BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
STATE UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The State University Internship Incentive Program is an incentive program to promote and support increased university-level student participation in employer sponsored internships. This program will raise awareness and interest of a greater and more diverse community of students in career opportunities related to the student's academic program of study and contribute to increased program completion and institutional graduation requirements.

DEFINITIONS

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION:
State universities within the system of public institutions of higher education as identified in Section 5(ii) of Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws. An eligible institution electing to participate in the State University Internship Incentive (SU-II) program is required to sign an Institutional Agreement with the Department of Higher Education, which outlines all responsibilities and requirements for the award of stipends to students in support of their participation in internship placements, as outlined in these guidelines.

INTERNSHIP:
A supervised work-based learning experience for Massachusetts state university-level students intended to develop awareness and stimulate interest in fields of work and careers. Such work placement shall relate directly or indirectly to the student's academic program of study and be designed to impart relevant knowledge and skills reflected in requirements to enter a range of possible careers.

Internships for this program may be compensated or not, consistent with U.S. Department of Labor requirements.

STIPEND:
A sum of money provided to a student for financial assistance to offset costs directly associated with participation in an approved internship, including tuition, fees, and/or related educational or student support expenses (e.g. travel expenses to and from the externship site) necessary for participation in the internship program.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND INTERNSHIP ELIGIBILITY

- Any state-supported undergraduate degree or certificate program offered by an eligible institution qualifies for this program.

- Internships must be directly or indirectly related to a student's program of study and must be approved in advance by a faculty supervisor in regard to the relevance of the leaning objectives to the student's course of study.

- Internships shall qualify for academic credit recognized by the academic department governing the student's program of study. The amount of the credit award shall be determined by the governing academic department. The award of credit shall be based upon successful completion of the work requirements defined by the sponsor organization and the learning expectations defined by the academic institution.

- The duration of a qualifying internship shall be no shorter than any defined academic term or session to qualify for credit award. The internship may be scheduled to begin or end at times that are outside of but adjacent to the scheduled academic term or session to accommodate the sponsors work schedules, e.g. a summer internship following the spring academic term or prior to the fall term or a winter inter-session.

- Student learning progress during the internship shall be monitored by a faculty supervisor in collaboration with the sponsor organization's internship site supervisor. Specific obligations of the employer to plan the internship and supervise and evaluate the student's successful completion of the internship shall be defined in an institutional agreement between the university and employer.

- Priority shall be given to internship sites located within the Commonwealth. Internships in Massachusetts based businesses and industries will promote future employment opportunities for students, better align the curriculum of our academic programs with the needs of key industry sectors and address the workforce needs of local employers for a highly skilled and educated workforce.

- Specific programs that regularly provide specialized student internships in out-of-state placement are also eligible for this program. Individual exceptions may be approved by the governing academic department when the exception offers a uniquely valuable and relevant workplace experience for students that cannot be readily attained within the Commonwealth.

- To promote broad student participation in internships across academic departments, no single academic program shall represent more than 50% of the institution's available funds for this purpose.

- International internship placements are not eligible for student stipends from this program.

- Eligible institutions electing to participate in the State University Internship Incentive (SU-II) program are required to sign an Institutional Agreement which outlines all responsibilities and requirements for the awarding of funds, student support services, and data sharing with the Department of Higher Education.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the State University Internship Incentive Program, the student must:

a) be enrolled in an eligible institution, as defined;

b) physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education (BHE) policy;

c) be a U.S. Citizen, lawful permanent resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the BHE pursuant to the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law or otherwise;

d) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) as applicable for eligible students under the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law annually;

e) comply with financial aid verification requirements;

f) not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program;

g) have not earned a bachelor's degree (or the equivalent)

h) be an undergraduate certificate or degree-seeking student enrolled full-time in a Massachusetts public state university;

i) maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA on all academic coursework in accordance with institutional standards; and

j) meet any additional institutional eligibility or selection criteria, which may include financial need or merit considerations.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT

This program requires a committed one-for-one match of private funds for each dollar of state appropriated funds. Each state university will conduct general fundraising to secure matching funds. Any gift or donation made to the institution or its foundation for the express purpose of supporting internships or other gifts or donations made available through general fundraising by the institution and assigned as matching funds to the internship incentive program in the current fiscal year will qualify to meet this matching requirement.

No other state funds, including any other state-assisted internship stipends, may be counted as a match.

Documentation of all claimed matches must be maintained by each state university consistent with generally accepted accounting practices, including for wages and/or stipends.

ALLOTMENT OF STATE FUNDS

To promote broad-based student participation in internship placements across academic departments, statewide, and to provide a minimum baseline of funding for each campus, 50% of available state funds shall be allotted equally to each eligible institution and the remaining 50% shall be allotted on the basis of each institution's percentage of full-time enrolled undergraduate students across the State University system.

AWARD VALUE

To promote broad-based student participation in internship placements, students are only eligible for one stipend award from this program. The maximum student award under this program is $5,000 per internship. Individual awards shall be determined by each institution to include a base award plus the option of an additional award up to the $5,000 limit for extraordinary expenses.

AWARD PROCEDURE

Participating institutions are required to verify the enrollment status of all students identified to participate in the SU-II program. Based on enrolled status and upon verification of Grade Point Average (GPA), the institution shall disburse stipends to all eligible students through the standard procedures used for disbursing state financial aid funds. Such disbursement may occur at the beginning of the academic term in which the student commences the internship program.

If a student is participating in an internship program that requires a mandatory program fee, the institution may forward such funds to the agency on behalf of the student, once invoiced. Such payments may not exceed the maximum stipend available to a student under this program.

Payments must be provided directly to each student, unless a balance is owed to the institution for direct charges.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the State University Internship Incentive Program. Institutions that have signed an agreement to participate in the Massachusetts State financial aid programs are required to share data for all students with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) or its designee, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance for this purpose. The program may be evaluated annually to determine any immediate impact or to determine if adjustments are required for various processes, such as disbursement of funds.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

All institutions receiving funds under the State University Internship Incentive Program must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

AUDIT REQUIREMENT

a) It shall be the responsibility of each college to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the State University Internship Incentive Program.

b) The Commissioner shall require each college to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the State University Internship Incentive Program. OSFA will establish the timeline, specifications, and procedures for this report.

c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this Program shall, at all times, be open to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records, and documents are for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years, if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.