



High School Internship Programs

Designing High School Internship Programs

As technology's presence increases in worksites, high school internships have an opportunity to prepare students for a changing workplace. As opportunities evolve, it is imperative that work-based learning coordinators develop high-quality internship programs for high school students. There are several essential components in a high school internship program that need to be considered in order for programs to effectively prepare students and support community partners.

The ideal high school internship provides direct instruction around employability skills before the student is then connected with a community partner for an extensive high school internship. The essential components of a quality high school internship program include: learning around employability skills from the instructor, developing professional documents, connecting to a local internship, writing a training plan for skill development, establishing roles through the training agreement, and providing support from the instructor at the student training site.

With all of the student internship opportunities provided, appropriate support measures need to be made for the student learner based on their skill level and accommodation needs.

Internship Opportunities:

1. **Full Immersion High School Internship.** The student will report to the internship site and the instructor will visit the site regularly to ensure the training plan is followed, conduct periodic evaluations, and support both the student and internship partners. The full immersion high school internship is how quality internships have been provided in the past and districts should strive to provide for their students.
2. **Blended High School Internship.** The blended high school internship would consist of the student spending some time at the internship site and a portion of time completing components remotely. The blended high school internship opportunity includes two different options.
 - a. **Blended Internship with the Internship Site.** The student may start the internship on site and need to have virtual projects to complete for the internship during periods where the community partner, parent/guardian, student, or school district would prefer the student be physically present at the internship site for a portion of the internship experience. The community partner internship site manager will identify projects for the organization the student intern can complete virtually while completing a portion of the internship remotely. The instructor will regularly communicate and meet with the internship manager and student to ensure the training plan is followed, conduct periodic evaluations, and to support the student and internship partner. The instructor, student, and internship manager may choose to complete the meetings on site or virtually.
 - b. **Blended Internship with Online Projects Organized by the Work-Based Learning Coordinator.** The student may start the internship on site and need to have virtual projects to complete for the internship during periods where the community partner, parent/guardian, student, or school district would prefer a portion of the internship be completed virtually. If the internship site is unable to provide viable virtual projects for the student, the work-based learning coordinator (MOC) should identify projects for the student to complete that articulates

with the goals on the student's training plan. The projects can be adjusted to provide the student with the opportunity to adapt the project for favorable usage at the internship site. If the internship site is unable to connect during the time of the project, the finalized project may be presented to the work-based learning coordinator. The work-based learning coordinator will use professional judgement to determine if the work-based learning coordinator or internship site manager should conduct student evaluations, progress on the student's training plan, and monitoring or evaluating student projects. Whenever possible the work-based learning coordinator should include virtual meetings with the student and internship site manager for valuable progress discussions and career development.

3. **Virtual High School Internship.** A virtual high school internship would consist of the student intern training and completing projects for the community partner virtually.
 - a. **Virtual Internship with a Community Partner.** A community partner may wish to provide an internship opportunity in a completely virtual format. In the event the entire internship is virtual, the work-based learning coordinator will need to establish where the student will report each day and communicate and document these expectations with the student, parent/guardian, employer, and school district. The projects and work products expected of the student will need to align with the individualized training plan. The internship site manager will need to clearly articulate expectations for the student intern in regards to expectations in communication, availability, deadlines, etc. Regular site visits will be done virtually and should still follow the requirements of evaluating progress on their training plans, periodic evaluations, and supporting students and internship sites.

Internships in Career Paths with Limited Opportunities

In the event an internship with a community partner in the student's career field of interest cannot be found, the work-based learning coordinator should connect the student intern in a related career path. To determine the best related career path, evaluate the student's interests compared to the opportunities available. Connect with your local [Intermediary](#) to brainstorm related careers with industry partners in your region.

To bring additional focus and skills on the student's interested career path, the work-based learning coordinator can integrate projects related to the career pathway of interest. The career pathway projects can be in addition to the student's internship expectations and can be presented to the work-based learning coordinator, internship site coordinator, Intermediary, or other industry professional. Connect with the Iowa Department of Education's [Work-Based Learning Newsletter](#) for more up-to-date information.

Resources

1. Connect with your local [Intermediary](#). Your Intermediary can assist with identifying potential internship sites or employers. Your Intermediary is a great advocate to help brainstorm potential opportunities in your area with their direct line of communication with community partners.
2. Projects to support internship opportunities can be found on the Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning's Website. Additional information can be obtained through communication with The Iowa Department of Education's [Work-Based Learning Education Consultant](#), Kristy Volesky, through newsletters.
3. Connect with the [Iowa Work Based Learning Coordinators](#) (IWBL). The professional IWBL organization can assist with troubleshooting issues that arise and provide ongoing virtual collaboration opportunities for educators.

Additional Considerations

1. Consider adjusting the training agreement to allow any of the parties to request a shift in the delivery of the internship from in-person to blended or virtual if any of the parties are concerned with the safety of

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the student or internship partner. The school district, work-based learning coordinator, parent/guardian, student, or internship site should have the ability to request a shift in internship delivery format to ensure all individuals feel comfortable with the situation.

2. Within your school district's communication about course expectations, the expectation of how the status of the student internship site may change if school or the internship site is closed should be addressed (including but not limited to inclement weather). As a district the method of communication should be pre-determined so all parties can be notified in a timely manner.