).

Who needs an internship?

Internships can benefit any student in any field. Some majors and degree tracks require internships to enable students to apply their education and skills while making professional connections and building their resumes. Students should work with their advisers or department's internship coordinator to determine if they need an internship experience.



Will an internship really help me when I am searching for full-time employment?

Yes, internship experience is highly regarded by employers. It helps you gain skills that are relevant to your particular field of interest. Sometimes internship positions can turn into full-time employment if the right circumstances are in place. The experience gained completing the internship search process also helps when searching for full-time positions. You have acquired cover letter and resume writing skills. In addition, you will be more relaxed at full-time employment interviews if you have gone through the process during the search for internships.

STUDENT BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many benefits to completing an internship. Internships help students evaluate career choices, utilize theories learned in class, and skills developed from campus involvement to gain experience in the workplace.

Nationally, up to 51.7 percent of students who participated in an internship received a job offer for full-time employment from the hosting employer (NACE, 2015). It is important for the student to be a professional and responsible intern.

Interns:

- Gain experience and develop skills
- Make connections
- Accumulate evidence of abilities
- Learn about a field
- Assess interests and abilities
- Possibly land a full-time job
- Strengthen resume
- Gain industry knowledge



“Perhaps the most valuable lesson I learned during my UMaine Alumni Association (UMAA) internship was the value of diversifying my writing styles. Writing for marketing and community engagement is much different than, say, writing for a newspaper or authoring an academic paper. In my time at UMAA, I crafted community emails, managed social media campaigns, wrote magazine articles, and professionally interacted with community and campus leaders. This diversity helped prepare me for every job I’ve had since.”

Kyle Hadyniak, '15, '17G, Journalism B.A., Mass Communication M.A.
Internship with UMaine Alumni Association

Additional benefits

A successful internship can help students design an academic plan appropriate for entering their desired career. Internships can help students financially. According to a study's findings, appearing on indeed.com, average intern wage is \$12.69 an hour. Some interns receive additional benefits besides pay (e.g., relocation and/or housing assistance).

Intern employers reported making full-time employment offers to nearly 90 percent of interns, and nearly 90 percent accepted (NACE, 2015). In the Class of 2017 Student Survey, the job-offer rate for “paid-private” students (62.2 percent) was 20.4 percent higher than for “unpaid” students and 18.9 percent higher than for students lacking experience. In addition, the median starting salary offer for “paid-private” students was 44.8 percent higher than for “unpaid” students and 27.1 percent higher than for students lacking experience (NACE, 2018).



Checklist for students earning credit

- Search and find an internship that fits your career goals. For help clarifying career goals, contact the Career Center for an appointment.
- Get approval from your faculty internship coordinator.
- Sign up for the field internship/experience course for your major.
- Develop a learning contract detailing objectives, working in conjunction with your employer and faculty internship coordinator.
- Attend all training required by the employer.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner while at the internship site.
- Maintain contact with your on-site supervisor and faculty coordinator.
- Complete required coursework agreed on in the learning contract.

EMPLOYER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many benefits an organization can gain by employing an intern. Students usually are energetic and eager to learn. They are up-to-date on the latest theories and patterns in their particular field. With this experience, student interns can bring exciting change to an organization. Internships are highly cost efficient for employers. Employers can recruit new full-time employees from their pool of interns. By working with an intern prior to hiring them full time, a company ensures they are hiring only the best workers.



Employers:

- Find future employees
- Increase productivity
- Increase employee retention rate
- Enhance perspective
- Give back to the community
- Support/mentor students

“Internships are a critical component of our workforce development initiatives at Bangor Savings Bank. Not only do our interns fulfill critical business needs during their time with us, they also provide us with insights into the interests and workplace needs of the next generation of workforce — helping us to remain an employer of choice. Many of our Summer Intern Program participants have returned to work for Bangor Savings Bank, IT and Wealth Management. We truly value our internship partnership with UMaine, and look forward to continuing to provide a robust Summer Intern Program that includes workplace experience, professional skills development and social engagement.”

Isla Dickerson, director of marketing and senior vice president, Bangor Savings Bank

Additional benefits

Interns allow employers to complete special or ongoing projects, bringing new and innovative ideas to an employer. Internships allow employers to try out and evaluate potential full-time employees without any long-term commitments. Training costs and time are greatly reduced if an employer converts an intern to a full-time employee. Interns tend to be energetic about their work while doing an internship and will share their experience with others.

Internship programs can help develop a strong bond with the university community as employers partner with programs and students. [The Flagship Internship Program](#) is an available designation for Maine employers. To be a part of this premier internship program, please complete an employer application [online](#).

Checklist of employer responsibilities

- Develop positions that pertain to the student’s field of study. See the list of majors offered at the University of Maine.
- Expand on the student’s educational background.
- Determine who will supervise the student(s). Regular meetings should be set up between the student and an on-site supervisor.
- Have a supervisor who can answer questions the university or a student may have about the position.
- Provide training to the student(s).
- Provide company orientation that should be completed prior to or concurrently with the start of the internship. Orientation should include safety concerns or requirements, hours to be at work, appropriate attire, introduction to people in the company and other topics the company sees as important.
- Assist the student with the development of the learning contract by stating specific job responsibilities.
- Include student interns in meetings and other activities required by employees in the same department.
- Provide an evaluation of the student’s progress regularly and at the end of the internship.
- Allow for on-site visits by the faculty internship coordinator.
- Notify the faculty internship coordinator of any changes to or concerns about employment (e.g., job responsibilities, schedules or disciplinary issues).



HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

Step 1: Determine the type of internship

- Your major, personal interests and/or career goals can determine the type of internship for you. If you have questions about which career field to enter, take advantage of Career Center counseling.

Step 2: Search

- Use the Career Center's website to find links to many job search engines for internships.
- Develop a prospect list and browse through contact information for companies in numerous career fields. You can send a letter of inquiry to the contact asking about internship availability.
- Check your academic department bulletin boards for postings. Check the Career Center's on-campus recruiting schedule for employers recruiting interns, and attend related events such as the Career Fair and employer networking opportunities.

Step 3: Apply

- Each internship has a different application process, but most require a cover letter, resume and an interview.
- Once you have a typed draft of a cover letter, make an appointment at the Career Center to have it critiqued.
- Tailor your resume. Resumes can be reviewed at the Career Center.
- Prepare for the interview. The Career Center offers print resources, videos, interview coaching and mock interviews.
- Collect letters of recommendation (if required) or have a list of references (three are typically sufficient).
- Once you have been offered and accepted an internship, contact your faculty coordinator to develop the learning contract and sign up for the field experience course for your major if you need academic credit.

Step 4: On the job

- Internships are designed as learning experiences for students. To get the most out of your experience, ask questions, research your areas of interest and get involved. Always think about what you are learning and what you have learned from your experiences.
- Have confidence in your ideas and abilities. It is normal to be nervous when entering a new environment. It may take time to feel comfortable. College students have the ability to adapt quickly to new circumstances. Ask questions when you do not know how to start or how to continue a project.
- Be professional and courteous in all things that you are requested and required to do. Adopt a positive attitude. Be willing to accept feedback from supervisors and peers. Be prompt, ready to learn, motivated and develop time management skills to ensure that you meet deadlines.
- Pay attention to the people around you and notice who is the best person to answer your questions. Observe how people interact with each other, and get to know the people you work with (they may be valuable contacts for you one day).



Ways to get to know people at work:

1. Get involved in company teams or professional organizations, and take time to eat lunch with co-workers. These give you an opportunity to get to know people on a less formal basis.
2. Attend office parties, meetings and other office-related activities. This is another chance to build connections with people.
3. While attending these functions, be friendly, courteous, listen to others, contribute to the conversation, but do not give your whole life history.

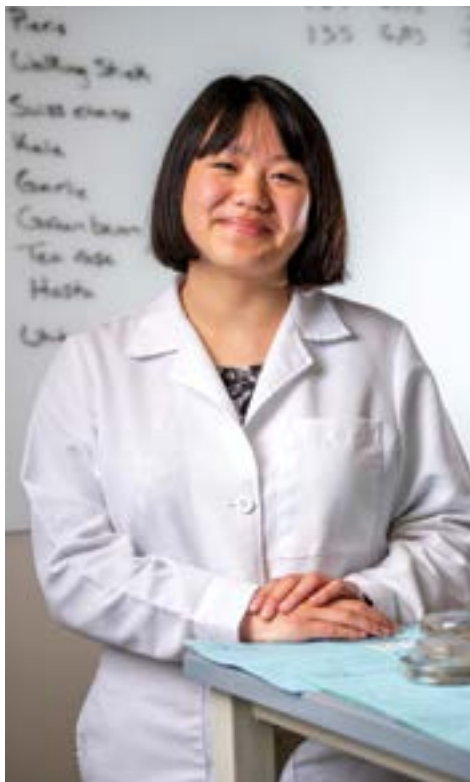
“As a research associate at the Maine International Trade Center (MITC), I helped Maine businesses connect with foreign markets and learned about market trends, regulations and logistics. It was very exciting to work as a member of a team that developed answers to questions asked by Maine businesses about international trade. The answers we provided ultimately helped the businesses grow. That was definitely the most rewarding part about my internship at MITC — my work directly contributed to economic development in the state of Maine.”

George Lindbom, '17G Economics
Internship with Maine International Trade Center

LEARNING CONTRACT

The student needs to develop a list of learning objectives to accomplish while completing the internship. The student should determine if the goals are appropriate for the particular internship by consulting with the on-site supervisor or the faculty internship coordinator. Visit umaine.edu/career/employers/internship-co-op-guide/students/learning-contract for a template to create your own learning contract.

The next step of the [learning contract](#) is to work with the on-site supervisor to determine how each of the learning objectives will be reached. Points that need to be included in the contract are: the total number of hours required at the internship site, the amount of credit to be earned, and any assignments the academic department and faculty coordinator require to receive credit. Finally, the student and on-site supervisor need to meet to determine if the preset goals are reached.



“Learning to apply information about sustainability is one of the most important things I’ve learned. And being able to adapt to different industries, like the science or business sector, is key when trying to convey your message. Professional communication to the real world is also something that I have gained knowledge about, especially when I had to call or meet someone in person for an interview. The workshops I participated in through this internship were eye-opening, and being able to video chat with the other interns was like having them right there in a classroom.”

Abigayl Novak, Class of 2020
Ecology and environmental science major with a dual concentration in ecosystems ecology and sustainability, natural resource management and environmental policy
Internship with Manomet U360 Sustainability



Steps for employers to develop an internship

1. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Why do I want to develop an internship or program?
 - What do I hope to get out of the program?
 - What will the student get out of the program?
2. Determine projects or an area of need in your organization.
3. Know how many students you want to have working for your organization.
4. Set aside funds for the project and/or student.
5. Develop a job description with specific requirements for applicants, such as desired majors, minimum GPA and amount of completed coursework. Determine the application procedures appropriate for your organization. Make sure that your job or project will supplement the student’s educational experience.
6. Recruit a supervisor to monitor, train, orient and evaluate the student(s).
7. Contact the University of Maine’s [Career Center](#) to post the position. You can post the position directly to [CareerLink](#), or email the job description and application instructions to umainecareercenter@maine.edu. Contact the Career Center if you wish to schedule on-campus interviewing.
8. Hire the best candidates for your internship and let the Career Center know when you have filled the position.

ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

The legal issues presented here are not intended to constitute all of the legal responsibilities that an employer incurs when hiring an intern. The laws change from state to state and also with the type of employer. Nonprofit agencies, government agencies and privately owned companies may have different rules. For a better understanding of your organization's legal rights and responsibilities when hosting an intern, consult with your organization's attorney.

Civil rights

Employers are required to utilize the same nondiscrimination guidelines when hiring interns that they observe when hiring part- and full-time employees.

Harassment

Interns are protected from harassment under the same laws that govern employees. If an intern was the initiator of harassment against an employee of the organization, the intern would be dealt with in a fashion similar to an employee.

Liability

As long as the intern is an enrolled student at the University of Maine, the university's liability insurance will cover him or her at the internship site. Employers are required to provide the intern with a safe working environment that lives up to OSHA standards and includes all necessary safety equipment and training.

Unemployment compensation

Student interns are typically not able to collect unemployment compensation at the end of the work period.

Noncompete and nondisclosure agreements

Some interns are asked to sign noncompete and/or nondisclosure agreements. Nondisclosure agreements prohibit students from relaying information about a company's products, processes and other information to future employers. The noncompete agreements forbid students to work for a competing company. As a result of companies asking students to sign these agreements, some schools are not allowing them to participate in internships with their students. In general, noncompete agreements are difficult to enforce when interns are

involved and enforceability depends on the reasonableness of the restrictions and whether sufficient legal consideration was given to the student in exchange for the promise not to compete.

Criteria to determine if the employer needs to pay an intern

The following comes from the National Association of Colleges and Employers: "The answer to this, does the employer have to pay the intern for his or her work, lies in an analysis of the on-the-job experience the individual will have in relationship to the standards set forth under the Fair Labor Standards Act, which requires employers to pay at least the minimum wage to employees." ([dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm](https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm))

For a student worker to be considered an intern these criteria should be met:

- The work needs to be an integral part of the student's course of study.
- The student will receive credit for the work, or the experience is a requirement for graduation.
- The student needs to prepare a report of his or her experience and submit it to the faculty internship coordinator.
- The employer needs written documentation from the school that the experience is educationally relevant.
- A learning contract with clear goals needs to be drafted and signed.
- The student does not perform work done by other employees.
- The student is shadowing or learning from a mentor/on-site supervisor.
- The employer provides the student the opportunity to learn skills relevant to the business and career field.
- The student is supervised at the work site.
- The student does not provide benefit to the employer for more than 50 percent of the time.
- The employer did not guarantee the student a job upon completion of training or schooling.

Can the experience be considered volunteer work by the organization? The Department of Labor considers a volunteer a person who provides services to a public agency for "civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons" without compensation or the expectation of compensation.

For further questions, contact the University of Maine Career Center, Memorial Union, Suite 300, 207.581.1359.

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umaine.edu/career

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