

The University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS)

Employer Internship Guide

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SEAS educates and trains future practitioners in diverse sustainability specializations, at both undergraduate and graduate student levels. Employers looking to post an internship or partner with SEAS on creating internships will find this guide useful.



WHO WE ARE

The [UM School for Environment and Sustainability's](#) overarching objective is to transform higher-education and its impact through research, teaching, and engagement in society. It's focused on solving the climate crisis and creating a world that is economically robust, environmentally sound, sustainable and just, from the scale of watersheds and communities in Michigan, to the entire planet. SEAS degrees cover seven specializations for masters of science, a masters of landscape architecture degree, as well as PhD.

The undergraduate [Program in the Environment \(PitE\)](#) (a jointly conferred degree between SEAS and UM-LSA) offers both a broad liberal arts education in environmental topics and the opportunity for students to pursue various lines of individual interest in considerable depth. PitE's curriculum focuses on the complex interactions of human beings and their environment. To understand these interactions and learn how to create more rational and equitable forms of human habitation on this planet, PitE students develop a multidisciplinary perspective integrating the methods and approaches of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

Internship opportunities are open to all of these student groups and explored in greater details throughout this guide.

DO YOU ALREADY HAVE INTERNSHIPS? SEAS INTERNSHIP POSTING PROCESS

If you already have ready-to-share internships that you are looking to fill, SEAS can post openings any time of year and aims to meet employers where you are on the spectrum of recruiting and talent acquisition. In general, the earlier in the start of each school year (late August to early September) that employers provide and post internships, the greater likelihood that you will identify proactive students who are planning ahead.

Internships can occur any time of year, however, in general when referring to internships in this document the emphasis will be for the summer months (June - August, 10 - 12 weeks) when students are most often looking for opportunities and not fully enrolled in classes. Most internships are full or close to full-time. Part-time internships do occur in UM's fall (September - December) and winter (January - April) semesters and SEAS can help you identify interns outside of the summer months as well.

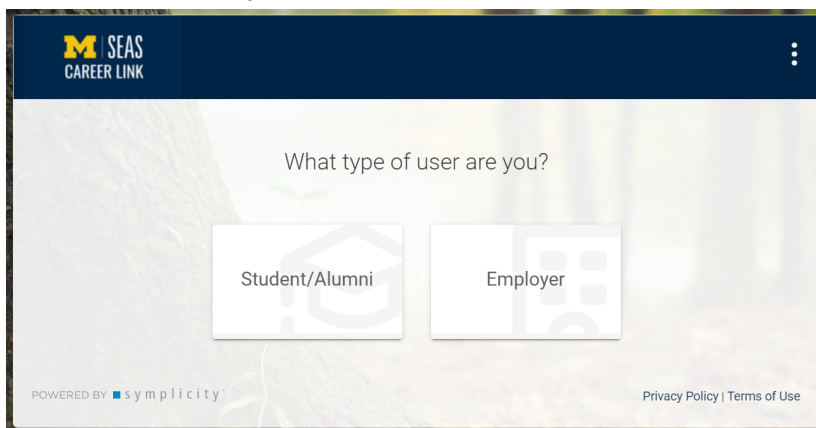
How to Post an Internship with SEAS/PitE:

There are two options for posting an internship with SEAS:

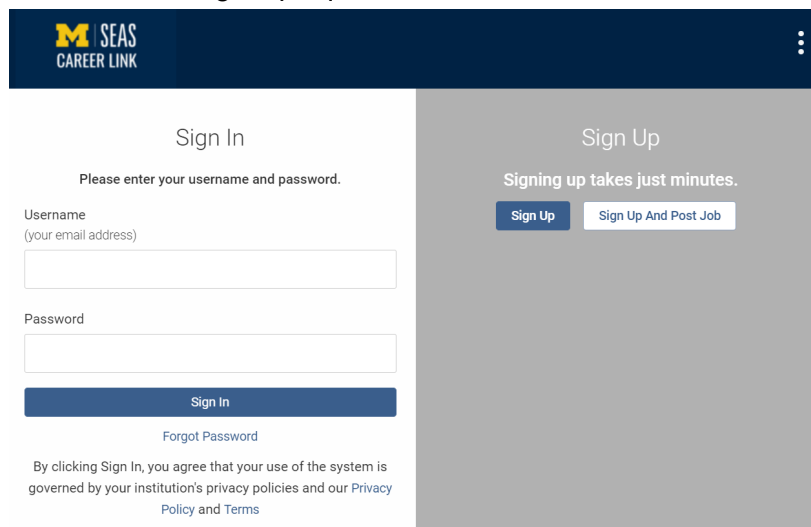
Option 1) Email your openings (including links or instructions to apply) to SEAS Career Services: seas-careers@umich.edu. Your internship will be shared in an internal online jobs board and communications sent to students.

Option 2) Post the internship(s) directly in SEAS Career Link (a CRM tool using the software platform company Symplicity), that includes our job board and other features, following these steps:

- Go to: <https://seasumich-csm.symplicity.com/>
- Click on the Employer square button as shown here:



- Click the blue Sign-Up square button as shown here:



- You will be guided through several fields, some required (*), to create account credentials. This will focus on your “Company Information.” From there you can select additional features and benefits you may sign up for beyond job posting, including:
 - Resume Book (search by keywords, career interests, experience, etc.)
 - Post internships or full-time jobs with SEAS Career Link
 - Contact information visibility option
 - Access to career fairs and information sessions for recruiting purposes
- UM staff will then review and approve your access to and you will be notified via email.

Reach out to seas-careers@umich.edu if interested in a template/sample internship job posting used with partner employers.

DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL INTERNSHIP

The first question you or your organization should ask is whether you are seeking undergraduate students (The UM [Program in the Environment, or PitE](#)) or graduate students (Masters of Science, Masters of Landscape Architecture, PhD) from the [School for Environment and Sustainability \(SEAS\)](#). Both groups of students offer unique skills for your organization.

You can explore the academic programs (links below) of each to learn which cohort of student is the best fit for your needs:

[PitE \(B.S.\)](#)

[SEAS \(M.S.\)](#) | [SEAS \(M.L.A\)](#)

[PhD](#)

Define Expectations: Within the first week, you should be comfortable discussing with the intern both your organization's expectations as well as asking the same of your intern(s). Ideally, essential expectations would be discussed prior to your offering the position so that both parties are clear. Certain reporting or check-in expectations, however, may wait until the start day and should be covered so your organization and the student are clear and in agreement. If you require any form of non-disclosure agreement (NDA) based on information access the intern will have, this should be discussed and understood with the intern. Typically, UM cannot review private NDA's that do not involve faculty/researcher signature.

Supervision: There should be someone directly supervising interns for the duration of their time with your organization. It is important to have in place the frequency and manner for how often the intern and supervisor will meet.

Scope of Work: The best internships are those supporting a specific research or implementation task, so the intern can gain skills and be able to relay benefits gained. Most internships for SEAS and PitE students are not generalized but are specific to projects. It will likely be necessary to scope out a job description with the eventual supervisor or project lead to describe the kinds of skills needed as well as those that will be gained.

Objectives: Consider and determine student learning objectives based on your organization's needs and student goals for their professional development/career aspirations. A great resource to assist comes from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE):

- [NACE core competencies](#)
- Competencies developed during the internship could include: relationship building, teamwork, project management, conflict management, campaign and event planning, and public writing communications (social media, blogs, etc.)
- Align these learning objectives with students' goals for the internship

Depending on the length of time of the internship, it can be valuable to give the intern a longer-term project that they can develop over the course of their time with a tangible result or product at the end that they can feel proud of and feature on their resume. Having these final products gives the students a sense of accomplishment and completion about the work they performed for the internship.

CHOOSE THE STUDENT PROGRAM(S) FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Undergraduate Students

Student Program	Student Benefits	Employer Benefits
Program in the Environment (PitE) Undergraduate Students	<p>Funding: All students in the PitE program are eligible for internship scholarships to cover the costs of their living expenses (up to \$7,500)</p> <p>Internship Course Credit: All PitE students can gain 1 course credit through taking a course through the college of Literature, Science, and the Arts</p>	<p>Interdisciplinary Environmental Background: Our PitE students receive an interdisciplinary environmental studies education allowing them to have a broad knowledge base to solve problems, think critically, and effectively communicate within the environmental field.</p> <p>Compensation: Because all our undergraduate students are eligible for need-based internship scholarships, hiring an undergraduate can be a great choice for non-profit or community-based organizations that are unable to provide an hourly wage to students due to financial restrictions.</p>
PitE Michigan Internship Learning Environment (MILE) Students	<p>In addition to the above benefits -</p> <p>Internship Course Credit: Students participating in the MILE program receive 3 course credits and meet the practical experience requirement for their major</p>	<p>In addition to the above benefits -</p> <p>Research for your Organization: Students in the MILE program partner with their internship supervisor, course professor, and a U-M faculty advisor in order to conduct a research project that meets the needs of your organization.</p>

Graduate Students

Student Program	Student Benefits	Employer Benefits
Masters Students Internships	<p>Funding: Masters students can apply for competitive scholarship opportunities for internships at non-profit or governmental organizations (# of students awarded)</p>	<p>Specialization Specific Knowledge: Access to seven distinct skills specializations for Masters of Science (MS) and Masters of Landscape Architecture (MLA). Students receive training in ecological management and design (MLA), policy, geospatial, behavioral science, quantitative analysis, social justice and equity assessment, and other hard and soft skills within the evolving fields of sustainability.</p>
Masters Students Capstone	<p>Program Requirement: Most SEAS students take part in team-based projects that can include an internship. Details for employers considering hosting a masters student capstone project are available here.</p>	<p>Extended Timeline: See yearly deadline and proposal details at the link in the left cell. Proposals are due typically in September, projects that advance are notified in December and team work (~5 students/team) with client employers begins in January and continues until the following April (~1 year, 4 months)</p>
PhD Students Internships	<p>Funding: PhD Students can apply for competitive internship funding through SEAS and the Rackham graduate school for summer internships.</p>	<p>Expert Research & Project Management Skills: PhD Students bring a high level of research and project management expertise to any organization. Their ability to provide critical analysis and problem solving within the environmental field make them extremely valuable interns.</p>

CAN YOU PAY YOUR INTERNS?

Most internships should strive to pay an hourly rate or a stipend reasonable for at least entry-level work at your organization. Contact seas-careers@umich.edu to get insights on what funding might be appropriate for undergrad/graduate degree students. [NACE also covers current fair wage/pay issues for employers to consider](#).

SEAS recognizes that not all employers can pay interns but are still very much interested in hosting them to add capacity for projects or advance your ongoing mission. As of 2021, there are two limited internship funding sources graduate students (with the support of the

organization) may apply to: [Sussman](#) (full application materials due early February of each year) or [Weinberg](#) (full application materials due March of each year) programs. Please review these weblinks if at this time your organization can only offer unpaid internships.

If you don't have funding but are interested in hiring undergraduates, students in the PitE program can apply to [LSA Internship Scholarships](#). Certain undergraduate students may be open to getting course credits for interning. For more information on this option explore the [MILE program](#) (involves a research requirement) and [ALA 225: Undergraduate Internship Course](#).

Undergraduate MILE internship for credit details:

The MILE program includes a series of stages that must be completed before, during, and after the internship. This process can be initiated throughout the academic year. Each of the goals and activities included in MILE must be completed before students can gain Environ 398 credit for an internship experience. [More details here](#).

Undergraduate Internship Scholarships

LSA Internship Scholarship awards vary depending on the cost of a student's virtual or in-person internship experience and their financial need. Award amounts can range anywhere from \$500 to \$7,500. Higher award amounts are typically reserved for students with higher internship expenses such as those who are interning abroad. [More details here](#).

HIRING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERNS

The University of Michigan International Center has information on steps to onboard international students who will work off-campus (using Curricular Practical Training, or CPT):

<https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/cpt>

Sponsorship is not required for this kind of intern hiring.

As described in greater detail at the link above, when hiring an international student via CPT, employers should write a Detailed Training Description. It must:

- Be written on the company's letterhead
- Be addressed to student
- Include job title
- Provide a detailed job description (at least a few sentences describing specific duties, tasks, goals, etc.)
- Specify the street address where employment will take place (street, city, state, and zip code). If you will work remotely, the letter should specify this and list the company's physical address.
- Specify number of hours per week you will work
- Specify start and end dates of CPT employment (keep in mind that CPT can only be authorized one term at a time).

There are also options to extend your student hire for three years through STEM OPT. More information from the International Center can be found here:

<https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/opt>

Other Questions and Considerations when Formulating an Internship

The following questions can help you further outline needs you have when seeking to host/hire an intern and that can make your internship appealing among options students may be considering from other employers:

- What additional mentorship will be open to students while with your organization?
- Will interns have access and networking opportunities with senior leadership and departments outside their core area to bolster their experience?
- Are you prepared to invest the time into oversight and guidance rather than just giving a student busywork or floundering tasks?
- Will there be an end-of-internship report or presentation expectation summarizing their work and its impact to the organization?
- Do you have the requisite insurance policy to cover the intern in a manner you would for employees?
- Is it possible to convert interns to full-time employees? A great tool for recruiting good interns is to fashion your internship program with an eye towards transitioning interns to employees.
- Are you factoring in diversity, equity and inclusion into your internship search process and plan after hiring? [SEAS DEI](#) and [UM DEI](#) initiatives offer additional insights for DEI approaches that are intentional and informed, and you are encouraged to examine resources and tools at these University links. Additional up to date content on the topic is available at [NACE](#).

Example employers and internship sites for SEAS MS/MLA students can be found [here](#). SEAS is focused on providing interdisciplinary learning across a number of distinct specializations that span the evolving sustainability jobs sector.

PitE career areas information to help formulate undergraduate internships is available [here](#).

HOW TO SUPPORT INTERNS ONCE HIRED

Orienting Student Interns

Whether you have hired a part or full-time intern for summer or during the school semester, it is important for the student to feel welcome and a part of whatever team they are supporting. Many organizations hire interns with an eye towards turning them into full hires, so making them

feel welcome ensures both productive work from your intern and the ability for you to gauge their value as a possible future employee.

Do your best to include your intern in recurring staff meetings and events open to employees. The more you can incorporate interns into typical daily happenings, the more value you will get and you will be enriching their overall experience.

Plan ahead for things like how you will provide technology (laptop/computer/phone) in advance of the internship start-date. Will you need new equipment you don't already have or be able to utilize what you have already? Can your organization dedicate equipment for interns so you will not need to find or order items every year? Remote internships since the COVID-19 pandemic began are increasingly common and could be offered as an alternative to designating a workspace, but eventually or at least planning for some in-person activities and a designated workspace should be factored into your plan before posting/hiring interns.

For additional guidance, reach out to SEAS Career Services at: seas-careers@umich.edu
SEAS Career Services Website: <https://seas.umich.edu/student-services/career-services>

We look forward to working with you!

Additional UM Resources and Helpful Links

- [LSA Opportunity Hub - Employers. Post an Opportunity](#)
- [LSA Opportunity Hub - Employer Guide for Hosting Virtual Internships](#)
- [University of Michigan Career Center - Post a job or internship](#) (to post internships across other parts of the University of Michigan)