

U360

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Training students | Engaging small businesses | Creating a more sustainable world



The U360 program:

- » Strengthens students' research, analytical, and professional skills, so they're better prepared for future careers
- » Deepens students' knowledge of sustainability through practical applications and direct engagement with small businesses
- » Trains the future workforce on the principles of business sustainability

Professional Connections



Career Skills Training



Real-world Experience



U360

U360 Curriculum

U360 is an interdisciplinary, experiential internship program designed to deepen college students' understanding of sustainability and small business management. As a high-impact internship, U360 also helps students develop vital career skills, gain extensive real-world experience, and build their network of professional contacts. The two-semester program involves close mentorship and consists of **four phases**:

1

Sustainability Principles & Skills Trainings

2

Small Business Engagement

3

Sustainability Analysis

4

The Capstone Competitions

PHASE 1: Sustainability Principles & Skills Trainings

The U360 internship begins by providing students with a foundational understanding of sustainability, and preparing them for their direct engagement with small businesses. This is done through a series of educational workshops and skills trainings led by Manomet over six weeks, with accompanying reading material.

Topics covered during the workshops include:

Introduction to Manomet and its small business sustainability online toolkit, Root360 • What does sustainability mean? • Business sustainability principles & the triple-bottom line • Environmental issues that affect small businesses • Business management concepts • The realities of owning and running a small business

Trainings will cover: How to engage with small business owners • How to effectively communicate the benefits of sustainability to small businesses • Understanding all components of the Root360 survey • Professional communication & interview skills • Interview prep and practice

During this phase, students also begin researching individual small businesses and each create a list of 150 nationwide to contact in Phase II.

CONCEPTS COVERED:

- » The triple-bottom line approach to management and the benefits to small businesses
- » How the business sector impacts the environment; both negatively and positively

SKILLS DEVELOPED:

- » Research and writing

OUTCOMES FOR EACH STUDENT:

- » A lead list of businesses to contact in Phase II

PHASE 2: Small Business Engagement

Through direct engagement with small businesses, students learn first-hand about business sustainability and small business management. Students spend 20 weeks over the fall and spring semesters interviewing small business owners, and are encouraged to select businesses of varied sizes, locations, types, and longevity, in order to have a more diverse data set. During the fall, students interview a variety of industries, and in the spring they can focus on one industry of their choosing.

With ongoing coaching, students are responsible for all communication with their businesses in order to schedule and conduct informational interviews. Manomet provides students with an interview script consisting of questions that examine a business's environmental, social and governance practices to use for every interview, which creates consistency and a base of comparison. After every interview, Manomet calculates the business's sustainability scores and creates a sustainability analysis. Manomet provides a high level of support and guidance throughout this phase to help students hone their professional skills and apply what they learned in the Phase I trainings.

CONCEPTS APPLIED:

- » Enhanced understanding of small business management
- » Developing an effective working relationship with a supervisor

SKILLS DEVELOPED:

- » Professional communication (email, phone, in-person)
- » Interviewing
- » Networking and outreach
- » Time and project management
- » The ability to work independently
- » How to follow systematic procedures

OUTCOMES FOR EACH STUDENT:

- » 25+ interviews with small businesses, conducted in-person or via phone
- » Real-world experience working with a variety of businesses

PHASE 3: Sustainability Analysis

After the interviews are complete, each student selects one business to be their case study. Manomet teaches the students to analyze the business's strengths and weaknesses, understand how their business could benefit from an increased focus on the triple-bottom line, and brainstorm ways the business could improve its sustainability. Each student spends three weeks creating a Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) that outlines recommendations for the business; taking into account such factors as cost, feasibility, and maximum impact. The SAP identifies the external factor(s) (environmental and/or market-based) that most threaten the business's long-term viability, and demonstrates how the student's recommendations can make the business more resilient.

CONCEPTS APPLIED:

- » How to apply general sustainability principles to a specific business using real-world data
- » How a triple-bottom line approach impacts a business's profitability
- » The challenges small businesses face related to sustainability

SKILLS DEVELOPED:

- » Creative problem-solving for managing business sustainability
- » Analytical thinking

OUTCOMES FOR EACH STUDENT:

- » A Case Study and Sustainability Action Plan for one small business
- » Slide deck and 15-minute "mock pitch" about the proposed Sustainability Action Plan

PHASE 4: The Capstone Competitions

The U360 internship concludes with a competition for all participating students. The students each present their SAPs to a panel of small business experts, who serve as judges and ask questions to challenge the students' thinking. Three finalists advance to a final competition in Boston to compete for a \$1000 scholarship.

CONCEPTS APPLIED:

- » How to communicate about business sustainability
- » How to prepare for a professional presentation

SKILLS DEVELOPED:

- » Public speaking and presentation skills, including fielding a Q&A

OUTCOMES FOR EACH STUDENT:

- » A 15-minute professional presentation
- » Professional connections with small business leaders
- » Nonprofit work experience for their resume

The basics of U360:

- » U360 teaches students how to research and interview small businesses, analyze their current level of sustainability and identify areas for improvement.
- » The program includes a series of in-person workshops led by Manomet where students learn how to apply general sustainability principles to real-world scenarios.
- » U360 is designed for students enrolled in business, economics, environmental, sustainability and/or liberal arts programs; students must be a sophomore or higher to participate.
- » The program is 8 hours per week for two consecutive semesters, which includes team trainings, workshops, and weekly meetings, along with independent research, communication, and interviews with businesses.
- » U360 is a team program, and each year Manomet will accept up to six students per state.
- » Students are taught and supervised by Manomet staff, and are required to attend all workshops and weekly team meetings on campus (or via video conference). Aside from the workshops and meetings, students create their own schedules and work remotely.

I would highly recommend the U360 internship for students interested in business or the environment, and for those who want to develop their communication skills. As a U360 intern, you get a unique platform that enables you to interview small business owners in a way that allows both parties to benefit from the experience. Whether it is the environmental, social, or governance practices, I have such a better understanding of what goes into running a business because I was able to learn about it first hand by the business owners. I also felt a sense of pride when the business acknowledges that the interview is helping them consider sustainable practices that they have never thought of before.

After developing an action plan for a business, I have come to realize that sustainability is more than just an initiative to do well for the environment and the community. I have learned and seen how sustainability is the overarching method that will ensure the best business performance. The program was a great way to build consulting and professional skills that I will use throughout my future career.



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Manomet is a nonprofit with a mission of applying science and engaging people to sustain our world. Manomet provides practical ways to act—where people live and work. Our experts champion better practices in conservation, business sustainability, and science education in the U. S. and internationally. As a result, Manomet is showing how we can create a sustainable future.

U360 is run by Manomet's Sustainable Economies Program, which advises communities and businesses on practices that enhance their economic viability and human well-being while measurably reducing their environmental footprint. U360 utilizes Manomet's small business sustainability online toolkit, Root360.org.