

The Minnesota High Tech Association



Frequently Asked Questions

What is SciTechsperience?

SciTechsperience is a free, state-funded internship program that connects small Minnesota businesses with STEM college students for internships and wage match opportunities.

How much does it cost to participate?

Absolutely nothing. The program is completely free to use for employers and students.

Does SciTechsperience match interns to specific companies?

Nope! The hiring decision is entirely up to the employer. Employers maintain complete control of the searching, interviewing and hiring processes, and may hire any student registered with SciTechsperience.

How is the program funded?

SciTechsperience is funded by the State of Minnesota through an appropriation by the Minnesota legislature. Every two years, the Minnesota High Tech Association - the home of SciTechsperience - seeks to have program funding renewed for the next biennium.

How does the process work?

Once a company has submitted an application on SciTechMN.org and the application has been approved, the employer posts an internship on the SciTechsperience job board. They can then use the SciTech student database to search for and contact qualified candidates. In addition, SciTech sends out a weekly *New Jobs email* blast to its preapproved talent pool and strongly encourages students to reach out to companies directly to apply for internships.

Does an employer need to post an internship on the website?

Yes, employers must have an active position posted on SciTechMN.org during the current program year in order for a hire to qualify for the wage match. In addition, students that are hired must be registered and approved with SciTechsperience.

Can SciTechsperience be used to fill unpaid, non-STEM or fulltime positions?

No, the site may only be used for hiring STEM interns for paid STEM internships. If an internship turns into a fulltime offer, that's great! However, the site shall not be used as a resource pool for filling fulltime positions, unpaid internships, or non-STEM positions.

How do employers report a hire?

The employer secures a wage match when the hire of a qualified student is reported to SciTechsperience via phone (952-230-4241) or email (beckys@mhta.org). Wages matches are available on a first come, first hire basis.

How do employers get the reimbursement?

To receive the reimbursement, employers send in a simple one-page form and supporting documentation to receive a 50 percent match on the gross wages paid to the intern, up to \$2,500 per student. This form is sent to the employer after a hire has been reported. The reimbursement documentation is sent once, either when the intern reaches \$5,000 in gross wages or the internship ends, whichever comes first.

Where does SciTechsperience find talent?

Lots of different places!

- We attend career fairs at public and private colleges and universities all across Minnesota
- We work with college career centers and STEM student groups to host information sessions on campuses
- Information about SciTechsperience can be found on dozens of college job boards and multiple social media channels
- Employers may also refer students to the program.

These are smart young people with average GPAs of about 3.3!

Is there a limit on how many interns a company can hire?

Each company can hire up to 10 students per program year and each student can complete one internship per program year. There is no lifetime limit.

When can companies apply to the program?

SciTechsperience runs year-round, so companies can apply whenever they like. The program year follows the typical school year, running from September 1st to August 31st.

Is there a minimum requirement for wages?

The minimum hourly rate for the program is \$12.50 per hour, but the average is closer to \$15.00 per hour and may vary widely by industry. All internships through SciTechsperience must be paid and only internships may be posted on the site.

Does the intern have to work a certain number of hours?

The employment arrangement is determined by what works best for the intern and the employer. Students may work part time or fulltime any time of year.

As far as the reimbursement goes, it's best to focus on getting to \$5,000 in gross wages paid; at that point, the cap on the wage match will be reached. For example, if you pay the minimum rate of \$12.50 per hour, it takes 400 hours to reach \$5,000. If you pay \$15 per hour, it takes 330 hours to reach \$5,000. There is no maximum on the total pay or hours worked. If the student finishes the internship making less than \$5,000, a 50 percent match is provided on whatever wages were paid. For example, if the intern made \$3,200, the reimbursement would be \$1,600.

How is SciTechsperience related to MHTA?

The Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA) is the home of SciTechsperience. It's one of several programs that MHTA supports to help fuel and sustain Minnesota's growing STEM ecosystem and workforce. Learn more about at mhta.org.

Where did the idea for SciTechsperience originate?

The SciTechsperience Internship program came out of a strategic planning initiative at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) back in 2011 as way to help build and retain Minnesota's STEM workforce. SciTechsperience is designed to provide hands-on learning opportunities to talented college students while supporting small and growing companies in dynamic industries across Minnesota. The program aims to keep talented STEM students in Minnesota after they graduate in order to strengthen and advance Minnesota's knowledge-based economy.

My company already hired an intern – is it too late to participate?

SciTechsperience cannot support retroactive matches, i.e. where a student started working for a company prior to applying for SciTechsperience or before a job was posted by the company. However companies are welcome to refer students to enroll in SciTechsperience and can hire them through the program if they meet the eligibility requirements.