

# Iowa Internship Toolkit

## Resource to Plan, Launch & Manage High School Internship Programs

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## Iowa Internship Toolkit

A resource to help school districts plan and manage quality high school internship programs.

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# Introduction

As technology improves organizational processes and more emphasis is placed on employees having a higher-level skill set, students need the preparation, mentoring and opportunities available through a quality high school internship program. Students have gained work experience through part-time jobs for decades, but students need more to be competitive in high wage-earning careers. This toolkit is designed to highlight key components of a high-quality internship program to prepare students for success in postsecondary education, training and careers. Whether your district is developing a new internship program or revamping a current work experience program into an internship program, this toolkit provides important topics for discussion to ensure your district provides quality opportunities for your students. Although this toolkit is intended to prompt internal district conversations, do not hesitate to reach out to the Department's consultant overseeing [work-based learning](#), including internship programs, to answer questions or brainstorm opportunities to help advance your internship program into a high-quality opportunity for students.

Quality internship programs in Iowa have provided high school students the opportunity to: work on blueprints for clients at engineering firms; design a room for a client at an interior design company; assist a physical therapist by ensuring the final stretches a patient completes follows the directions of the physical therapist; assist a classroom educator by providing guided support for small group learning; develop, plan and lead an event for an organization; assist with small veterinarian procedures; and complete a rotational learning and training with various departments within a construction company. The examples provided are just a small sample of what students in your district can have access to through a quality high school internship program. Your students will learn, develop skills, contribute back to your community partners, build a professional portfolio and be prepared for postsecondary success.

The Iowa Internship Toolkit was a collaborative project between the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Work-Based Learning Coordinators and the Iowa Intermediary Network.



# Section 1: Preparing Your Internship Program for Success

## District Decisions

All pertinent parties need to engage in a discussion on which educator(s) will oversee the internship program, how the program will be structured and how students will be identified or placed into the program. Overseeing an internship program requires an educator who has excellent communication and presentation skills, patience to mentor and coach both students and industry partners and an ability to collaborate with all parties.

The internship program can be structured in a variety of ways with best practice offering a curriculum adjacent to the student internship experience. The district will need to evaluate what the coursework and experience can potentially look like in the building and community while structuring the opportunity for success.

The district will need to determine how to communicate the opportunities to students, parents or guardians and staff using the best communication methods for the district. Some districts may find it useful to present the opportunity at a grade-level meeting to ensure all students learn of the opportunity, have the ability to ask questions, understand the opportunity is available to all students and can plan their schedule in the years leading up to the experience. Other districts may find that communication through school newsletters or social media will provide all students and parents or guardians the information in an effective manner. As the program progresses and successes are reached, the district should utilize communication opportunities to share student experiences with the community and school board.

## Instructor Qualifications and Preparation

Any certified educator may oversee student internships in their particular content area and will need time built into their schedule to visit internship sites. In order to ensure consistent oversight, districts may choose to designate one educator to oversee all student internships. Designating one educator allows the district to provide them ample time to visit the internship sites to ensure student safety and decrease district liability. If an educator is overseeing internships in all career paths, the educator will need to earn their multioccupations endorsement (MOC).

The MOC endorsement brings an important value to the district's internship program. It is through the coursework with the endorsement that the educator learns how to prepare students for a successful experience, oversee internship programs to ensure the student is safe, learn how to reduce liability for the school district and support industry partners to ensure a successful program.

The Board of Educational Examiners provides comprehensive guidelines for the [5-12 Multioccupations endorsement](#) including two courses required for completion:

- Foundations of vocational and career education
- Coordination of cooperative programs

[Iowa State University](#) offers one of the courses online and [University of Northern Iowa](#) offers both courses online.

## Developing Your Internship Brand

Just as an organization develops its brand, the brand you develop for your internship program will be the brand you communicate with students, parents or guardians and industry partners. It is essential that you consider the name you are associating with your program. There have been many names for

a high school internship program over the years; however, the expectations have evolved. The name of your program and the title the educator overseeing the program uses will determine the perception you receive from all of your stakeholders. Whether you have used a name in the past or are developing a new program, consider how to best communicate with your stakeholders about the type of experience you are providing. Across the state there are inconsistencies with

messaging by programs calling themselves cooperative work, school-to-work, on-the-job training, job, MOC, work experience, work-based learning and internship.

If you are planning to offer students the ability to develop skills in a career path at an industry partner's site, including projects the student can place in a professional portfolio with oversight from a work-based learning coordinator, then you are offering an **internship**. Industry partners are well-versed with the term and concept of an internship. If an educator overseeing internships uses a different name for the program and routinely has to explain what the title of their program means to others, that is not effective branding. The term internship elicits an understanding from industry partners of the arrangement and professional expectations (this is more than a part-time job, this is a career preparation opportunity).

Just as there are a lot of terms for internship programs, the educators provide themselves with various titles. The title "**work-based learning coordinator**" is a title indicating the educator is preparing and overseeing students in work-based learning. At a national level it is widely understood that educators overseeing internships are titled work-based learning coordinators and their programs are titled internships. Branding your program is a local decision, so consider (or reconsider) your message based on discussions in your district.

After the district has decided on a program name and a title for the educator, you will need to ensure branding consistency on all materials associated with your program. When providing paperwork, consider using your district's letterhead or logo appropriately to demonstrate professionalism. Business cards should be ordered for the educator to provide to industry partners to make communication and connections easier, especially when building a relationship with a new industry partner. The educator should clearly identify his or her title on the business card along with the email signature used in any electronic communication.

## Working with Administration on the Documents for the Program

To ensure adequate communication of expectations of all parties involved in a high school internship program and to reduce liability, discuss as a district administration team the following potential documents to determine which ones make sense for your internship program. District administrators should discuss if other potential documents pertinent to your local district program should be added.

### 1. Training Agreement

- a. The purpose of the training agreement is to outline the responsibilities for each stakeholder: student, parent or guardian, work-based learning coordinator and industry partner during the internship.
- b. The training agreement supports all parties by clearly defining roles and expectations.
- c. [A sample training agreement](#) is located on the [Department's Career-Connected Learning page](#).

### 2. Training Plan

- a. The training plan is an essential component of a successful internship program. The training plan is written for each individual student in collaboration with the internship manager based on the student skill set, career path goals and expected skill set for the career path. The training plan also identifies potential safety hazards and provides guidance on what the student can and cannot operate. The purpose of the training plan is to provide clear guidance on the individual goals and skills the student will be working on during the internship so all parties are aware of the expectations.

- b. The training plan supports all parties by clearly identifying goals, skills and safety components connected to the internship and referenced during regular site visits.
- c. [A sample training plan](#) is located on the [Department's Career-Connected Learning page](#). Each student's training plan will have different goals based on their prior skill set, knowledge and career goals.

### **3. Expectations of the Program**

- a. In the form signed by the parent or guardian, it should clearly communicate the expectations of the program. Consider including course requirements such as hours, deadlines, credits for the course, etc.
- b. The expectations document supports the work-based learning coordinator and the school by providing clear expectations for the program from the beginning.

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

- a. The purpose of the confidentiality agreement is to communicate with the employers the confidentiality training done in class and to request the internship site manager provide specific training at the internship site for confidentiality required by the organization.
- b. The confidentiality agreement supports the industry partner, student and parent or guardian by clearly communicating expectations for confidentiality.

### **4. Photo Release**

- a. The purpose of developing a photo release is to allow the work-based learning coordinator and internship site to demonstrate the value of offering high school internship programs through external communications.
- b. The photo release document supports the student, parent or guardian, work-based learning coordinator and school district by clearly communicating whether each student and their guardian is okay with the release of the student's photo while participating in the internship program.

### **5. Driving Waiver**

- a. The purpose of the driving waiver is to address the liability of the student while driving to their internship site.
- b. Discuss with your district's administration team to see if a driving contract is necessary.

## **Reducing Your Liability**

There is liability with offering a high school internship program, but through preparation and ongoing support the liability can be reduced. Preparation of the program includes the paperwork outlined in the prior section as well as preparing students with the important employability skills. By preparing students in the classroom first, students will be equipped to develop skills and contribute to valuable industry site projects.

The district and work-based learning coordinator should review [child labor laws](#) and be aware of the rules regarding [compensation for student interns](#). If the district or work-based learning coordinator has questions about hazardous and prohibited occupations presented in the [Iowa Code chapter 92 child labor laws](#), contact the [Iowa Department of Labor staff](#).

As identified earlier, building in the training and safety portions of the training plan for each student's training plan are essential in outlining and communicating with all stakeholders on what the student is allowed (or not allowed) to do. Communicating both in the student's training plan and directly with the internship site manager are essential to preventing unsafe situations.

Regular visits to the internship site by the work-based learning coordinator are necessary to ensure the student is safe and that all parties are fulfilling the expectations outlined in the agreed training agreement. Although "regular" is not outlined with a specific time frame, it needs to be at a minimum during the midterm and at the end of the term. Additional visits should be made if the student or internship site manager is struggling or if the work-based learning coordinator has concerns about the safety or the quality of the student's internship experience. Not all internship site visits need to be

planned meetings; additional visits could be unannounced check-ins or brief discussions with the student or manager depending on the needs of the student.

## Developing the Course Content and Preparation

One of the most important ways to support your business partners is to prepare students for their internship before they interview for their internship experience. Although students could learn the professional skills for the internship in a prior year, when the students see the immediate value in learning and implementing the professional skills, they are more invested in mastering the professional skills. Content for the coursework preparation could include (but is not limited to) career development skills and employability skills.

Career development skill learning may include:

- Researching careers of interest and assessing the job market
- Connecting personal strengths to an appropriate career
- Preparing professional documents for an interview
- Preparing and participating in a mock interview
- Professional skills for entering the internship site environment

Employability skill learning may include:

- Professional image at the internship site and through social media
- Professional behavior including conflict resolution
- Professional written and verbal communication skills
- Handling difficult customers, coworkers and managers

Students benefit from the intentional teaching and support of professional skills, documents and experiences to aide in professional success. Bridging the preparation prior to the student internship experience allows students to gain valuable feedback and make necessary adjustments for professional success. For example, allowing the student to prepare professional documents for their mock interview and gaining the feedback and skills from the experience will prepare the student for success once the interview for the internship placement occurs. Most students have limited experiences for professional interviews and rarely receive feedback from their part-time job interview experiences to prepare them for a professional setting. Once the student has interviewed and earned the internship placement, the student will begin working toward the goals listed in their individualized training plan. Additional emphasis can be placed on the implementation of the career development and employability skills to ensure the transition from learning to applying.

When determining what coursework to include, consider reaching out to your local community college to identify potential concurrent enrollment courses aligning to the objectives of your internship course. The concurrent enrollment courses can provide you with classroom standards and suggested curriculum supports.

Providing curriculum in a classroom setting is essential to a successful program. Meeting with students face to face assists with developing rapport with your students, understanding your students' personalities, and building trust to help coach your students throughout their internship experience. Meeting as frequently as possible as a class to start the term is important. Delaying the start of the student's internship is important in order for the essential skills to be taught and increase the likelihood of a successful internship experience. Many successful internship programs have structured their year-long internship experiences for students in similar ways by utilizing the start of the school year for students and teachers to meet regularly.

Some successful internship programs are organized the following ways:

- Students spend the first trimester in class every single day, then spend the other two trimesters submitting reflective, electronic journals related to classroom standards. The coordinator uses the second and third trimesters to meet with the student and industry partners at the internship site on a regular basis.

- Students spend the first semester in class every day learning the curriculum and preparing for the internship site. Students interview for their internship site toward the end of the semester and spend the entire second semester at the internship site, submitting weekly journal entries related to classroom standards. The coordinator meets with the student regularly at the internship site.
- Students spend the first few months learning the curriculum that is expected and use a blended learning approach for the remainder of the semester to provide additional time for the coordinator to meet with the students at their internship site. The blended learning requires students to complete activities that are required by the standards of the class. The students interview and begin their internships on site before the classroom portion ends. The entire second semester is off site and allows the coordinator to visit the internship sites regularly.

As identified in the bullets, there are similar approaches to delivering curriculum in-person to ensure the work-based learning coordinator develops a relationship with the students to build trust and ensure a successful internship experience. By first preparing students with professional skills before they interview for their internships, industry partners will see that the students are prepared to learn and contribute. The positive first impression with the industry partner is essential in establishing the internship in a positive direction. By requiring classroom instruction to overlap the start of an internship experience, the work-based learning coordinator can assist student interns with the transition in expectations at the start of the internship experience.

After determining the name to brand your program, the title of your course and the course content to cover, the administrative team will need to properly code the courses. Depending on the requirements and how the schedule is structured, course School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) codes will be attached to your program through the student management system. If the course is following the expectations of an internship experience, consult the [guidance offered for work-based learning course SCED codes for Perkins V](#).

## Length of Internship Program and Hours Required

One question your district may be grappling with is the length of your internship program. When making the decision to meet your local needs, consider the time it takes for onboarding a student intern with potential paperwork, orientation and any required training at the internship site. For many internship sites it may take four to six weeks for the student interns to prove to the employer their skills and capabilities after completing the initial orientation and training with the industry partner. After interns have proven the quality of their work, dependability and communication skills, they are then connected with quality projects at the internship sites (for a professional portfolio). Given the length of time it takes to demonstrate an intern's worth, providing student interns with an extended experience will truly give them a competitive edge with their peers from across the state.

Another consideration is the number of hours the students should complete during their internship experience. If your internship program offers concurrent enrollment credit, those hours will be a minimum standard for your program. Later in this toolkit the students' schedules are addressed to maximize their learning potential at the internship site. Ten to 15 hours are the maximum required each week to ensure the student interns have balance between their other courses. These hours should be done during the school day to ensure the student is offered quality projects at the internship site and so the work-based learning coordinator is able to check in on the student while he or she is at the site (for safety, liability and support reasons). Programs across the state vary in the amount of internship hours required by students per semester and per year. Over the course of the year, some programs require 120 hours to upwards of 250 hours (for two semesters). The more time students have at their internship site, the more skills and experience the students gain.

Districts need to balance what is manageable for the student, work-based learning coordinator and industry partner. Work-based learning coordinators need time to understand the student's capabilities

and to prepare the student. Immediately placing students at internships within the first couple of weeks of school is unfair to the student, work-based learning coordinator and the industry partner.

## Identifying Students for the Program

When preparing for the first year of the program, the work-based learning coordinator should work with the counseling team to identify students to recruit to register for the internship program. In order to establish a quality program, maintain a small and manageable group of students the first year.

After course registration takes place, the work-based learning coordinator should access the list of students who wish to enter the program. Even if the number of students requesting the internship program is fewer than the maximum identified by the district, the work-based learning coordinator should still conduct an interview of the students interested. The student interview to get into the program should not expect students to have the professional interviewing skills nor be intimidating in any capacity. The work-based learning coordinator should use the interview to gather information about the students to better understand their career interests, prior experiences, goals for the program and other factors influencing potential internship placements. If additional accommodations need to be made for students so they are comfortable, please make those arrangements through consultation with the school counselor or special education teacher.

A student may be referred to your program that, at first glance, does not seem to be a good fit due to a need for a higher level of support than you are able to provide. This is when you will want to connect with the special education teacher, counselor or other applicable educator to ensure you have the instructional support necessary for the student to succeed. There are times when a student may need a work-based learning program administered through the special education team; however, working with the special education team to provide support within the general education program can be the best option. Remember, it is always an individual decision for each student.

If your district is in a situation where more students have requested the program than the coordinator is able to support, the district should have some guidelines on how to determine which students will be allowed to participate in the high school internship program. The parameters in deciding which students are best prepared for the program should include components where all students have a fair chance. Avoid unfair factors such as GPA or perfected professional skills prior to the experience to determine which students are able to access the high school internship program. For more information on best practices to evaluate which students will be admitted into a high school internship program, connect with the Iowa Work Based Learning Coordinators (IWBL) by requesting access to their [discussion platform](#).

## Evaluating How Many Students to Include in Your Program

Determining just how many students to allow into your district's high school internship program can be extremely stressful. No one likes to turn students away, but remember there comes a point where too many student interns can lead to a low-quality program and disgruntled employers. Disgruntled employers will not want to take future interns, which will lead to fewer opportunities as years progress. A work-based learning coordinator overseeing too many students will lead to burnout and coordinator turnover. There is not a magic number for student interns in any particular program without a consistent evaluation and open communication. Internal discussions should take place to consider local components impacting just how much time will be needed to support your high school internship program as well as how many internships can be supported by local industry partners.

Considerations in determining how many students and how much time your work-based learning coordinator will need include the distance to internship sites, the level of support your student interns will need, the time it will take for the work-based learning coordinator to reach the majority of internship sites and whether your program will rely on internship opportunities in a nearby community. Time for the evaluation, training plan discussions, time to visit the workstation to evaluate safety and time for coaching the student must also be considered. If it is your first year for the program, start small.

Finally, plan on building in additional time to support student interns in case there is a need to check in on a student at their internship site, an issue that requires immediate attention with the industry partner, a conversation with the counselor or any other programming needs. The more time provided to the work-based learning coordinator, the more successful your internship program and prepared your students are for postsecondary success.

When determining how many students the program can handle and how much time the work-based learning coordinator will need to effectively manage student interns, take into consideration the information in the following sections.

## Time Needed for the Work-Based Learning Coordinator



### 1. Time Needed per student in minutes:

*Time to travel to and from the internship site (minutes) + 60-minute meeting*

### 2. Minutes work-based learning coordinator needs every month:

*Time needed per student x # of students*

*(Total found in #1)*

### 3. Minutes work-based learning coordinator needs per day to complete program expectations:

*Minutes work-based learning coordinator needs every month / 20 days in a month*

*(Total found in #2)*

Providing more time than what these formulae calculate will only improve your program and make your students more competitive with their peers at other school districts. The coordinator can also be more proactive and support students and industry partners before there are problems. Additional time leads to opportunities to meet with potential industry partners, discuss with the counselor how to support a struggling student, collaborate with educators and maintain the necessary paperwork to support the internship program. Some students will need more support than others during the internship experience and providing the necessary time and flexibility to support students at their internships is essential for supporting industry partners and students for a successful experience.

If you need to limit the number of students in your internship program due to time constraints for proper work-based learning coordinator oversight, think about the opportunities your school offers to students. Consider other work-based learning opportunities on the continuum incorporated into other courses and other opportunities such as pre-apprenticeships, school-based enterprises, courses with industry partner projects embedded in the curriculum, courses with career and technical student organizations (CTSO incorporated into the curriculum using projects connected with industry partners) and other career exploration opportunities.

## Coordinator and Student Schedules

### Work-Based Learning Coordinator (Educator) Schedule

As identified in early sections of the toolkit, providing the educator with as much time to support students and industry partners is key to a successful internship program. The amount of time needed is reliant on several factors, including the distance it will take to travel to most internship sites, completing the necessary classroom pieces, communication and more outlined in section two of this toolkit under Balancing Your Responsibilities.

Districts can approach supporting the educator's schedule in a variety of ways. Some districts offer the work-based learning coordinator an entire day dedicated to teaching the coursework and then connecting with industry partners to develop and support internships. Most districts end up structuring

the work-based learning coordinator's schedule to offer half or a portion of the day open to overseeing high school internships.

Here is a sample of high-quality internship programs and the structure of the work-based learning coordinator's schedule:

- Seven-period day: Coordinator teaches periods 1-3 with the 4<sup>th</sup> period for the coursework (in the fall) and then periods 5-7 are dedicated to supporting students and industry partners (prep and site visits). This schedule provides adequate time to travel and support students since many rural communities are supported.
- Eight-period day: Coordinator teaches other courses periods 1-4 with the 5<sup>th</sup> period for the coursework (in the fall), 6<sup>th</sup> period prep and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> periods are dedicated to supporting students and industry partners. Once the coursework portion is completed then additional time is provided for visiting internship sites to support students and industry partners.
- Block: Coordinator teaches internship coursework during 1<sup>st</sup> block and uses remaining block periods to support students and industry partners at their sites.

Internship programs where the coordinator teaches seven periods of classes with an eighth period as their prep and their time to visit internship sites is not a supportive schedule. Although the district's schedule may be structured in this manner due to precedent, it is time to innovate alternative approaches to ensure adequate time is provided to the coordinator to cultivate quality experiences, reduce liability and support students and industry partners. If a coordinator has to choose whether to use the prep period to support the seven other classes of students or support the students at the internship sites, most likely the competition for one prep period will result in the coordinator not visiting the internship sites, which is not a best practice.

Here are some examples of how districts can approach providing industry support time for the coordinator to properly oversee the internship program:

- Review the work-based learning coordinator's schedule to place the curriculum portion of the internship course adjacent to the coordinator's prep time. This way, when the class no longer meets formally in the classroom, the work-based learning coordinator will have more time to visit the internship sites.
- Review the other courses taught by the work-based learning coordinator to determine which courses could be moved to another instructor and add in the internship course and industry support time.
- Review the course format adjacent to the work-based learning coordinator's industry support time to determine if a blended or virtual course delivery is an option.

There are some innovative ways to approach scheduling to offer a high school internship program adequate time for the coordinator to oversee and support students and industry partners. If you are needing assistance with evaluating how to support the work-based learning coordinator's schedule, reach out to [your Department Consultant](#). If you are a district sharing a work-based learning coordinator with another school district, planning and communication will be necessary between districts. It is important to plan how the work-based learning coordinator will deliver the curriculum, whether other district students will travel to participate in another district's classroom or whether the coordinator rotates and streams the delivery of content at the start of the school year. It is imperative the work-based learning coordinator establish a relationship with the student interns so future internship site coaching will be possible. It is also important that students in a district with a shared work-based learning coordinator have access to content to prepare the students for their internship sites. Both the preparation and on-site rotation of the coordinator is possible; however, it is imperative the districts sharing the coordinator communicate the best delivery opportunity.

When organizing the coordinator's schedule within the master schedule, evaluate how the time blocks for the coordinator to support industry partners are labeled. Time to support industry partners is not "time off," rather it is time to support the expected components of the coordinator position. Consider labeling the time for the work-based learning coordinator to fulfill the supportive elements of the position

as **industry partner support** within the coordinator's schedule. The scheduled time for industry partner support will provide the coordinator with time to establish internship site relationships, prepare curriculum and manage student paperwork for the program, write training plans, visit students at their internship sites to ensure student safety and complete student evaluations on a regular rotation. There will always be unplanned situations where the coordinator will need the flexibility to support the student and industry partner in a short time frame. Without the time to support the industry partner, the necessary components to ensure a quality program and experience for the student and industry partner will not happen.

## Student Schedule

After determining how to structure the work-based learning coordinator's schedule, evaluate how the student's schedule can be developed for a successful experience. If students are expected to complete their internship after school, that will reduce valuable experiences. Many professional organizations are winding down their days at 3 p.m. and there will be limited opportunities for students to engage in professional training and projects to build the student's portfolio. Students should be allowed to spend a portion of their day at their internship sites and the students' schedules should allow them to be at the internship site the same time the work-based learning coordinator can visit the internship site. Aligning the student and coordinator's schedule will allow the work-based learning coordinator to fulfill their expected responsibilities to ensure student safety, student progress and student and industry partner support, which is key to a successful internship program.

It is important to remove barriers from the students' schedules that would prevent them from spending a large portion of their day training at their internship site and developing skills and experiences to improve their opportunities after graduation. The barrier to the students' schedules usually revolves around allowing students the opportunity to take the required courses during the morning or afternoon so the other time block will be free for learning at the internship site.

Internally, the team should discuss if there will be a required policy for when the student would be at their internship site. Some districts mandate and communicate with industry partners that all students must be at their internships during a set time each week, while others offer flexibility. Your district may also decide to be flexible based on the industry partner's needs while still requiring at least two days during the week that students must be at their internships during the school day. Below are some examples of why some districts allow flexibility with student internship schedules with the industry partner:

- A pharmacy technician intern may be needed most during the evening rush from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.; however, it would be so busy during those days the evaluations could never be done during that time (and it is outside of school hours). The pharmacy would agree to have the student scheduled at least two times during the week during the school day to allow time for the work-based learning coordinator to visit the internship site and hold an evaluation with the internship manager without worrying about disrupting business at the pharmacy. Allowing the student time at the pharmacy during slower times also allows ample opportunities for onsite training alongside the manager.
- A nursing intern may not be able to do a lot of things without a nursing degree, so the internship manager might prefer the student's internship schedule include training every day for two or three hours. The frequent and short hours allow the student to learn, contribute to the site and have impact on quality projects while meeting the needs of the industry partner.
- An interior design intern would have more projects and learning opportunities by attending their internship for longer periods of time, so it may make sense for the student intern to attend the internship for three to four days each week. If the student attended for two hours each day, the student would barely get started with the project and it would be time to leave for the day.

Depending on your district's policy about how and when students may attend their internships, you will need to consider how to communicate those guidelines with industry partners. There are several ways to provide the student's schedule to align with the internship opportunity, but ensuring it aligns with the

work-based learning coordinator's scheduled time to meet with industry partners is essential. If all students are provided the second half of the day to train at their internship sites, then students and parents will need to understand the guidelines on reporting expectations and behavior expectations during the times they are not at their internship sites. Providing the communication and expectations before the internship begins is key. If you are wondering what other district policies around student schedules at internship sites are, [connect with the Iowa Work Based Learning Coordinators](#) and use their discussion board to see what other schools have found successful.

## Identifying Potential Student Barriers

This portion of the toolkit identifies common barriers to student participation in high school internships and approaches districts in Iowa have taken to overcome them. There is not a solution that fits all districts, but ideas used by other districts can provide foundational discussions to innovate additional opportunities to overcome barriers. The barriers identified here are not the only barriers present in offering student internship opportunities, so work with your district team to identify student participation issues and opportunities to overcome those challenges to ensure equitable opportunity.

### Transportation

The flexible nature of high school internships and the need for the student to train at the internship site generates issues on how students will manage transporting to and from their internship site on a daily basis. Transportation issues are common in both urban and rural parts of the state, and approaches to overcoming those barriers could be vastly different.

Discuss as a district team, potential paths to providing transportation for needful students. There could be local nonprofits or organizations in your community willing to sponsor or provide transportation on a regular basis. Ensure there is a system where students lacking transportation have the ability to participate in high school internships.

A short-term strategy could be looking at what options exist virtually, within your district or within walking distance. Although the concept is relatively new for high school internships, there are emerging opportunities for students to participate in virtual experiences. If your district has offered successful internships in prior years, reach out to those participating industry partners to gauge interest in a virtual internship. If your district's internship program is new, approach the idea of a virtual internship with a new industry partner carefully by outlining how the work-based learning coordinator will support the student to ensure success. If an employer is willing to offer a virtual internship after some initial training, discuss with your district team on how to best support transporting the student short-term until the internship can transform to a virtual internship. When offering a virtual internship or blended internship, your district should discuss the components outlined in [guidance covering alternate offerings to in-person internships](#).

An often-overlooked opportunity are career pathway internships within your own school district. Consider all the potential internships available within education, athletic training, sports management (athletic director), information technology, accounting (business office), culinary, maintenance, landscaping and more. When identifying potential internship opportunities within your school district, be mindful of confidentiality and what appropriate internships should look like.

Another opportunity is to evaluate which internship opportunities are available within reasonable walking distance or, if applicable, a city bus route. When evaluating reasonable walking distances, keep in mind the harsh Iowa winter conditions to ensure the student is not expected to walk far during cold conditions (consider as a school district providing transportation during the winter months for the student). If a city bus route is an option, research funding opportunities available to your community to support the student's bus pass for the internship.

## Compensation

This section will analyze the barrier of the student needing compensation. Some students may financially support their families or may be responsible for paying for their own expenses related to transportation (monthly payment, insurance, gas, repairs). Many students who rely on wages from their part-time job to pay for the expenses may run into the barrier of not being able to take advantage of an unpaid internship. The student may even request to use their internship time to work more hours at their part-time job to increase their income. Although this situation appears to have an easy way out (let the student increase their hours at their part-time job and use it as the internship), the work-based learning coordinator and district staff need to really dig into what is best for the student long-term.

One misconception with high school internships is that all internships need to be unpaid, which is not true. High school internships can be paid or unpaid opportunities. Review the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) guide to understand which internships should be paid. If the internship will be a paid internship, the work-based learning coordinator will need to ensure the student's compensation follows the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#). Although an industry partner may not be able to offer compensation for the internship, the district may discuss how to connect the student with nonprofits to help cover the costs of transportation as discussed above. If the industry partner wants to provide compensation in the form of a bonus, it needs to follow [De Minimis Fringe Benefits](#) guidelines and cannot be tied to student hours.

If a student intern needs compensation, it is possible to connect the student with an internship that provides compensation. Consider the benefit of offering an internship in the career pathway of interest versus defaulting to allowing the student to just work more at a part-time job. Although the student may learn some skills at the part-time job, it should be asked what career the student will be connected with after graduation. If the student plans to transition from part-time to full-time after graduation, it should be noted whether the move will provide a quality income. If the student isn't passionate about transitioning the part-time job into a full-time career after graduation, use the internship program to help connect the student with opportunities that will provide a quality income and satisfying career based on the student's interests. Consider ways the student intern could be connected with an employer who provides compensation. A student intern may be connected with a paid internship in a career area of interest that leads to a full-time position, connection to scholarships or additional paid training.



If a paid internship in the student's career area of interest is not possible, consider building the student's schedule to allow them the opportunity to explore, build skills and train at the unpaid internship during the day in the career area of interest so they can then transition to their part-time job after the school

day. This allows the student to build successful skills and connections for future career success and still maintain the hours at their part-time job as needed.

Reference [Iowa Code chapter 85](#) for information on how compensation impacts Workers' Compensation responsibilities (85.6).

## Balancing Internships and After-School Commitments

Whether the student is responsible for watching a younger sibling, fulfilling part-time job responsibilities or participating in extracurricular activities after school, work-based learning coordinators need to be mindful of after-school commitments of students. This potential barrier can best be addressed by building the student's schedule so they can fulfill their internship during the school day. Allowing matching time with the work-based learning coordinator to meet the student and industry partner at the internship site during the school day is key to ensuring students do not see after-school commitments as a barrier to participation in an internship program.

## Supporting Students with Professional Clothing Needs

Some students are wary to participate in a professional internship program because they do not have the finances to support purchasing professional clothing. To overcome this barrier, consider reaching out to local professional groups to organize a clothing drive or suggest the building's PTO support a professional clothing drive. If the school will house the clothing, finding a location to hold the clothing for students as needed while allowing privacy for students searching for clothing is also key. District staff may consider connecting with local nonprofits to support professional clothing closets or sponsorship of students, as needed. However, your district approaches connecting donated professional clothing to students, please take the proper steps to maintain student privacy.

## Identifying Internship Program Costs

When developing an internship program, evaluating the costs associated with the program are important to address up front. The majority of the costs for the program will be dedicated to supporting the salary of the work-based learning coordinator. Other costs include:

- Travel reimbursement (or using the school vehicle) for site visits for the work-based learning coordinator.
- The purchase of business cards for the work-based learning coordinator to provide to internship managers.
- Supplemental books or materials to support classroom learning during the internship preparation.
- Printing documents to provide to internship partners on expectations as well as documents the district team has decided to require (unless electronic is preferred).

# Section 2: Evaluating Progress During the Year

Throughout the year, the work-based learning coordinator should spend time reflecting to ensure the expected goals of the program are met as well as how alterations can be made to improve the outcomes of the program. The work-based learning coordinator will need to balance supporting students and industry partners on a regular basis to meet all the expectations of the program.

## Course Preparation

As discussed in the first section, Developing Course Content and Preparation, the coursework should prepare students with the professional skills they will need at their internship site. The coursework

should be provided at the start of the semester and foundational concepts need to be taught and assessed prior to connecting students with their industry partners for an interview.

Key learning can take place to improve the success of the internship experience. Consider the following:

- Investigate and analyze different career paths of interest to ensure the career path of interest is a great fit.
- Provide students with opportunities to learn about the important professional skills before making a first impression with the industry partner.
- Assist students with developing professional resumes and cover letters in preparation for their mock interviews and eventually to use during their internship interview.
- Use mock interviews to practice interviewing skills prior to making a positive first impression at their internship interview. The better the first impression, the more likely the student will earn the internship placement.

Use the visits to the internship sites for student evaluation and progress meetings to also elicit feedback from the managers on the topic of student preparation. Ask if the internship manager wished the student had additional knowledge on a particular topic before starting the internship and if an additional delay before placement needed to occur to allow more time for students to learn and practice their professional skills prior to the start of the internship. This feedback can be used to update your curriculum during the internship and for future students.

In the section Developing Course Content and Preparation, possible topics for content were outlined along with the suggestion to connect with your community college for concurrent enrollment opportunities. Connect with the [Iowa Work-Based Learning Coordinator](#) and their discussion board to see what other schools are offering for classroom content standards and assessments. The discussion board may also provide you with suggested timelines for transitioning from classroom learning to internship site learning. In all situations, the year should be used for listening to students and internship managers and reflecting on what additional changes to content should take place to better support student interns.

## Writing Student Training Plans

Every training plan should be individualized to meet the needs of the student intern and the career path of interest. A training plan should allow for a progression of skill attainment as the internship progresses. Every training plan should include orientation, safety, professional skills and individualized goals for the internship career path.

When the work-based learning coordinator develops the individualized goals section of the training plan, the coordinator should use foundational knowledge of the career, the career interests of the student and realistic project experiences provided by the internship site manager. The individualized goals should consist of projects or skills requiring training and should include the time it will take to complete that training. Simple tasks would not be included in the student intern's goals (i.e., making collated copies with the copy machine). Challenging goals should be provided to encourage deeper learning and career development skills. Consult with the industry partner for project ideas and skills the student should learn during the experience. If the industry partner struggles to identify attainable skills, brainstorm ideas based on the skills identified for the occupation listed on [O\\*Net OnLine](#) and discuss potential projects to develop those skills. After writing the individualized goals, take a holistic view of the goals to ensure it is providing opportunities for the student to develop career pathway goals, and projects to add to the student's professional portfolio. A sample training plan is available on the [Department's Career-Connected Learning page](#) under the Resources section.

The safety section of the training plan should outline the necessary components of the training associated with the equipment the student can legally operate. Identifying equipment the student may not use due to legal concerns following hazardous occupations and equipment regulations (outlined under [Iowa Code chapter 92](#)) may need to be identified and documented on the training plan. Internship

site managers will need to agree to the training plan so the work-based learning coordinator should allow time to make edits to the document before it is finalized.

## Supporting Your Student Interns

High school internships are not part-time jobs and students will need support from the work-based learning coordinator to ensure program success. Student interns are held to a different professional level in their behavior, communication, performance and expectations. Although industry partners realize high school students are not adults, the interns are expected to behave close to an adult employee. The work-based learning coordinator will need to prepare students for the experience through classroom learning. Students need to understand expected behaviors, such as how to handle difficult situations. Students need to not only learn and understand professional internship expectations, they also need to be able to practice those skills and learn from classroom simulations.

As student interns transition from classroom-only to their internship site experience, they will need support in the first few weeks. Some student interns truly think they will immediately jump into meaningful projects at their internship site, when the reality is employers need to build trust with the student intern first. Students will need to be prepared for what to expect in the first few weeks along with the ability to easily access the work-based learning coordinator to discuss any struggles or frustrations.

Once the student interns are fully oriented at their internship sites, the students will need the support of the work-based learning coordinator. The work-based learning coordinator needs to regularly visit the student at the internship site, although “regular” will be differentiated based on the student intern’s needs. If a student is struggling at the internship site, informal visits outside of the evaluation meetings will need to take place. If the internship manager has indicated there is an issue, the work-based learning coordinator will need to visit and provide the necessary support with the student intern (and manager). At a minimum, work-based learning coordinators should visit the student at the internship site during the mid-term and end of each term the student is at the site.

The student intern will feel most supported when the work-based learning coordinator visits the internship site and has a chance to speak with them. To ensure safety, the work-based learning coordinator should visit the student’s training center and review any potential hazards. To connect with the student intern, the coordinator should ask the student intern to share a project the student has completed and a project they are working on. When the student shares their accomplishments, it provides an opportunity for positive reinforcement and the intern will be more likely to accept constructive criticism and coaching during future evaluation meetings.

## Supporting Your Student Interns During an Evaluation

Your district team should discuss the frequency of student evaluations while considering the timeline of the terms at your district. The student should not be formally evaluated early in the internship, as the manager may not have enough to document. The evaluation should include an assessment on the student’s professional career pathway skills and the progress in the student’s training plan.

The best way to support your student intern during an evaluation is to prepare the student for what the evaluation will look like and the standards on which they will be assessed. Industry partners like having time to reflect on the skills the student will be assessed on prior to completing the evaluation, as sometimes several managers may be asked to provide feedback. The evaluation process should be a positive experience, set up to provide valuable feedback and ensure the student is able to grow from the experience and improve before the next evaluation. Some internship managers will want to discuss every item the student needs to work on; however, receiving a long list of items a student needs to correct can turn into an overwhelmingly negative experience.

One way to approach an evaluation:

1. Email or drop off training plan for evaluation prior to the meeting. Ask the manager to complete or review prior to the meeting, but not discuss it with the student intern prior to the meeting.
2. Upon arrival at the internship, the work-based learning coordinator will meet privately with the manager to discuss the student's progress. This is an opportunity for the work-based learning coordinator to ensure the manager's words match the training plan evaluation scores and make any necessary adjustments prior to meeting with the student.
3. Move the manager's completed training plan so it is not viewable for the student intern. Ask the student intern to join the meeting and start by reflecting. The student should reflect on something they are doing well and something they need to work on.
4. After the student intern has reflected, ask the internship manager to identify something the student intern is doing well and something that needs improvement.
5. The completed training plan is then shared with the student. If there were marks on the training plan that were not discussed during the prior steps, the work-based learning coordinator should manage those conversations so it does not become overwhelming for the student intern.
6. When the student does not have any additional questions for the manager, the manager should leave to allow a separate conversation between the coordinator and the student intern. The work-based learning coordinator will shift from managing the conversation to coaching the conversation. They should allow the student to share first, especially if they have any frustrations from the meeting. Counsel and empower the student through the review meeting that just occurred so the student feels they are able to improve. Work-based learning coordinators can effectively manage the conversations during the evaluation and navigate the next steps with the student intern to direct a positive response from the feedback.
7. After coaching the student, ask to see what the student intern is working on and view their work station. Check in with the internship manager prior to leaving, if necessary.

If the evaluation meeting indicates the student will need additional support or interventions, the work-based learning coordinator will need to evaluate the appropriate next steps. If any additional school personnel are needed to support the student, they can be used to ensure the student has all the support needed to succeed. If the feedback from the manager indicated the student intern is needing interventions for improvement, the work-based learning coordinator will need to develop a plan and visit the internship site more frequently until the student is making the appropriate progress. The work-based learning coordinator's plan should include as much direct assistance as applicable to ensure the internship site manager feels supported.

The example format on the prior page is one way to approach an evaluation meeting, including the assessment of the training plan. Your district team may decide a different process is necessary; however, visiting the internship site is crucial for supporting students and industry partners.

Asking a student intern to reflect on their own performance, dissect the feedback from an internship manager and develop perseverance to receive the feedback and improve takes a lot of growth and maturity. Although it is difficult for student interns to listen to feedback during these evaluation meetings, they are essential to developing the skills for students to maintain long-term employment success. There will be times when the student will be very upset from the feedback and other times when the student is elated by the feedback. The support of the work-based learning coordinator is important in helping students pick up the pieces and improve without the concern of judgment from the internship manager. By the end of the internship experience, the growth in the intern's perseverance and confidence will improve tremendously through the support of the work-based learning coordinator and internship site manager.

## Supporting Your Industry Partners

As mentioned in prior sections of this toolkit, supporting your internship partners is essential for receiving continued opportunities for student interns and the longevity of the program. There are several

steps work-based learning coordinators and internship programs can take to support industry partners, including preparing students through prior coursework and visiting the internship site regularly. Internship managers want students prepared with professional skills to increase the likelihood of transitioning into the professional setting with minimal issues. Internship managers also want the support of the work-based learning coordinator as a partner to ensure the experience is a quality experience for both the student and the internship site partner.

## Finding, Connecting and Supporting Your Industry Partners

Working to identify industry partners is an essential first step in coordinating high school internship hosts. High school students elect to participate in internships to develop professional skills through a career experience. The internship experience assists with pathway navigation and post-high school decisions. It is important to secure host sites that align with student interests.

Connecting students to internship placements is a careful balance. One strategy to encourage industry partner participation in hosting a high school intern is to allow the partner the option of whether to accept the student as an intern after an internship interview. Allowing industry partners the option to interview the potential student intern provides the partner with the understanding the students should be prepared, and if they are not, they are not obligated to take on the student intern. As mentioned earlier, preparing students through mock interviews is key to preparing students for their internship interview. The work-based learning coordinator should reach out to the industry partner to provide the name of the student(s) potentially interviewing before the student calls to request an interview time.

Supporting industry partners is an ongoing process. Initial support should include meeting with the internship manager after the student has been interviewed and “hired” to discuss possible projects and skills to develop during the internship. The work-based learning coordinator will also visit the internship site on a regular basis to support the individual students. The work-based learning coordinator should maintain regular communication with the industry partner, but most important, the coordinator must schedule times to visit the internship site for face-to-face evaluation meetings with the student and employer onsite. Work-based learning coordinators that do not visit student internship sites throughout the experience will see disgruntled internship managers due to lack of support, disgruntled students who do not have the advocate they need and diminishing opportunities for the student as they grow frustrated with their experience. The work-based learning coordinator possesses essential skills in navigating difficult conversations and increasing perseverance and communication from the student and internship manager.

## Collaborating for Future Success

Collaboration within your district is essential for effectively supporting the student as well as ensuring all students are aware of internship opportunities and can appropriately plan. One major collaboration to establish is with your building’s counseling team. The counseling team can help communicate essential information on the internship program to students, help identify students for the program and support the work-based learning coordinator with additional needs of the student intern. The work-based learning coordinator may discover during a site visit that the student is struggling with personal issues, and having the counselor to assist with supporting the student is key for ensuring student success. Consider inviting the counseling team to visit an internship site to learn more about what the student intern is learning. Not only does the experience of visiting the internship provide context to discussing the program with future students, it is also rewarding for the counselor to see their student in a successful program. Work-based learning coordinators should consider inviting other key district staff to learn directly about the internship program through site visits.

Connecting the value of the program beyond the immediate year is a great way to track progress and continue to receive feedback from prior students. Work with the counseling team to determine the best way to reach out to graduates and learn how their experience from participating in the internship

program impacted their career and training choices five years after graduation. If the counseling department does not have a method for collecting data on prior graduates, the work-based learning coordinator could navigate outreach through LinkedIn or email. The data collected will provide important information on impactful curriculum, additional curriculum to add as well as what successes transpired after their internship experience.

Most districts have one work-based learning coordinator, which can cause struggles on finding other staff to collaborate on the internship program. Collaborating with other work-based learning coordinators will provide a quality experience to troubleshoot and brainstorm opportunities to continue to enhance your current program. Reach out to the [Iowa Work Based Learning Coordinators \(IWBL\)](#) to find a virtual platform to exchange ideas on curriculum and brainstorm how to overcome common challenges facing work-based learning coordinators. The Iowa Work Based Learning Coordinators also host an annual conference to share best practices for providing high quality internship programs.

## Balancing Coordinator Responsibilities

The work-based learning coordinator has several responsibilities to complete in the various aspects of the role. Balancing these responsibilities takes time, which is why the industry partner support time is essential to include in the work-based learning coordinator's schedule.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Work-Based Learning Coordinator

#### 1. Classroom Responsibilities

- a. Providing lesson planning, classroom instruction, grading assessments and providing student feedback.
- b. Understanding the career interests and personalities of student interns to guide connections for placements.
- c. Writing individualized training plans for every student intern. Ensuring the projects and goals for the student will allow the student to have a quality professional portfolio at the end of the internship.
- d. Tracking and storing required paperwork documents for the program.
- e. Utilize feedback from industry partners to adjust curriculum and instruction.

#### 2. Collaboration

- a. Collaborating with the counseling department to communicate student updates, recruit future students and support current students needing additional support.
- b. Collaborating with district staff to assess enrollment to ensure all students have access to the internship program.
- c. Collaborating with other educators as appropriate to address individual or unique needs of students who may require additional support.
- d. Collaborating with work-based learning coordinators from other districts to connect with valuable professional development.
- e. Collaborating with community partners to support overcoming barriers such as transportation and professional clothing.
- f. Collaborating with local agencies supporting industry partners such as Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Workforce Development as well as local and county economic development organizations to understand local workforce needs and skill gaps.

#### 3. Managing Student Internships

- a. Tracking hours and communicating expectations with students and contacting parents or guardians to follow district policies.
- b. Maintaining regular communication with students to be proactive about potential internship site concerns.
- c. Managing potential changes to internship placements if necessary.
- d. Supporting students through additional coaching, as needed. Meeting with students to discuss and strategize how to approach issues or opportunities at the internship site.

#### 4. Managing Internship Placement Support

- a. Visiting internship sites on a regular basis (some more than others due to students' differentiated needs).
- b. Managing internship evaluations, including assessing progress with student training plans.
- c. Assessing the internship site training stations and vocalizing and documenting limitations on equipment as well as safety concerns.
- d. Supporting the student through coaching to ensure the student is able to navigate difficult situations.
- e. Supporting the internship site manager through coaching conversations and follow-up with the student intern as needed.
- f. Requesting feedback from the internship site manager on requests for future changes.
- g. Providing recognition for internship managers and student interns through a recognition ceremony at the end of the year.

#### 5. Communication Role

- a. Communicating throughout the experience with all stakeholders, including students, parents or guardians, internship site managers, Intermediary and district staff.
- b. Communicating information about the internship program in collaboration with the counseling team to students and parents or guardians.
- c. Collecting data on student interns at the end of the year on both a compilation of their professional portfolio from their experience and additional supports they would like during the year.
- d. Communicating with the district team on the data of the students participating and addressing any barriers preventing students from participating.
- e. Following up with prior student interns five years after graduation to collect data on impact of their internship experience.

### Reflecting on Barriers

During the year, the district team should discuss barriers for student participation in the internship program and brainstorm opportunities to overcome them. Reach out to other stakeholders or neighboring districts to join in the conversation. Although not every barrier can be solved in a given year, taking steps to overcome one barrier at a time is essential for an ongoing and successful internship program for students.



## Preparing for Next year's Internship Class

A balancing act for the work-based learning coordinator is the time frame of coordinating the current internship class while managing to interview students for the next year's program. As mentioned in the first planning section, an interview of interested students is strongly encouraged. The interview could be used to learn more about the student's career interest and prior experiences. The interview process does provide context that the program is a professional internship experience and is not a work release program.

Decide your district's timeline for registering for courses, and the time frame the school has for finalizing the student's schedule for the fall. The answers received will provide a timeline for providing information about the program, conducting student interviews and finalizing the list of students in the program for the counseling department so appropriate scheduling decisions can be made. During the first year of the internship program, there will probably be more recruiting by the counseling department and the work-based learning coordinator to ensure a small group of students is appropriately identified.

Throughout the first year of the internship program, provide opportunities for current internship students to talk to other students. As additional years transpire, it would be a great idea to coordinate the information of what the program entails to eighth grade students and their parents or guardians so they can effectively plan and prepare their schedules for participation during their senior year. To learn more about how other schools coordinate their registration, interview and selection process, reach out to the [Iowa Work-based Learning Coordinators](#) on their discussion platform.

## Recognizing Student and Internship Manager Accomplishments

A great way to end the year is through a recognition ceremony to acknowledge the outstanding accomplishments of the student interns and the value of the internship managers. Inviting parents and guardians to the recognition ceremony will elevate the experience to effectively showcase the students' talents and the value of the internship managers. Include other district staff to attend, such as counselors, administrators, school board members and educators. The students will beam with pride while they are recognized for their accomplishments in front of their parents or guardians. The internship managers enjoy the recognition of their time while also having the opportunity to connect with the student's parents or guardians who may provide additional praise for the experience.

The recognition ceremony can be as elaborate or simple as your district would like. If the ceremony will provide food, consider requesting a culinary class to prepare the dishes. Certificates are a simple keepsake for the student to have to commemorate their experience and to recognize the completion of the internship.

## Section 3: Preparing for Future Years

### Sharing Success with Your Stakeholders

As your district's high school internship grows in opportunities and experiences, it is crucial the successes of the program be shared with stakeholders. The stakeholders include students, parents, school administration personnel, school board members, educators, community members, industry partners and more. Sharing the program accomplishments will generate continued enthusiasm, support and investment into future opportunities. Students can provide testimonials to their experiences through in-person presentations or through articles circulated within the community. The increased communication will help educate others on the opportunities available and will help advocate for additional future industry partners and student interest. As years progress, analyze the data and trends of student participation in career pathways of interest, accomplishments and enrollments to help educate stakeholders and determine the strategies for communicating the value of participation in the high school internship program. Check to ensure the data supports the current trajectory goals of the

program and if there needs to be increased focus and advocacy on additional career paths to support the high-wage, in-demand careers students may not be aware of. Note if the industry partners in your community and surrounding communities struggling to find skilled employees where your high school internship program can help connect and communicate the valuable opportunities to students.

## Evaluating Your Program

### Gather Feedback from Students

Gathering feedback from students throughout the internship and at the conclusion of the experience are important for making appropriate programming decisions. Record observations and useful pieces of information from internship site visits such as any struggles the students experienced or comments indicating what information they wished they would have had prior to the experience. The concerns and struggles should be immediately addressed, but it may warrant a shift in future curriculum to ensure future students are better prepared.

In addition to noting observations and conversations from students to direct programming changes, a thoughtful reflection at the end of the year is also important. Ask each student prior to the end of the program term what additional preparation and supports they wish would have been provided. Request this information in a neutral environment so the student feels they can be honest and their response won't impact their grade. It might make sense to gather information through an anonymous survey to ensure student interns feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. The goal is to gather valuable feedback to ensure the program supports student learning and preparation for continued internship program success.

### Gather Feedback from Industry Partners

During internship site visits, record observations and internship manager comments to evaluate potential shifts in programming to better prepare students for their high school internship experience. Although issues should be immediately addressed, recording consistent trends will direct changes to future curriculum to ensure subsequent students are prepared and industry partners are apt to continue providing internship opportunities.

If possible, create a short survey to gather information in an anonymous platform to ensure industry partners feel comfortable providing honest feedback. Keep the survey short to improve the participation rate and focus on the information most valuable to gather. The information from the anonymous survey will assist making the appropriate curriculum changes to improve support for student preparation for future classes.

## Connecting and Sharing Learning with Colleagues and Administrators

Take the time to share successes internally and externally to help connect the value and student potential in the program. Invite content teachers, teacher leaders, counselors and administrators to visit an internship site alongside the work-based learning coordinator to be able to see the program in action and provide learning opportunities around industry partners, content connections and careers. Allowing other key individuals to witness what a high school internship experience consists of will assist in promoting the program to future students interested in participating in a high school internship program.

## Addressing Growing Demand for Your Program

As student success is recognized and more individuals are aware of the programming potential, your district may find increased student interest in the program. The district team will need to discuss the maximum number of students the current work-based learning coordinator can oversee while

maintaining proper support and oversight. For instance, consider what is the maximum sustainable level of internships your community industry partners can handle and what similar opportunities can be provided to students. Your district may decide to open up more industry partner support time blocks for the work-based learning coordinator to support additional students or add another work-based learning coordinator to support additional students or add another work-based learning coordinator. Whatever the decisions your district makes, the continued focus should be on providing quality internship experiences, not on increasing the quantity of internships at the expense of a quality experience.

## Section 4: Ongoing Professional Development & Resources

Educators recognize the value of collaboration, and the more opportunities to collaborate with others only increases the value of the education for students within your own district. Connecting with coordinators from area districts allows for great professional learning. To gain information from work-based learning coordinators outside your region and to learn the latest trends, resources and information in work-based learning, connect with professional organizations designed to support work-based learning coordinators. The following organizations may provide good connections for your high school internship programs.

### Iowa Work-Based Learning Coordinators

The [Iowa Work-Based Learning Coordinators](#) (IWBL) is a nonprofit organization in Iowa consisting of educators overseeing high school internships and other work-based learning continuum components. Each year, IWBL hosts an annual spring conference to bring work-based learning coordinators together from across the state to share best practices, collaborate and network. The valuable connections and learning made from the annual conference provide work-based learning coordinators the energy and support to improve their local programming. IWBL also has a virtual collaboration platform to allow educators to share resources and discuss how to handle current challenges in their programs.

### Association of Career and Technical Education – Work-Based Learning Division

The Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has both a state and national opportunity to connect, collaborate and learn from online content, webinars and conferences. The [Iowa Association of Career and Technical Education](#) (IACTE) allows Iowa educators to connect, collaborate and learn from other Iowa educators while the [Association of Career and Technical Education](#) (ACTE) allows a national connection. Within both the Iowa and national organization, the option to connect to the work-based learning division is offered during membership registration. The work-based learning division provides specific resources and collaboration opportunities on work-based learning for coordinators.

### Iowa Department of Education – Career-Connected Learning

### Iowa Department of Education – Work-Based Learning

The Iowa Department of Education provides resources on the [Career-Connected Learning web page](#) and can assist with the development and implementation of district high school internship programs. Specific resources for internships are available on the [Work-based Learning section of the Department website](#).



## Section 5: Appendix with Resources

### Appendix A: Program Administration

For consistency across the state and to communicate the level of programs offered to student, please note these suggested changes:

- **Program and Course Name for a Semester Experience:** Internship
- **Educator Title:** Work-Based Learning Coordinator
- **SCED Code for the Course:** If a generalized internship course covering all career pathways, 22998. For specialized career pathway SCED codes, check the [guidance for Perkins V](#).
- **Time blocked in the schedule for the coordinator to visit internship sites:** industry partner support time.

If your internship class is a year-long class offering employability skill development coursework followed by the internship experience portion, consider using the following:

- **Program and Course Name for the Entire Year:** Internship
- **Educator Title:** Work-Based Learning Coordinator
- **SCED Code for the Course:**
  - **Fall** with employability skills: 22152 (Employability Skills)
  - **Spring** with workplace experience: 22998 (If a generalized internship course covering all career pathways) For specialized career pathway SCED codes, check the [guidance for Perkins V](#).
- **Time blocked in the schedule for the coordinator to visit internship sites:** industry partner support time.

### Appendix B: Internship Terms and Definitions

**MOC** – Acronym for Multioccupations endorsement for educators overseeing the internship program for all career pathways.

**WEC** – Acronym for Work Experience Coordinator endorsement for educators providing specially designed instruction to students with IEPs in workplace settings.

**Work-Based Learning Coordinator** – Title of the educator overseeing work-based learning experiences at the industry partner site.

**Internship** – Title of the program offering students the opportunity to engage in industry projects at the partner site and skill building opportunities for an extended period of time in career paths of student interest. The extended experience includes internship site evaluations, an individualized training plan with a skill progression assessment and professional skill developing experiences.

**Industry Partner** – Community organization providing work-based learning opportunities for students.

**Internship Site** – Reference to the specific location for the student internship.

**Internship Manager** – The industry professional overseeing the internship experience for the student.

**Industry Partner Support Time** – The time built into the work-based learning coordinator’s schedule to ensure proper oversight of the program requirements and onsite support of the student and industry partner.

## Appendix C: MOC Endorsement Process and Procedure

The MOC endorsement provides the foundational skills necessary for the coordinator to prepare students for their internships.

To earn a multioccupations (MOC) endorsement:

- [Iowa State](#): Course #418 available online.
- [UNI](#): Visit their website outlining courses and contacts.

Guidelines to add to the 5-12 Multioccupations Endorsement can be found on the [Iowa Board of Educational Examiners website](#).

## Appendix D: Program Costs

- Travel reimbursement (or using the school vehicle) for site visits for the work-based learning coordinator.
  - Reasoning: Work-based learning coordinator site visits are essential for ensuring student safety and a quality experience. Since it is expected by the district, covering the costs to travel to the internship sites is important.
- The purchase of business cards for the work-based learning coordinator to provide to internship managers.
  - Reasoning: Business cards are an easy visual for internship site managers and demonstrate professionalism and ease the opportunity to connect.
- Supplemental books or materials to support classroom learning during the internship preparation.
  - Reasoning: Providing content prior to connecting students to internships will improve student performance and experience. Many resources are available online for free; however, the district may want supplemental resources to bring greater value to student learning.
- Printing documents to provide to internship partners on expectations as well as documents the district team has decided to require (unless electronic is preferred).
  - Reasoning: Although providing digital copies is increasingly accepted among industry partners, some will still prefer paper copies.

# Appendix E: Frequently Asked Questions

## Student-Based Questions

**Question:** Do all internships need to be unpaid?

**Answer:** No, not all internships need to be unpaid. Reference the guidance on internships under the Fair Labor Standards Act to understand which internships should be compensated. If the student will be compensated, reference the Fair Labor Standards Act to ensure the student is justly compensated. If the industry partner wants to provide compensation in the form of a bonus, it needs to follow De Minimis Fringe Benefits guidelines and cannot be tied to student hours.

**Question:** If a student needs to earn a wage during their internship, shouldn't I just allow the student to work hours at their part-time job?

**Answer:** This toolkit explains the valuable advantage students have through the opportunity to experience a professional internship in a career path of interest. There are paid internship opportunities, and looking for opportunities to set all students up for a successful future is important. If the student is not allowed the opportunity to build career skills and work with an industry partner to prepare for future success through an internship, the student is at a disadvantage from his or her peers.

**Question:** Can students complete their internships after school and on weekends only?

**Answer:** If the student is completing their entire internship outside of school hours, monitoring the internship site for proper safety and support will be difficult. Although certain career paths lend more hands-on experience during hours outside of the school day, to provide the proper oversight, reduce district liability and provide the mentoring and support for the student and industry partner, some of the hours need to be built in during the school day. The work-based learning coordinator can build in other essential opportunities to be learned during the school day with the industry partner. More information can be found in the first section of the toolkit under the Student Schedule section.

## Educator-Based Questions

**Question:** How should districts determine which students can participate in internship experiences?

**Answer:** All students should have access to a high school internship program. Just like a classroom, student experiences will be differentiated based on the student's career interest, prior skills, career goals and abilities. The training plan will help outline the specific goals of the student based on the factors mentioned. If student interest exceeds the availability of industry partners and the time availability of the work-based learning coordinator, then the district team will need to make appropriate decisions on how to limit the number of students in the program. More details are provided in the first section under Identifying Students for the Program.

**Question:** Does the work-based coordinator really need to connect students with internship sites if our district has the policy for students to find their own?

**Answer:** Expecting students to find their own internship sites is an unfair practice. Advocating for student internships takes knowledge of the curriculum that will prepare the student, the ability to articulate the value of the program and the abilities of the student. The role of the work-based learning coordinator should be to advocate for the internship opportunity. It is good practice for the student to interview with the industry partner in order to fully earn the internship after the student has successfully completed the mock interview. The process of connecting students to internships is outlined in the second section under Supporting Internship Partners.

**Question:** How do I handle student interests when I don't have industry options in my region?

**Answer:** Often there are more career pathways available than first recognized. Not only does every school district have a variety of career paths, but every business has a variety of roles that will deliver different career learning outcomes.

**Question:** How do I provide time for the coordinator to visit internship sites when the educator needs to teach all periods/blocks except during his or her prep time?

**Answer:** The work-based learning coordinator needs to visit the internship sites while the student is onsite to ensure student safety and to provide the necessary support for the student and industry partner. If your district is struggling to provide industry partner support time for the coordinator to fulfill the expectations of the position, review the information outlined in the first section under the Schedule heading for the work-based learning coordinator. The Schedule section provides ideas on how to provide the necessary industry partner support time for the work-based learning coordinator to fulfill the expectations of their role. You can also reach out to the [Department consultant](#) overseeing work-based learning to brainstorm different options within your district's current parameters.

**Question:** How does the district best prepare students for success with their internship program?

**Answer:** There are several approaches to best prepare students for success with their internship program. The core elements of preparing students for the internship experience include intentional curriculum and classroom learning, interview preparation through mock interviews, students interviewing for their internship placement, developing meaningful training plans to track student progress and regular onsite visits by the work-based learning coordinator. All of these essential elements are outlined in this toolkit.

**Question:** Can I recycle last year's training plan with the internship site for this year's student?

**Answer:** Although you may use a prior student's training plan as a draft to develop the current student's training plan, you should not use the same training plan every year for a particular career pathway. Training plan goals should take into consideration the student's prior learning, experiences, skills and career goals. There is not a cookie-cutter approach to training plans for every career pathway. If the work-based learning coordinator is struggling to write training plans, reach out to the network of other work-based learning coordinators through the [Iowa Work Based Learning Coordinators](#) (IWBL) forum platform.

**Question:** Do all students who require accommodations need to have a certified WEC educator to oversee student experiences?

**Answer:** No, an educator with a multioccupations endorsement is able to oversee the experiences of a student who needs accommodations. If the work-based learning coordinator with a MOC endorsement is overseeing students who need accommodations, the coordinator should collaborate with the special education instructor to ensure all accommodations and additional support are provided.

**Question:** Are CTE educators the only educators that can earn their MOC endorsement?

**Answer:** Other licensed educators may earn their MOC endorsement. Review the Board of Educational Examiner's guidelines to add the MOC endorsement to the educator's license.

