



Developing a Paid or Non-Paid Internship

An internship is a temporary position that emphasizes on-the-job training. Here are some steps to take for developing and supporting students in securing an internship experience.

1. Assess students' interests

Discuss a student's career interests with them. If they are still uncertain, you can support them in taking a self-assessment to identify top career clusters that match their interests. Family members and teachers can be a great resource in identifying student career interests.

2. Discuss multiple internship opportunities

Use resources such as LinkedIn, Indeed, Internships.com, and community-based resources (parents, local organizations) to determine what opportunities exist and present them to the student. Discuss the opportunities that each one may have and how they align with their interests or will allow them to explore a new field.

3. Work with students to create or develop a resume, cover letter, or one-page profile

Most internships will still involve an application process. Work with students to create or develop their resume, cover letter, or one-page profile. Even if a student has had no work experiences before, they can include other Work-Based Learning experiences such as job shadowing, volunteering, or participating in a school-based enterprise. Students can use this [resume generator](#) to incorporate their skills and relevant experiences. Examples and templates for a one-page profile can be found under the Transition Tennessee Self-Advocacy course's [supplemental materials](#).

4. Prepare student for interview

Practice and review overall tips and tricks for interviewing. If the student will need any accommodations for the interview, make sure to discuss this with the student on how to arrange them.



5. Follow-up with internship site

Check-in regularly with the student's supervisor at the internship site. If there are any concerns or issues, see how you can be a support in addressing them. If the feedback is positive, relay that back to the student to build their self-efficacy. Ensure that the site is a quality and safe learning environment and is accomplishing the key objectives of the internship experience such as on-the-job training and skill building.

6. Reflect with the student

Check-in regularly with the student on how the internship is going. Likewise, if they have concerns about something on site, work to address them. Reinforce the importance of self-advocacy and communication skills during the internship. Have the students consider key experiences they have had and how that informs what they may seek to do in their future career.

7. Conclude the experience

At the conclusion of the internship, work with students and the employer to have an exit interview where they can communicate overall strengths and areas for improvement from the experience. Have the student and employer fill out evaluation forms and share contact information for future use. The student may want to use their supervisor as a reference in the future.

For supporting students are already in an internship

If students already in an intership, you can still engage in tasks of communication and reflection to support their overall experience.

1. Check-in regularly with the internship site

Introduce your role as a provider of Pre-ETS and some of the overarching goals you wish for the student to accomplish to through the internship. Ask if there are any concerns or issues. If so, determine how you can be a support in addressing them. If the feedback is positive, relay that back to the student to build their self-efficacy. Ensure that the site is a quality and safe learning environment and is accomplishing the key objectives of the internship experience such as on-the-job training and skill building.

2. Reflect with the student

Also, check-in periodically with the student on how the internship is going. Likewise, if they have concerns about something on site, work to address them. Reinforce the importance of self-advocacy and communication skills during the internship. Have the students consider key experiences they have had and how that informs what they may seek to do in their future career.



3. Conclude the experience

At the conclusion of the internship, work with students and the employer to have an exit interview where they can communicate overall strengths and areas for improvement from the experience. Have the student and employer fill out evaluation forms and share contact information for future use. The student may want to use their supervisor as a reference in the future.

4. Connect the internship to classroom instruction

Have the student connect class content to what they are learning or practicing at their internship. For example, if you are discussing professional communication, ask the student to give an example of when they communicated well at their internship site.

Criteria to consider for student participation in a non-paid internship

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern
- The intern does not replace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff
- For non-paid internships the intern is not entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship