Q. What is the LIFT2 Program?

A. The LIFT2 program, now in its 16th year, places committed teachers into paid externships in companies in STEM fields so they can experience first-hand what careers might look like for their students.

Q. What does LIFT2 stand for?

A. Leadership Initiatives for Teachers of Technology

Q. Can any teacher apply for the program?

A. Yes, any teacher can apply but it is very difficult to find an externship for a non-STEM teacher or an elementary teacher. The program is designed for STEM 6-12 teachers.

Q. What is an externship?

A. A 5-8 week paid work experience where teachers shadow engineers in the lab, in the field and in the office.

Q. What is the cost of the program?

A. The cost of the program is $6,000 plus the extern’s stipend, typically $800 per week. This fee covers the cost of two graduate level courses (4 credits) for the teachers to develop and practice skills in using Project Based Learning in their classroom, along with the cost of managing the program and the business expenses for implementing the program. Additional externs can be sponsored at a reduced rate of $3,000 each.
Q. What is the commitment from the company?
A. Companies commit to hosting a STEM teacher for 5-8 weeks over the summer. They assign the teacher a mentor/supervisor, provide the teacher a workspace, and may assign the teacher a project or a task to complete. Companies are expected to create opportunities for their externs to learn about aspects of their engineers’ work beyond the primary assignment area.

Q. What is the purpose of the graduate courses?
A. The summer course is designed to support the teacher throughout their externship as well as to develop curriculum based on their experiences at their externship company. The fall course is an action research course that allows the teacher to implement the curriculum that they develop in the summer.

Q. Which university issues the credits and how many?
A. Framingham State University issues 3 credits for the summer course and 1 credit for the fall course.

Q. How are teachers matched with companies?
A. Sponsoring companies are asked to provide a profile of the type of teacher they would like to have work with them. For example, a pharmaceutical company might ask for a high school Biology teacher with a degree in Biology. A civil engineering company might ask for a math or science teacher and a defense contractor might only take an engineering teacher. Companies are typically sent 3-5 resumes and they choose whom to contact and interview.

Q. What is the timing of the program?
A. We seek a sponsorship commitment by early January so that opportunities can be marketed to teachers. Sponsoring companies will begin to receive resumes in February and the goal is to complete the matching process by the end of March. Externships usually begin late June or early July and finish by mid-August.

Q. What oversight does Teachers21 provide?
A. The dedicated Program Director, Katie Clarke, works with both the sponsoring companies and the externs throughout the process to ensure a smooth experience that satisfies the needs of each party.