



Business Partners

INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

Kirkwood

WORKPLACE LEARNING
CONNECTION

Workplace Learning Connection History

Workplace Learning Connection (WLC) is a story of success and positive return on investment for our business partners, local young people, area schools, and communities in east-central Iowa. WLC was established in 1998 as an intermediary—or go-between—connecting schools with local businesses in the Cedar Rapids area and has grown to include the public, private, and parochial school districts in the seven-county service area consistent with Grant Wood Area Education Agency and Kirkwood Community College. Thus, WLC serves students, educators, employers, and communities in Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties.

WLC partners with middle and high schools within each district to provide programming both in and outside the classroom, which serves to better prepare students to enter and succeed in the world of work. Career development programming that WLC organizes includes speakers in the classroom, financial literacy fairs, worksite tours, mock interviews, career fairs, STEM events, high school job shadows, high school internships, and teacher externships. WLC impacts tens of thousands of local students each year through our partnerships in the community with hundreds of businesses.

Staff Contact Information

www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/meetourstaff

Ann Brendes

Internship Coordinator
ann.brendes@kirkwood.edu
 319-398-4833 direct line

Laura Miner

Internship Coordinator
laura.miner@kirkwood.edu
 319-784-1608 direct line

Rochelle Sowers

Internship Coordinator
rochelle.sowers@kirkwood.edu
 319-887-3651 direct line

Laurie Worden

Director
laurie.worden@kirkwood.edu
 319-398-4826 direct line

WLC Mission Statement

We believe in a vibrant community with a workforce ready for a changing world, and we support the next generation as they navigate and connect to our shared future.

We are connecting today's students to tomorrow's careers through high-quality, age-appropriate work-based learning opportunities.

We **convene** local, regional, and/or state leaders, practitioners, and customers across sectors to ensure youth success. We **connect** and broker services to youth, public partners, and private partners, including schools and training organizations, employers and workplace partners, social service and community organizations, and families and neighborhoods. We **measure** effectiveness and ensure the quality and impact of youth-serving efforts. We **sustain** effective practices through advocacy and progressive policies.

Internship Objectives

After completing an internship, a student should be able to:

- Apply knowledge to real-world problems in a real-world-experience setting.
- Develop sound decision-making skills through the professional experience.
- Describe and demonstrate appropriate professional conduct in a work environment.
- Determine a better understanding of their career interest.

Eligibility

The WLC internship program is available to high school juniors and seniors in our service area. A student's first opportunity to apply is the summer after 10th grade when they are considered Rising Juniors. Sessions are fall, winter, spring, and summer. Summer internships will be reflected on the upcoming fall transcript. Students should meet with their counselor to determine if they are a good fit for an opportunity. Students should have excellent attendance, be self-motivated, and be mature enough to handle a professional environment outside the classroom. During the school year, students need time in their schedule to complete on-site hours.

Selection Process

Participation in the WLC program does not guarantee a student an internship with a company. Interns may or may not be selected based on the following:

- The student applies online (school recommendation, parent/guardian permission, teacher and outside reference).
- Students are vetted through the interview process with a panel of business/school representative.
- Based on application, interview, student schedule, and career/business availability, students are selected and then placed.

The WLC programs provide equal opportunity to all persons regardless of sex, race, age, creed, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability.

Advantages of Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning effectively prepares students to enter and make progress in the world of work. However, no instructional method can perfectly simulate the real-world job environment.

Student Advantages:

- Increases motivation and improves student retention.
- Develops responsibility and maturity by strengthening resourcefulness, problem-solving skills, self-confidence, and self-discipline.
- Provides opportunities for occupational exploration prior to making long-term and costly investments in more training or education.
- Offers an organized plan of training on the job under actual business conditions.
- Develops interpersonal skills through professional interactions in job settings.
- Makes academic instruction relevant and applicable to the workplace.

Employer Advantages:

- Provides workers who bring new ideas, fresh approaches, and enthusiasm for work.
- Offers direct input into education and training needed for the students.

- Improves the image and prestige of the industry and/or business among student learners and community members.
- Provides an opportunity for the employer to make a difference in the future workforce.

Community/Workforce Development Advantages:

- Increases student awareness of the employment prospects in their community.
- Promotes a closer relationship between the community and school.

Internship Description

Once a business agrees to host a student, the business will write a internship description that covers the essential functions of the experience and the minimum requirements of the student. This will be available to the student and will be listed on our website.

Please refer to the training tool in Appendix A.

- Tips for Writing an Internship Description

Communication

Once students are selected and begin their internships, communication regarding the student will be with the internship coordinator via phone, e-mail, and/or site visits during the session. Communication is important and the responsibility of all parties involved.

One focus of the program is helping students learn to self-advocate by communicating directly with the host and WLC internship coordinator. Any concerns or questions should be posed by the student to their host or internship coordinator. Parents who contact the student's host should be directed to the internship coordinator.

Internship Hours

- Hours are to be negotiated between the intern and host as outlined on the Agreement Form.
- Hours must be completed within the session dates provided by the WLC coordinator.
- The number of hours required will be provided by the WLC coordinator and must not exceed those hours.

Internship Experience/Training

Please refer to the training tools for orientation and engaging with the student in appendices B, C, and D:

- Internship Orientation Business Checklist
- Working with Internship Students
- Ways to Engage Your Intern

WLC Career Development Skills

Internship Agreement forms should be completed at the first student/host meeting and will stay on file with the internship coordinator.

During the three career development meetings, students go through the process of how to be successful in the workplace. See Appendix E for a complete list of learning topics.

Safety

STUDENT SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S PRIORITY!

Basic Steps in Risk Awareness:

- Parents should discuss workplace safety with their child.
- School guidance or administration should discuss workplace safety with the student.
- The host should provide an orientation at the worksite on safety.
 - ◆ Student should understand job responsibilities.
 - ◆ Student should identify potential risks.
 - ◆ Student should inform the host and WLC supervisor of any concern.
 - ◆ Host should remember the Rule of 3 and maintain an open-door policy.

In the Event of an Incident:

- Student should document the date, time, persons involved, and the situation.
- Student should inform the host and WLC supervisor immediately.

Examples of Safety Risks:

- Harassment, such as sexual or racial.
- Identify protection, such as social security number if hired.

- Physical hazards, such as weather, asbestos, machinery, etc.
- Biological hazards, such as biohazardous waste.
- Chemical hazards, such as in a laboratory setting.

Additional Information:

- www.youthrules.gov
- www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/hiringiowateens
(Page 8 has a list of jobs too dangerous for individuals under 18.)

Weather

Since transportation is the responsibility of the student, in the case of inclement weather, WLC follows the student's school district weather policy. If a district is closed due to inclement weather, the student should not attend. Safety is our main priority. Students are expected to communicate with their host.

Host Business Evaluation

The host will conduct a final evaluation of the student's work and progress during their internship. The host will complete the online evaluation via a link provided by the WLC coordinator. These evaluations will be shared with the student and their high school.

www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/review

Liability and Fair Labor Standards

To access the complete Work-Based Learning Guide from the Iowa Department of Education, please go to:

www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/learningguide

What Employers Need to Know Regarding Federal Law

www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/fairlabor

Insurance

Unpaid interns are covered under their home school district workers' compensation policy during their internship. Paid interns hired by the company fall under the employer's workers' compensation policy. Business hosts are encouraged to seek information regarding appropriate property liability coverage from their company's insurance provider.

Iowa School-to-Work Legislation Information

www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/schooltowork

Appendix A

Tips for Writing an Internship Description

The following guidelines are useful in preparing well-organized, clearly written internship descriptions.

- **Start with the title.** The first thing on the description for an internship should be the title of the position. Try to be specific to ensure that you attract people with the appropriate skills and interests.
- **Introduce your company.** Under the title you should include a few sentences that give a picture of your company. Briefly outline your company's purpose.
- **Describe the role.** The description should cover the meaningful duties but not in excessive detail. The description must be easy to understand. The internship coordinator will provide a sample.
 - **Outline the intern's responsibilities.** Detail what the intern will be doing. Write a list of tasks in bullet points. It is common to put the most important thing, or what the intern will spend most of their time doing, at the top. Use active language and be as clear and concise as possible.
 - **List minimum requirements.** Detail the minimum requirements of the position. Include necessary skills, coursework and/or knowledge needed, and any environmental demands of the worksite, such as exposure to heat, cold, dust, and noise.
- **Standard disclaimer.** The following disclaimer must be added to the bottom of your description regarding employer's rights:

This description does not list all the duties. Intern may be asked to perform other duties by the staff or supervisor. Intern will be evaluated on performance of the projects listed as well as interaction with employees and clients. On-site hours will be negotiated with each candidate.

- **Safety in the workplace.** Safety is everyone's responsibility. The following information must be added: *Safety expectations, including harassment, will be reviewed with the host.*

Check out Iowa Workforce Development's
"Hiring Iowa Teens: A Guide for Employers about Iowa Child Labor Law"
www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/hiringiowateens

Questions? Contact the internship coordinator with any questions or concerns.

Appendix B

Internship Orientation Business Checklist

Welcome and Introduction

- Company philosophy, goals, and purpose

Tour of Workplace

- A tour of the workplace
- Introduction to co-workers
- Restrooms
- Lunchroom/break room
- Where to store personal belongings
- Where to park

About the Company

- Review type of business, products, and services
- Overview of the company and customers

Department/Position Specifics

- Discussion of work schedule
- Review of dress and conduct codes (including appropriate use of personal cell phone)
- Review of breaks and lunch policies
- Location of time clock or sign-in
- Attendance requirements, what to do when absent

Job Specifics

- How to use phone or office equipment
- Supplies, paper, pens, etc.
- Job description and performance evaluation process

Appendix B

Internship Orientation Business Checklist

Safety Training

- Safety plan/security procedures
- Special hazards
- Accident prevention
- Sexual harassment

Materials

- Copy of personnel handbook if appropriate
- Telephone directory or internal messaging procedures

Supervisor Should:

- Clearly define expected outcomes and timelines upon commencement of internship.
- Provide frequent, honest feedback to the intern. This is a learning experience.
- Present opportunities for students to develop skills necessary for success in your industry, providing any initial instruction or information as required for skill development.
- Communicate regularly with the student and WLC representative.
- Review Iowa Workforce Development’s “Hiring Iowa Teens: A Guide for Employers about Iowa Child Labor Law” at www.kirkwood.edu/wlc/hiringiowateens
- Complete business evaluation.

Appendix C

Working with Internship Students

Foster Communication – Extend respect to students and expect students to reciprocate. Our students want to connect—they value honesty and appreciate adults who treat them with respect. Ask the student questions about him/herself to create rapport. Encourage the intern to ask questions about anything he or she does not understand. Be willing to answer what might seem to be obvious questions.

Put Yourself in the Intern’s Shoes – Visualizing yourself at the age of the intern will provide you some insight into the student’s experience. Students in this age group are at the development stage where they are trying to determine who they are and where they fit into the world. Share personal stories of your own educational and career journey—both struggles and successes. These stories will resonate with interns and enable them to see themselves achieving your level of success in the industry.

Balance Criticism and Praise – Offer criticism in a constructive way that allows the student the opportunity to improve. Keep in mind that as an intern supervisor, you are able to open many doors and expose the intern to many different opportunities. Our students want to learn—they may be teenagers, but they are poised to make their transition into adulthood and the professional world of work.

Be Clear in Your Instructions and Encourage Questions – Many students may be reluctant to ask questions. Be specific and direct with your instructions about a task, particularly regarding expected completion time and format. Your clarity will help your intern have early successes on which he/she can build. Show examples of your work and engage students by using images and artifacts. Many students will understand best when you show examples of what you are explaining.

Provide Appropriate Tasks for an Intern – Do not expect your intern to know how to do everything right away; interns are neither temp workers nor regular paid adult employees. They are learning what it means to be part of a professional environment. Try to avoid giving the intern repetitive, boring assignments for prolonged periods of time in isolation or without the understanding of why the work is important to the organization. Use every opportunity to draw connections between their career interest, your specific work, and the industry as a whole.

Make Use of Available Support Systems – Two things we hear most from students are that they view the experience as a success when the environment is welcoming and when they believe they’ve learned how to better communicate with others. Remember that this may be a student’s first professional environment, and they may need some coaching on workplace etiquette. Thank you for your efforts to make the students feel valued and in teaching them how to be successful! This program was designed with support for both the employer and the intern. If you are having difficulty with a behavior of the student or you observe performance problems, please contact the WLC internship coordinator. Parents are part of the student’s support system but shouldn’t reach out to the host. Please refer any parent communication to the WLC internship coordinator.

Appendix D

Ways to Engage Your Intern

Preparation

- Develop and share the internship description with the student and mentors.
- Decide when and how training will be accomplished.
- Decide who will conduct the training.

Tell and Show

- Describe what should be done.
- Demonstrate how to do the task.
- Ask questions, check for understanding.

Practice

- Allow the intern to do the task.
- Coach through any problem-solving opportunities.
- Ask interns to describe what they are doing.

Performance

- Allow interns to work on their own.
- Designate someone to go to for help.
- Check frequently for progress.
- Ask questions.
- Provide feedback on performance directly to the student and WLC coordinator.

Appendix E

WLC Career Development Skills

Prior to and during the three career development meetings with WLC, students go through the process of how to be successful in the workplace. Curriculum includes the following:

Prior to the Internship:

- Application Process
- Interview Preparation & Interviewing
- Goal Setting

During the Internship:

- Professionalism & Worksite Expectations
 - ◆ Attendance
 - ◆ Dependability & Responsibility
 - ◆ Confidentiality
 - ◆ Work Ethic
 - ◆ Attitude & Character
 - ◆ Appropriate Dress
 - ◆ Safety in the Workplace
- Verbal & Written Communication
 - ◆ Speaking & Listening Skills
 - ◆ Emails
 - ◆ Phone
 - ◆ Texting
 - ◆ Messages
 - ◆ Communication Styles
 - ◆ Social Media
- Employability & Transferable Skills
- Networking
- Resume Writing
- Teamwork & Problem-Solving
- The Art of a Thank You



Thank you for your support!

Kirkwood

**WORKPLACE LEARNING
CONNECTION**

www.kirkwood.edu/wlc