

# Internships for 9-14 Schools: Planning Timeline and Guiding Questions

## *How to Use This Document:*

Creating a medium to large internship program requires multiple years of planning prior to students beginning their work placements. The following timeline identifies key planning tasks for the two years leading up to the start of a new internship program. The timeline is most appropriate for schools implementing internships during the summer.

It may be useful for leaders from the school, district, and employer to review, achieve consensus, and revisit continuously to monitor the planning process.

Note that most 9-14 schools begin internships the summer after grade 11. School and employer partners plan much of the program together via the Work-based Learning Committee's vision and leadership. 9-14 schools are founded with "one or more lead employer partner(s)" whom provide a significant proportion of the internship placements.

## PLANNING TIMELINE

### ONE YEAR BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP (YEAR 2 OF A NEW SCHOOL)

#### Semester 1

- Define basic program design and structure, i.e. which semesters students will intern, intern work schedule, learning expectations, and appropriate types of positions.
- Define eligibility criteria, project # of students served in each cycle

#### Semester 2

- Deeper exploration into appropriate positions at lead employer partner(s), review sample job descriptions, review existing internship programs and how to adapt to model
- Assess gap between projections and lead employer partner offerings, convene institutional partners to get involved with school (e.g. employer partner's "ecosystem"), assess # employer-paid internships and need for additional funds
- Bring potential internship partners into school for project days, etc.
- Better define on and off ramps for student subgroups, especially in terms of apprenticeship, capstone, and other deeper learning experiences
- Teacher externships to support internship development

#### Summer

- Observe and visit with active internship programs
- Look for additional internship funding for employers that cannot pay and/or staffing
- Develop staffing model and plan for Year 3
- Teacher externships to support internship development

## Internship Tools: Planning Timeline and Guiding Questions

### YEAR OF THE INTERNSHIP (YEAR 3 OF A NEW SCHOOL)

#### Semester 1

- Revisit student eligibility, create eligible student list, recalculate internship projections
- Obtain commitments from lead employer partner(s) and assess gap, get introductions from lead employer partner to additional employer partners
- Obtain preliminary commitments from additional employer partners
- Create and finalize student application materials
- Students begin preparing application documents: resume, e-portfolio, pitch, interest survey, etc.
- Develop tracking system in school information system or similar platform

#### Semester 2

- Complete student preparation
- Finalize employer commitments and position descriptions
- Manage intern interview and selection process
- Complete employer preparation

#### Summer

- Begin internships
- Evaluate and begin program improvement
- Document intern cohort and employer experiences for future pitch materials
- Plan for academic-year internships if applicable
- Reflect on student experience to further plan for work experiences in years 4, 5, 6

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### SAMPLE “YEAR OF THE INTERNSHIP” DETAIL FOR SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

Category	Activity	Output or Deliverable	Start by	Complete by
Business development	Outreach and pitches	Prospective employers will be identified and courted, they will learn more about opportunity and express their interest	11/3	1/30
Business development	Commitments	Staff will close sales with interested employers toward firm commitments for number and type of internships they'll provide	11/3	2/13
Student preparation	Resume refinement	Students create and refine a resume that is ready to show employers	11/10	1/19
Student preparation	E-portfolio development	Students create an e-portfolio highlighting skills and student work	1/20	2/9
Employer preparation	Position description development	Employer creates a job description that is realistic for both employer and student with appropriate tasks for skill level and development	1/5	2/27
Application and matching	Student interest survey	Students indicate interests and preferences for position types	1/20	1/26
Student preparation	Mock interviews	Students are ready to interview with employer(s)	3/2	3/13
Application and matching	Actual interviews	Students compete for internship positions	3/20	5/1
Application and matching	Matching	Students matched to internship positions	5/1	5/15
Student preparation	Pre-internship student orientation	Students understand what's expected of them, are briefed on workplace behavior and internship protocol, and know what to do when a problem arises	5/1	6/5
Internship program	Program monitoring	Students receive additional support and guidance from teachers and program staff will gain critical information about program quality and any issues that arise	6/29	8/15
Internship program	Academic component	Students will have opportunities for reflection and extension, and to address any issues arising in the work experience	6/29	8/15

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Category	Activity	Output or Deliverable	Start by	Complete by
Employer preparation	Pre-internship supervisor orientation	Intern supervisors gain the knowledge and tools to support student(s) during internship and understand key expectations and commitment	5/27	5/27
Student preparation	Pre-hire intern paperwork	Students receive support and complete all paperwork and documentation necessary to begin work	6/2	6/2
Internship program	Program launch	Students report for first day of internship	6/29	6/29
Internship program	Culminating event(s)	Students showcase their work and gain feedback from the employer community. Participating employers celebrate accomplishments with students. Prospective employers gain exposure to the program's benefits	8/28	8/28

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During the planning process, staff serving in program development or management roles will need to answer many questions related to program design and goals. These questions are organized below into five categories: student preparation, employer preparation, academic connections, work environment and experience, and staffing. Lastly, schools and partners can use the “future work experiences” questions to begin planning for deeper learning experiences in future years, e.g. coops or capstones, etc.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN

#### Student preparation

1. What are the eligibility criteria?
  - What are the prerequisites?
  - What are the prior performance expectations in terms of grades, attendance, behavior, high school and college credits accumulated?
2. How many students will be eligible to participate?
3. When will students be available?
  - Start and end dates
  - Hours per day/hours per week
4. How will students be selected?
  - Competitive application?
  - Interest survey?

#### Employer preparation

1. How many internship placements can the lead employer provide?
2. What’s the gap between total number of students to serve and lead employer placements?
3. What’s the plan for the lead employer and school to engage additional employer partners?
4. Can the lead employer partner pay?
5. Can additional employer partners pay?
6. If payment is an issue, what funds are necessary and what are the potential funding sources?  
Who will seek additional funding?

#### Academic connections

1. How are students prepared for internships, when and by whom?
2. Will there be a school seminar for interns?
  - If yes, what days and for how long?
  - How frequent should the seminar meet?
  - Who will plan and facilitate?

## Internship Tools: Planning Timeline and Guiding Questions

### Work environment and experience

1. What are the different settings and company types in which students could intern?
2. What tasks are aligned with their CTE path and what is not?
3. What are students interested in?
4. What should be the breakdown of more and less technical positions?

### Staffing

1. Who should comprise the committee that plans for internships? When will they meet and how frequently?
2. Who will be the school-based coordinator? Will they have the capacity to do a share of employer outreach/business development?
3. How many teachers could be available during the school year to help students prepare for applications and interviews, review applications, and match students to internship placements?
4. How many teachers could be available during the summer for program administration and monitoring?

### Future work experiences

1. What amount of work experience should students have upon graduation
  - Consider differences for students exiting after 4, 5, and 6 years?
2. What experiences follow a first internship, and how do later work experiences build on earlier experiences?
  - Will students do a second internship during the next summer or academic year?
  - Will any students do coops or apprenticeships?
  - Will students complete a capstone experience? If yes, does this involve an employer or client?
3. What is the next step for students that didn't qualify for the first internship opportunity?
4. Will students apply to external internship opportunities?
  - If yes, what are the options?
  - How would the school best support the process?
5. What space and flexibility exists during the academic year for students to work?
  - If this is a priority, will anything in the scope and sequence need to be rearranged?
6. What is the internship commitment from the associated degree program(s)?
  - How many students are projected to participate?
  - What are the implications for these students' additional work experiences, if any?