

## **INTERNSHIPS**

Student internships are used by post-secondary students as well as eleventh and twelfth graders. During an internship, students are hired by a partnering organization. The time frame and number of hours vary depending on the program.

Successful internships partner students with an internal mentor who will guide them through the experience. An internship is an opportunity to work in their chosen field and produce a real work product or service.

It is important for employers to select an intern with the skills and knowledge to make a contribution, even if small, to the accomplishments of the workplace in which they will be working.

Watch this site for upcoming *Internship Evaluation Guidelines* that can be used to select and prepare assignments for interns.

## PREPARING AN INTERSHIP EXPERINECE

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It is important that the overall experience for the partnering company, as well as for the shadowing students and interns, is a positive one. Below are some simple guidelines that will help make certain that the students feel welcomed when they enter the organization, ensuring a smooth transition into the workplace for them, and minimizing potential issues for both the business partners and the students.

- ✓ Prepare meaningful assignments for the intern, in advance of his/her arrival.
- ✓ Ensure the intern has the opportunity to learn about the entirety of the organization through varied work experiences.
- ✓ Ensure the intern understands all workplace rules and regulations (such as dress code, work hours, breaks and lunch, etc.).
- ✓ Obtain necessary security clearance as soon as possible.
- ✓ Ensure that the student's workstation is ready and available on his/her first day of work
- ✓ Identify the customer and internal department the intern is supporting; assist him/her in understanding the importance of the work he/she will be producing, and how each member of an organization contributes to its success
- ✓ Provide manageable challenges and learning experiences that will contribute to the growth of the intern and the success of the business.
- ✓ Provide the intern with the opportunity to meet with key executives within the organization in a meaningful manner.
- ✓ Coordinate "coaching" meetings with each/all interns, weekly at first, then at least monthly to ensure all expectations are understood and being met by intern(s), partnering company employees and the educational program.

## **JOB SHADOWING**

Nationally, “Groundhog Day” is used as the primary day for students to “shadow” workers in an organization for a single day. This activity is frequently used by tenth and eleventh graders. Some programs, such as the National Academy Foundation’s participating schools, require students to “shadow” four times per school year.

Students may visit a job site in the private, public, non-profit, or government sector. Each student will have the opportunity to tour a job site, “shadow” a workplace host for a day, and participate in some workplace activities. They gain a high-level understanding of the business, practice their dress for success skills, interact with key individuals from business organizations, and receive hands-on experience.

Most importantly, the program helps students make that critical link between the classroom and the workplace. Key concepts of the program are:

- **Relevance of Schoolwork-** Students may observe how English, math, problem-solving, and other basic skills are used each day on the job.
- **Necessary Workplace Skills-** Students are introduced to skills required for success in nearly all available career fields. Students conduct a personal assessment of skills as observed in action, and then develop a personal action plan to help obtain the education and skills necessary to secure an ideal job.
- **Teamwork-** Students are introduced to teamwork on the job, discovering how each person and department play a role in production or service delivery.
- **Connection between Learning and Earning-** Workplace Hosts demonstrate that education and training are required for success on the job. This helps students understand that getting a good education is a key to getting a good job, while life-long learning is important to continued success.
- **Introduction to Careers-** Students gain valuable exposure to many different kinds of careers at the chosen job site. This up-close exposure enables students to make more accurate and informed career decisions later in life.

Students are not compensated by the organization for the time they spend job shadowing.

## **SHADOW HOST CHECKLIST**

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**The key to a successful job shadow experience is to prepare for the activities before the students' arrival.**

- ✓ Prepare activities to conduct with your students.
- ✓ Consider ways to give them real world application of classroom learning and demonstrate the skills and education used on the job.
- ✓ Make sure that you have the name and phone number of your Shadow student.
- ✓ Confirm that school has workplace contact information.
- ✓ Make your student feel comfortable and welcome.
- ✓ Review safety procedures and supervise activities for your student.
- ✓ Involve student in general and representational workplace activities.
- ✓ Conduct Wrap-Up activities and cover workplace skills.

## High School Students 101\*

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- High School students want most to be valued. They are eager to engage in conversations that are genuine dialogues and gravitate toward adults who listen to their viewpoints. They won't listen to people who are perceived as lecturing or "saving" them.
- Fairness is an important value for High School students. Playing favorites or not giving each student a fair share is seen as negative behavior. If you have more than one student shadow, be sure to give them each equal chance to participate.
- It is "cool" to be passive. Many High School students will not demonstrate their curiosity, even if he/she is functioning at a high level.
- The most important "others" to High School students are their peers. Peer leadership is frequently flexible depending on the situation. Someone who is a leader athletically may be enthusiastic following in another situation.
- High School students want to be idealistic, even if their own situations may not be positive. Although definitions of success may differ, all High School students want to be successful.
- High School students will surprise you frequently. Most often that surprise is a joyous occasion. If you genuinely regard learning as a joint activity between you and the student, your experience will be memorable.

\*Compliments of NAF School, Baltimore, MD. 2004