MADISON

Micro
Internship
Program

PROJECT HOST RESOURCE GUIDE

JMU University Career Center

SSC 3250 | (540) 568-6555 | jmu.edu/career

Madison Micros Program Overview

Program Purpose

The **Madison Micros Program** is meant to provide current James Madison University students the ability to gain valuable career-related experience though smaller scale individual projects, sometimes referred to as **Project-Based Experiential Learning** or **Micro-Internships**. This program aims to help students explore the world of work and gain experience for future internship, job, or graduate school applications. **Below you will find program details, examples of project ideas, and how to participate.**

What is a Project-Based Experience/Micro-Internship?

It is a developmental opportunity with a smaller time commitment where students are hyper-focused on completing one project for an organization/individual. The project should be something that allows the participant to grow as a professional and apply skills they have learned while attending college, while also benefiting the organization. Projects/Micro-Internships can span roughly anywhere from **20-80 hours**. **Since Madison Micros are such short and focused opportunities (20-80 hours total), it is important to focus on one big goal (that can be broken into smaller steps as needed) and not multiple projects.**

When Will These Projects Take Place?

Projects should ideally take place after classes end in mid-May and conclude by mid-July for the most successful timeliness. They do not need to last the entire period and may start at any point within that timeframe.

How Can Our Alumni, Employers and Community Partners Be Involved?

Submit a project(s) and be a Project Host! Has there been a project on your organization's to-do list, but you haven't had the time to get it started?

Assess needs within your organization and identify possible tasks that a college student could do once you've given them expectations for what you need. Micros give students insight into your organization/industry while they gain hands-on real-world experience. If you have questions or would like to brainstorm possible projects, contact our Assistant Director for Internships, Emma Gibbons (gibbonek@jmu.edu). Page 5 of this guide has a link to sample project descriptions.

Options for Work Location

Project Hosts will have the option to make their Micro remote, hybrid or in-person
(in person: these are not encouraged but will be considered on a case-by-case basis)
Additional stipulations may apply, see below:

Options for Work Location cont.

In general, remote & hybrid positions can widen a Project Host's candidate pool and create greater access for students.

If you would like to host a hybrid or in-person Micro, your company/organization's work site must be located in the state of Virginia. If the Micro is outside of the state of Virginia, it must be remote. Below, we have outlined the benefits and potential considerations associated with remote and hybrid work:

Remote

Benefits:

- No commute time
- Many people can be more productive at home
- Schedule flexibility with asynchronous schedules
- Technology is right at your fingertips, so finding information in a meeting is much faster

Potential Considerations:

- Relationship building has to be more intentional
- Collaboration takes prior planning and setting up meetings
- Less informal brainstorming/conversations
- Requires more intentional planning regarding information sharing and accessing files

Hybrid

Benefits:

- Best of both worlds, individual remote work and in-person collaborative work
- Many people thrive in flexible work environments
- Less commute time/cost

Potential Considerations:

- Keeping track of what is in-office vs. remote work
- Transporting technology to and from the office
- Must plan for when people are in/out of the office

Topics for Potential Projects

- Social Media Marketing
- Grant Research/Writing
- Copy Writing and Editing
- Vendor Research
- Research Industry Topics
- Client Outreach
- Graphic Design
- Educational Materials
- Website Development
- Event/Logistics Planning
- Data Analysis
- User Experience Testing

How to Submit Your Project

Submit your project by filling out this Microsoft Form: Madison Micros Program Submission Form – Fill out form

Project Submissions are due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, February 24th, 2026

What Happens After You Submit a Project?

A Career Center staff member may reach out to clarify information for your project, then we will post your project(s) in our Handshake system sometime in February. Students will apply and the Career Center will send you an applicant packet of the students who applied to your Micro. You will have several business days to review your applicants' resumes and short essay questions and send us back a ranking of all candidates and the Career Center will offer the Micro to the students in that order. Once a student accepts the offer, our office will connect both you and the student via email.

Compensation

Madison Micros can be paid or unpaid.

Micros at for-profit businesses (corporations, small businesses, start-ups, franchises, etc.) we encourage compensation for a minimum of $100 per project (stipend, gift/gift card, freelance fee - however that would be best classified with your accountant). Ideally a student doing a project for a for-profit organization would earn Virginia's hourly minimum wage. Here is additional information from the IRS for your convenience:

https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/forms-and-associated-taxes-for-independent-contractors

Advice for Internship Hosts:

- Have a clear understanding of your project and the steps it will take to complete it.
- Get organized with your project details before the intern begins.
- Know exactly what you need by a said time and join this program it was amazing!
- JMU students are a pleasure to work with! Because this is an unpaid internship with a very short timeframe, the project they are assigned must be straightforward and not too involved, so the students can succeed in a few weeks with all their other summer commitments.
- Create checklists/task lists when meeting with your student - Pro tip: make this a shared document that the student can update as items are completed.
- Have a clear definition of the student's role, duties and expectations from the start of the project.
- Talk with your student and your team (as needed) about what's working and what's not then brainstorm ways to pivot if needed.
- Involve the student in planning out how the project will be approached and what is to be learned.

Ideas for Projects:

Serve the City Peninsula

Type of Project: Data Entry & Analysis

Organization Website: www.STCpeninsula.com
Anticipated # of Hours: 40 hours; Anticipated # of Weeks: 4
Compensation: Unpaid
Location: Remote

Project Description:
Volunteer analysis. Data entry and analysis of Serve the City volunteer history. Project will require completing entry of data from the last half of 2020 and 2021 to date (using Excel spreadsheets) and presenting results in both tabular and graphical format. Analysis will need to include volunteer retention rates, identification of most popular projects/project types, and identification of repeat volunteers (threshold TBD).

Skills Developed Through Project:
Student will gain experience in basic data analysis including identifying trends and presenting data in a clear and concise format

Required Technology: Computer and internet access, Microsoft Excel

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Cups and Claws Cat Cafe

Type of Project: Social Media/Marketing

Organization Website: www.cupsandclaws.com
Anticipated # of Hours: 40-50 hours; Anticipated # of Weeks: 4-6 Weeks
Compensation: Yes, A Cat Cafe membership worth $395, $150 stipend
Location: Newport News, VA, Hybrid (some work remote, some on-site)

Project Description: Social Media/Marketing - Schedule/plan/create content for a 12 week period

Skills Developed Through the Micro:

- Real life experience working with a local small business utilizing marketing
- Social media and digital skills, as well as addressing target audiences, videography, camera skills, interpersonal development, and more

Required Technology Access/Knowledge: Computer, internet access, Canva, social media platforms, Google Calendar

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