

Real World Learning

INTERNSHIPS | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Internships are excellent opportunities for students to immerse themselves in the world of work ...

They provide access to real professionals, authentic problems, and essential skills. Beyond value for students, these experiences also benefit employers: they help employers accomplish needed work while providing early access to future talent and an opportunity for current employees to grow coaching and leadership skills.

Below are the essential elements to build a rewarding experience for students and employers.

Definition of an internship

Internships are opportunities where learners perform meaningful job tasks at a worksite or approved location, under the guidance of a qualified supervisor.

INTERNSHIPS

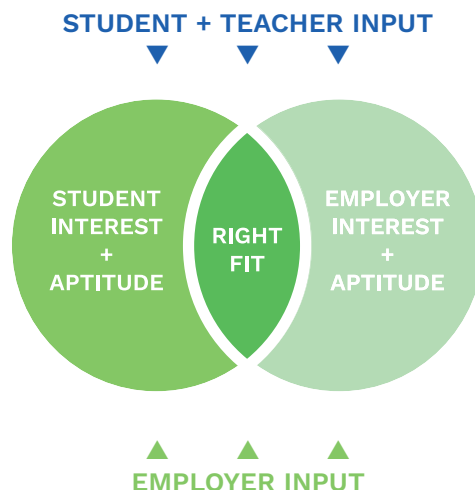
EXPLORE

IMMERSE

Finding the right fit

The driving factor behind a rewarding internship for a student is fit – where there is alignment between the student's and the employer's interest and aptitude.

Readiness is a key consideration – students should have already been exposed to real-world learning experiences that build on one another, and employers should be familiar with the expectations around working with young professionals.



A Market Value Asset (MVA)*-level experience

While all internships can provide value, the most valuable experiences are those which:

- ☐ Qualify for high school or college credit
- ☐ Involve meaningful work
- ☐ Add to a student's professional network
- ☐ Engage the student 120+ hours in a year, with 60+ hours on-site
- ☐ Are evaluated by educator and employer partner

Roles and phases of an internship

Beyond the student, success of the internship experience depends on the collaboration among different stakeholders – both from the school and employer side.



EDUCATOR

- Will coach the student throughout engagement
- Responsible for helping student internalize lessons from job experience
- Typically the lead teacher



WORK MANAGER

- Will supervise the student in job tasks
- Responsible for directing student effort and evaluating performance
- Typically from employer worksite



INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR

- Will coordinate all moving pieces
- Responsible for comprehensive process logistics (planning, documentation, feedback data)
- Typically school district, employer, or third-party intermediary



WORK MENTOR

- Will be primary on-site coach regarding work tasks
- Responsible for professional development and help with unpacking lessons
- Typically from employer worksite

PHASES & INTERACTION OF AN INTERNSHIP

SOURCING & MATCHING

- Employer recruitment
- Student interest and aptitude



PLANNING

- Meaningful work
- Expectations and preparation for all stakeholders
- Alignment with standards



WORK

- Engagement with professionals and tools
- Feedback cycles
- Mentorship



REFLECTION

- Final evaluation
- Lessons learned
- Growth/areas of improvement



*a Market Value Asset is an industry valued and recognized skill that creates a seamless transition post-high school.

Planning conversations

In addition to logistics, people who want to start a quality internship for students should have preliminary conversations about any special circumstances.

HOW CAN HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE CREDIT BE EARNED?

WHAT IS CONSIDERED MEANINGFUL WORK IN THIS CONTEXT?

- Focus on authentic work duties
- Be wary of too many administrative tasks
- Should be a “resume-worthy” experience

WHO WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE TO SERVE AS MANAGER AND MENTOR?

- Are there managers proven to be successful with employee development?
- Could this be a valuable leadership experience for a junior associate?
- What are training needs for the manager and mentor?

BASICS ON COMMUNICATING WITH YOUNG ADULTS

- Balance expectations – still a teen, but not a child
- Treat intern as a regular employee
- Escalate any issues to educator/coordinator if necessary

WHAT BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS ARE THERE?

- Follow standard school district processes for any adult participant requirements
- Follow standard employer policies for employee requirements

WHAT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OR CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERNS ARE THERE?

- Are there situations in which the student may need particular clearance?
- Follow standard employer policies

ARE INTERNS EXPECTED TO TRANSPORT THEMSELVES TO THE WORKSITE?

HELPING HANDS

If starting an internship alone seems daunting, consider these organizations who work with schools and employers to facilitate internship and other scaffolded experiences.

- **THE BRAND LAB** | <https://www.thebrandlab.org/about-us/>
- **HIRE KC** | <https://hirekc.org/aboutus/>
- **NORTHLAND CAPS** | www.northlandcaps.org/s/1625/bp19/home.aspx
- **BLUE VALLEY CAPS** | <https://bvcaps.yourcapsnetwork.org/about/>
- **PREP KC** | www.prepkc.org