

Internship Planning 101: A Guide to Preparing for your Internship Experience

What is an internship?

- A chance to apply some of your previous classroom experience to a real-world setting.
- A chance to practice “professional” skills (attitude, teamwork, attendance, workplace dress) as you transition from being a
- student to a worker.
- A “first-step” towards preparing you for life after high school.
- An opportunity to look inside an industry and an organization, to see if you will ‘fit’

What will my internship provide for me?

The most successful internships occur when you already have some experience with the field (at minimum, one class, some previous hands-on experience via hobbies, etc).

Think about these things:

- Which industry are you thinking about interning in? (healthcare, education, agriculture, etc)
- How much experience do you already have in this field? (a class, hobbies, etc. Think of everything –even things that you’ve taught yourself!)

Your Turn! Write your ideas here by answering the following questions.

1. Which industry?

2. What can you already contribute to a workplace in this industry? (Example: cosmetology. Skilled with phones, customer contact, cleaning, cash register, hair trends)

3. What time can I commit to an internship?

4. Is it going to be a priority for me at this time in my life? Some internships can work well at any time of the day. Other internships work better in either the morning or the afternoon, depending on the business’s work cycles. Some internship sites prefer that you are there every day. Some worksites won’t work well for any internship blocks, particularly if the people who work there travel a lot or have a lot of variety in their work schedules.

5. How flexible is your class schedule?

6. Are certain required classes only offered during certain semesters?

7. How will that impact your availability for your internship?

8. Do you have sports, clubs, work, or play practice directly after school, making it difficult to do a 4th block internship out-of-town?

9. Will you be missing several days of school due to competitions & other school activities? If so, can you wait to do your internship during a different semester?

10. How will you get to your internship site (walk, drive, etc). If you share a vehicle with other family members, when will you most likely have access to it? (Note: no car-pooling is allowed for internship travel).

Your Own Goals for Your Internship:

It is important to note that the best internship experiences involve YOU identifying learning goals.

Why?

- Your goals & the organization's goals might be different.
- Can you meet in the middle?
- No idea of what you'd like to learn? GOOGLE IT! Try "career" + "internship", and read some job descriptions online to get some tentative ideas.
- Remember that career planning builds on itself in steps.

Example: Would you take 8th grade math, and then enroll in Calculus? You'd definitely struggle and would probably fail. An internship is like that, too. If you haven't taken at least one class that is related to your internship, it will be a struggle to understand what is happening each day, and it will lead to frustration unless you anticipate this and take steps along the way to learn more about what is happening each day at your site. It is more realistic to picture your long-term career goal, and then use your high-school internship as a bridge towards the next step.

11. Are you hoping to find out what it's like to work in a particular field?

12. Is an internship the best avenue for this? Or, would volunteering, shadowing, or attending a camp be more helpful & appropriate for your schedule?

13. What kinds of new skills are you hoping to learn & practice & why? Make sure your list has a mixture of both technical skills & "soft skills". If you don't know what skills are required for your future job, be sure to ask me!

14. Are you hoping to expand your network of contacts? If so, what kinds of people are you hoping to meet?

15. Are you hoping to strengthen your resume? What are you hoping to add to it?

Think about your long-term goals.

- Challenge yourself to find one job listing that is related to your long-term goals, and find out what is required in terms of technical & soft skills. Can you use your high school internship to get you one step closer to that goal?
Example: long-term goal is cosmetology shop owner. Hoping to learn more about advertising techniques, merchandising products, product lines, dealing with old & young customers, sanitation procedures, ordering, training, etc.

What happens this summer?

- It depends on your internship placement. You might get asked to complete a background check, a TB test, an application, or even do an interview, etc.
- Please be sure to check your email periodically in August so that we can have your placement ready by the time school starts.
- Once school starts, you'll report to the Internship Supervisor's class on the first day of your internship class. She will have a folder & some paperwork for you to fill out.
- After that, you'll complete some online educational modules to prepare you for the "professional world".
- You'll spend the first two weeks of the semester in your supervisor's class. At some point during those two weeks, though, you will have a meeting at your internship site, with your new boss, and an Internship Supervisor. At that time, you will meet your new co-workers, have your internship contract signed, and discuss your work schedule, dress code, goals, etc.
- Once you have that meeting, you are free to start reporting to your internship site! Your supervisor will have you keep track of your time on a calendar. The calendar is used for attendance purposes and will be submitted.
- You will also keep weekly journals.
- Twice during the semester (mid-term & finals), your on-site supervisor will complete an evaluation about your work. They will have a chance to provide comments on your attendance, attitude, willingness to learn, etc.
- At some point during the semester, a site visit will also be conducted by an internship supervisor.