



*career*tech
WBL Work-Based Learning
Implementation Guide

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FHI 360 is an international nonprofit working to improve the health and well-being of people in the United States and around the world.

The organization partners with governments, the private sector and civil society to bring about positive social change and to provide lifesaving health care, quality education and opportunities for meaningful economic participation.

FHI 360 has graciously allowed the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education to modify their Work Based Learning Manual for use in our work-based learning efforts.

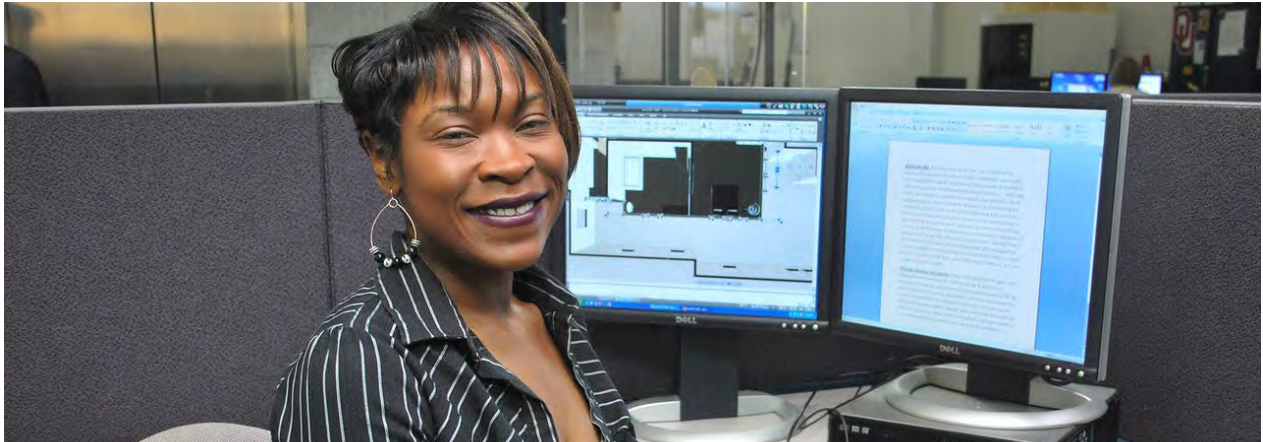


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Chapter 1: Introduction to Work-Based Learning

1.1 Overview

What Is Work-Based Learning?

Work-based learning (WBL) is **a set of instructional strategies that engages employers and schools in providing learning experiences for students**. WBL activities are structured opportunities for students to interact with employers or community partners either at school, at a worksite, or virtually, using technology to link students and employers in different locations.

The purposes of WBL are to:

- Build student awareness of potential careers
- Facilitate student exploration of career opportunities
- Begin student preparation for careers

These awareness, exploration, and preparation activities help students make informed decisions about high school course and program enrollment and about postsecondary education and training. Exposure to careers through an individual WBL activity can be beneficial, but students attain best results when WBL activities are structured and sequenced over several years.

WBL should be integrated with classroom learning to help students draw connections between coursework and future careers. Students need time and assistance to prepare for WBL activities as well as opportunities to reflect on the activities afterward.

Quality work-based learning should include the following elements:

- A sequence of experiences that begins with awareness and moves on to exploration and hands-on preparation.
- Clearly defined learning objectives related to classroom curricula.
- Alignment with students' career interests.
- Alignment with content standards and industry/occupational standards.
- Exposure to a wide range of industries and occupations.
- Collaboration between employers and educators, with clearly defined roles for each.
- Activities with a range of levels of intensity and duration.
- Intentional student preparation and opportunities for reflection.



This WBL guide has been developed by FHI360 and adapted by Oklahoma CareerTech to guide implementation of WBL activities. Before moving on to a chapter about a specific WBL activity, users should review the entire introduction. It provides information pertinent to all WBL activities, which will enable district or school staff members to implement WBL activities in a broader, well-planned context.

1.2 How to Use This Manual

The *CareerTech Work-Based Learning Implementation Guide* is a how-to guide with suggestions and tools for planning and implementing specific WBL activities. While district or school priorities for implementing WBL may vary, as will the variety of local employers with which to partner, the manual provides information that will help in implementing each activity in the context of the complete WBL continuum.

This *Introduction* provides:

- An overview of WBL activities
- Their benefits to students, schools, and employers
- The skills to be developed through WBL
- Suggestions for planning the overall WBL program
- Important steps for implementing WBL activities

- Guidance for the critical tasks of managing collaboration with the wide range of essential stakeholders, especially employers

Each of the other chapters provides more detailed information about a specific WBL activity: ideas on which stakeholders to engage; a suggested implementation timeline; resource templates and tools; and links for more information. In addition, each WBL activity chapter provides ideas for student preparation as well as suggestions for employer preparation. The timelines and tools in the manual are suggested best practices that should be adapted to suit the specific needs of the participating schools and employers. For example, what works well in a larger, urban district may need to be scaled down to fit more rural communities that have fewer employers spread across greater distances.

1.3 Benefits of Work-Based Learning

Well-planned WBL programs benefit all participants in multiple ways.

Benefits to students:

- Build relationships with adult role models other than families, friends, and teachers.
- Acquire experience and workplace skills.
- Set and pursue individual career goals based on workplace experiences.
- Engage parents in career planning.
- Get a “foot in the door” for possible future part-time, summer, or eventual full-time jobs.
- Become aware of career opportunities, explore those of interest, and start preparing for them.
- Build understanding of skills required to succeed in the workplace.
- Recognize the relevance of education to career success and increase motivation for academic success.



Benefits to schools:

- Build relationships with the community.
- Make classroom learning more relevant.
- Enable students to share their experiences with peers and teachers.
- Provide staff development opportunities.

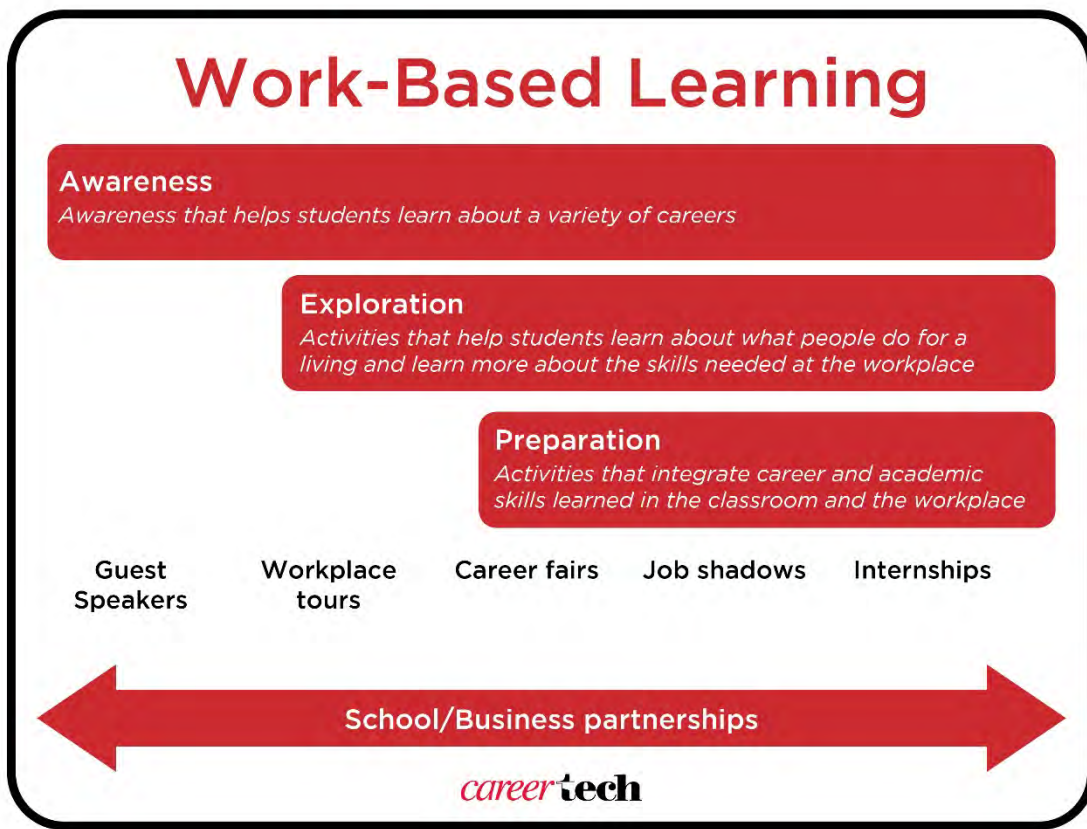
- Increase staff understanding of the workplaces for which they are preparing students.
- Expand curricula by using workplaces as learning environments.

Benefits to employers:

- Build positive relationships with school staff and students.
- Help create a pool of better-prepared and motivated potential employees.
- Strengthen employees’ supervisory and leadership skills.
- Improve employee retention and morale.
- Learn about the knowledge and skills of today’s students and tomorrow’s employees.
- Generate favorable visibility in the community.
- Derive value from student work.
- Make contacts with potential candidates for part-time, summer, or eventual full-time jobs.

1.4 Work-Based Learning Continuum

The WBL continuum is a sequence of activities that starts with low-intensity experiences that begin to engage students in thinking about careers and gradually progresses into more in-depth, intensive experiences that include opportunities for hands-on learning. WBL also



includes expanding teachers' knowledge of the employers in their region and the careers that might be available to their students.

Career Awareness

Career awareness activities help students learn about a variety of careers, the education and training required for those careers, and the typical pathways for career entry and advancement. Career awareness activities expose students to a wide range of occupations in the private, public, and non-profit sectors.

Career awareness activities generally have the following characteristics:

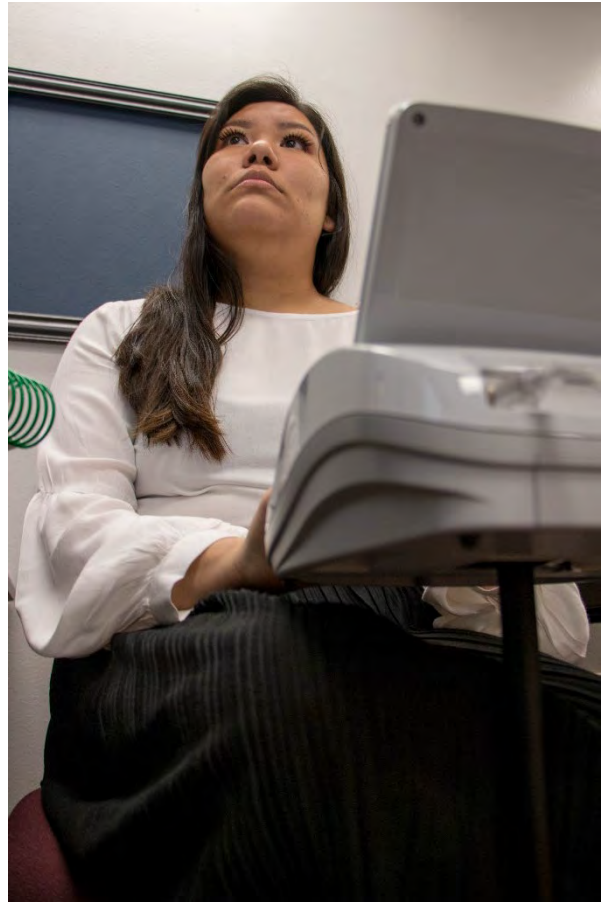
- Industry or community partners provide a learning experience for students, usually in groups.
- The activity is designed and shaped by educators and employer partners to broaden students' knowledge by introducing a wide range of careers and occupations.
- The activity provides information about the types of careers available, the people in them and what they do, and the education and training required for those careers.
- Students learn about appropriate workplace behaviors.
- Students have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and begin to identify interests for further exploration.
- Students in the middle and high school grades may all benefit from career awareness activities, providing they are tailored to the specific grade level.

Career awareness activities might include:

- Guest speakers (Chapter 2)
- Workplace tours (Chapter 3)
- Career fairs (Chapter 4)

Career Exploration

Career exploration activities help students learn about the skills needed for specific careers by observing and interacting with employees in the workplace. As a next step after career



awareness, career exploration activities are usually more focused on specific careers in which students are interested.

Career exploration activities generally have the following characteristics:

- Students interact one-on-one with employees in a specific industry or occupation.
- They are usually one-time or one-day events.
- Students play active roles in selecting and shaping the activities, based on their individual interests.
- Students have opportunities for deeper analysis and reflection to help refine their choices about future education and training.
- They are best suited to high school students.

Career exploration activities might include:

- Informational interviews (Chapter 5)
- Job shadows (Chapter 6)

Career Preparation

The emphasis is on building employability and work readiness skills and on understanding applications of school-based learning to specific careers

Career preparation activities integrate career and academic skills acquired in the classroom with skills and knowledge acquired in the workplace. The emphasis is on building employability and work readiness skills and on understanding applications of school-based learning to specific careers. Many students use these activities to help make decisions about future education and training options.

Career preparation activities generally have the following characteristics:

- They build on the interests developed in career awareness and exploration activities by providing more in-depth, hands-on experiences.
- Students interact one-on-one with employees in a specific occupation or industry over an extended period of time.
- Students engage in activities that have career development value beyond success in school.
- Both students and employers benefit from the experience.
- Student performance is evaluated by employers.
- The activities are connected to the academic and career/technical curricula.
- They are of sufficient duration and depth to enable students to develop and demonstrate specific knowledge and skills and to make further education and career planning decisions.
- They are applicable to multiple postsecondary education and career options.

- They are most suitable for high school students, typically in the 10th to 12th grades, because they help inform both short- and longer-term decisions about career choice, course selection, and planning for postsecondary education.



Apprenticeships

Youth Apprenticeship allows high school juniors and seniors to combine academic instruction and on-the-job training for elective credit. **Postsecondary**

Apprenticeships provide on-the-job training and classroom instruction, sometimes for college credit. **Registered Apprenticeship** is a structured education and training program that combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction. Apprentices are full-time, paid employees who receive instruction and mentoring from skilled workers. Apprentices are trained to the employer’s standards using the employer’s equipment and protocols. Upon completion of the program, apprentices receive a nationally recognized credential.

There are several other types of learning-by-doing career preparation activities which are not addressed in this manual. Users may wish to investigate alternatives such as school-based enterprises (e.g., student-run businesses), service learning (e.g., using volunteer projects as simulated workplaces), or cooperative education (e.g., combining part-time or alternating periods of school and work). These options are beyond the scope of this manual and offer quite similar experiences to the internships addressed in Chapter 7.

Work-Based Learning for Teachers

Students and employers are not the only ones who can benefit from WBL. Participating in WBL activities can improve teachers’, counselors’, and administrators’ capacity to guide students’ career development work by bringing actual work experiences into classrooms, counseling settings, and the larger school community. WBL for teachers, for example, can be used for curriculum development and for integrating work-related concepts and experiences into instruction.

Teacher WBL activities generally have the following characteristics:

- They expand teachers’ knowledge of the careers in which their students are interested.
- They familiarize teachers with the skills and education required for specific careers.
- They connect teachers with employers for either short-term or extended interactions in the workplace.

- They include opportunities for teachers to reflect on their experiences and determine how they will apply what they learn in their classrooms.
- Sometimes they enable participating teachers to earn continuing education or graduate credits.

Teacher WBL activities may include:

- Teacher workplace tours (Chapter 8)
- Teacher externships (Chapter 9)

Skills Developed Through Work-Based Learning

One of the purposes of WBL is to help students develop skills and behaviors that are essential to success in every workplace. The following chart presents a typology of workplace skills. It is reprinted, with permission, from *A Work-Based Learning Strategy: Career Practicum* by ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Careers. Many states and school districts have incorporated versions of these workplace skills into their standards for learning.

When implementing WBL activities, it is important to build in opportunities for students to develop these skills and to work with employer partners to ensure that they address them in their work with students.

Category	Student Learning Outcome
	Student...
Collaboration and Teamwork	Builds effective collaborative working relationships with colleagues and customers; is able to work with diverse teams, contributing appropriately to the team effort; negotiates and manages conflict; learns from and works collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, ethnicities, ages, gender, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints; and uses technology to support collaboration.
Communication	Comprehends verbal, written, and visual information and instructions; listens effectively; observes non-verbal communication; articulates and presents ideas and information clearly and effectively both verbally and in written form; and uses technology appropriately for communication.
Creativity and Innovation	Demonstrates originality and inventiveness in work; communicates new ideas to others; and integrates knowledge across different disciplines.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Demonstrates the following critical-thinking and problem-solving skills: exercises sound reasoning and analytical thinking; makes judgments and explains perspectives based on evidence and previous findings; and uses knowledge, facts, and data to solve problems.

Category	Student Learning Outcome
Information Management	Is open to learning and demonstrates the following information-gathering skills: seeks out and locates information; understands and organizes information; evaluates information for quality of content, validity, credibility, and relevance; and references sources of information appropriately.
Initiative and Self-Direction	Takes initiative and is able to work independently as needed; looks for the means to solve problems; actively seeks out new knowledge and skills; monitors his/her own learning needs; learns from his/her mistakes; and seeks information about related career options and postsecondary training.
Professionalism and Ethics	Manages time effectively; is punctual; takes responsibility; prioritizes tasks; brings tasks and projects to completion; demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior; and acts responsibly with others in mind.
Quantitative Reasoning	Uses math and quantitative reasoning to describe, analyze, and solve problems; performs basic mathematical computations quickly and accurately; and understands how to use math and/or data to develop possible solutions.
Technology	Selects and uses appropriate technology to accomplish tasks; applies technology skills to problem solving; uses standard technologies easily; and is able to access information quickly from reliable sources online.
Workplace Context and Culture	Understands the workplace's culture, etiquette, and practices; knows how to navigate the organization; understands how to build, utilize, and maintain a professional network of relationships; and understands the role such a network plays in personal and professional success.

1.5 How to Develop a Work-Based Learning Plan

A robust WBL program has many moving parts: scheduling multiple WBL activities for students from multiple schools; recruiting employers to participate in multiple WBL activities; coordinating with school schedules; matching up students with employers according to students' career interests and employer expectations; managing the logistical details of WBL activity implementation; ensuring that both students and employers are well-prepared for each WBL activity, providing for post-activity reflection and evaluation; and capturing lessons learned from implementation that can be used for continuous improvement. Without a good overall plan, too many critical tasks can slip through the cracks, it is harder for school staff to integrate WBL activities into the classroom curriculum, and employers could be bombarded with multiple, fragmented – and eventually unwelcome – requests for participation in WBL activities. While the how-to description below is designed to help districts and schools of all sizes, a more abbreviated approach may be more suitable in smaller, more rural regions.

The WBL coordinator should begin by convening key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive WBL plan.

The WBL coordinator (and other district or school staff) should begin by convening key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive WBL plan that will:

- **Provide a framework and context** for all WBL activities.
- **Engage key education and employer stakeholders** to gain their support and ensure that WBL activities can be carried out efficiently and effectively.
- **Lay out a schedule** of which WBL activities will be implemented for which students/schools at what point in the year.
- **Identify resources** (human and financial) that will be needed and how they will be obtained.
- **Set priorities** for making the inevitable trade-offs required by resource limitations.
- **Define roles and responsibilities** for those involved in implementation.
- **Define how WBL activities will complement classroom curricula** and be integrated into academic learning.

In addition to serving as a framework for organizing the work of WBL coordinators and other district or school staff, the WBL planning process is an opportunity to enlist the support of those most critical to implementation of individual WBL activities. The plan will also define the costs associated with specific WBL activities (typically transportation to workplaces, substitute teachers, facility and food costs for career/college fairs, and staffing to provide support and supervision for activities that are implemented in the summer) with enough lead time to enable staff to develop strategies for securing the necessary budget resources. The planning process also provides a context for setting overall WBL priorities for a district or school.



There may already be a WBL plan in place. In that case, the WBL coordinator should determine how it should be updated, strengthened, or otherwise revised. If a plan is in place, staff should identify employers that have participated in WBL activities in the past and assess the nature and quality of their previous involvement. Key stakeholders should be involved in any revisions so that their support for the plan is assured. WBL coordinators may find it necessary to meet immediate demands for WBL activities concurrently with developing a more comprehensive plan.

The first step in developing a WBL plan is to recruit a committee of stakeholders to engage as partners in the planning process. The following stakeholder partners are critical:

- District and school administrators (including career and technical education [CTE] administrators)
- Major employers and employer associations (e.g., chambers of commerce)
- Relevant local, regional, and state agencies (e.g., workforce development boards, economic development agencies, and state departments of labor and/or commerce)
- Counselors
- Career advisors
- Teachers
- Postsecondary representatives (from two- and four-year colleges and universities, technology centers and other technical schools, certificate or licensure programs, and apprenticeships)
- CTE program business and industry councils

Note: Workforce development boards (WDBs), sometimes called workforce boards or workforce investment boards (WIBs), coordinate workforce development resources at the state, regional, and/or local levels, develop strategic plans, and establish funding priorities. More than 50 percent of each WDB’s members must come from the business community. For further information, visit the [National Association of Workforce Boards](#).

Parents and students (and perhaps young alumni) should also be involved in the planning process, but it may make more sense to obtain their perspectives through focus groups early in the process rather than to ask them to attend a series of meetings where only parts of the discussion will be of interest.

Recruitment of employer representatives should be focused on individuals who can provide a broad range of diverse employer perspectives and can devote the necessary time. Certainly, the largest employers in the region should be asked to participate, but recruitment of employer representatives should probably focus on employer associations like chambers of commerce, other industry or trade associations (e.g., manufacturers association or home builders association) and service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions). These associations and clubs can provide their members’ perspectives, and they also can be valuable partners for recruiting their members to participate in WBL activities.

Representatives from local governments, regional workforce development



The WBL coordinator should design the planning process in such a way that there are as few meetings as possible, and most of the work is done by staff between meetings.

boards, economic development agencies, non-profit organizations, and state departments of labor or commerce can also offer knowledge and expertise to the planning process. There may be smaller employers that are willing to engage in the planning process, but staff should try to limit the inconvenience of doing so; it might be easier for them to meet once (or have a telephone conversation/interview) with a staff member to provide their perspectives on the WBL plan than to

attend a series of meetings.

The WBL coordinator should design the planning process in such a way that there are as few meetings as possible, and most of the work is done by staff between meetings. For example, a kick-off meeting might be devoted to introducing WBL objectives and activities, reviewing any previous WBL activities in the district, describing how WBL activities benefit all participants, and asking each partner to share perspectives on the value of WBL and the practical considerations the plan should address. A second meeting might be scheduled to review a staff-prepared draft plan and identify gaps or any revisions that might be needed. This draft plan could be circulated more widely to enable other stakeholders, such as principals, to comment before the plan is finalized. A third and final meeting would approve the plan and focus on how each partner can help in implementation.

The WBL coordinator should determine what will be the most useful format for a WBL plan. It may be as simple as a calendar with a weekly or monthly listing of which WBL activities are planned for which students and which employers. A more elaborate narrative document might be useful in building awareness of WBL and in recruiting employers for specific WBL activities, but it is not essential that such information be in the plan itself.

A summary of the plan should be made widely available to as many stakeholders as possible so that they know what to expect. It may also be used as a tool for engaging media interest in WBL.

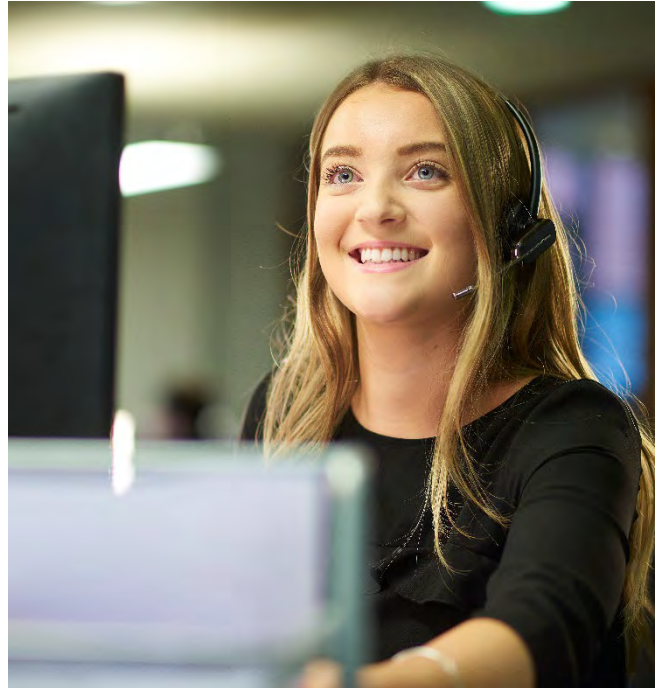
1.6 How to Implement Work-Based Learning Activities

There is no single right way to implement WBL activities, and the responsibility for doing so may rest with a variety of individuals. This manual is intended to help anyone responsible for implementing a WBL program: counselors; career advisors; school administrators; teachers; or other district and school staff members. The term **WBL coordinator** is used throughout the manual to refer to the individual responsible for coordinating a WBL activity and serving as a single point of contact for employers. Typically, the WBL coordinator acts as a liaison between employers and educators and ensures that each aspect of the WBL activity is implemented successfully. Depending on the specific WBL activity and context, school site responsibilities may rest with counselors, career advisors, teachers, or administrators.

When introducing WBL activities to a community or region, it is wise to start with those that are easiest to implement successfully — particularly those in which employers are most likely to participate. A good strategy might be to start with WBL activities like guest speakers, workplace tours, or informational interviews that afford employers the opportunity to interact with students with minimal risk and a very modest commitment of time. Positive early experiences may lead to employer willingness to engage in WBL activities requiring a higher level of engagement, such as job shadows or internships.

The key stakeholders required for implementing WBL activities will almost always include the following:

- Employers
- District and school administrators
- Career advisors
- Counselors
- Teachers
- Students
- Parents
- Local or regional CTE staff



The following stakeholders may also be included:

- Postsecondary representatives
- Employer associations such as chambers of commerce, other industry or trade associations, service clubs, and economic development organizations
- Regional workforce development boards
- State departments of labor or commerce

Implementation of a specific WBL activity usually includes the following steps:

1. **Identify the stakeholders** needed to assist with the specific WBL activity.
2. **Collect information on students' career interests** to help target employer recruitment.
3. **Recruit stakeholders** to participate in the WBL activity. This step can take substantial time; an early start will help significantly.
4. **Keep all participating stakeholders informed** at each stage of implementation.
5. **For WBL activities that take place in the summer (e.g., student internships and teacher externships), the district or school may need to budget** for related staffing and logistical costs and ensure appropriate staffing throughout implementation.
6. **Prepare students, employers, and other participants for the WBL activity.** Ensure that everyone involved understands – and accepts – his or her responsibilities.

7. **Carry out the WBL activity.** Document it with photos, attendance lists, or other appropriate means.
8. **Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect** on what they learned and how they can apply it to subsequent career development and academic work.
9. **Obtain evaluations of the WBL activity** from students and employers; these should be used for continuous improvement of the WBL program.
10. **Extend thanks and provide recognition** to participating stakeholders, especially employers.

More detailed information, including suggestions for implementation, timelines, and resource materials can be found in each WBL activity chapter.

Managing Stakeholders

When implementing WBL activities, each stakeholder needs to understand the purpose of the activity, the benefits of participating, his or her specific role, the time line for implementation, and the resources that will support implementation. This means that the WBL coordinator will need to keep track of every interaction with each stakeholder to make sure that the right information gets to the right party at the right time. Efficient tracking of stakeholder contacts and the roles and responsibilities each assumes are crucial to success. A WBL database that tracks school staff and employer contacts will prove to be a vital asset for managing WBL activities. A sample WBL database template is provided in the *Resources* section of this introduction.

The WBL database should be created by the district or school staff member who will be responsible for entering and managing the information; frequent and consistent updating will be required. The WBL database not only tracks specific contact information and tasks related to individual WBL activities; it can also be used to track participation of schools and employers over time. As more WBL activities are implemented and staff changes occur, new staff members can use the database to ensure consistency and continuity.

Engaging a wide range of employers in multiple WBL activities every year is critical to the very existence of WBL programs, let alone their success. WBL coordinators have no more important task, and they probably do not have a more challenging one.

The WBL database should be designed to be accessible to the WBL coordinator and other stakeholders such as school-based staff, who may need access to carry out their responsibilities. This can be accomplished by saving the document to an intranet or by using online services or “cloud” tools.

Employer Engagement and Communication

Engaging a wide range of employers in multiple WBL activities every year is critical to the very existence of WBL programs, let alone their success. WBL coordinators have no more important task, and they probably do not have a more challenging one. The more effectively coordinators engage with employers from the outset, the easier it becomes to plan and implement the full range of WBL activities.

Employer engagement should take place on at least two levels: (1) broad awareness in the community about the role of WBL in preparing students for careers and (2) recruitment of specific employers to participate in one or more WBL activities. The WBL coordinator will need to build an extensive network of employer contacts (starting with the participants in the planning process described

earlier in this introduction and/or with employers that may have participated in WBL activities in the past) that can be used to plan and implement specific WBL activities. These contact networks should be managed and maintained using the WBL database described above. Communications with employers should be succinct, informative, and tailored to the recipients' needs and organizational cultures. Whenever possible, communications should build on employers' previous WBL involvement. Because WBL is not a one-time initiative, special efforts should be made to retain employers as WBL participants year after year.

Broad Awareness in the Community and Among Employers

General community awareness of the role of WBL in helping students set and pursue education and career goals is the foundation on which all employer engagement is built. It is much easier to engage an employer in conversation about hosting a job shadow, for example, if the conversation does not have to start with explaining what WBL is all about, why it is important for students, and how it can benefit employers.

The audiences for WBL awareness outreach are much broader than the more targeted audience for recruiting hosts for internships in a specific occupation, for example, because awareness and word of mouth are powerful recruitment tools. The WBL coordinator should think broadly about how to reach all kinds of employers, not only in the business sector but also in the public and non-profit sectors and among the self-employed. There are many ways to reach employer audiences, both directly and indirectly, with general information about WBL that can pave the



way for successful recruitment of employers to participate in specific WBL activities. Some useful ways to build awareness include:

- **Contact employer associations** such as chambers of commerce, other industry or trade associations, and service clubs to request opportunities to speak about WBL at one of their meetings. Be sure to collect contact information for those in attendance and add it to the WBL database.
- **Develop contacts and share information about WBL** with economic development agencies, postsecondary institutions, workforce development boards, community-based organizations, non-profits such as United Way, and state departments of labor or commerce.
- **Send information about WBL home to parents** who, in addition to being advocates for their children’s education and career development, may be employers or employees who can participate in WBL activities.
- **Tap into the personal networks of district and school staff** to learn who can open which employer doors for the WBL coordinator.
- **Contact local media outlets** (print, radio, television, and school) to interest them in feature stories, appearances on talk shows, or coverage of WBL activities.
- **Consider publishing a periodic electronic WBL newsletter** with highlights of recent and upcoming WBL activities, including photos and quotes from participants. Include information on how to get involved in future WBL activities. The distribution list may include the full WBL database, but the frequency and length of the newsletter should be limited so that its arrival is welcomed.

It is worth remembering that WBL may not have been part of the high school experience of most adults in the community. The information you provide may be new to them and therefore especially interesting. In all of these awareness activities, the benefits of participation for students, school, and employers should be highlighted.



Targeted Recruitment of Employers for Work-Based Learning Participation

Outreach to employers to request participation in one or more WBL activities should usually be targeted to those that offer careers about which at least some students (and teachers) have expressed interest in learning. If approaching an employer that has never participated in WBL, it is a good idea to start with

an activity that is easiest for the employer (e.g., guest speakers or workplace tours) and build on a favorable experience by later requesting a more challenging form of participation.

Each request should be tailored to the recipient, using information about the employer that has been researched and recorded in the database, and may offer a menu of choices of WBL activities. For example, asking a veterinarian with a solo practice to spend a whole day at a college and career fair, including preparing an exhibit, is probably not realistic, but asking them to speak to a class or host a job shadow might be more likely to elicit a favorable response. Similarly, recruiting employers in seasonal industries (e.g., agriculture, tourism, or construction trades) should focus on their off-peak seasons when they are more likely to be able to devote some time to a WBL activity.

Every request should include enough specific information to enable the recipient to determine if it is even feasible to consider a positive response. If a request is declined, the WBL coordinator should be prepared to offer an alternative WBL opportunity that better fits the employer's schedule or ability to engage with students.

In the early stages of implementing WBL, it may be necessary to conduct research to identify what employers exist in the local area, what industries they represent, and how many employees they have. Local and regional chambers of commerce and other industry or trade associations can be helpful resources, as can service clubs, economic development agencies, workforce development boards, and state departments of labor or commerce. The WBL coordinator should not overlook public sector employers such as school systems, colleges and technology centers, and state and local agencies (e.g., emergency services, law enforcement, and human services). It may take a little more digging to identify small business owners and solo practitioners in occupations such as the building trades, design, health care, accounting, or the arts and to find ways to engage them in WBL activities that are not so time-consuming that they compromise their abilities to earn a living. This kind of research about employers might be an excellent school activity for a career readiness class, CTE class, state history and current affairs class, or another appropriate class. Students will acquire a great deal of career information by conducting this research and sharing their findings with classmates.

The WBL coordinator should make it a priority to identify and cultivate relationships with the largest local employers and those that offer careers in occupations of greatest interest to students. These are the “make-or-break” employers for the local WBL program.

The WBL coordinator should make it a priority to identify and cultivate relationships with the largest local employers and those that offer careers in occupations of greatest interest to students. These are the “make-or-break” employers for the local WBL program. The coordinator should identify the right contact within each organization (perhaps in human resources) and request an opportunity to acquaint him/her with the full range of WBL activities



to determine which provide the right fit between student interests and the employer's ability to accommodate them.

Ideally, the employer and the coordinator could agree on a plan for participation in a variety of WBL activities at different times of the year. Such a plan would enable the coordinator to make specific requests in the context of an agreed-upon framework. Multiple, unconnected, and unexpected requests from multiple sources for WBL participation risk turning off the employer's enthusiasm for WBL and conveying the impression that local WBL efforts are disorganized and inefficient. Instead, the WBL coordinator should use an "account management" approach and serve as a single point of contact for all communication with these high-priority employers (even if it is necessary to hand off some coordination responsibility for specific activities led by school-based staff). If managed effectively, these employers can become champions for WBL by helping recruit additional employers

that are harder to reach. Over time, consistent use of the WBL database will facilitate an account management approach to coordination of WBL participation by every employer, which will, in turn, minimize intrusion into their routines and make it easier for them to say "yes" to WBL invitations.

Communicating with Employers

WBL coordinators will need to find a balance between the desire to keep employers informed and engaged in WBL and the risk of over-communicating and making employers feel like they are being bombarded by too many calls and emails that are not of specific value or interest to them. Following a few simple principles can help avoid this outcome:

- Coordinators should communicate only as frequently as necessary to get the job done.
- Clearly state the purpose of each communication, and its utility to the recipient.
- Use the least intrusive method that can accomplish the task (e.g., call vs. meeting, email vs. call).

Like most people, employers are busy and appreciate it when others show respect for their time. For communications about specific WBL activities, the coordinator should be prepared for

every call or meeting, having researched the company and its prior WBL experiences and prepared a list of all topics to be covered. WBL coordinators should be clear about what is requested and when, why it is important, how students and the employer will benefit, and how and when the WBL coordinator will be in touch as implementation unfolds. Making sure the employer understands and accepts the responsibilities involved in participating in a specific WBL activity is the best way to avoid unpleasant surprises and ensure that implementation goes smoothly.

Employers whose initial experience with WBL is positive are much more likely to participate again, participate in the more challenging WBL activities, and to recruit their peers in their own organizations and others to participate in WBL.

Employer Retention

Every business knows that it is easier and less costly to generate repeat business from existing customers than it is to acquire new ones. The same is true for employer participation in WBL programs. Employers whose initial experience with WBL is positive are much more likely to participate again, participate in the more challenging WBL activities, and to recruit their peers in their own organizations and others to participate in WBL. Key factors in employer retention include:

- Communicating clearly and concisely before, during, and after the activity.
- Ensuring that employers' expectations for how the WBL activity will be implemented are met (i.e., no surprises.)
- Making certain that students are well-prepared to make the experience a positive one for the employer.
- Soliciting feedback that can be used to improve future WBL activities.
- Providing appropriate feedback, appreciation, and recognition.

In larger communities, an annual recognition event for all the employers who have taken part in WBL may be feasible. Other means of recognition may be more appropriate in rural areas. Over time, the WBL coordinator should check in at least annually with the employers that have been most active in WBL to ask for their thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of the local WBL programs and learn whether they have had continuing contact with students they met through WBL participation (e.g., summer jobs, part-time work, or full-time employment after postsecondary education). Learning about some success stories can be very helpful in recruiting additional employers to participate in WBL activities. Conversely, learning from employers about any negative experiences can help in identifying changes that may be needed to ensure that future WBL activities lead to more positive experiences.

1.7 Resources

The most important resource for managing all the moving parts of a comprehensive WBL plan is the WBL database described earlier. A sample Excel template is provided here, but the design can be adapted to local needs, resources, and preferences. The WBL database may range from

a simple spreadsheet to a more sophisticated information management database. The more schools and employers there are to track, the more an investment in the time it takes to set up a WBL database, using readily available software, will pay off in the long run. With a comprehensive WBL database, the WBL coordinator can generate reports on WBL contacts and participation at a specific school or employer or a list of WBL activities planned for the coming month, for example.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Work-Based Learning (PDF)
WBL Database (XLS)



Chapter 2: Guest Speakers

2.1 Overview

What Are Guest Speaker Visits?

Guest speaker visits are typically early career awareness activities, at least in part because they involve less student preparation and easier employer recruitment than some other forms of WBL. They are also well-suited to be younger students' first introduction to WBL and build awareness in many students at one time. Guest speakers can enhance the relevance of classroom learning and broaden student awareness of potential careers and the education and training required to enter them.

Recruiting employers to be guest speakers can be a first step toward lasting partnerships, often resulting in employer participation in additional speaking engagements or other WBL activities. Guest speakers may also be invited from colleges to help build awareness of the kinds of programs they offer, application requirements, costs and financial aid, and what it is like to be a college student.

Recruiting employers to be guest speakers can be a first step toward lasting partnerships.

Which Students Attend Presentations by Guest Speakers?

Guest speakers are suitable for all grade levels, because the content of presentations can be tailored to the students. For students in the middle grades and early high school, guest speakers are typically asked to talk broadly about their industries, organizations, and careers. In the later years of high school, guest speakers can provide more in-depth information about specific careers and the education and training required for them, as well as how classroom learning can be applied to real-world careers. Often, a presentation can be replicated with different classes or modified for use in other grade levels

How Are Guest Speaker Visits Structured?

Guest speakers typically address one classroom of students for about one hour or one class period, but they can extend longer and expand the student audience, perhaps using the school auditorium or gym to combine several classes. Another option is for a panel of speakers from different employers in similar industries to provide multiple perspectives in one visit. While each speaking engagement should be tailored to students' interests, host teacher expectations, and employer preferences, a sample outline for a presentation is provided below:

- Introduction of guest speaker (or panel)
- Description of the careers available in the industry and organization (perhaps using labor market data or other local information) and what kinds of work employees in those careers do
- Introduction to the skills, education, and preparation required for such careers
- Description of guest speaker's personal education and career path
- Discussion of typical compensation and benefit packages for entry-level and more senior positions
- Question and answer period



WBL coordinators should map out a series of guest speaker visits to expose students to a range of industries or occupations during the academic year. The topics should reflect students' interests and be timed to align with the school's curricula. Knowing ahead of time when representatives of specific industries/occupations should be scheduled for guest speaker appearances makes it easier to target which employers to invite and to time the requests. WBL coordinators should review the Introduction to this manual for more information on employer recruitment.

2.2 How to Implement Guest Speaker Visits

Successful guest speaker activities require collaboration, communication, and preparation by several stakeholders. The process involves preparing students to be ready to learn and participate in the activity, helping teachers work with students to get the most from the experience, and preparing the speakers to be able to communicate effectively with students, anticipate the questions they are likely to be asked, and learn about the next generation of potential employees.

The work entailed in organizing a guest speaker visit (or speaker series) can extend over a period of months. As noted in the Introduction section, the following steps should be followed when organizing a guest speaker visit:

1. Identify the stakeholders needed to assist with implementing guest speaker visits. Typically, these will be school-based staff and employers.
2. Secure agreement from school administrators and teachers to assist in hosting guest speakers. Solicit their preferences for scheduling and for the classes and grade levels that will make up the student audiences.
3. Collect information on students' career interests. This may be done by teachers, counselors, or career advisors.
4. Based on students' interests, identify employers to ask to provide guest speakers. Employer recruitment can take time, so start early.
5. Prepare students for the guest speaker.
6. Prepare the speaker.
7. Conduct the guest speaker visit. Document it with photos, as appropriate.
8. Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect.
9. Obtain evaluations from students and the speaker.
10. Thank the guest speaker and school hosts. Give recognition to all participating stakeholders.



The following section provides more detailed descriptions of steps that should be taken to implement a well-organized guest speaker series. These steps are presented in the form of a timeline, starting months before the actual event. Some steps in the timeline will not apply to classes of adult students. The timeline is flexible and can be condensed, but proper student and employer preparation is important.

2.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the Introduction, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to the guest speaker series.



The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see Introduction), if there is one, to ensure that the scheduling of guest speakers from specific employers for students from a particular school is coordinated with the implementation of other WBL activities planned for that employer or that school. Both the employers and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for guest speakers in that larger context.

While the steps for implementing a guest speaker series are more straightforward and less time-consuming than for some other WBL activities, it is important to get a schedule in place early in the school year. Once the target speaker topics and approximate dates are known, the WBL coordinator can recruit the speakers and get the events on their schedules well ahead of time. The more detailed preparation tasks, such as working with the speakers on the content of their presentations, can be completed with shorter lead times.

Note: The WBL coordinator is assumed to be responsible for completing or assigning the tasks described below, except as noted otherwise.

Early in the school year

- Reach out to school administrators and teachers to enlist their participation in scheduling a series of guest speakers (or a single visit).
- Working with teachers and counselors, collect information on students' career interests and teachers' ideas on careers that relate most closely to the curricula.
- Map out potential guest speaker topics and a tentative schedule. Identify presentation topics by week or month during the year. Be sure to include as wide a range of employer types as possible. Specifying the date and time of the presentation (e.g., third period, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) can assist when recruiting speakers, although it is best to offer a few scheduling options for each potential speaker.
- Find out school policies and procedures for visitors.

Three months before the guest speaker visit

Note: These steps can be completed early in the school year for the full calendar of speaker appearances or on a rolling basis for speaker slots in the coming months.

- Review the employer outreach information in the Introduction to this manual.

- Using the WBL database and other resources, identify employers or occupations in the local area that align with student interests and school curricula. In rural areas with few employers, matching student interests with speaker candidates may be especially challenging.
- Begin outreach to targeted employers based on the presentation topics. Sample communications for employer recruitment can be found in the Resources section. Be as specific as possible about what is requested and what is expected of guest speakers. Make it as easy as possible for the employer to say “yes.”
- Follow up on introductory invitations with phone calls, as needed. Use the WBL database to identify past guest speakers or other employers who may reinforce the invitation with a peer-to-peer communication such as the one provided in the Resources section.
- As responses come in, confirm the dates and topics and communicate the confirmations to the schools and the speakers.
- Continue speaker recruitment, as needed, until all the targeted slots are filled.

Be as specific as possible about what is requested and what is expected of guest speakers. Make it as easy as possible for the employer to say “yes.”

One month before the guest speaker visit

- Reconfirm the speaker engagement, especially if the initial scheduling was done earlier in the school year.
- Start preparing the speaker.
- Schedule a 15- to 20-minute phone call or in-person meeting to discuss arrangements for the presentation. See the Resources section for a useful checklist to use for employer preparation.
- Familiarize the speaker with their audience and its level of knowledge: number of students, grade and class, students’ career interests, curricula that pertain to speaker’s industry/occupation, etc.
- Discuss how to target a presentation to a student audience, with particular attention to the kinds of questions students will ask. (Example: Students will usually ask what the speaker earns; knowing that enables him or her to decide how to answer.)
- Suggest ways the presentation can be made lively and interesting through use of technology or visual aids. Use examples from previous well-received guest speakers.
- Ask the speaker for a bio and get permission to share it with the students.
- Ask the speaker to send the presentation in advance, if possible, so that you can help him or her do any fine-tuning that may be needed to engage the student audience.
- Advise the speaker of any school-required visitor or security procedures.
- Ask the speaker to specify any needs for audiovisual or other equipment and make sure the school can accommodate the request(s).
- Obtain permission to photograph or record the speaker, if desired.

- Teachers/counselors/career advisors: Introduce students to
 - Strategies for listening, taking notes, and asking questions.
 - The speaker’s industry/employer/occupation.
 - Other curricular materials that may be relevant to the speaker’s occupation.

One week before the guest speaker visit

- Reconfirm the date, time, and location with the guest speaker by phone or email. Offer to answer questions. Provide directions to the school and parking information, along with an emergency contact in case the speaker is delayed or lost. Include instructions for entering the school and reporting to the main office. Offer to print any handouts the speaker may wish to use.
- Reconfirm the school site arrangements: time; date; place; equipment needs; etc. Arrange for a student to greet the speaker in the main office and escort him or her to the classroom.
- Teachers/counselors/career advisors: Complete students’ preparation by reviewing information about the speaker and his or her employer and distributing his or her bio. Review listening and note-taking tips.



One day before the guest speaker visit

- Touch base with guest speaker and school site coordinator to address any last-minute questions.
- Teachers/counselors/career advisors: Remind students about the speaker and his or her organization and about proper behavior during the presentation. Introduce the information collection form, a sample of which is in the Resources section.

Day of the guest speaker visit

- Set up equipment for presentation, if needed.
- Distribute student information collection sheets.

One day to one week after the guest speaker visit

- Send thank-you email to speaker with the speaker evaluation form and request that it be completed and returned.
- Distribute, collect, and review student evaluations.
- Review speaker's evaluation form and follow up on any issues raised. Make note in the WBL database of favorable speaker evaluations and follow up with employers who indicated their willingness to participate in future WBL activities.
- Share a summary or samples of student reflections with the speaker to illustrate his/her impact on students' thinking about careers.
- Teachers/counselors/career advisors: Conduct reflection activities in class and compile written reflections for dissemination to all participating students (and their teachers).
- Include discussions about the guest speaker's presentation as well as a guided written reflection on the experience.
- Consider using the same form of reflection for each guest speaker throughout the year.
- Teachers/counselors/career advisors: Have students write thank-you notes to the speaker. Each student's note should describe how the presentation was valuable and what he/she learned. The notes should be reviewed by the teacher before they are sent. If the speaker's audience was more than one class, send a representative sample of the thank-you notes so as not to inundate the speaker.

2.4 Resources for Guest Speaker Activities

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 2: Guest Speakers (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Guest Speaker Participation Form (Doc)
- Sample Email for Employers to Forward to Others (Doc)
- Sample Email to Employers from WBL Coordinator (Doc)

Employer/speaker:

- Guest Speaker Evaluation Form (Doc)
- Speaker Checklist – Expectations (Doc)

Student:

- Student Evaluation of Guest Speaker (Doc)
- Guest Speaker Student Notes and Observations Form (Doc)



Chapter 3: Workplace Tours

3.1 Overview

What Are Workplace Tours?

Workplace tours are usually early career awareness activities for students. They are more than typical field trips because they incorporate explicit student preparation, student interactions with employer representatives during the tour, and student reflections following the tour. Workplace tours offer students the opportunity to learn about the careers available with a particular employer and observe the work performed by people in those careers. Tours are typically conducted with small groups of students and teachers.

The student's primary role is to observe the workplace, listen to what the host has to say, ask questions, and think about potential career opportunities. Students' experiences with workplace tours can help guide their choices about additional career awareness and exploration activities as well as their higher education plans.

Which Students Participate in Workplace Tours?

Workplace tours can occur during the middle or high school grades to expose students to multiple careers in a range of industries. While the focus at all grade levels is on exposure to the specific workplace and the employer, high school students will benefit from more in-depth discussion about potential careers and the education and skills required for them. The WBL coordinator should discuss specific expectations for the tours with the workplace hosts and assist with developing appropriate agendas and presentations. An example of an employer preparation checklist can be found in the *Resources* section.

At the high school level, workplace tours may connect to a specific curriculum related to workplace skills or an academic subject.

Workplace tours can help students connect classroom learning with its application in the working world. For example, a tour of an engineering firm could showcase practical applications of the mathematics involved in building design.

Workplace tours can help students connect classroom learning with its application in the working world.

How Are Workplace Tours Structured?

Workplace tours can range in time from an hour or two to a half day, depending on the complexity of the workplace and the time the host employer is willing to devote.

While each tour may be different, a sample agenda could include:

- Introductions, welcome, and overview of the industry and the employer.
- Tour highlighting work in action, organizational culture, different careers, and various components of the workplace. The tour may visit a series of work stations where different employees discuss or demonstrate the work they do. Students may tour in a single group or be broken up into small groups, depending on what works better in the specific workplace.
- Wrap-up session for employees to answer student questions *and* for employers to ask questions of students.

Students' observations of the workplace should be guided and documented by using a student observation form, a sample of which is included in the *Resources* section.

3.2 How to Implement a Workplace Tour

Successful workplace tours require collaboration, communication, and preparation by several stakeholders. The process involves preparing students to be ready to learn and participate in the activity, helping teachers work with students to get the most from the experience, and preparing the hosts to be able to communicate effectively with students, anticipate the types of questions they are likely to ask, and learn about the next generation of potential employees.

The work entailed in organizing a workplace tour can extend over several months. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following steps should be followed when organizing a workplace tour:

1. Identify the stakeholders needed to assist with implementation. Typically, these will be district and school staff and employers and/or representatives of employer associations.
2. Secure agreement from school administrators and teachers to assist in planning workplace tours. Solicit their preferences for scheduling and for the classes and grade levels that will participate.

3. Collect information on students' career interests. This may be done by teachers, counselors, or career advisors.
4. Based on students' interests, identify employers to ask to host workplace tours. Employer recruitment can take time, so an early start is advisable.
5. Prepare students for the tour.
6. Prepare the host employer to offer a tour that will be an enriching experience for both students and employees.
7. Conduct the workplace tour. Document it with photos, as appropriate.
8. Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect.
9. Obtain evaluations from students and representatives of the host employer.
10. Thank the host employer and the school staff who participated. Give recognition to all participating stakeholders.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of steps that should be taken to implement a well-organized workplace tour. These steps are presented in the form of a timeline, starting months before the actual event. Some steps in the timeline will not apply to classes of adult students. The timeline is flexible and can be condensed, but proper student and employer preparation is important.

3.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to workplace tours.



The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that the scheduling of a workplace tour with a specific employer or students from a particular school is coordinated with the implementation of other WBL activities planned for that employer or that school. Both the employer and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for workplace tours in that larger context.

Note: The WBL coordinator is assumed to be responsible for completing or assigning each task described below, except as noted otherwise.



Before or early in the school year

- Reach out to school administrators and teachers to enlist their participation in scheduling a workplace tour or a series of tours.
- Working with teachers and counselors, collect information on students' career interests and teachers' ideas on careers that relate most closely to the curricula.
- Identify which local employers would be good candidates for hosting tours that align with students' and teachers' interests. Use the WBL database and other sources (e.g., advisory committee members, employers of former students, organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, workforce development boards, state departments of labor or commerce, and the personal networks of district and school staff members) to identify employers to target.
- Map out potential workplace tours and a desirable schedule. Identify desired workplace tours by week or month during the year. Be sure to include a wide a range of employer types so that as many students as possible visit a workplace that aligns with their career aspirations.
- Find out about school policies and procedures for student field trips, including provisions for transportation.

Four months before the workplace tour

Note: These steps can be completed early in the school year for the full calendar of workplace tours or on a rolling basis for tours in the coming months.

- Review the employer outreach information in the *Introduction* to this manual.
- Using the WBL database and other resources, identify employers or occupations in the local area that align with students' interests and school curricula. Identify as many employers as possible so that there are options to pursue if the first-choice employer declines to host a tour. In rural areas with few employers, matching student interests with potential employer hosts may be especially challenging.
- Also using the WBL database, identify employers who had positive experiences as guest speakers (and were well-received by students and teachers) or other WBL activities and might be interested in hosting a tour.

- Begin outreach to targeted employers. Sample communications for employer recruitment can be found in the *Resources* section. To be sure that workplace tours are provided in the industries of greatest interest to students, recruit multiple employers at the same time (if there are multiple employers in the same industry in the area). If there are too many positive responses to manage, find future opportunities to engage the “extra” employers in workplace tours or other WBL activities.
- In recruiting employers to host workplace tours, be as specific as possible about what is requested, what is expected, and what support will be provided by the WBL coordinator and others. Make it as easy as possible for the employer to say “yes.”
- Follow up introductory invitations with phone calls, as needed. Use the WBL database to identify past hosts of workplace tours or other employers who may reinforce the invitation with a peer-to-peer communication (see sample in *Resources* section).
- As responses come in, confirm the dates and communicate them to the schools and the hosts.
- Continue employer recruitment, as needed, until all the targeted slots for workplace tours are full.

Three months before the workplace tour

Note: These implementation steps refer to planning a single tour but can be completed concurrently for multiple tours that may be scheduled for around the same time.

- Select students. In partnership with the school (counselors, career advisors, teachers, and administrators), determine which students or classes will participate in the workplace tour, based on the particular employer’s alignment with students’ career interests and classroom curricula.
- Identify adults who will accompany the students. Workplace tours typically have ten students to one adult. Depending on the workplace, tours may involve as many as 35 students. The adults can be employees of the host employer, district or school staff members, and/or parents. They will help manage students throughout the tour. Teachers who accompany students on workplace tours will benefit by becoming better able to make connections between academic subjects and their applications in the workplace.



- Identify transportation needs and how they will be addressed (e.g., bus, personal/parent vehicles, or others).
- Set a date. Working with the employer host and the school, determine the desired date, making sure to avoid conflicts with school and community calendars. Ask the employer to sign a workplace tour participation form (in the *Resources* section) so that planning can move forward.
- Begin preparation work with the employer host, using a checklist such as the one provided in the *Resources* section.
 - Discuss and reach agreement with the employer host about the number of students, the time and duration of the tour, and the agenda for the tour. (A sample agenda can be found on the first page of this chapter.)
 - If any students have special needs, determine whether and how they can be accommodated.
 - Inquire about the employer sponsoring transportation and/or lunch, if needed.
 - Determine the appropriate dress code for students and adults participating in the tour.
 - Identify any safety requirements for participation in the tour (e.g., closed-toe shoes or safety goggles).
 - Obtain permission for photos to be taken.
- Work with school staff to determine how they will obtain parent/guardian permission for students to register and participate in the fair and teacher permission to be absent from classes. Examples are provided in the *Resources* section, but the school should use the same forms it uses for field trips and the same process and deadlines for distributing and collecting the forms. The forms may need to be modified to include a release for photographic documentation of the tour or to disclose any safety risks posed by visiting the workplace.
- Make appropriate arrangements if the tour will include lunch time and the employer does not provide a meal (e.g., student brown bag or box lunches from school cafeteria).
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Begin to prepare students for the workplace tour. In class, introduce career opportunities, working conditions, workplace behaviors, and dress code specific to employer they will be visiting.



Two months before the workplace tour

- Make transportation arrangements for students based on prior assessment of needs and how they will be met.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Continue preparing students for the workplace tour. Teachers in subjects that relate to the specific workplace students will tour might introduce or review lessons on topics that are used on the job in the employer host's industry.

One month before the workplace tour

- Have schools distribute required student registration, parent permission, and teacher permission for class absence forms. School staff should determine the deadline for return of permission forms.
- Consult with the employer host to make sure the agenda and all on-site arrangements are in place.
- Document all the details and share this information with the employer host and with school staff to ensure its accuracy.:
 - Names of participating students, staff, and other adults
 - Times of departure and arrival
 - Transportation arrangements
 - Agenda for the tour
 - Special safety or security equipment or procedures
 - Accommodations for students with special needs
 - Dress code

Two weeks before the workplace tour

- Ensure that signed registration/permission and class absence forms have been collected and that the appropriate school staff member is following up on any that have yet to be returned.
- Confirm transportation.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Continue to prepare students by introducing them to the employer hosting the tour and its industry. Discuss the dress code and any lunch or transportation arrangements that involve students' families.



One week before the workplace tour

- Make sure all permission forms have been collected.
- Confirm transportation (and lunch, if applicable) arrangements.
- Confirm all details with employer host. Provide contact information (e.g., cell phone numbers and email addresses) for communications on the day of the tour.
- Obtain name tags for students and adults who will be in the tour group. They may be pre-printed or hand-written.
- Address any questions or concerns of students (or their parents), teachers, or the employer host.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Review workplace behavior expectations with students, including the dress code for the tour. They should also introduce the student observation form (see *Resource* section) so that students will be prepared to document their experiences.



One day before the workplace tour

- Double-check all arrangements.

Day of the workplace tour

- Ensure all students are accounted for on the bus or in personal vehicles when traveling to and from the tour.
- Ensure students are dressed appropriately.
- Distribute student observation forms to students. Distribute name tags.
- Respond promptly to any questions or concerns that arise during the day.
- Bring the schedule and contact information and manage the time appropriately.
- Use both still and video photography to document the tour, if the host employer and students/students' parents have given permission to do so.
- Provide evaluation forms to students and employers. Collect student evaluation forms.

One day to one week after the workplace tour

- Send thank-you emails to host employer and a reminder to return the evaluation form if it was not collected the day of the tour; include a few photos and highlights from student comments.

- Review student evaluations to assess what they learned from the tour.
- Collect employer evaluation or contact the employer representative and fill out the evaluation through telephone conversation (whichever is easiest for the employer).
- Review employer evaluations and follow up, as appropriate, regarding concerns or comments. Also, follow up with hosts who expressed interest in other WBL activities.
- Summarize student evaluations and reflections and share them with host employers so that they can understand their contribution to students' learning.
- Provide exposure and positive recognition for host employers in the local newspaper, school newsletter, or other media if the employers gave permission to do so.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Have students write thank-you notes to the employer host. Review them before sending.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Conduct reflection activities in classes and compile written reflections for dissemination to all participating students and their teachers.

3.4 Resources for Workplace Tours

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 3: Workplace Tours (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Sample Email for Employers to Forward to Others (Doc)
- Sample Email to Employers from WBL Coordinator (Doc)
- Workplace Tour Participation Form (Doc)

School:

- Teacher Permission Form for Class Absence (Doc)
- Student Registration and Parent-Guardian Permission Form for Workplace Tour (Doc)

Employer:

- Workplace Tour Employer Evaluation (Doc)
- Employer Workplace Tour Checklist-Expectations (Doc)

Student:

- Workplace Tour Student Evaluation (Doc)
- Workplace Tour Student Observation Form (Doc)



Chapter 4: Career Fairs

4.1 Overview

What Are Career Fairs?

These recruitment events include two- and four-year colleges and universities, technology centers and other technical schools, certificate or licensure programs, and apprenticeships.

Career fairs are career awareness activities that expose students to a wide range of careers and education/training opportunities. These recruitment events include two- and four-year colleges and universities, technology centers and other technical schools, certificate or licensure programs, and apprenticeships offered through employers. These events typically bring multiple employers and institutions into one large space where each exhibitor has a table or booth at which to showcase options for students. Since most postsecondary institutions participate in career fairs as part of their regular recruitment functions, the focus of this chapter is on working with employers to participate in career fairs. When planning a career fair, the best contacts at institutions will be the recruitment or admissions staff. Colleges and technical schools are usually well-equipped to provide an informative exhibit without much help from the WBL coordinator. Businesses may require more help.

These recruitment events include two- and four-year colleges and universities, technology centers and other technical schools, certificate or licensure programs, and apprenticeships offered through employers.

Fairs provide students with opportunities to learn about a wide variety of potential career paths and postsecondary options and help them identify career interests that warrant further exploration. They also help students learn about the high school courses required to enroll in postsecondary education and/or prepare for specific occupations. Although often focused on

Many fairs feature employers that are looking to recruit high school students near or just after graduation.

either schools or careers, fairs that combine the two may enable students to connect learning about careers with learning about how to access the education and training required for those careers.

Just as impactful are opportunities for immediate employment. Many fairs feature employers that are looking to recruit high school students near or just after graduation. Students should be prepared to look at the short-term and long-term

opportunities these companies can provide. Some companies have a process to grow the knowledge and skills of their employees through formal internal education programs or through tuition reimbursement programs. Students who can take advantage of these programs may be able to make a living while pursuing post-secondary education.

The students' primary roles are to interact with adults and ask questions that will help focus their future career exploration activities. They may also collect brochures or other informational handouts that can be used to stimulate family and school discussions about education and career planning.

Which Students Participate in Career Fairs?

While career fairs are typically offered to students in the 7th through 12th grades, expectations for student outcomes and the content presented by employers and education/training institutions should be relevant to the age of participating students. Fairs attended by middle school students should offer broad information about careers, while fairs attended by high school students should provide more detailed information about specific careers and the education and other requirements for them, as well as possible opportunities for immediate employment.

How Are Career Fairs Structured?

A career fair might be planned for a single school or for multiple schools in a region. A larger fair would be a more efficient way for exhibitors to reach more students, but it would require a larger venue and transportation for students. In rural areas, a fair for multiple schools would require transportation over longer distances. The WBL coordinator should weigh the trade-offs fair for a few schools in the same area, or one for each school.

Career fairs typically last from several hours to a full day. Some extend into the evening to facilitate attendance by those who work during daytime hours. The format can vary based on the age of participating students and the context in which the fair is offered. Some fairs include breakout sessions that highlight specific careers, education/training programs, or industry trends, while others simply host a broad array of exhibitors from employers and education/training institutions. Some fairs have employer booths and education/training booths in separate rooms, while others have them together in one room. Often, students are

scheduled to arrive at the fair in “shifts” to prevent overcrowding and provide each group time to interact with the exhibitors.

While each fair should be tailored to local context, needs, and resources, a sample agenda for a fair could include:

- Introduction/overview sessions for students and exhibitors
 - Student and exhibitor overviews should be conducted separately, but both should cover what the day will look like, what is expected of them, the location of restrooms and refreshments (if provided), and the schedule for breakout sessions (if any).
 - The student overview could be done on the bus on the way to the fair (if it is off-campus) or in class the day before.
- Blocks of time for students to visit booths and/or breakout sessions
- Wrap-up/close of fair

Strategies to track and manage student participation at booths and in breakout sessions should be developed during the planning stages. Some fairs document student participation through stamps or signatures obtained at exhibitors' booths – like getting stamps in a “passport to the future.”

4.2 How to Implement a Career Fair

Successful career fairs require collaboration, communication, and preparation by multiple stakeholders. The process involves:

- Identifying planning and implementation partners
- Selecting an appropriate venue
- Developing and funding a budget
- Recruiting employer and education/training exhibitors
- Making logistical arrangements
- Collaborating with teachers to prepare students to learn and participate
- Preparing exhibitors to communicate effectively with students



The work involved in planning a career fair, whether it is for one school or several districts, can extend over several months. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following steps should be followed when organizing a career fair.

1. Identify the partners needed to assist with implementation. Typically, these will be district and school staff, representatives of employers or employer associations, and representatives from colleges, technology centers and other technical schools, certificate or licensure programs, and apprenticeships.
2. Consult with district and school staff to determine the scope of the fair (education/training, career, or both; one school, one district, or multiple schools or districts).
3. Working with school partners, identify a few options for the date of the fair and venues at which it could be held.
4. Draw up a tentative budget, which may include: facility rental; equipment rental (e.g., tables, chairs, and audiovisual or other equipment); transportation, and refreshments. Develop a strategy for securing the necessary funds (e.g., school or district budget, fees from exhibitors, sponsorships, or local philanthropies).
5. Solicit student, teacher, and counselor input on specific exhibitors that are of greatest interest. Use this information to develop an invitation/recruitment list for the fair.
6. Recruit employers and institutions to participate in the fair. Recruitment can be slow and time-consuming; starting early is advisable.
7. Arrange student transportation, unless the fair will be held at a single school for only the students who attend that school.
8. Prepare students for the fair.
9. Prepare exhibitors for the fair and make sure that their needs are met.
10. Hold the fair and document it with photos, as appropriate.
11. Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences.
12. Obtain evaluations from students and exhibitors.
13. Recognize participating stakeholders, especially sponsors and employers.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of steps for implementing a well-organized fair. These steps are presented in the form of a timeline, starting six months before the fair. Some steps in the timeline will not apply to classes of adult students. The timeline is flexible and can be condensed, but proper planning is essential as there will be many details to manage.



4.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (principal, counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator



should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to the college and career fair.

The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that the scheduling of the college and career fair is coordinated with the implementation of other WBL activities planned for the district or school. Employers, colleges, and school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for the fair in that larger context.

The WBL coordinator is assumed to be the individual responsible for completing or assigning all the tasks listed below, except where noted otherwise.

Six months before the career fair

- Create a planning team. Members might include district or school staff, employers in the private, public, and non-profit sectors, representatives of employer associations, and representatives from educational/training institutions. This team will: plan the event, assign responsibilities for various tasks associated with the fair, develop a budget and secure resources to fund it, determine who will staff the event, and participate in any follow-up necessary after the fair. The planning team should meet regularly (in person or by conference call) to make sure everyone is well-informed and on track. More frequent communication will take place among team members with respect to specific tasks.
- In partnership with school staff (e.g., counselors, career advisors, teachers, and administrators), determine which students, classes, or schools will participate in the fair.
- Determine whether providing breakout sessions for more in-depth presentations by some exhibitors is desirable.

- Based on the anticipated attendance, the number of likely exhibitors, and whether space is needed for breakout sessions, identify potential locations for the fair. The WBL coordinator should then follow up to investigate costs, availability, capacity, and other factors that would influence the choice of location. The location should provide an open space for exhibitor booths or tables. Spaces for



breakout sessions should be nearby and large enough to accommodate special presentations for 15 to 30 students at a time.

- After consulting school calendars and checking with key employers and colleges, set a date for the fair and reserve the location. Assign specific tasks to specific team members, along with milestones and deadlines.
- Work with school staff to determine how they will obtain any necessary parent/guardian permission for students to register and participate in the fair and teacher permission to be absent from classes. Examples are provided in the *Resources* section, but the school should use the same forms it uses for field trips and the same process and deadlines for distributing and collecting the forms. The forms may need to be modified to include a release for photographic documentation of the fair.
- Consult with teachers, counselors, and career advisors to identify which employers and institutions are likely to be of greatest interest to students. These are the participants that will be targeted for the most vigorous recruitment and, if space for the fair is limited, will get priority for exhibit space. Send a “save the date” communication to these high-priority employer and college contacts.
- Use the WBL database and other sources (e.g., organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, workforce development boards, state departments of labor or commerce, and the personal networks of district and school staff members) to identify other employers to target.
- Solidify the final budget and secure funding commitments.

Four months before the career fair

- Begin outreach to employers and institutions, especially those identified to be of greatest interest to students, to build awareness of the upcoming fair and generate interest. Review the employer outreach section of the *Introduction* for useful tips.

- Start with high-priority employers and others that have had successful experiences with WBL activities or have been well-received at past career fairs. A sample invitation email is included in the *Resources* section.
- Meet with representatives of chambers of commerce, other industry and trade associations, and service clubs to talk about the fair and ask them to encourage their members to participate. Provide whatever information they need (e.g., newsletter article or draft email to members) to make it easy for them to help. The sample outreach materials in the *Resources* section can be adapted for this purpose. The WBL coordinator might offer to attend a meeting to provide additional information about plans for the fair.
- Contact education/training institutions that should be included in the fair.
- Send information home with students for parent awareness and recruitment of additional employers.
- As potential exhibitors respond to these contacts, secure their commitments to participate using or adapting the exhibitor participation form in the *Resources* section.

Three months before the career fair

- Follow up on invitations, especially to the exhibitors of greatest interest to students. Ask employers that have already committed to participating for help in recruiting others, using peer communication such as the example in the *Resources* section.
- Create a participant checklist to help representatives plan their exhibits for the fair. The *Resources* section includes a sample that can be adapted to local context and needs.
 - Communicate the schedule for the fair as well as the space and equipment that will be available to exhibitors and offer tips for how to engage with students during the fair. Give examples of hands-on activities or demonstrations that will expose students to work-related tasks.
 - Send the participant checklist to exhibitors that have submitted participation forms. Offer to assist them in planning their exhibits.
- Continue outreach as needed until the high-priority exhibitors have responded and the available exhibit spaces are filled.
- Determine transportation needs and how they will be addressed (e.g., bus, personal/parent vehicles, or others).



- Determine the number of volunteers needed for the fair and identify the responsibilities of each (e.g., assisting in set-up, serving as bus monitors, assisting students as they move through the fair, greeting arriving students and exhibitors, providing refreshments, taking photographs and videos, or helping with clean-up).
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Introduce students to the career fair and begin to prepare them to get the most out of their participation through research into careers and education/training institutions. Help students who are close to graduation prepare resumes to be handed out to potential employers at the fair.

Two months before the career fair

- Continue exhibitor outreach as needed, using all the methods described earlier.
- Continue phone calls with participants after they have reviewed the resource materials to confirm their understanding of what is expected and to answer questions or provide advice.
- If breakout sessions will be offered, determine which exhibitors they should feature, invite them, and help them prepare. Breakout sessions are typically 30 minutes long for about 15 to 30 students. They should focus on high-need industries, high-need skills, workplace skills, education programs, etc. Work with presenters to build powerful and engaging presentations. Resource materials from the *Guest Speakers* chapter of the manual may be useful for this purpose.
- Determine how to manage students' time throughout the fair to avoid too many or too few students in breakout sessions or visiting booths at the same time. Staggered arrival and departure times for groups of students are a typical way to avoid excessive congestion at the fair.
- Provide updates to teachers regarding confirmed exhibitors, so that they can pique students' interest and acquaint them with what they might learn.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Continue preparing students using content listed above.



One month before the career fair

- Continue employer outreach and obtain additional commitments, as needed.

- Maintain contact with participants and continue to offer assistance with planning their exhibits. Gather information on any space or other requirements (e.g., electrical outlets, internet access) to make sure that they can be provided.



- Recruit staff and volunteers for the day of the fair. They may be school staff, parents, students from education/training institutions, or even high school students (as long as they still have time to participate in the fair).
- Develop student deliverables for participation in the fair. These may include passports to the future (see sample in the *Resources* section) to be stamped by exhibitor representatives or other tools that encourage student engagement and facilitate tracking of students during the fair.
- Reach out to local media outlets that might cover the fair. These could include local and regional newspapers, radio and television news programs, and/or school publications.
- Have schools distribute required student registration, parent/guardian permission, and teacher permission for class absence forms and a list of participating exhibitors to students. Include an invitation for parents/guardians to participate, if possible. School staff should determine the deadline for return of permission forms.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Continue student preparation activities:
 - Have students conduct research on participating exhibitors, with a special focus on those that align with their individual career interests.
 - Introduce students to informational interviews (see more in *Chapter 5*) to help them interact effectively with employer and college representatives.
 - Help students develop questions to ask exhibitors. For example, students might ask employer representatives about their job responsibilities, skill requirements, and what they like and dislike about their jobs. The students might ask representatives from education/training institutions about entrance requirements, costs, and the availability of programs related to specific careers.

Two weeks before the career fair

- Touch base with exhibitors to answer questions and confirm all logistical information.

- Create and finalize a floor plan or diagram for the fair, assigning booths or tables to participants.
- Finalize assignments for staff and volunteers and define expectations for each assignment. It may be helpful to designate task leaders for jobs like set-up and clean-up.
- Confirm transportation plans.
- Confirm site preparation arrangements, including parking, tables, chairs, refreshments (if any), storage (for coats and exhibitor materials), table decorations (if any), internet access (if required), electrical outlets, etc.
- **School staff:** Finish collecting registration, parent/guardian permission, and class absence forms.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Continue preparing students for the fair by reviewing participating employers and colleges as well as past lessons.



One week before the career fair

- Reconfirm details for participating exhibitors. Include information on how to contact the WBL coordinator and other key staff before and during the fair.
- Secure or create directional signage and decorations (e.g., balloons outside the doors to the event and signs with the agenda for the day and locations of specific exhibitors and breakout sessions).
- Review the fair logistics with the planning team, staff, and volunteers and make any needed adjustments. Make plans for communication on the day of the fair, using mobile phones or walkie-talkies.
- Remind media outlets that the fair is coming up, so they can plan coverage assignments. Make sure the media have an on-site contact (typically the WBL coordinator, but perhaps a district media relations person) to guide them to the most newsworthy exhibits.
- **School staff:** Determine how to handle students who did not secure parent/guardian permission or class absence forms by the due date (e.g., attend a study hall or have special assignments for the time when other students will be at the fair).
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Continue student preparation activities:
 - Discuss appropriate student behavior and attire for the fair.
 - Distribute and review the questionnaires or forms students will be completing during the fair. (See *Resources* section for sample.)
 - Create and distribute schedules for the fair, including transportation arrangements. In some instances, schedules may be customized based on students' selections of

representatives they wish to meet and breakout sessions they want to attend. Schedules should be shared with the WBL coordinator and others involved in implementation.

- Address any questions or concerns that students (or their parents) may have or refer them to the WBL coordinator.

One day before the career fair

- Send a final confirmation email to exhibitors, including logistical and contact information.
- Send a reminder to media outlets with specifics on location, schedule, notable exhibitors, what will be happening, and whom to contact on site.
- If possible, begin to set up for the fair, including technology resources, registration tables, directional signs, decorations, booths or tables, and breakout session rooms.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Distribute the final list of exhibitors, the locations of their exhibits, breakout session assignments, and a passport to the future or other tool to document the exhibits the students visit. (See sample passport to the future in *Resources* section.) Extra copies should also be available at the fair.

Day of the career fair

- Complete set-up work. Allow ample time to be ready before the start of the fair. Walk the space to identify and correct any problems.
- Gather staff, organizers, and exhibitor representatives to share logistical information, introduce key contacts, and answer questions. Include details about post-fair clean-up as determined during planning process.
- Ensure that all students have transportation and that attendance is taken at the fair or on the bus to and from the fair.
- Greet media representatives and guide them to potential points of interest.
- Ensure that the assigned staff and volunteers perform the clean-up tasks assigned to them and that the space is left as specified in the rental contract.
- As exhibitors are leaving, thank them for participating and give them evaluation forms (sample in *Resources* section) to complete. Follow up by emailing the form.



- **School staff:** Distribute evaluation forms to students as they leave the fair or on the bus.
- **On-site staff and volunteers:** Direct students to appropriate booths or breakout sessions, maintain the schedule, answer questions, and document the fair with photos.



One day to one week after the career fair

- Send thank-you emails to exhibitors, along with a reminder to return their evaluation forms; include a few highlights from student comments, photos, and media coverage.
- Collect and review evaluations completed by students and exhibitors.
- If negative feedback is obtained from evaluations, gather additional information and take appropriate action promptly. Capture this information for use in planning future fairs.
- Conduct a debriefing session with the planning team. Share all evaluation results and capture lessons learned for future college and career fairs.
- Follow up with media representatives who did and did not attend. Media outlets that did not attend may still publish news from the fair. Collect news coverage and distribute to participants. Also, share any media coverage with school districts, schools, and other partners. This information can be used for outreach in subsequent years.
- Follow up with any exhibitor representatives who expressed interest in further participation in WBL activities.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Conduct reflection activities in classes and compile students' written reflections for dissemination.

4.4 Career Fair Resources

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 4: Career Fairs (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Sample Email for Employers to Forward to Others (Doc)

- Career Fair Participation Form (Doc)
- Sample Email to Employers and Colleges from WBL Coordinator (Doc)

Exhibitors:

- Career Fair Employer-College Evaluation (Doc)
- Career Fair Checklist-Expectations for Employers and Colleges (Doc)

School:

- Teacher Permission Form for Class Absence (Doc)
- Student Registration and Parent-Guardian Permission Form for Career Fair (Doc)

Student:

- Career Fair Student Evaluation (Doc)
- Passport to the Future (Doc)



Chapter 5: Informational Interviews

5.1 Overview

What Are Informational Interviews?

An informational interview is a career exploration activity involving a structured interaction between a student and an employee (the term *employee* refers to any variety of workers, including solo practitioners in fields ranging from law and medicine to skilled trades and the arts). Interviews are usually done over the phone or by video conference. The interview is guided by the student's interest in learning more about a specific career and/or employer. The interviews can help students set career goals and focus future career exploration and education plans.

The skills developed through informational interviews are critical to learning how to seek information and interact professionally with employers. They are also a foundation for learning how to engage in a job interview. Because these skills are so important, informational interviews are often prerequisite activities for job shadows or internships. Significant preparation and guidance should be provided to students prior to their interviews.

informational interviews are often prerequisite activities for job shadows or internships.

The student's primary roles are to prepare for and request the interview, schedule a time for the interview, conduct the interview, thank the employee interviewed, reflect on the interview, and share thoughts on the experience in the classroom.

Which Students Participate in Informational Interviews?

Informational interviews are conducted by students engaged in career exploration and are intended to help them further refine their career interests for subsequent exploration and preparation activities. Typically, this level of career exploration and interaction with employees



involves early high school students who have already participated in some career awareness activities. As with other career awareness and exploration activities, informational interviews should reflect the student's desire to learn more about specific career fields and the education needed for entry and success in them.

How Are Informational Interviews Structured?

Typically, students identify employees in the careers in which

they are interested and conduct interviews over the phone or by video conference. Informational interviews typically range from 15 to 30 minutes and may precede or be integrated into an activity such as job shadowing.

While there are no prescriptive guidelines, the usual components of an informational interview are:

- Introduction and purpose of the interview.
- Questions about the employer, industry, and career of the employee interviewed as well as the education required for entry and success in a similar career.
- Conclusion with a recap of highlights of what the student learned and thank you for the employee's participation.

Unlike some other WBL activities, students play a leading role in scheduling and conducting informational interviews.

5.2 How to Implement Informational Interviews

Successful informational interviews require collaboration, communication, and preparation by the WBL coordinator, school administrators, teachers, employers and their employees, and students.

Planning for informational interviews should begin at least two months prior to the time period targeted for this activity. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following steps should be followed when implementing informational interviews.

1. Work with school administrators and teachers to plan for informational interviews.
2. Collect information on students' career interests to use in identifying employees to interview.
3. Inform the employer community that students will be reaching out to make interview contacts during a certain time period.
4. Have teachers prepare students for the informational interviews, including helping them identify employers who can provide names of employees to interview.
5. Have students contact employers or employees and make arrangements for their interviews.
6. Have students conduct the informational interviews with employees.
7. Have teachers provide structured opportunities for students to reflect with their peers.
8. Obtain evaluations from students.
9. Recognize participating stakeholders.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of these steps, presented in the form of a timeline. Some steps in the timeline will not apply to classes of adult students. The timeline is flexible and can be condensed, but proper student and employer preparation is important.

5.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to informational interviews.

The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (as described in the *Introduction*), if there is one, to be sure that the informational interview activities are coordinated with other WBL activities for the same employers, schools, and students. For this particular WBL activity,





most of the coordination can be done by school staff, with the WBL coordinator focusing on the employer outreach process.

Note: The WBL coordinator is assumed to be responsible for completing or assigning each of the tasks listed below, except where otherwise noted.

Two to three months before the informational interviews

Begin outreach to employers to make them aware that they may be hearing from students seeking informational interviews and encourage them to participate. This can be accomplished by asking chambers of commerce, other industry and trade associations, and service clubs to alert their members, contacting advisory committee members,

placing an item in a local newspaper or school newsletter, asking school staff to reach out to their contacts, reaching out to former students, and/or sending emails to the contacts in the WBL database. A sample email is provided in the *Resources* section. While students are responsible for finding their own employees to interview, the WBL coordinator can help by compiling a list of people who have responded to the WBL coordinator's email and volunteered to participate, have participated in informational interviews in the past, or have demonstrated their interest in working with students by participating in other WBL activities.

- **School staff:** Identify which students or classes will conduct informational interviews.
- **School staff:** Determine the time frame, typically one to two weeks, in which students will reach out to employers/employees and conduct interviews. Allow sufficient time for student preparation.
- **School staff:** Determine how many informational interviews each student should be expected to conduct.
- **School staff:** Determine how students should obtain permission to miss a class if interviews are scheduled during class time. A sample form for obtaining teacher permission to miss a class in order to conduct an interview is provided in the *Resources* section. Decide whether to send a notice to parents/guardians to let them know that some students may conduct their interviews from home.
- **School staff:** Play a facilitating role, because informational interviews are student-led activities. Establish the process for students to use to reach out to employers or employees (via phone or email) to schedule and conduct interviews and ensure that

they have access to the tools (telephones and/or computers) to do so. If some students are struggling to schedule interviews, school staff or the WBL coordinator may assist them.

- **Teachers/Counselors/Career Advisors:** Begin to prepare students in class by introducing:
 - The purpose and benefits of informational interviews.
 - Strategies for listening effectively and asking appropriate questions.
 - What to include in questions for informational interviews.

One month before the informational interviews

- Mine the WBL database (described in the *Introduction* to this guide) to help students who have trouble securing informational interviews.
- Send the employer checklist (sample in *Resources* section) to the employees who will be interviewed by students to help them prepare.
- **School staff:** Schedule computer lab time, if needed, for student research and outreach to employers.
- **Students:** Begin outreach by calling the employers in which they are interested, using a script to determine which employees in the company might be available to interview. A sample phone call script for students is in the *Resources* section. If a student or the WBL coordinator has already identified an individual employee who is likely to be willing to be interviewed, the student may call the employee directly. This can be accomplished in class if students use their own phones, or the school will need to make phones available to students for this purpose.
- **Teachers/Counselors/Career Advisors:** Have students practice interview techniques and begin to develop questions about the job, career, employer, and industry of the employee to be interviewed. Additional questions might focus on skills required to enter the industry, work environment, salary ranges, and what the person likes and dislikes about his/her current job.



One week before the informational interviews

- **Teachers/Counselors/Career Advisors:** Continue student preparation by having them write and revise their interview questions and practice interviews in class.

- **School staff:** Make sure students have appropriate quiet places to conduct their phone or video conference interviews.



One day before the informational interviews

- **Students:** Send confirmation emails to the employees to be interviewed with the date, time, and duration of the interviews as well as the telephone numbers to be used.
- **Teachers/Counselors/Career Advisors:** Make sure students have completed their interview questions and have pencil and paper or a computer handy for taking notes.

Day of the informational interviews

- **Students:** Make their calls, conduct the interviews, and take notes for later reflection.
- **School staff:** Make sure there is an adult standing by to assist students during the interviews, if necessary.

One day to one week after the informational interviews

- Collect and review student evaluations and make note of any feedback that could be used to improve informational interview experiences in the future.
- Follow up with employers and their employees by sending thank-you emails, sharing some of the student comments that demonstrate the impact of their participation, and soliciting informal feedback on the interviews.
- Recognize participating employers and their employees. Many districts and schools hold annual celebrations honoring employers who have participated in WBL activities.
- **Students:** Send thank-you emails or notes to employees interviewed. Teachers/counselors/career advisors should review the emails before they are sent.
- **Students:** Complete evaluations of their experiences with the informational interviews and turn them in to their teachers. A sample evaluation form is provided in the *Resources* section.
- **Teachers/Counselors/Career Advisors:** Conduct student reflection activities in class and compile written reflections for dissemination to all participating students (and their other teachers).

5.4 Informational Interview Resources

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 5: Informational Interviews (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Sample Email to Employers from WBL Coordinator (Doc)

Employer:

- Employer Informational Interview Checklist-Expectations (Doc)

School:

- Teacher Permission Form for Class Absence (Doc)

Student:

- Informational Interview Student Evaluation (Doc)
- Informational Interview Student Scheduling Phone Call Script (Doc)



Chapter 6: Job Shadows

6.1 Overview

What Are Job Shadows?

Job shadows are career exploration activities that place individual students in workplaces to interact with and observe one or more employees. (In this chapter, “employer” refers to the workplace representative who decides whether to offer job shadow opportunities to students. “Employee” refers to the person in the workplace who hosts the student. In small organizations, these may be the same person.) Based on students’ interests in specific careers and/or employers, job shadows can help students learn more about the nature of jobs and work environments, as well as the education and training required to enter them.

Job shadows are sometimes the first opportunities for students to observe workplaces and have one-on-one interactions with employees, allowing for more in-depth exposure to both careers and work environments. Students benefit most from participating in several job-shadowing opportunities, because they are able to compare and contrast the careers and workplaces that are of interest to them.

Job shadows are sometimes the first opportunities for students to observe workplaces and have one-on-one interactions with employees

Students’ primary roles during a job shadow experience are:

- Identify job shadow opportunities that interest them.
- Interact with employees.
- Record observations of careers and workplaces.
- Reflect on their experiences.

Which Students Participate in Job Shadows?

Job shadow experiences are typically made available to students in 10th through 12th grades who have already participated in some career awareness and exploration activities. As with other WBL activities, the content and expectations for job shadows should reflect each student's need for additional information about specific careers.



How Are Job Shadows Structured?

Typically lasting between four and eight hours, job shadows are individual student activities. While each job shadow should be tailored to the specific employee and student, a sample agenda for a job shadow would include:

- Introductions, welcome, overview of the industry and the employer: 30 minutes
- Workplace tour: up to 30 minutes
- Individual shadowing time (including informational interview): 2 – 6 hours
- Wrap-up/reflections meeting: 1 hour

Occasionally, job shadows are organized so that students spend part of their time with two or more different employees. If more than one employee is available, a rotational job shadow allows students to gather information about multiple careers or experience multiple perspectives on the same workplace or career.

Based on local needs and context, job shadow experiences may be offered to a group of students on a limited number of days or to individual students throughout the school year. Transportation and other logistics may vary depending upon the number of students and the schedule of job shadow visits.

6.2 How to Implement Job Shadows

Successful job shadowing experiences require collaboration, communication, and preparation by several stakeholders. The planning process involves preparing students to get the most from the experience, helping host employees communicate effectively with students, and providing positive experiences for students and the host organization.

The work entailed in organizing job shadows can extend over several months. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following implementation steps should be followed.

1. Identify the stakeholders needed to assist with implementation. Typically, these will be district or school staff and representatives of employers and/or employer associations.
2. Secure agreement from school administrators and teachers to assist in planning job shadows. Solicit their preferences for scheduling and for how the students will be selected.
3. Collect information on students' career interests. This may be done by teachers, counselors, or career advisors.
4. Based on students' interests, identify employers to ask to host job shadows. Employer recruitment can take time, so an early start is advisable.
5. Prepare students for their job shadows.
6. Prepare the host employees.
7. Conduct the job shadows. Document them with photos, as appropriate.
8. Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect on their job-shadowing experiences.
9. Obtain evaluations from students and their hosts.
10. Thank the hosts and the school staff who participated. Give recognition to participating employers.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of steps that should be taken to implement well-organized job shadows. These steps are presented in the form of a timeline, starting months before the job shadows take place. Some steps in the timeline will not apply to classes of adult students. The timeline is flexible and can be condensed, but proper student and employee preparation is important.



6.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL

activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to job shadows.



The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that the scheduling of job shadows for specific employers or students from a particular school is coordinated with the implementation of other WBL activities planned for that employer or that school. Both the employers and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for job shadows in that larger context. Since it is desirable for students to complete more than one job shadow, if possible, these activities should be scheduled on multiple dates, probably at different times of the year. Planning can be completed at the beginning of the school year, with implementation conducted on a rolling basis ahead of each date. This chapter assumes that multiple students will be engaged in job shadowing on the same day, which would allow for some efficiencies in planning transportation and securing parent/guardian and teacher permission for the students. However, job shadows can be planned for individual students with considerably less lead time than suggested below.

Note: The WBL coordinator is assumed to be the individual responsible for completing or assigning the tasks listed below, except where noted otherwise.

Six months before the job shadows

- In partnership with school staff (e.g., counselors, career advisors, teachers, and administrators), determine which students or classes will participate in job shadowing.
- Conduct a student interest survey to determine how many students are interested in job shadows in each career or industry cluster. Students should be encouraged to select three careers of interest.
- Working with school staff, determine the desired dates for job shadows, allowing for proper preparation and outreach.
 - Consider choosing February 2 as one of the dates to align with National Groundhog Job Shadow Day.
 - Review community and school calendars to avoid conflicts.
 - Confirm the feasibility of proposed dates with key employer partners.

- Work with school staff to determine how they will obtain teacher and parent/guardian permission for students to register and participate in job shadows and be absent from classes. Examples of permission forms are provided in the *Resources* section, but it would be best to use the same forms used for field trips and the same process and deadlines for distributing and collecting them. The forms may need to be modified to include a release for photographic documentation or to disclose any safety risks posed by visiting specific workplaces.
- Develop criteria for employer outreach. Not all interested employers will be able to participate due to safety or other regulations. It may be possible to arrange job shadows at workplaces where there are safety risks by structuring the job shadows to limit student exposure to risks. For example, a job shadow in a restaurant may allow students to tour the kitchen but not to handle knives or other dangerous equipment. Similarly, students may be able to visit an oil field office but not actually go out to the oil field.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Begin introducing the benefits of job shadows and what students need to do to prepare for them.

Four months before the job shadows

- Review the employer outreach section of the *Introduction* and use the WBL database to identify potential job shadow hosts. Use the student interest survey results to target high-priority employers. Begin making contacts.
 - Start with employers that had positive previous experiences with job shadows or other WBL activities. Send them an email such as the sample provided in the *Resources* section.
 - Contact employers who provide advisory committee members and those that employ former students.
 - Meet with representatives of chambers of commerce, other industry and trade associations, and service clubs to talk about job shadowing and ask them to encourage their members to participate. Provide whatever information they need (e.g., newsletter article or draft email to members) to make it easy for them to help. A sample email for a peer communication is included in the *Resources* section. The WBL coordinator might offer to attend a meeting to provide additional information about job shadows.



- Engage economic development agencies, workforce development boards, and state departments of labor or commerce to identify other employers to target.
- Submit information to school newsletters, company newsletters, local newspapers, and other media outlets.
- Send information home with students for parent awareness and recruitment of additional employers.
- Tap into the personal networks of district and school staff members to help make contact with employers.
- Contact employers that align with students' interests. Make sure to contact more employers than needed, because some will not be able to host job shadows. A sample email is provided in the *Resources* section, but personal contact is the best approach, especially with employers that have previously participated in WBL activities. A sample form to confirm employers' participation as job shadow hosts is also provided in the *Resources* section.
- Encourage employers to host multiple students, if possible. Students may shadow employees in pairs or individually with different employees.
- Create employer resource materials such as the checklist provided in the *Resources* section, which can be adapted to the local context and specific needs. Be sure to include information and a timeline for the job shadow hosts.
- As employers respond and confirm their participation, send them the employer checklist described above and offer to work with them to shape a job shadow experience that will be positive for their employees and the students.
- Schedule phone calls with employers to go over what is expected for job shadows, answer questions, and provide suggestions that will make the experiences productive for both students and their host employees. The employer checklist in the *Resources* section provides some pertinent guidance.
- Working with school staff, begin to match students with employers that align with their preferences for job shadow experiences. The available slots may not perfectly align with student interests, which will help identify any further employer outreach that may be necessary.



Three months before the job shadows

- Identify transportation needs and how they will be addressed (e.g., bus, personal/parent vehicles, or others).

- Continue employer outreach until job shadow slots have been secured for all students.
- Continue to work with employers to plan the job shadows they will host.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Introduce students to expectations of being in a workplace, with emphasis on recognition and understanding of both written and unwritten rules of behavior, etiquette, and job responsibilities; assist students with resume preparation.

Two months before the job shadows

- Continue employer outreach if necessary. As the number of students without confirmed job shadow hosts decreases, the final employer outreach efforts can be more narrowly focused on the needs of those students.
- Continue phone calls with employers to help them plan for participating in job shadows and to answer questions.
- Schedule a host employee orientation for one month before the job shadows at a location convenient to as many employers as possible. Send out a “save the date” email and ask for RSVPs.
- Make sure all students have completed their resumes.

One month before the job shadows

- Identify media outlets that should be invited to cover the job shadows, including local and regional newspapers, radio and television stations, and school publications. Attracting media attention is easier when several students are doing job shadows in one location. Obtain permission from the employer host and students/parents to have media present.
- Complete matching students to host employees based on students’ interests. If there is no confirmed job shadow host that matches a student’s preferences, school staff should work with the student to identify a different job shadow that will enable him/her to move forward with career exploration.
- Conduct a host employee orientation that describes the purpose of the job shadows and gives an overview of youth development, WBL, and strategies to communicate with students. A sample agenda for the orientation is provided in the *Resources* section. In rural areas, it



may be impractical for all job shadow hosts to meet in one place. The WBL coordinator could conduct briefings through conference calls or virtual meetings.

- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Introduce students to the informational interviews they will conduct during the job shadow activity to learn about the industry, the employer, and potential careers. This may be a review for students who have already conducted informational interviews (which are described in *Chapter 5*). These students may be good resources for their classmates.
- **Students:** Begin to research the employers they will be visiting. Each student's research should be specific to the host organization and industry and thorough enough to prepare for informational interviews and other conversations during their job shadows.

Two weeks before the job shadows

- Finish matching students with host employees.
- Make sure all students have turned in student registration/parent permission forms and forms for teacher permission for class absence, and that alternate arrangements have been made for students who are not participating.
- Touch base with the host employees to confirm their plans and answer questions.
- Confirm parent-, student-, and/or school-provided transportation.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Have students continue research on their host organizations, prepare informational interview questions, and complete their resumes.
- **Students:** Make confirmation calls to their employer hosts. A sample call script may be found in the *Resources* section.

One week before the job shadows

- Contact media for possible coverage of one or more job shadows, if employer hosts and students/parents have given permission. This is typically done via email with a short description of the job shadow and why it is newsworthy.
- Address any questions or concerns that students (or their parents) may have.
- Print and distribute materials for students to use: job shadow confirmation form completed by student during confirmation call; the information collection sheet (to be



completed at workplace); and the student evaluation. Samples of these materials are included in the *Resources* section.

- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Have students send introductory emails to their hosts. A sample email is included in the *Resources* section.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Review expectations for workplace behavior (including how to dress).



One day before the job shadows

- Send final confirmation emails to job shadow hosts, including contact information for questions or concerns during the day as well as emergency contact information. Attach evaluation forms for employers to complete after the job shadows.
- Send a reminder and description of the job shadow activity to media outlets (if previously agreed to by the participating employers).
- Confirm that all necessary parent permission and class absence forms were received and that all transportation arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that students have their job shadow schedules, transportation arrangements, forms, resumes, and instructions for what to do if they are ill or will be late.

Day of the job shadow

- Be available to attend to last-minute surprises.
- Direct media representatives to potential points of interest, such as an employer hosting several students or a workplace where students will be doing something particularly noteworthy.
- Visit as many job shadow sites as possible, taking photographs where it would not be disruptive to do so and prior permission has been obtained.

One day to one week after the job shadow

- Send thank-you emails to employers and host employees along with evaluation forms; include a few highlights from student comments, photos, or media clippings to demonstrate how their participation in job shadows made a difference.
- Collect and review student and employer evaluations. Capture lessons learned for planning future job shadows. Follow up with employers who made unfavorable comments on their evaluations and take appropriate action promptly.

- Follow up with media representatives, even if they did not visit job shadow sites. Media organizations that did not attend may be given information and photos they can use. Share any coverage with all stakeholders; it can also be used for future recruitment of job shadow hosts.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Have students complete thank-you notes to their job shadow hosts. Review the notes before they are sent.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Conduct reflection activities and compile written reflections for dissemination to all participating students (and their other teachers).
 - Assist students in evaluating what they learned through the job shadows and their interest in the careers offered by their host employers.
 - Encourage students to present their reflections to the class, directly following the job shadow or when class content is related to the job shadow location.

6.4 Job Shadow Resources

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 6: Job Shadows (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Sample Email to Employer from WBL Coordinator (Doc)
- Employer Orientation Agenda (Doc)
- Job Shadow Employer Participation Form (Doc)
- Sample Email for Employers or Others to Forward (Doc)

School:

- Teacher Permission Form for Class Absence (Doc)
- Student Registration and Parent-Guardian Permission Form for Job Shadows (Doc)

Employer:

- Job Shadow Employee Host Evaluation (Doc)
- Employer Job Shadow Checklist-Expectations (Doc)

Student:

- Job Shadow Student Evaluation (Doc)
- Job Shadow Student Observation Form (Doc)
- Student Introduction Email (Doc)



Chapter 7: Internships

7.1 Overview

What Are Internships?

Internships are often viewed as culminating WBL experiences, because they bring together skills and knowledge developed through previous career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities, connect them to classroom curricula, and allow students to apply them on the job. An internship is a WBL activity in which students spend consecutive days for a period of time (usually weeks) working for an employer. This allows them to test their interest in a career with that industry, occupation, or employer and to develop critical workplace and occupational skills. Unlike a summer or part-time job, an internship is connected to classroom learning and accompanied by structured reflection activities that help the student analyze and digest the experience. This “test drive” affords students an opportunity to confirm their future education and training decisions or, alternatively, choose another path.

Internships differ from other WBL activities by offering students hands-on skill and knowledge development through work. Students may earn credits for internships as well. Internships differ from ordinary summer or part-time jobs in two significant respects. First, they include a detailed learning plan for acquiring specific foundational skills that are required in all workplaces and specific career skills that are integrated with the classroom curriculum. Second, interns are supervised by school or district staff (in addition to employees in the workplace) before, during, and after the internships. These school-based supervisors help students prepare for their internships, make site visits, confer with interns and their workplace supervisors, assess and document progress on the learning plans, and convene periodic meetings of interns to reflect on their experiences. Interns should not fill positions that otherwise would be available to part- or full-time workers.

Internships differ from other WBL activities by offering students hands-on skill and knowledge development through work.



Internships offer employers the opportunity to get to know the next generation of employees, benefit from their work, and provide leadership development opportunities for the employees who supervise interns.

Which Students Participate in Internships?

Internships are typically offered to students in both academic and CTE classes who are going into their

junior or senior years of high school. Students are best prepared to intern after they have engaged in the full continuum of WBL activities (e.g., guest speakers, workplace tours, career fairs, informational interviews, and job shadows). Student interns are usually expected to have had some form of workplace experience (e.g., part-time/summer jobs or job shadows). Other eligibility criteria options are discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

How Are Internships Structured?

Internships may be structured in multiple ways. Students enrolled in formal CTE programs may be released from school during appropriate periods to participate in an internship. Students may also participate in internships after school, on weekends, or during school breaks. For summer internships, districts or schools will need to ensure that adequate school-based supervision (by a teacher, counselor, or other professional) is provided and included in the budget.

The length of an internship can vary. Decisions about the number of hours required for an internship and whether internships are paid and/or credit-bearing are made at the local level. In planning for internships, the WBL coordinator will want to research state or district policies that may link the possibility of earning credit to completion of a minimum number of hours in the workplace. Internships should be complemented by structured student reflections before, during, and after the internship in order to connect students' learning in the workplace with their academic work. In some locations, cooperative education (or co-op) programs that include work experience as part of a credit-bearing class may be available to CTE students. If co-op programs are offered in a district or school, the WBL coordinator should investigate the policies for students earning wages and or/credit and include CTE administrators in the planning for new internship opportunities.

Ideally, internship programs are large enough to offer internship opportunities to most juniors and seniors in a district or school. Where this is the case, most of the coordination is done at the school level by teachers, counselors, and/or career advisors, although employer

recruitment may be led by the WBL coordinator. School-based staff members need to assume more significant roles than for other WBL activities, because internships should be integrated with school curricula. Significant school-based pre-internship preparation, support during internships, and post-internship reflection activities are all required for successful internships. In larger cities and districts, WBL coordinators from multiple schools and agencies that serve out-of-school youth may need to plan collaboratively to limit the possibility of multiple requests to the same employers.

7.2 How to Implement Internships

Successful internships require collaboration, communication, and preparation by many stakeholders. The process involves:

- Recruiting employers willing to provide internship opportunities.
- Preparing students for internships.
- Preparing the employees who will supervise interns.
- Designing internships that will benefit both students and employers.
- Providing close school-based supervision and guidance before, during, and after the internships.

Implementing internships can be a complex, time-consuming process that begins early in the school year and extends through the summer into the following fall. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following steps should be followed when starting an internship program.

1. Convene the stakeholders needed to assist with implementing internships. These include employers, chambers of commerce and other industry or trade associations, school administrators, teachers, counselors, and career advisors.
2. Determine the scope and structure of the internship program, including policies that will govern student selection, intern supervision, and the awarding of credit (see table below for details on the decisions that will need to be made).
3. Estimate budget requirements for costs such as internship supervision during the summer and (possibly) stipends or other incentives for interns.
4. Assess students' career interests in order to target appropriate employers for recruitment.



5. Recruit employers to host internships and work with them to structure internships that will benefit students, employers, and workplace supervisors.
6. Select students who are interested in internships and meet the selection criteria.
7. Facilitate employers' interviews of student candidates for internships and allow the employers to make the final selections.
8. Prepare students for their internships.
9. Ensure that adequate supervision is provided during the internships through site visits, regular communication with workplace supervisors and students, and troubleshooting as needs arise.
10. Provide for structured student reflection, both individual and group, before, during, and after their internships.
11. Obtain evaluations of the activity from students and employers. Review school-based supervisor reports as well.
12. Compile, document, and share results of these evaluations with key stakeholders.
13. Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect about their internships and how they connect to their coursework and future education and career plans.
14. Recognize participating stakeholders, especially the host employers, workplace supervisors, and the students.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of the tasks entailed in implementing a well-organized internship program. These steps are presented in the form of a timeline, starting early in the school year. Some steps in the timeline will not apply to classes of adult students. The timeline is flexible and can be condensed, but proper planning is essential.

7.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. For internships, school-based stakeholders (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) play important roles. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to student internships.



The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that implementation of internships for students from a specific school and with specific employers is coordinated with other WBL activities planned for the same school or employers. Both the employers and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for student internships in that larger context. The WBL coordinator should be careful in



communicating with employers to avoid confusion if recruitment for student internships and teacher externships is occurring in the same time frame.

The WBL coordinator is assumed to be the person responsible for completing or assigning the tasks listed below, except where otherwise noted. The term “school-based supervisor” is used to refer to the person most responsible for working with students at a particular school before, during, and after their internships. Because this involves working in the summer and outside school hours, it is necessary to hire someone to carry out this work – be it a teacher, counselor, career advisor, or other professional.

Nine months to a year before the internships

There are several fundamental policy decisions that will shape a local internship program. Such decisions should be based on conversations with multiple stakeholders, including school district officials and school principals, counselors, and teachers. Making these decisions can take time, so the WBL coordinator needs to start the conversations well before the internship program will be implemented. WBL coordinators would be well-advised to start with a very small-scale program and expand later based on experience. Once a track record is built and the challenging issues resolved, expansion can go forward with greater confidence.

- Convene the appropriate stakeholders (e.g., district and/or school administrators and representatives of employers or employer associations) to design the internship program. The table that follows is designed to help staff identify internship policy and program design decisions for which stakeholder agreement is needed.

Number of internships desired	Factors may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student interest • Funding availability for summer school-based supervisors and other costs (see below) • Outlook for employer recruitment • Number of staff available to manage the internships
Paid vs. unpaid	<p>If paid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source (e.g., employers, district, school, or local philanthropies) • Hourly wage or stipend? How much? • Paid by whom? • Process for how time is recorded and payment is issued <p>If unpaid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other form of incentive to be offered (e.g., donated gift cards, clothing allowances, transportation costs, etc.)? <p>If some are paid and others are not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare appropriate messaging for students, parents, employers, and others
Credit vs. non-credit	<p>For credit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do state or district policies establish criteria for awarding credit for work experience? • Can credit be awarded through a class if there are no state or district policies? <p>Without credit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there other incentives students may receive?

Budget considerations	<p>Determine needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based supervision • Possible extra compensation for school-based supervisors in the months before and after the internships • Possible student stipends or incentives <p>Identify funding sources and secure commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District or school • Host employers • Other employer sponsors • Local philanthropies
Student eligibility criteria	<p>Might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of career awareness and exploration activities • Experience in a workplace (e.g., job shadow or part-time job) • Recommendation from classroom teacher or counselor • Minimum attendance and/or grade point average • Completion of application and interview process • Completion of student registration/parent permission forms • Ability to fulfill the time demands of the internship
Expectations for employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of job description and learning agreement with specific goals and benchmarks • Workplace supervision of intern • Documentation and assessment of student performance • Coordination and communication with WBL coordinator and/or school-based supervisor • Possible compensation for interns or contribution to support internship program • Evaluation at the end of the internship

School-based internship supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who will supervise internships (e.g., teachers, counselors, career advisors, or others) and to whom they will report • Establish schedule for regular communications between WBL coordinator and school-based supervisors • Determine expectations (e.g., pre-internship work with students, frequency of site visits and workplace supervisor consultations, progress reports, trouble-shooting, convening sessions for student reflections during internships, and post-internship activities) • Set compensation parameters for staff • Provide orientation and training to school-based supervisors as needed
Expectations for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in internship preparation activities in class or after-school sessions (e.g., resume writing, interview skills, workplace behavior and dress code expectations, etc.) • Understand and commit to completing their learning agreements • Arrange transportation to and from the workplace (e.g., self, parent, or other) • Be punctual and carry out assigned work • Ask questions of workplace supervisors • Comply with all workplace rules • Complete individual reflection assignments • Meet periodically with school-based supervisor and other interns for reflection activities • Complete evaluations at the end of their internships • Engage in post-internship reflection activities
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicable child labor and workplace safety regulations • Liability insurance, sometimes covered under a school district policy, an employer’s policy, or purchased separately • Worker’s compensation insurance, if intern is paid

At the beginning of the school year

- Communicate the policy and internship program design decisions to principals, teachers, counselors, and career advisors. Principals may wish to designate an individual contact at their schools to work with the WBL coordinator on the internship program; that person would then be responsible for sharing pertinent information with colleagues.

- Develop an internship program budget and identify the funding sources that will underwrite it. The budget should identify all anticipated costs, including: salary or stipends for students (if offered by the district or school), compensation for internship supervisor(s), liability insurance (if not covered by school district and/or employer policies), and recognition awards (such as gift cards) for students who successfully complete their internships (especially if they are unpaid).



- Determine which costs can be funded by the school or district and which need to be funded from other sources.
- Create a plan to solicit funding for the program, clearly identifying the process, the responsible parties, and their deadlines. Employers, local philanthropies, and municipal agencies may be asked to sponsor interns with a contribution to the program budget, even if they are unable to host interns.
- Work with school staff to determine how to obtain student registration and any necessary parent/guardian permission for internships. A sample form is provided in the *Resources* section.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Have students begin to identify and research potential industries or employers where they would like to intern. Lists of employers produced by economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, workforce development boards, and state departments of labor or commerce are good resources for this research, along with students' families and the internet. Each student should identify up to five local employers where they would like to intern.

Throughout the school year

- Review the employer outreach information in the *Introduction*.
- Begin employer outreach by targeting those that already have had successful experiences with WBL activities, have been identified by students, and/or have expressed interest in hosting an intern. A sample email for this purpose is provided in the *Resources* section. Expand outreach as needed, using the strategies listed below.
 - Use the WBL database to track employer contacts.
 - Contact advisory committee members and employers of former students.

- Meet with representatives of chambers of commerce, other industry and trade associations, and service clubs to talk about internships and ask them to encourage their members to participate. Provide whatever information they need (e.g., newsletter article or draft email to members) to make it easy for them to help. A sample email for a peer communication is included in the *Resources* section. The WBL coordinator might offer to attend a meeting to provide additional information about internships.
- Submit information to school newsletters, company newsletters, local newspapers, and other media outlets to recruit internship hosts.
- Send information home with students for parent awareness and recruitment of additional employers.
- Follow up on positive responses by asking willing employers to complete participation forms (a sample of which is included in the *Resources* section) to confirm their commitments. Ask each employer to designate a contact to work with the WBL coordinator and school staff to develop more detailed plans for the internship. This may be a human resources manager or an employee in a specific department who will supervise the intern on the job.
- Make sure that all the policy and program design decisions listed in the table preceding this section have been researched and resolved.
- Develop a protocol for working with employers to help them understand what it takes to host an intern and to plan a rewarding internship. The employer preparation information in the *Resources* section can be adapted to suit local needs and reflect the policy decisions that drive the local internship program. Every internship should include a learning plan that addresses foundational workplace skills and specific career-related skills. A sample learning plan template is provided in the *Resources* section.
- Be prepared to answer questions about details such as financial commitments expected from employers, liability coverage, etc.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Have students write or update their resumes and review expectations of being in a workplace, with emphasis on recognition and understanding of both written and unwritten rules of behavior, etiquette, and job responsibilities. Introduce students to the internship application. A sample application is provided in the *Resources* section.
- Recruit and select school-based supervisor(s) who will work with student interns and their workplace supervisors. These may



be teachers, counselors, career advisors, or other staff members. Their responsibilities will include:

- Participating in intern preparation and orientation.
- Leading student reflection activities during the internship.
- Visiting interns' work sites at least twice.
- Touching base with students and their workplace supervisors periodically.
- Reporting on students' progress on their learning plans.
- Troubleshooting any issues that arise during the internships.
- Leading post-internship reflection activities.

- Match student applications with confirmed internship sites, identifying three candidates for each internship, if possible. (This will likely mean that each student will be a candidate for more than one internship.) Continue to match students with internships and arrange for interviews until all accepted students have been placed.



- Schedule interviews for candidates for each internship with the employer-designated contact person. The interviews should ideally be conducted after school to avoid disruption of students' class schedules. They may take place either at the workplace or the school. If the former, make sure students arrange their own transportation; if the latter, be sure there is a quiet place available.
- Ask employer representatives for their final selections of student interns and communicate the placements to students, school-based supervisors, parents, and others, as appropriate.
- Schedule one or more workplace and school-based supervisor orientation sessions at times and locations that are convenient for all. The orientation agenda, a sample of which is provided in the *Resources* section, should address: expectations of school-based and workplace supervisors, the learning agreement template and its specific components, strategies for communicating with youth, time sheets, procedures for payment of interns (if applicable), provisions for individual and group student reflection activities, and documentation requirements for earning school credit. Orientation sessions should take place one to two months before internships start and should be attended by the employees who will supervise the interns' work and the school-based

supervisors. For those unable to attend an orientation session, special arrangements will need to be made for one-on-one briefings.

- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors:** Develop a list of interested students who meet the established eligibility criteria and are likely to be available for the duration of the internship program. Consult with counselors and career advisors, and select only those students who, in their judgment, are ready for the responsibilities of internships.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors or school-based supervisors:** Have eligible students complete applications for the internship program. A sample application is provided in the *Resources* section.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors or school-based supervisors:** Introduce students to job interview techniques and have them practice interviewing each other.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors or school-based supervisors:** Have students send introductory emails to the employer contacts at the workplaces for which they are internship candidates. A sample is provided in the *Resources* section.



Two months to one month before the internships

- Finish student interview and selection processes.
- Hold the workplace and school-based supervisor orientations.
- Work with school-based supervisors to develop student reflection assignments and procedures.
- **School-based supervisors:** Conduct one or more orientation sessions for students. The agenda (a sample of which is provided in the *Resources* section) should address: expectations for the internship; strategies for communicating with supervisors and other professionals, workplace behavior, the learning plan, the role of the school-based supervisor, time sheets and payment schedules (if applicable), reflection activities during the internship, and documentation requirements for earning credit (if applicable). If possible, parents should attend this orientation to learn how they can support their students in fulfilling internship responsibilities.
- **School-based supervisors:** Make sure that each student's learning plan is complete and review it with the workplace supervisor and the student.

One month before the internships

- Reconfirm that the workplace supervisors, school-based supervisors, and students all understand their roles and responsibilities. Make sure all interns have arranged transportation to and from their workplaces.
- Review logistics and procedures with the school-based supervisors and make sure that plans are in place for student reflection assignments and activities. If the school building is not open during the summer, an alternate location for student reflection meetings will need to be identified.

Two weeks before the internships

- Send reminder emails to both workplace and school-based supervisors, confirming details of internships along with student names and contact information.
- Be available to answer questions from employers, students, parents, and school-based supervisors.
- **School-based supervisors:** Schedule meetings or check-ins with workplace supervisors periodically throughout the internship.
 - Site visits are typically scheduled early in the internship and at about the three-quarters point. More frequent telephone or email check-ins are advised.
 - Be sure the workplace supervisors and the student interns are aware of whom to contact with any questions or concerns at any time during the internship.



One week before the internships

- Reconfirm any arrangements that were not in place at the last check and send a quick reminder email to school-based and workplace supervisors and students.

During the internships

- **School-based supervisors:** Check in with employers on the first or second day of the internships to make sure students were prompt and the internships are off to good starts. Intervene with students and/or workplace supervisors as needed.

- **School-based supervisors:** Conduct first visits to employer sites (generally after one week) and review progress on learning agreement goals with students and their workplace supervisors. Skill attainment should be demonstrated and documented. If skill development is not progressing satisfactorily, work with the student and supervisor to reconfigure the internship.
- **School-based supervisors:** Send progress reports summarizing students' attainment of the skills detailed in their learning plans to the person to whom they report.
- **School-based supervisors:** Collect student time sheets (see sample in *Resources* section) weekly and touch base by phone or email with the interns and their workplace supervisors. If the district or school is handling payment of salaries or stipends, paychecks can be delivered when time sheets are collected.
- **School-based supervisors:** Conduct second site visits (generally about three-quarters of the way through the internships) to review students' performance. Review learning plan progress and submit progress reports.
- **School-based supervisors:** Distribute student reflection materials throughout the internship as scheduled during the planning process. Review, track, and grade (if necessary) individual student reflection assignments during the internships. Convene student meetings for group reflections at planned intervals during the internships. As a local option, students who do not have internships but are working at summer or after-school jobs may be invited to join these discussions.
- **School-based supervisors:** Review student reflections promptly. Students might identify issues and concerns that they do not mention during weekly check-ins or site visits. Intervene as needed.
- **School-based supervisors:** Maintain records for credit-earning options as needed and submit required paperwork.

One day to one week after the internship

- **School-based supervisors or WBL coordinator:** Send thank-you emails to both the employers and the workplace supervisors (which may be the same person in a small organization).
- **School-based supervisors or WBL coordinator:** Distribute internship evaluations to workplace supervisors, collect and review completed evaluations, and move promptly to follow up on negative responses.
- **School-based supervisors or WBL coordinator:** Distribute internship evaluations to students.



- **School-based supervisors or WBL coordinator:** Analyze evaluations and identify common themes to be shared with the internship planning team, school-based staff, workplace supervisors, and students. Move promptly to follow up on negative evaluations and capture lessons learned to use for future program improvements.



- **School-based supervisors:** Complete final reports on each students' performance on their learning plans, in consultation with their workplace supervisors, and share them with the students and their teachers and counselors.
- **School-based supervisors:** Have students complete thank-you notes to their workplace supervisors. Review the notes before students send them.
- **School-based supervisors or WBL coordinator:** Conduct a post-internship reflection meeting with all student interns, focusing on how their internships connect with the courses they will take in the future. Present them with recognition awards (gift cards or other), if they were included in the budget.
- Recognize employer hosts and workplace supervisors. One form of recognition could be a celebratory event, where students showcase what they have learned. Co-hosting the event with a chamber of commerce or other local organization or agency provides a wider audience, helps with recruitment for future internships and other WBL activities, and acknowledges the efforts of the employers that hosted internships. Invite the school-based supervisor(s) and interns' classroom teachers, counselors, career advisors, and principals.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors or school-based supervisors:** Have students produce culminating projects or reports on their internship experiences and how they connect to school curricula. Have students request letters of recommendation from their workplace supervisors, which can be used when they seek employment in the future.
- **Teachers/counselors/career advisors or school-based supervisors:** Identify ways to use student internship experiences in the classroom to illustrate for all students the connections between academic curricula and career success.

7.4 Internship Resources

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 7: Internships (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Sample Email for Employers to Forward (Doc)
- Sample Email to Employer from WBL Coordinator (Doc)
- Internship Employer Participation Form (Doc)

School:

- Student Orientation Agenda (Doc)
- Workplace Supervisor and School-Based Supervisor Orientation Agenda (Doc)
- Learning Agreement (Doc)
- Student Registration and Parent-Guardian Permission Form for Internship (Doc)

Employer:

- Work-Based Supervisor Evaluation (Doc)
- Employer Preparation Information (Doc)

Student:

- Student Internship Evaluation (Doc)
- Student Timesheet (Doc)
- Student Introduction Email (Doc)
- Student Internship Application Form (Doc)



Chapter 8: Teacher Workplace Tours

8.1 Overview

What Are Teacher Workplace Tours?

Teacher workplace tours are professional development and work-based learning activities that enable classroom teachers to gain first-hand insights into the career opportunities open to their students and the nature of the workplaces that offer those careers. Like the student workplace tours described in *Chapter 3*, teacher workplace tours can provide fresh perspectives on the skills required in different careers and about the ways in which academic skills are applied in the workplace. For some teachers, they are the first exposure in a long time to a workplace other than a school. Teacher workplace tours also provide opportunities for dialogues between teachers and employees to enhance understanding about how the knowledge and skills gained in school are applied in the workplace and how those connections can be strengthened. (Note: In this chapter, “employer” refers to the workplace that teachers are visiting, “employer representative” refers to the person who works with the WBL coordinator to plan a visit, and “employee” refers to the individual(s) with whom teachers interact during their visit.)

Teacher workplace tours can provide fresh perspectives on the skills required in different careers and about the ways in which academic skills are applied in the workplace.

Which Teachers Participate in Workplace Tours?

All teachers can benefit from workplace tours, especially those involved with WBL activities for students in the 7th through 12th grades. Teacher workplace tours can also assist teachers by providing real-world examples they can use in their lesson plans. One teacher workplace tour per year per teacher is a typical practice, but individual districts or schools may wish to set different targets.



Workplace tours are also helpful for administrators, counselors, and career advisors — especially those new to WBL activities. The term “teacher” used throughout this chapter should be taken to include these other educators.

How Are Teacher Workplace Tours Structured?

Teacher workplace tours are often scheduled for weekdays

when it is convenient for an employer to host a small group of teachers (up to five or six). Unless the tours are scheduled for days already set aside for professional development or take place after school or on a weekend day, schools will need to secure substitute teachers or make other arrangements for the classes the teachers miss to be covered. To avoid imposing excessively on an employer, teacher tours should be planned for small groups rather than individual teachers. Grouping teachers in different subjects from the same school may be beneficial, because they will have more opportunities to reflect together on what they learned and how they can apply it to their teaching. Teachers from the same school who tour a workplace together can support one another as they try out different ways of using workplace applications in the content they teach.

Teacher workplace tours typically include an introductory overview, a tour, a presentation about various career opportunities and the skills and education required, and a discussion session for teachers and the employer representative. Many teacher workplace tours also incorporate some time for teachers to shadow a professional to allow for more in-depth one-on-one exchanges. The discussion period can be the most valuable part of the tour, both for teachers and hosts, so ample time should be provided.

Teacher tours are usually planned to be three to four hours in duration. While each tour should be tailored based on the preferences of the teachers, the employer representative, and the school schedule, a sample outline for the experience might include:

- Introductions, welcome, and overview of the industry and the employer: 15-30 minutes
- Workplace tour: 30 minutes (more if employees at each stop on the tour talk about their fields)
- Presentation on the industry, the careers it offers, and the skills and education or training required: 30 minutes (unless covered as part of the tour)
- Job shadow time, if desired: 1 hour
- Discussion time: 30-45 minutes (perhaps over lunch)

The employer representative is often a human resources manager who is particularly knowledgeable about the hiring requirements for different jobs and the degree to which candidates typically fulfill those requirements or fall short. Employees from different disciplines or departments usually participate as well.

Following the tour, time should be set aside at school for the group of teachers to reflect on their experiences and how they can be used to enhance what they do in their classrooms.

8.2 How to Implement a Teacher Workplace Tour

Successful teacher workplace tours require collaboration, communication, and preparation by the WBL coordinator, school administrators, teachers, and employer representatives. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following basic steps are involved in planning and implementing a teacher workplace tour.

1. Engage district and/or school administrators, teachers, counselors, career advisors, and representatives of employers and employer associations in the planning process.
2. Work with school administrators to determine how many tours to schedule and identify multiple options for dates.
3. Gather input from the teachers (and others) who might be participating in the tour(s) on which industries and/or employers they would most like to visit.
4. Using the WBL database and other resources, contact the top-priority employers to request that they host a small group of teachers. Work with each willing employer to plan a tour that will be an enriching experience for both teachers and employees.
5. Prepare teachers and employees for the tour.
6. Carry out the teacher workplace tour.
7. Provide structured opportunities for reflection by teachers.
8. Obtain evaluations from teachers and employer representative.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of steps that should be taken to implement a well-organized teacher workplace tour. These steps are presented in the form of a timeline, which can be condensed or elongated, based on local needs.



8.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to teacher workplace tours.

The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that the scheduling of workplace tours with specific employers or teachers from particular schools is coordinated with the implementation of other WBL activities planned for those employers or schools. Both the employers and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for workplace tours in that larger context.

Note: The WBL coordinator is assumed to be responsible for completing or assigning each task described below, except as noted otherwise.

Three months before the teacher workplace tours

- Work with school administrators to determine how many tours should be planned and identify multiple options for dates on which to schedule them.
- Gather input from teachers and others who may be eligible to participate in a workplace tour about what industries and/or employers they would like to visit.
- Based on teachers' interests, use the WBL database and other sources (e.g., advisory committee members, employers of former students, organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, workforce development boards, state departments of labor or commerce, and the personal networks of district and school staff members) to identify employers to target.
- Review the information on employer outreach in the *Introduction*.
- Begin outreach to employers, based on teachers' interests, to request that they consider hosting a small group of teachers. The sample email and employer participation form in the *Resources* section may be used or adapted for this purpose.



- Identify an employer representative at each workplace that agrees to host a group of teachers. Work with each employer representative to schedule the tour for a convenient date and to develop a tour agenda that will be informative and engaging for both teachers and employees. See the sample checklist in the *Resources* section.
- Determine whether there are special security or safety precautions that must be observed, and obtain permission to take photographs of the teachers and employees, if desired.
- **Principals:** Select which teachers will participate in each workplace tour.
- **School administrators:** Make plans to ensure that any classes teachers will miss will be covered by substitutes or other teachers, unless the tour is scheduled for a professional development day when students will not be in school.



One month before the teacher workplace tours

- Work with employer representatives to complete plans for the tours, make sure they understand what is expected of them, and clarify what is expected of the visiting teachers.
- Work with the employer representatives to identify employees who will be shadowed by teachers (if applicable). Match teachers with employees who will be shadowed.
- Work with school administrators to determine what teachers will be expected to produce after the workplace tours. Deliverables may include written reflections on their experiences or lesson plans that incorporate what teachers learned about the skills required in the workplaces they visited.
- Prepare teachers by providing information about each employer’s dress code and other expectations for tour participants.
- Make sure teachers have made plans for transportation on the days of the tours (e.g., carpool from school or meet at the employer site).
- Determine whether teachers will need to provide personal information to gain access to the facility or site.
- **Teachers:** Collect information about the employers and their industries, including: the products and services the employers provide; the nature and size of their workforces; and any other information that would be useful. Sources might include employer

representatives, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, the employers' websites, or acquaintances who work for these employers.

One week before the teacher workplace tour

- Confirm that the school administration has made plans for teachers' classes to be covered, if necessary.
- Reconfirm arrangements with the employer representatives. This includes ordering food, if needed.
- Reconfirm plans with teachers.



One day before the teacher workplace tour

- Confirm that any needed teacher identification information has been provided to the employer and teachers have been approved for site access.
- Send final emails to the employer representatives and the teachers.
 - Include driving directions, a timeline for the day, and whom to contact upon arrival.
 - Make sure the employer representatives have the names of all the teachers.
 - Provide contact information for the WBL coordinator in case a participant is ill or delayed en route.
 - Distribute evaluation forms for employer representatives and teachers to complete (see samples in *Resources* section).

Day of the teacher workplace tour

- Stop in during the tour, if possible, to make sure everything is going as planned, take photographs, and answer questions as needed.
- Ensure evaluation forms are completed and collected from the employer representatives and the teachers.

One day to one week after the teacher workplace tour

- Review evaluation forms and send emails thanking employer representatives and sharing highlights of the feedback received from teachers. Address any employer or teacher questions or concerns.
- Compile and share the evaluation responses and identify recurring themes.
- Confirm that teachers have completed their deliverables (e.g., written reflections or lesson plans) and obtain copies to share with other teachers, as appropriate.
- Give appropriate recognition to host employers (see the *Introduction* for some of the ways to do so).

8.4 Teacher Workplace Tour Resources

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 8: Teacher Workplace Tours (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Sample Email for Employers or Others to Forward (Doc)
- Sample Email to Employer from WBL Coordinator (Doc)
- Teacher Workplace Tour Employer Participation Form (Doc)

Employer

- Teacher Workplace Tour Employer Representative Evaluation (Doc)
- Teacher Workplace Tours Checklist-Expectations for Employer (Doc)

Teacher:

- Teacher Workplace Tour Teacher Evaluation (Doc)



Chapter 9: Teacher Externships

9.1 Overview

What are Teacher Externships?

Teacher externships are work-based learning and professional development opportunities that provide teachers extended exposure to contemporary work environments and the types of careers their students may pursue. They are hands-on learning experiences that help teachers enrich their classroom pedagogy by using real-world applications of the academic content they teach. By having their own WBL experiences, teachers also can become better-equipped to prepare students for WBL activities. Externships involve explicit preparation, reflection during and after the experiences, and completion of specific products, such as lesson plans.

Externships offer teachers opportunities to build personal relationships with employers and the employees who are their colleagues during their externships, and thus enable the participating teachers to become ambassadors for WBL programs. After hosting teacher externships, employers may become more willing to engage in other WBL activities.

While student internships are career preparation activities for students who have yet to enter the workforce, teacher externships are opportunities for experienced professionals to enhance their knowledge and skills in ways that will benefit their students over the long term. Teachers can also benefit the employers who host their externships by bringing fresh perspectives to challenges in the workplace.

They are hands-on learning experiences that help teachers enrich their classroom pedagogy by using real-world applications of the academic content they teach.

Which Teachers Participate in Teacher Externships?

All teachers can benefit from teacher externships, especially those who work with 7th- through 12th-grade students who participate in WBL activities. Externships may also be appropriate opportunities for counselors, career advisors, and other educators who work directly with students. Participation in teacher externships should be voluntary. Depending on the design of the externship program, teachers may earn continuing education or graduate credits. Most are paid at least nominal stipends.

How Are Teacher Externships Structured?

Teacher externships usually take place during the summer, typically for 30 to 40 hours per week for a period of one to eight weeks. As with other WBL activities, the length and structure of teacher externships should reflect local needs and opportunities (e.g., availability of positions, teacher interests, or funding for stipends). Teacher externs typically meet periodically to reflect, share observations, or discuss ideas for how to use their externship experiences to enrich their teaching. Other reflection activities might include blogging, journaling, or writing articles for publication.



The content of each teacher externship should be agreed upon by both the employer and the teacher, with the WBL coordinator or school administrator playing a facilitating role. Teacher externs often work on projects that provide real value to the employers and can be completed in the designated timeframe. Examples of teacher externship projects include: research on operating efficiencies between departments, process redesign, or market research. Alternatively, teachers might rotate through several departments within an organization, perhaps filling in for vacationing employees, to learn about several careers in which their students may be interested. Externships should not be used to fill positions that otherwise would be available to part- or full-time employees.

During their externships, teachers are often expected to develop lesson plans that use real-world work situations to teach academic content. The lesson plans are typically presented to their employer hosts and shared among participating teachers and other district and school staff at the end of the externships.

Teacher externships are usually compensated in the form of stipends. Funding for stipends may be provided by employers, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, districts or schools, or local philanthropies. Colleges may participate by awarding continuing education or graduate credits. Decisions about stipends and credits need to be made early in the planning process to ensure adequate information is in place for outreach to employers and teachers. Because teacher externships usually take place in the summer, a principal or district staff member will need to be available “on call” to help resolve any problems that may arise.



To learn more about well-established teacher externship programs in three locations across the United States, see the *Resources* section.

9.2 How to Implement a Teacher Externship

Successful teacher externships require collaboration, communication, and preparation by school and district administrators, employer organizations, employers, and colleges. Teacher externships require extensive planning, which should begin early in the school year. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following steps are involved in implementing a teacher externship program.

1. Work with district and/or school administrators, representatives of employers and employer associations, and college representatives to determine the scope and structure of the externship program, including policies that will govern teacher selection, stipends, and academic credit as well as the roles each partner will play.
2. Budget for any district or school contribution to extern stipends. Determine funding expectations of employers who host teacher externs.
3. Assess teacher interest in externships and identify which industries and employers should be targeted for recruitment as hosts.
4. Recruit employers to host externships. Because hosting an externship requires a significant commitment from an employer, this may be a lengthy process.
5. Select teacher applicants but allow host employers to interview and select the teachers for externships.

6. Facilitate the design of each externship, working with both the teacher and the employer.
7. Determine who will monitor implementation of externships during the summer, resolve any problems that arise, and provide logistical support as needed. (Note: Existing externship programs have found that having an administrator “on call” is all they need and that the need to call on that person seldom, if ever, arises.)
8. Provide structured opportunities for teachers to reflect.
9. Obtain evaluations from teachers and employers.
10. Recognize participating teachers, employers, employees, and college partners.

Due to the complexity of planning and implementing teacher externships, the WBL coordinator would be well-advised to start on a very small scale. Once a track record has been built and the challenging issues resolved, expansion can go forward with greater confidence. The following pages provide a more detailed description of the implementation steps listed above, presented in the form of a timeline, which can be condensed or stretched out based on local circumstances.



9.3 Suggested Implementation Timeline

Note: Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or school staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for supporting the planning and implementation of WBL activities. In the case of teacher externships, many of the responsibilities should be assumed by school administrators and teachers. The WBL coordinator’s responsibilities should include employer recruitment, maintaining the WBL database, and providing logistical support.

The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that implementation of teacher externships for teachers from specific schools and employers is coordinated with other WBL activities planned for the same schools or employers. Both the employers and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for teacher externships in that larger context. The WBL coordinator should be careful in

communicating with employers to avoid confusion if recruitment for student internships and teacher externships is occurring in the same time frame.

The WBL coordinator is assumed to be the person responsible for completing or assigning the tasks listed below, except where otherwise noted.

At or before the beginning of the school year

- Convene the appropriate stakeholders (e.g., district and/or school administrators, representatives of employers and/or employer associations, and college representatives) to design the externship program for the following summer, determine the policies that should govern its implementation, and define the roles that each stakeholder should play. Some of the basic policy choices are summarized in the table below.

Number of externships (goal)	<p>Factors may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher interest. • Funding availability for extern stipends. • Outlook for employer recruitment. • Capacity of district, school, college, or other entity to provide logistical support during the summer. • Value of starting small and expanding over time.
Budget considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of stipend and number of externships. • Fees for teachers to earn credits (if not paid by teachers). • Host employers’ expected contributions. • Other funding sources (e.g., district, school, college, or local philanthropies).
Criteria and process for selecting teachers	<p>Possible criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific subjects or grade levels. • Involvement with preparing students for WBL activities. • Interest in specific high-demand industries/employers. <p>Selection process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application. • Selection of finalists by school administrators. • Employer interviews of candidates. • Final selection by employers.

Will teachers earn credit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing education or graduate credits? • Identification of which colleges will award credit. • Requirements (e.g., hours and deliverables) to earn credit. • Fees required for earning credit and who will pay.
Employer recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBL coordinator to draw on multiple resources (e.g., WBL database and personal networks of district and school staff) to identify and recruit host employers. • Contact advisory committee members and employers of former students. • Assistance from chamber of commerce, economic development agency, workforce development board, or state department of labor or commerce. • Targeted employers based on teacher interests.
Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration of externship (might vary among employers). • Hours per week (might vary among employers). • Frequency of meetings of teacher externs.
Work and learning plan for externships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and plans developed jointly by employers and teachers. • Special projects of value to employers or rotation through multiple departments. • Work assignments that are intellectually challenging and rigorous. • Specific learning goals negotiated among teacher, employer, and college (if credit is to be awarded).
Supervision expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers to supervise day-to-day work. • Supervisory role for colleges if they award credits. • Principal or WBL coordinator to ensure that teachers are accountable for deliverables (during or after externship). • Teachers to convene their own reflection meetings during the summer. • On-call district or school administrator for troubleshooting any problems that arise.

Teacher responsibilities and deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet employer expectations for punctuality, workplace behavior and attire, and quality of work. • Organize and participate in individual and group reflection activities. • Document achievement of learning goals. • Produce at least (number) of lesson plans that use workplace experience to enrich the teaching of academic subjects.
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- Complete the process of making the policy decisions noted above, assigning roles, and securing necessary funding before starting to recruit teachers and employers.

Six months before the externships

- Assess teacher interest in externships and identify which industries or employers are of greatest interest.
- Review employer outreach section of the *Introduction* and begin targeted employer recruitment. Sample recruitment emails are provided in the *Resources* section, as is a form to use to confirm employer participation.
- Work with employers interested in hosting externships to identify the work the extern will be expected to complete and define what they would look for in a teacher candidate. The employer checklist in the *Resources* section can be used for this task.
- Determine whether teachers will need to provide personal information to gain access to the facility or site.
- **Principals or WBL coordinator:** Conduct initial teacher application and selection process, designating more finalists than there are anticipated slots so that employers can interview pre-qualified candidates and make their final selections. A sample application is provided in the *Resources* section.



Four to three months before the externships

- When employers and teachers are ready, have teacher candidates who meet the employers' specifications send introductory notes to the employer hosts with their resumes. Allow employers to select which candidates they would like to interview.

- Continue outreach to employers and extern selection process, as needed, until recruitment goals are met.
- **Teachers:** Make appointments for interviews.
- **Employers:** Select teacher externs.



Three to two months before the externships

- Facilitate meetings between teachers and their workplace supervisors to develop work and learning plans for the externships and define deliverables that will be expected. If credits are to be offered, college representatives should review the plans to ensure that they meet the criteria for awarding credit. (Note: These meetings could take place closer to the time of the externship if the employer needs more time to determine what its needs are. However, teachers need to know whether and when they will be participating in externships so they can plan for their summer breaks.)
- Facilitate meeting(s) between college representatives and teachers who may be seeking credit for their externships to determine the role of the college in overseeing an externship, defining what deliverables will be required, and the procedure for paying fees. (Unless the district or school has planned and budgeted for these fees, the teachers may be responsible for paying them.)

Two months before the externships

- Touch base with teachers and workplace supervisors to review and reconfirm the work and learning plans and make sure everyone knows what is expected of them.
- Confirm that any needed teacher identification information has been provided to the employer and teachers have been approved for site access.
- **Principals and teachers:** Agree on deliverables for reflection activities and lesson plans to be produced during and after externships.
- **Teachers:** Decide among themselves when, where, and how frequently they will meet as a group for reflection during their externships.
- **Principals, other administrators, or WBL coordinator:** Work with employers, teachers, and college representatives (if engaged) to develop plans for progress reports and submission of deliverables.

One month before the externships

- Touch base with teachers and host employers to reconfirm plans and expectations.

- Make sure that procedures are in place for documenting hours worked, stipend payments, progress reports, reflection meetings, and deliverables.
- **Teachers:** Touch base with college representatives, if seeking credit for externships, to make sure that criteria, procedures, and fees for awarding credit are clearly understood.

One week before the externships

- Send reminder to teachers and workplace supervisors with all contact information, including the “on-call” district or school administrator, so any problems that arise can be addressed promptly.

During the externships

- **Teachers:** Convene reflection meetings at the intervals previously designated. These are opportunities to share externship experiences, get ideas for resolving on-the-job challenges, report progress on work and learning plans, and try out lesson plan ideas for applying their externship experiences to classroom teaching. These meetings might also be occasions for presentations by employers about industry trends, workplace skills, training programs, or other topics that may be useful and interesting to teachers and their students.

One day to one week after the externships

- Send email to employer hosts and workplace supervisors to thank them for providing teacher externship opportunities and ask them to complete evaluation forms. Send emails to teachers asking them to complete evaluation forms as well. Samples of both are provided in the *Resources* section.
- **Teachers:** Send thank-you emails to host employers and the employees who supervised them directly.
- **College representatives:** Meet with teachers to review their documentation and deliverables for earning credit. Touch base with employers if additional information is needed from them.



At the beginning of the school year

- Schedule time for teacher externs to share their new lesson plans and externship experiences with colleagues at their schools and across the district.

- Collect and review employer and teacher evaluations.
- Follow up with employers and teachers regarding concerns or comments, as needed.
- Consider holding a closing event where teachers present their externship accomplishments and employers share their views.

9.4 Resources

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

Chapter 9: Teacher Externships (includes all resources) (PDF)

WBL coordinator:

- Teacher Externship Employer Participation Form (Doc)
- Sample Email for Employers to Forward (Doc)
- Sample Email to Employer from WBL Coordinator (Doc)

Employer:

- Teacher Externship Employer Evaluation (Doc)
- Teacher Externship Employer Checklist-Expectations (Doc)

Teacher:

- Externship Teacher Evaluation (Doc)
- Teacher Externship Application Form (Doc)