



# SUMMER WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

## HOST HANDBOOK FOR HIGH SCHOOL EXTERNS

### CONTACT INFO

1501 Cherry Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 330-4522

E : [MWorheide@acementor.org](mailto:MWorheide@acementor.org)  
W : [www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org)  
P : (515) 954-8688

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## HOST HANDBOOK FOR HIGH SCHOOL EXTERNS

For many construction companies, summer workplace experiences (often referred to as externships) for high school students have become an integral part of workforce development alongside more traditional college internships. These 8-12 week summer programs are a proven way to build excitement and raise awareness about careers in architecture, engineering and construction. Many of the young people who have participated in the ACE Mentor Program and had summer jobs in the industry have moved on to higher education and into the profession.

Often one of the challenges to hosting a Summer Workplace Experience is establishing a successful program that benefits both the students and the host firm. That's why we've developed the following **Summer Workplace Experience Host Handbook**, a compilation of best practices drawn from the experiences of students and host firms over the years. The Handbook provides ideas that range from onboarding actions to activities and assignments. The Handbook is a resource to help your firm make the most of your next summer workplace experience.

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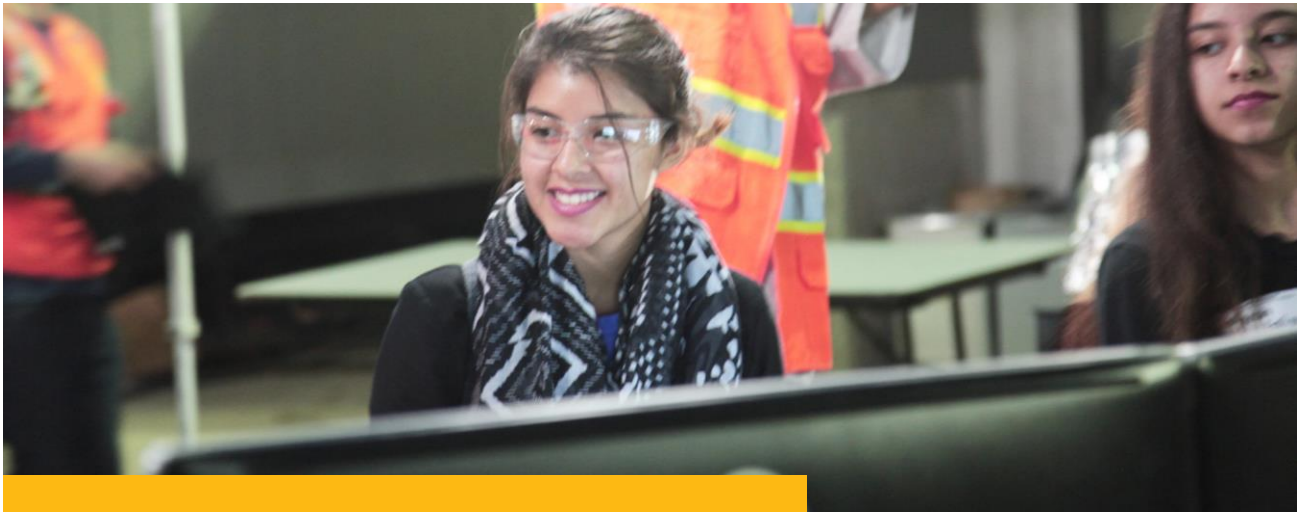
Fair Labor Standard Act



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# ONBOARDING AT THE OFFICE AND JOBSITE

It is useful to invite the student for an orientation to make sure they have the necessary information to get them started. Send detailed and exact directions to the work location including a contact name and phone number that the student can call if they need guidance. Give a meeting time and directions on how to enter the site. Clearly define any item that the student needs to bring with them.



## Orientation at Office

- Review expectations for summer.
  - Discuss working hours and schedule.
  - Dress code including required PPE.
  - Detailed, exact directions to jobsite if different with contact and phone number of jobsite contact.

## Meet the Team

- Introductions to primary mentor, secondary mentors, and other team personnel.
- Jobsite and/or office tour
- Safety training and PPE

## Set Goals

- Work with students to set their goals for their experience.
- Review Student-Mentor Agreement

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# EMPLOYER/EXTERN ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

## Welcome and Introduction

- ☐ What it means to work at this company

## Workplace Tour

- ☐ Overall tour of facility
- ☐ Tour of work area
- ☐ Fire extinguishers, fire escapes, exits, evacuation routes
- ☐ Introduction to staff

## Tour of Facilities

- ☐ Rest Rooms
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Lunch Rooms
- ☐ Telephones
- ☐ Storage for personal belongings

## About the Company

- ☐ Discussion of company structure
- ☐ Key people in the company
- ☐ Type of business, products, services
- ☐ Who our customers are
- ☐ Other branches or divisions

## Department Specifics

- ☐ Telephone Number and address
- ☐ Explanation of work schedule
- ☐ Location of time clock / sign-in

- ☐ Attendance requirements
- ☐ Working with other departments /employees
- ☐ Hours / Break times / Lunch time

## Job Specific Issues

- ☐ Location of necessary supplies
- ☐ How to use phone / office equipment
- ☐ Job description
- ☐ Training plan
- ☐ Evaluation procedures

## Safety Training

- ☐ Stairwell / fire exits
- ☐ Fire extinguishers
- ☐ Special hazards
- ☐ Accident prevention
- ☐ Safety Training Log, updated as needed

## Supervisor's Expectations

- ☐ Dress code (hair, clothing, jewelry, etc.)
- ☐ Performance expectations
- ☐ Company culture (teamwork, service, values, etc.)

## Materials

- ☐ Personnel handbook
- ☐ Organization chart
- ☐ Telephone directory

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# MOCK INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



Can you tell me a little about yourself?

How did you hear about the position?

What do you know about the company?

Why do you want this job?

What are your greatest personal strengths?

What do you consider to be your weaknesses?

**\* Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced and how you dealt with it.**

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What's your dream job?

What are you looking to learn?

What type of work environment do you prefer?

**\* What's a time you exercised leadership?**

How would your boss (mentor) and friends (peers) describe you?

How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

**\* What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work or school?**

What do you like to do outside of work?

**\* Do you have any questions for us?**

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# WHAT SHOULD WE DO WE DO WITH OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT?

Collaborating with their primary mentor, students should set learning goals for the summer. With these goals in mind, students will complete daily assignments structured around meeting the student's needs while exposing them to the wide variety of professions in the industry.



## **Suggested Assignments for High School Students (Optional)**

### **Daily Journal**

- Student to create a daily list of activities they took part in that day.
- Include photos of activities when applicable (may need access to digital camera).
- Have student take notes on new scopes of work, how things are installed, how they work and what function they provide.
- Questions for the student to consider:
  - Did the day's activities support your goals for the program?
  - Do you understand how your day-to-day work fits into the big picture of successful project completion?
  - Is there anything you would like to learn more about?

### **Daily Mentor Meeting**

- 10-15 minutes; hold to schedule, especially during the first few weeks.
- Review daily journal.
- Preview upcoming work and how student will contribute.
- Discuss student's strengths and weaknesses, provide coaching.

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# WHAT SHOULD WE DO WE DO WITH OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT?



## Informational Interviews

- Students are invited to interview one person working in the office or on a project every week.
- Project team will select interviewees in advance and prep them. It should include the widest range of roles possible.
- Student will schedule and conduct interviews, write summary to include in journal.

## Final Project/Presentation

- Summaries of informational interviews.
- Summary of daily journal entries.
- Summary of skills learned.
- Which jobsite activities did you like most?
- Reflections on what was learned.

## Pre- and Post-Program Assessment Survey Surveys

ACE National sends surveys to all students who accept an externship to gauge knowledge of and interest at the start of the program and again at the end.



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# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

The ideal assignments have an impact on the project and allow student to experience various aspects of the project. Avoid simple administrative work. No driving and no work with tools!

## **Innovation and technology**

Students can shadow CAD technicians, BIM engineers, drone pilots, etc. Students are very tech savvy and enjoy learning about the technological side of construction.

## **Pop Quiz!**

Students walk the site or project with mentor who points out objects and asks "What is that? What does it do? Why is it there?"

## **Third party inspection reports**

Students keep records of reports. Mentors teach how to read them and the significance of items not meeting requirements.

## **Meeting Minutes**

Show student examples of meeting minutes and ask them to take minutes for an upcoming meeting.

## **Safety Walk**

Have student walk the project with the Safety Professional to look for potential safety hazards.

## **Quality walk, inspections**

Have student walk the project with team. Learn to look for and record quality issues.

## **Select a trade/material vendor**

Supply student specifics to look for. Have student complete checklist.

## **Time Lapse**

Have student take photos of work in progress, and compile over the eight weeks.

## **Subcontractor/Vendor**

### **Engagement**

Have student meet key subcontractor personnel to develop a relationship and ask specific questions to obtain technical knowledge.

## **Updating Record Documents**

Show student how to read plans and how they are organized. Update the plans with RFI's and revisions to keep a current set.

## **Requests For Information**

Show student how to write RFI's and have them help to issue them.

## **Preconstruction estimating**

Work through a preconstruction estimate with student.

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## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

### **Updating site/floor plans**

Create a scavenger hunt for items on a jobsite or on a blueprint.

### **Administrative Work**

Log daily reports, create Excel files, log time.

### **Attend Training**

Facilitate ability to have student attend any company training provided during their externship.

### **“Mock Scenarios”**

Develop mock scenarios that your student can use their critical thinking skills on how to plan work and understand the construction industry.

Example, have them learn the process of what is needed to pour a concrete deck and then put a simple schedule together for it and action plan list of how to make it happen.

### **Learning the Players**

Teach them who the players are, subcontractors, clients, consultants, etc. and then have them read the scope of work and what everyone is responsible for. Have them put together a diagram to show they understand the relationship between each company.

### **Additional Resources: Recorded Lessons, Recorded Fieldtrips and Activities**

Virtual Curricular	<a href="https://acementortools.org/virtual/curriculum/">https://acementortools.org/virtual/curriculum/</a>
Virtual Fieldtrips	<a href="https://acementortools.org/ace-ventures/">https://acementortools.org/ace-ventures/</a>
ACE @ Home	<a href="https://acementortools.org/athome/">https://acementortools.org/athome/</a>

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# TIPS TO PROMOTE LEARNING

The workplace offers a unique environment for students to learn skills that they may not be able to learn at school — skills that will be critical for their long-term success. Here are some tips for fostering the development of these skills in the students you are supervising.

- **Connecting school and work.** Encourage students to relate their internship experiences back to their classwork, asking questions such as:
  - What kinds of reading, writing and math do you do at school and at work—and how are they similar or different?
  - What skills do you need at work that you can also work on at school?
  - What things are you good at, or do you like, that you can explore further in school?
  - What could you learn in college that would enable you to pursue a well-paying career in our organization or another organization like ours?
- **Applying math skills.** Encourage students to use math, whether in measurement, counting change, or completing accounting ledgers.
- **Applying reading and writing skills.** Encourage students to read manuals and write memos; do not hesitate to require students to complete work to the expected standards.
- **Learning about careers.** Provide opportunities for the student to be exposed to various departments and functions, including technical departments, marketing, human resources, finance/accounting, etc. by encouraging them to visit, conduct interviews, and/or shadow staff throughout the organization.
- **Learning about the workplace, understanding teamwork, and building relationships.** Provide opportunities for students to participate in staff meetings, project meetings, and other formal and informal exchanges among staff; introduce students to staff and encourage staff to welcome students to join them at lunch and breaks. Informal exchanges are often the best way to learn about an organization's culture.
- **Fostering initiative, critical thinking, and creativity.** If possible, allow students to solve problems on their own, tackle small organizational issues, or take on tasks requiring novel solutions, in addition to carrying out everyday responsibilities; these will help students develop and demonstrate initiative, critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity — skills that they will need in future careers that are difficult to learn in school.
- **Encouraging productivity, accountability, and collaboration.** If possible, provide a project to the student—one that would enable the student to plan his/her time, organize tasks, and work with others, in addition to performing basic workplace tasks.
- **Practicing communication.** If possible, ask the student to present the project to his/her teammates and supervisor, to practice oral communication and presentation skills.
- **Providing feedback to teachers as well as students.** Provide input to the teacher or ACE Coordinator during supervisory visits to the worksite; provide specific suggestions regarding the student's knowledge and skills that could benefit both the intern and other students.

# STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

WORK ETHIC: Exhibits grit, courage, and perseverance.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Exceeded Expectations

**COMMUNICATION:** Evidence of reading and comprehending, listening and understanding, speaking and writing clearly in accordance with accepted standards. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low Expectations ○○○○○○○○○○ Exceeded Expectations

**WILLINGNESS TO LEARN:** Desires to gain knowledge and develop skills to improve work performance.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○○○○○○○○○○ Exceeded Expectations

ME MANAGEMENT: Consistent and reliable in attendance. Timely and responsive with job duties and assigned tasks. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○○○○○○○○○○ Exceeded Expectations

TEAMWORK: Effectively and respectfully relates to others in formal and informal settings, a "team-player."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Exceeded Expectations

**INNOVATIVE THINKING:** Creatively expresses and delivers new ideas or methods that benefit business systems and/or operations. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○○○○○○○○○○ Exceeded Expectations

**CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING:** Ability to identify, analyze and create a solution to everyday problems on the job.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Exceeded Expectations

APPEARANCE AND GROOMING: Meets standards of decency and cleanliness. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Exceeded Expectations

**DIGITAL LITERACY:** Evidence of computer skills such as: safe internet search, email, social media at work, office software; e.g., Microsoft Office and/or Google Apps. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Below Expectations ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Exceeded Expectations





# SUMMER WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

## About the ACE Mentor Program

Founded in 1994, the ACE Mentor Program of America (ACE) is a free, award-winning, afterschool program designed to attract high school students into pursuing careers in the Architecture, Construction and Engineering industry, including skilled trades.

