

Employer's Quick Start Guide

Building a Successful Work Based Learning Program



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Eastern CT is positioned for growth and a bright future.

Are you ready?

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We welcome the 2020s with continued growth in Eastern Connecticut, poised to meet a new challenge - tremendous workforce demands, particularly in booming STEM fields.

Now more than ever it is critical for tomorrow's candidates to know who you are, have a positive perception of your company, and be aware of your career opportunities. This guide will help you get started!

What is Work Based Learning?

A work based learning program is a program where a student comes to your company to learn about your work, and ideally to gain skills needed to succeed in such work. The two main types of work based learning are job shadows and internships.

JOB SHADOW:

In a job shadow, a teenage student (middle or high school) observes an employee while they work, usually just for a day. The overarching purpose is to give students a sense of what a career is really like; it is mostly observational.

INTERN:

Internships are more in depth and require a longer commitment, often at least a semester (about 4 months). Interns are typically older (later high school and college) and do more hands on tasks. Interns are compensated with school credit, work experience, and sometimes the employer pays the intern.

Why Work Based Learning?

For the first time in US history there are more available jobs than available workers. Thus there is a pressing need for you to build your future talent pipeline, NOW.



Competition for talented workers is fierce, and is only expected to increase in the next few years. Like most things in life, relationships are key to success. But how do you build relationships with your future workers, today? The process is often time-consuming and expensive - but it doesn't need to be! **A simple work based learning program may be all you need to build relationships and start recruiting top future talent, today.**



Employer FAQ: Working with teens & schools

Q. Will having a student disrupt the workday?

A. No! Workers should be alerted that a student will be at your company, and a handful of friendly employees should be pre-identified to guide the student. The flow of the workday shouldn't change, as you want them to experience a real 'day in the life'. Because interns are part of your company for a longer duration, and can be trained to do job-specific tasks independently, you will find that they enhance the workday and make your company more efficient.

Q. Are there any legal requirements?

A. For the most part job shadows are treated as 'field experiences' – like a field trip – and students are covered by school insurance. Interns usually agree to a release of liability prior to starting work. In some sensitive fields such as healthcare or national defense, work based learning programs may not be allowed, or are limited to certain days or areas. The best places to check are your company HR department, and/or the partnering school guidance office. A simple agreement form can be completed to keep everyone on the same page. The CT Dept. of Ed does outline forms & requirements that schools and employers must agree to in an Unpaid Learning Experiential Program. Phone the CSDE office at 860-713-6740 for details.

Q. How do I start a work based learning program?

A. The first step is to decide what types of opportunities you would like to offer (job shadows, internships, or both), and in what field (manufacturing, web development, etc.). It is a good idea to name a company point person to serve as school and student liason. The next step is to reach out to your local school district (the list on the last page is the perfect place to start!). School Guidance Department Directors are the best place to start. Their contact information can usually be found on the school's staff page. Even if they themselves do not manage the school's work based learning program, they can tell you who does and make the connection for you. Send a short email to introduce yourself, your company, and your work based learning opportunities. Schools are increasingly eager to partner with companies, so you will likely get a positive response!



Start a Work Based Learning Program in 3 easy steps

1: CLEAR CONNECTIONS

Once you have a school partner, the first step is to identify connections that exist between what students learn in the classroom and what they will do in your work based learning program. To be meaningful, work based learning programs must be relevant; work with your school contact to devise a program that builds upon what is taught in school. For example, a student enrolled in a woodworking elective would be an excellent carpentry job shadow candidate. This 'matching' of your work based learning program to the school curriculum can be done on an individual student level, program level, or even schoolwide (ex: a school that focuses on manufacturing).



2. SCAFFOLDED APPROACH

The more structure your work based learning program has (at least to start), the better. A formalized program has:

- A simple agreement in place among all stakeholders prior to starting
- A clear 'teen onboarding' process
- A consistent company contact person adept at working with teens
- Accountability - what is the student responsible for, and how will their performance be monitored/evaluated?
- A clear goal: What specifically will the student do during the work based learning program to achieve their goals?



3. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF EASTERN CT RESOURCES

- **Member Directory:** Create your company listing so teachers and students can find you. Stay connected through blogs, news releases, and updates. And be sure to post job and internship opportunities!
- **Workshops and Seminars:** Provided by member organizations, these events often cover topics that can help you attract talent – see <https://info.chamberect.com/events>
- **Job Fair:** Each spring the Chamber partners with local schools to host a high school job fair. This is a great way to showcase your work based learning opportunities!
- **Networking events:** Share and discuss with fellow companies - do they offer work based learning programs? Have they found something to be particularly effective (or ineffective)? Networking events are a great way to learn from the experiences of others and make connections.

10

Teacher Tested Tips

Working With Teenagers

Surviving the first week...

1

Before they start, be sure to have an agreement form in place, signed by the student, supervising teacher, and employer representative.

2

On the first day, make it fun! A simple scavenger hunt can orient students to your company and engage them from the very beginning.

3

During the first week, have the student shadow a different employee each day. This will help them get a good sense of everything your company does, and who does what.

4

Meet with student and have them choose three things to accomplish that first week. Then repeat this meeting every week to maintain expectations and accountability.

5

End the first week with a fun teambuilding activity, including employees and student(s). Google 'team building activities' for some fun ones to try.

6

It should ALWAYS be clear what your teenager is expected to be doing, even if it is a simple 'to do' list for the day or week.

7

Maintain accountability. Remember, students are there to learn; be sure to provide feedback. Students also need to learn how to take accountability in the workplace; a mentor can help with this.

8

Research shows that having a mentor is key to retention. Within the first month, pair your student with an employee mentor. Ideally the mentor has been in similar 'shoes' and can offer helpful advice and guidance.

9

Check in with your student at least once per month to review goals. Is the student getting what he/she wants out of the experience? Is the experience going smoothly for the company?

10

Keep them connected. If your company has affinity groups or does outings, allow students to be involved and truly experience your corporate culture.

Schools in New London County

Middle Schools

Public

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School 36 Waller St., New London, CT 06320
 Carl C. Cutler Middle School 160 Fishtown Rd., Mystic, CT 06355
 Clark Lane Middle School 105 Clark Ln., Waterford, CT 06385
 East Lyme Middle School 31 Society Rd., Niantic, CT 06357
 Fields Memorial School P.O. Box 185, Bozrah, CT 06334
 Franklin Elementary & Middle School 206 Pond Rd., North Franklin, CT 06254
 Griswold Middle School 211 Slater Ave., Griswold, CT 06351
 Lebanon Middle School 891 Exeter Rd., Lebanon, CT 0624
 Ledyard Middle School 1860 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT 06335
 Leonard J. Tyl Middle School 166 Chesterfield Rd., Oakdale, CT 06370
 Lisbon Central School 15 Newent Rd., Lisbon, CT 06351
 Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School 53 Lyme St., Old Lyme, CT 06371
 Mystic Middle School 204 Mistuxet Ave., Mystic, CT 06355
 Pawcatuck Middle School 40 Field St., Pawcatuck, CT 06359
 Preston Plains School 1 Route 164, Preston, CT 06365
 Salem Elementary & Middle School 200 Hartford Rd., Salem, CT 06420
 Sayles School 25 Scotland Road, Baltic, CT 06330
 Voluntown Elementary & Middle School P.O. Box 129, Voluntown, CT 06384
 West Side Middle School 250 Brandeggee Avenue, Groton, CT 06340
 Wheeler Middle & High School 298 Norwich/Westerly Rd., North Stonington, CT 06359
 William J. Johnston Middle School 360 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415

Magnet & Charter

Dual Language & Arts Magnet Middle School 51 Daniels Avenue, Waterford, CT 06385
 Integrated Day Charter School 68 Thermos Ave., Norwich, CT 06360
 Interdistrict School For Arts And Communication 190 Governor Winthrop Blvd., New London, CT 06320
 Kelly STEAM Magnet Middle School 25 Mahan Dr., Norwich, CT 06360
 Science and Technology Magnet School of Southeastern Connecticut 490 Jefferson Ave., New London, CT 06320
 Teachers' Memorial Global Studies Magnet Middle School 15 Teachers Dr., Norwich, CT 06360

Schools in New London County

High Schools

Public

Bacon Academy 611 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415
East Lyme High School PO Box 210, East Lyme, CT 06333
Griswold Alternative School 1553 Glasgo Road, Griswold, CT 06351
Griswold High School 267 Slater Ave., Griswold, CT 06351
Ledyard High School 24 Gallup Hill Rd., Ledyard, CT 06339
Lyman Memorial High School 917 Exeter Rd., Lebanon, CT 06249
Lyme-Old Lyme High School 69 Lyme St., Old Lyme, CT 06371
Montville High School 8000 Old Colchester Rd., Oakdale, CT 06370
New London High School 490 Jefferson Ave., New London, CT 06320
Norwich Free Academy 305 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360
Robert E. Fitch High School 101 Groton Long Point Road, Groton, CT 06340
Sayles School 25 Scotland Road, Baltic, CT 06330
Stonington High School 176 South Broad St., Pawcatuck, CT 06379
Waterford High School 20 Rope Ferry Rd., Waterford, CT 06385
Wheeler Middle & High School 298 Norwich/Westerly Rd., North Stonington, CT 06359

Magnet & Charter

Marine Science Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut 130 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340
New London Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School 36 Waller Street, New London, CT 06320
Science and Technology Magnet School of Southeastern Connecticut 490 Jefferson Ave, New London, CT 06320
Three Rivers Middle College Magnet School 574 New London Turnpike, Norwich, CT 06360

Technical

Ella T. Grasso Technical High School 189 Fort Hill Rd., Groton, CT 06340
Norwich Technical High School 7 Mahan Drive, Norwich, CT 06360