

Internships at Mount Holyoke College

A central goal of the Mount Holyoke College career development initiative, The Lynk, is to ensure that all MHC students have the opportunity to explore their career interests, gain practical experience, and begin to develop a professional network through an internship or research project.

Students are coached by career and academic advisors prior to the start of their internship. They begin their time with you with a clear set of goals and an understanding of how to be a successful intern. In the fall after their internship, students take part in self-reflection activities to learn how to make the most of their experiences.

This document offers advice and explains our policies to support you as you recruit, advertise, and hire students for your internship opportunities.

Mount Holyoke College Internship Standards

Mount Holyoke College strongly prefers opportunities that meet the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) criteria for legitimate internship experiences.

1. The experience is an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that supports applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. The purpose is not simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned are transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to professional goals or the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

All interns, regardless of their compensation, should enjoy similar basic protections in the work setting consistent with all laws, ethical considerations, and sound business practices.

Mount Holyoke College prefers opportunities offering a minimum of 240 work hours for a summer internship and 120 hours for a semester internship, to allow for in-depth, quality learning to take place.

Posting a Position

To post an internship for Mount Holyoke College students, [connect to us in Handshake](#), or email our Assistant Director of Employer Engagement, Shannon Mastrangelo at smastrangelo@mtholyoke.edu for assistance.

A strong job description provides the following information:

- Company/Organization/Individual Professional name and description
- Website
- Position title

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- Location
- Detailed description of potential duties and embedded learning opportunities
- Detailed list of qualifications
- How to apply (application materials and submission procedures)
- Eligibility parameters: visa status, class year, etc.
- Application Deadline
- Pay information
- Contact information (name, email, phone and/or fax)

In most cases, we recommend posting internships at least two months prior to your expected start date. This will allow sufficient time to screen and select appropriate candidates. Many companies begin collecting applications in January (or earlier) for summer internships, so to find the most competitive candidates, we recommend starting early.

Hiring

We highly recommend that you treat hiring interns much like hiring professional staff. Cover letters, resumes, and interviews are all important pieces of the intern hiring process.

Mount Holyoke College requires that recruiting employers comply with all federal, state, and local equal employment opportunity regulations (including ADA) and [the College's nondiscrimination policy](#) in the hiring process.

MHC does not condone exploding job offers. We recommend that employers give students a minimum of two weeks to return a decision on a job offer.

Paying Your Interns: Useful Information

Average Paid Internship Hourly Wages

Wages vary widely, based on location and industry. According to the 2024 Guide to Compensation For Interns & Co-Ops from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the 2023 national average intern wage was \$22.06/hr

Lynk: Mount Holyoke College's Summer Internship/Research Funding Program

How it Works

The Lynk process is student-initiated and begins early in the school year. Since the program is student-initiated, students are not placed or matched into internships - they independently apply for opportunities and then initiate the funding process once an opportunity is secured. The Lynk program includes training developed to support the student in securing and succeeding in a high-quality internship opportunity.

Once the student secures a qualified opportunity - through MHC channels or independently - they complete their application for funding. Once the application is approved, the student receives their fellowship check, which will range between \$4000 and \$6450, based on our standardized funding formula.

Offering a Qualified Internship

To qualify for Lynk Funding, the internship must be *secured by May 13* and be both substantive and relevant. Definitions:

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- **Substantive**

To be substantive, the internship should consist of at least 240 work hours and provide roles and responsibilities that exercise the student's ability to think analytically and creatively and contribute meaningfully to the organization's or individual practitioner's stated mission. The position may include some non-substantive elements, like copying, filing, or weeding, but these should not make up the bulk of the experience. The intern should report to and receive regular guidance from a professional, on-site supervisor with expertise in the field of the internship/research. The student's roles, responsibilities, learning goals, and supervision plan should all be documented in a job description or similar document.

- **Relevant**

The experience must relate demonstrably to the student's personal learning goals and aspirations, and be relevant to one or more of MHC's learning objectives. The intern should be able to communicate how the internship or research experience is relevant to personally defined goals and aspirations – both academic and professional.

Lynk Organization\Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Complete hiring and assign supervisor by May 12, 2026
2. Provide high-quality supervision and mentorship,
3. Confirm student's learning goals and internship details in the online Lynk system
4. Complete an Intern Performance Evaluation prior to the completion of the internship in the online Lynk system

Unpaid Internships

Mount Holyoke College expects that all employers offering unpaid internships will comply with the NACE criteria for internships (available at the beginning of this document). For US employers, if you are considering offering an unpaid internship, be sure to also review the US Department of Labor's [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#) as well as any guidance set by your state department of labor. Non-US employers should review their own country, region and/or city-based employment policies for guidance.

Recommendations for Training and Performance Evaluation

Create a Learning Plan with the Intern

Mutually agreed upon, documented learning objectives are very important for effective learning to take place. This ensures both parties envision the same experience and reduces the possibility of misunderstanding and disappointment. Effective learning objectives are concise and measurable.

Ongoing Engagement and Assessment

We recommend that the supervisor plan ongoing weekly meetings to stay up-to-date with the intern's progress. Be sure to have some additional projects available in case an intern successfully completes a project ahead of schedule. Interns who are well-supervised and supported are significantly more likely to add value to your organization.

Evaluation

An internship can only be a true learning experience if constructive feedback is provided. An effective evaluation will focus on the interns' learning objectives that were identified at the start of the internship. Supervisors should take time to evaluate both a student's positive accomplishments and weaknesses. If an intern was unable to meet their learning objectives, suggestions for improvement should be given. Mount Holyoke College can provide performance evaluation templates upon request.

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Questions or Concerns?

Internships have long been a part of Mount Holyoke College's tradition and we are grateful for the efforts that our employer partners make to provide challenging environments, where our students can optimize their experiential learning opportunities. If you have questions, problems, or merely wish to confer with us, our team is at your service.

Existing Internships and Recruiting Questions: Recruiting Team at recruiting@mtholyoke.edu

Developing an Internship Program and Lynk Funding Questions: Experiential Learning Team at internships@mtholyoke.edu