



# Teacher Internship Guide

---

**Invest**

127 South Peyton Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

(800) 221.7917

[www.InVESTprogram.org](http://www.InVESTprogram.org)

---



## Internships

---

The transition between school and the workplace is one of the most difficult rights of passage that adolescents must face. While students have responsibilities in school, schools exist for the education of students. The primary focus of teachers, administrators and the students themselves is, as it should be, on the students. The primary focus in the workplace, however, is on achieving the business goals and objectives of the company. While students will be given the opportunity to learn by exposure to the business environment and involvement in projects, learning is a by-product of the overall experience. Importantly, each student must recognize that he/she is not the sole beneficiary of an internship opportunity, as a company's experience with one student may affect the availability of future opportunities for other candidates.

### Internship Options Vary Based on Student Age

- ❖ High school students *can* get internships.
- ❖ Community college students *can* get field experience for a career from internships.
- ❖ College and graduate students *can* increase their marketability from internships, and companies may want to recruit from business schools.

### A Quick Look at Internships

Internships also are called work-study programs. Sometimes they pay a stipend; sometimes they only provide credit for coursework. In all cases, they introduce students to the workplace, and they should serve to develop a pool of young, competent talent for the industry. Internships usually are a one-time experience for the student, lasting from one month to one year. A typical college stint will consist of one semester or a summer. A high school internship may be school year or summer long. An internship should be related to the student's course of study, and students should never be considered if they are not capable of committing to excellent attendance and performance. Transportation, dress, liability exposure, parent involvement, good school preparation and interaction with employers all are preliminary issues that must be dealt with before moving forward with student placement. Invest has forms, reading materials and advisors available to help you in the process.

Internships are optimal for students in their Junior and Senior years. They allow the intern to apply classroom learning to actual career situations. Each school district may have its own regulations and mandates, so legal counsel may be of great benefit in the preparation process. The following list will help in establishing an excellent program.

## Main Considerations

- ❖ Student eligibility—age, grade, academic performance;
- ❖ Worksite liability—check state law for requirements;
- ❖ Parent involvement—approval and transportation arrangements;
- ❖ Student safety—confirm emergency procedures and worksite safety;
- ❖ Medical prerequisites—drug testing, vaccinations, handicap accessibility;
- ❖ Legal responsibilities—background checks of employer personnel, especially for one-on-one supervisors; and
- ❖ Student preparation—classroom instruction and practical responsibilities, such as dress, grooming and behavior.

## Student Responsibilities

- ❖ Maintain high level of attendance and performance at school and worksite;
- ❖ Maintain satisfactory grades and be in good standing with local high school;
- ❖ Consult work-based learning coordinator or supervising teacher, as well as the employer, about any concerns or problems;
- ❖ Attend worksite according to a signed internship-agreement form;
- ❖ Use transportation approved and/or provided by parent;
- ❖ Dress appropriately for the worksite, including all appropriate safety clothing and equipment;
- ❖ Demonstrate honesty, punctuality, cooperative attitude, proper grooming and willingness to learn;
- ❖ Conform to rules, regulations and safety standards of the training site and maintain confidentiality;
- ❖ Complete required assignments and furnish necessary information, reports and time sheets; and
- ❖ Notify employer/supervisor and work-based learning coordinator prior to absences.

## School Supervisor Responsibilities

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

## How to Get Access to Internship Opportunities

- ❖ Invite insurance professionals to be guest speakers and attend insurance organizations presentations or other industry events which showcase quality students.
- ❖ Ask your local school committee. Individuals on your committee may be able to persuade their organizations to offer internships to your students.
- ❖ Arm your team members with information on your program and students:
  - A written summary with information on your program and students;
  - A written summary of what you have done to prepare your students for an internship;
  - Skills your students have to offer, and examples of projects that your students can handle; and
  - Sample resumes for some of your students.
- ❖ Start small. Schedule field trips and/or job-shadowing days with targeted companies to demonstrate the quality of your students. Be sure to educate the students on the company before the trip (e.g., familiarize them with the company's Web site) so that they may ask informed questions.
- ❖ Start early! If you're looking for internships in June, start in September or before. Companies, especially larger ones, will take time to identify potential opportunities.
- ❖ Bargain. Interns typically are paid less than full time employees. Contact the InVEST staff for guidance. If cost is a problem, try to organize a two-week project or create an intern-share program amongst two or more companies. Exposure to the workplace, no matter how limited, may lead to further opportunities.
- ❖ Advertise to local companies and check the want ads. Many companies may not be aware of the quality employees you have to offer.

## Meeting with the Employer

Preparation is key to success. Make an excellent first impression—dress well, be punctual, present a positive demeanor. Exhibit professionalism and knowledge, as well as interest in their firm.

- ❖ Confirm all meeting arrangements
- ❖ Prepare and bring all needed materials such as:
  - Business cards;
  - Brochures; and
  - Forms and documents (see Appendix I).
- ❖ Respect employer's time
- ❖ Do not allow cell phone interruptions
- ❖ Allow time for questions and listen to concerns
- ❖ Re-emphasize benefits of participation:
  - Developing trained workforce, providing new recruits;
  - Reduce the cost of recruiting and selecting full-time employees;
  - Provide a source of temporary employees;
  - Experiment with new positions or functions without having to make long term commitments;

- Benefit from an injection of new ideas from students and academicians and stay current in a particular field;
- Enhancing skills and morale of present employees through mentoring;
- Improving the community; and
- Increase the profile of the organization in the community and at the educational institution.
- ❖ Be honest and clear about programs requirements and your expectations
- ❖ Get a commitment from the employer, and signatures where applicable

### Follow Up with Employer

- ❖ Make sure forms that need to be at worksite are sent and received
- ❖ Assess the worksite for student safety, emergency procedures, medical prerequisites
- ❖ Address legal responsibilities:
  - OSHA;
  - Child labor;
  - Discrimination;
  - Sexual harassment;
  - Background checks;
  - Develop goals and objectives for student performance;
  - Provide employer with instructions on working with youth; and
  - Supply evaluation materials.
- ❖ Check on first week and plan on time to iron out kinks
- ❖ Schedule phone calls or worksite visits to monitor program at least once a month
- ❖ Make sure student understands to meet with assigned school personnel on schedule

### How to Prepare Your Students for an Internship

- ❖ Stress that students must act as ambassadors to the program (one bad intern may equal many lost internship opportunities).
- ❖ Help students to understand the goal of an internship: gain experience, knowledge, contacts, etc. The goal is not just make money.
- ❖ Explain to students what will be expected of them at the office: promptness, completion of task in a timely manner, interest in job, high-energy, mature behavior, etc.
- ❖ Review computer, email, telephone and office etiquette (do's and don'ts).
- ❖ Let students know the importance of dressing for success.
- ❖ Work on resume building and interview workshops.
- ❖ Go over office simulation and use of software products for word processing, spreadsheet, presentations and database management (i.e. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access).