

# WORK-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## STUDENT INTERNSHIP

### DEFINITION

Student internships are experiences where students work for an employer for a specified period of time to learn about a particular industry or occupation. Internship programs extend formal classroom learning into the community. Internships are:



- Linked to a related internship class
- Paid or unpaid (usually unpaid)
- Time limited
- Practical application of concurrently or previously studied theory or related curriculum
- Connected to career goals and the SEOP
- Opportunities for students to explore career options in a particular field of work

During an internship, students 11th-12th grade, have the opportunity to apply formal classroom learning to actual career situations. Students explore a spectrum of career skills in a single occupation or area of emphasis. Opportunities are provided for students to:

- Identify academic, technical and life skills used on the job
- Define a sequence of classes
- Develop specific skills related to the work site

### STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Student must be at least 16 years of age
- Student must be a junior in high school
- Student must complete a related CTE class
- Student must meet school guidelines for participation

### LIABILITY EXPOSURE - UNPAID

Work site liability is the responsibility of the respective school district in an unpaid experience. Utah state law (Senate Bill 28, 1996) provides for the school district's worker's compensation insurance to cover non-paid student learners.

### LIABILITY EXPOSURE - PAID

In paid work experiences, the student is hired by the employer. Utah state law indicates that in such cases, students are considered regular employees and are covered by the employer's worker's compensation insurance.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain high level of attendance and performance at both the school and the work site
- Maintain satisfactory grades and be in good standing with local high school

- Consult Work-Based Learning coordinator or supervising teacher, as well as the employer, about any concerns or problems
- Attend work site according to the *Internship Agreement*
- Use transportation approved and/or provided by parent
- Dress appropriately for the work site, including all appropriate safety clothing and equipment
- Demonstrate honesty, punctuality, cooperative attitude, proper grooming and dress and willingness to learn
- Conform to rules, regulations, and safety standards of the training site and maintain confidentiality
- Complete required assignments and furnish necessary information, reports and time sheets
- Notify employer/supervisor and Work-Based Learning coordinator prior to absences

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Approve and support the student's participation in the internship
- Provide or arrange for transportation
- Discuss internship experiences with student

### **EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Conduct hiring interview with the student
- Sign training agreement
- Approve student learning objectives
- Provide time to orient, train and provide safety instruction
- Review progress with the student periodically
- Assume responsibility for meaningful training and a safe workplace
- Consult school supervisor regarding problems related to the work experience
- Conform to state and federal labor laws
- Provide worker's compensation coverage for students in paid experiences
- Verify and sign attendance and/or time records, as required
- Work with student to coordinate work and school schedules
- Evaluate student performance

### **SCHOOL SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Serve as coordinator to all parties involved in the internship
- Issue grade and credit for successful completion of requirements
- Insure all written work and forms are complete and received
- Conduct monthly training site visits and/or work site contacts
- Assist student in achieving educational goals as stated in the SEOP
- Complete necessary paperwork and monitor student progress in cooperation with student and work site supervisor
- Verify safety standards in the work place
- Monitor student internship hours regularly, collect time cards at least monthly

- Maintain open communication with student, parent and employer

## **OPENING THE WORK SITE**

Opening a work site involves a sequential process. Quality of the site, relevance to student goals and student safety are of paramount importance in setting up a Work-Based Learning experience. These three factors should guide all work site development. The following steps provide a suggested process for opening a work site. The steps may be modified based on individual circumstances.

### **1. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS**

- Gather information about potential employers through personal contacts and professional organizations. A Request for Intern Form can be used to facilitate this purpose.
- Network with friends and co-workers. Many people have work site contacts among friends and family. Do not underestimate the value of these contacts.
- Survey local organizations. Find out the types of Work-Based Learning activities organizations in your community are willing to sponsor.
- Coordinate with community organizations such as your local chamber of commerce and the Utah Department of Workforce Services.
- Research each organization. Gather information such as the number of employees, services or products provided, job opportunities, contact names, information about other similar companies or organizations, etc.
- Additional sources for identifying and targeting employers include:
  - Alumni
  - Business Publications
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Churches
  - Civic Organizations
  - Federal Agencies
  - Human Resource Departments
  - Internet
  - New Business License Lists
  - Non-profit Organizations
  - Parents of Students
  - Private Employment Agencies
  - Professional Organizations and Associations
  - Telephone Books
  - Small Business Development Center
  - Utah Department of Workforce Services
  - Want Ads

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

## 2. MAKE THE INITIAL CONTACT

Effective communication is the foundation for developing and maintaining Work-Based Learning sites. Some employers will prefer to have a single point of contact to maintain and develop relationships with schools. Program coordinators can fulfill this role. Other employers will prefer to work directly with school staff members responsible for placing students in their organizations. Steps in making the initial contact include:

- Prepare a phone conversation script. Include all the information you will need to give an employer. When preparing your script, pretend that you are the employer. What would you want to know first? For example, what are the liability issues, what kind of time commitment and paperwork is required, are there costs?, etc.
- Introduce yourself and ask for some time to discuss your program. A good statement to use is: "Do you have a few minutes to discuss our school's Work-Based Learning program?" If it is not a convenient time, ask for a good time to call back.
- Explain program needs clearly and concisely.
- Emphasize the benefits of participation.
- Solicit questions and immediate concerns from the employer.
- Set up a meeting time for further discussion.

Review details discussed in the phone conversation - date, time and place of meeting, preferred Work-Based Learning areas of interest, contact person with phone number, etc.

Please note that it is important to remember that when calling employers and community organizations it is always best to have the name of the individual within a company to call. In marketing terms this is referred to as a "warm" call. If you do not have a name you will need to do a "cold" call. When cold calling, explain your reasons for calling and ask for the name of the person who might be responsible for this type of activity. You may be referred to the human resources, personnel or marketing departments, especially in large organizations.

## 3. PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Preparation is a key element in the success of any endeavor. Key areas in preparation include:

- Confirm arrangements. It is important to make contact with the individuals who will attend a meeting shortly before the scheduled time or date. A letter may be used to verify details and remind individuals of assignments. A phone call, fax or E-mail may also be used.
- Develop and/or gather needed materials. Identify, produce and/or compile needed meeting materials. These may include:
  - Business Cards
  - Brochures
  - Employer Orientation Packets
  - Training Agreement
  - Employer Liability Documentation - Senate Bill 28
  - Time Sheets
  - Employer Evaluation
  - Sample Learning Grid - Appropriate to Experience
  - Scope and Sequence

#### 4. MEET WITH THE EMPLOYER

Public speaking research indicates that most people make an initial decision about another person in the first ten seconds of an encounter. Initial impressions are crucial. Dress, punctuality and personal demeanor are important in developing this initial impression. Maintaining a positive image after the initial impression also takes a great deal of effort. Stakeholders will be committing time and resources to support Work-Based Learning programs. Stakeholders want to know that you have the skills necessary to capitalize on their investment.

- Demonstrate professionalism. When meeting with the employer, follow the same interview guidelines you teach students.
  - Know your material
  - Listen well
  - Utilize effective communication skills
  - Respect the employer's time
  - Dress appropriately - remember that most businesses have stricter dress requirements than schools
- Conduct the meeting. Meet in a place where interruptions are minimal whenever possible. During the meeting do the following:
  - Give a brief explanation of the program
  - Include pertinent information about the students involved
  - Use the meeting to learn about the work site and the industry
  - Do more listening than talking
  - Allow time for questions

- Emphasize the benefits of participation. Some possible benefits to employers include:
  - Developing a more highly trained workforce for the future
  - Providing input regarding curriculum offerings and content at the school
  - Enhancing skills and morale of present employees through job coaching and mentoring
  - Supporting employer evaluation of quality employees
  - Providing opportunities to observe possible candidates for employment
  - Taking an active role in improving the community
  
- Prepare and sign written agreements where applicable. Employers appreciate having things spelled out. Make sure that all involved parties understand program expectations and responsibilities. Some Work-Based Learning experiences require formal training agreements signed by all parties. Copies of the work site agreement and the training agreement must be kept at the work site whenever a student participates in cooperative work experience, clinical work experience or a student internship. An apprenticeship requires a copy of both a work site agreement and a *Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training Agreement* to be kept onsite.
  
- Conduct ongoing follow-up activities to support a successful Work-Based Learning experience. Regularly scheduled (at least monthly) follow-up telephone calls and/or work site visits are important and required to insure that all parties are satisfied and working well together.

## **ASSESSING THE WORK SITE**

Site assessment is essential for successful relationships among all participants. Address the following issues when addressing a work site.

### **1. ACCESS STUDENT SAFETY**

Student safety is of critical importance. Safety issues should be evaluated based on student needs and skills along with the level of hazards found in the specific job. It is important to:

- Verify that state and federal regulations and guidelines are being followed by the prospective business sponsor.
  
- Address safety equipment, emergency procedures and medical prerequisites with the student and employer. Consider the following:
  - Safety equipment - protective glasses, steel-toed shoes, lifting belts, wrist guards, etc.

- Emergency procedures - fire extinguishers, eye wash station, first aid, exits, etc.
- Medical prerequisites - drug testing, vaccinations, reasonable accommodations including ramps, space, adjusting furniture, etc.

Take special precautions when placing a student in a hazardous work site. If student safety is ever in question, pull the student immediately from the work site.

## 2. ADDRESS LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many legal issues of which work site supervisors need to be aware. These include safety concerns, child labor laws, discrimination, sexual harassment laws, etc. It is imperative that work site supervisors understand their legal responsibilities and potential liabilities in advance. For unpaid work experiences, all parties need to be aware of federal guidelines related to unpaid work experience. Visit the legal section of this manual for further information.

- Conduct background checks. Background checks are necessary any time a student is in a one-on-one situation with an employer or employee for a significant amount of unsupervised time. Criminal background checks are at the district expense.
- Create skills/learning grids. Students, work site supervisors and program coordinators need to work together to develop a list of goals and objectives for the internship experience. The list should include concepts and skills the student needs to understand and apply.
- Provide employer with instructions for working with young people. Many professionals are unaccustomed to the unique challenges of communicating and working with young people. Remind work site supervisors that they may be faced with student attitudes and expectations that may seem unrealistic in the workplace. Encourage hosts to provide as many active learning experiences as possible.
- Supply evaluation materials. Employer response to the internship program is essential for maintaining a successful operation. Provide employers with forms on which they can evaluate student participation, as well as the program itself. See the sample forms for more information.

## PLACING STUDENTS

Connecting students with work sites that will meet their needs and provide relevant experiences is the most important aspect of planning the internship experience. Students submit an application stating their SEOP (career goal and related classes) and potential internship sites. Employers will want to interview prospective interns to ensure a good match.

- Arrange schedules. The Work-Based Learning coordinator or school supervisor and student should arrange a consistent work schedule that is convenient for the employer. Internship hours should be equivalent to the time spent in the classroom.
- Prepare the students. Students need to be thoroughly prepared before embarking on an internship experience. In addition to classroom preparation that focuses on career research/exploration and skills that will be applied at the work site, there are practical concerns to be addressed as well. Many districts provide students with an internship handbook and/or orientation, which contains a combination of the following information:
  - Contracts - this information outlines the responsibilities of both the work site supervisor, student, parents and Work-Based Learning coordinator as well as the purpose of and the academic expectations for the internship experience
- Review dress and behavior expectations. While classroom preparation for career exploration activities usually covers this information, it never hurts to reinforce the message that dress and behavior standards in the workplace are different than those at school. Remind students that they are representing the program and the school, as well as themselves. The coordinator should be aware of dress code at each work site and discuss appropriate attire with students. Students should also be informed about sexual harassment issues.
- Give students an internship checklist, Ready to Intern, which includes everything the student needs to do to prepare for the internship experience. Preparing resumes, developing objectives, contacting employers, arranging schedules and transportation and completing background research are all possible checklist items.

## **STUDENT SEMINARS**

The seminar course is a semester-long class, which focuses on skills--Critical Workplace Skills. This class is taught as the school-based learning link to the internship experience. Work-Based Learning coordinators teach this curriculum according to their district policy, which can be the first two to three weeks of the semester and the last three weeks of the semester or each Monday during the semester. For an outline of the Critical Workplace Skills course, please visit the course information section of the Work-Based Learning website.