



INTERNSHIP GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

SUMMER 2015

WORKPLACE LEARNING

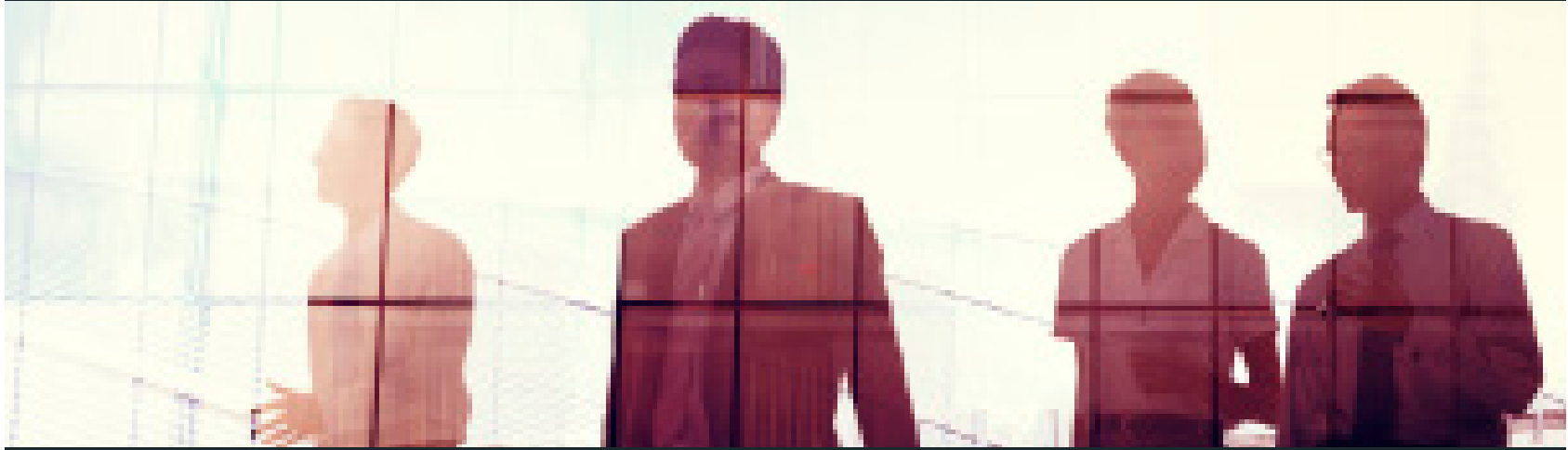
Connecting High School Students to Local Industry



ePathways *is*
customized learning
that results in our students
being prepared for **21st Century**
globally competitive work

WHY WORKPLACE LEARNING?

Seminole County Public Schools is a leading economic driver in our community. For our graduates to be ready for college, careers, and citizenship, they need opportunities to deepen their classroom learning by applying their skills, passions, and interests to authentic workplace experiences. Through the facilitation of internships, employers provide access to elements of work that are not readily available to entry-level employees. Students benefit from early exposure to the world of work, and employers enjoy the energy and enthusiasm that student interns bring to their business while also contributing to local talent development.



INTRODUCTION

Seminole County Public Schools has partnered with the Seminole County Chamber of Commerce, the Seminole County Office of Economic Development and local employers to offer workplace learning opportunities to high school juniors and seniors. By providing students with authentic workplace experiences, employers empower their interns to develop skills and passions that will illuminate career pathways and strengthen workforce development. Additional goals for this partnership include cultivating interpersonal skills for students in realistic contexts, deepening content area knowledge through real world application and providing students with opportunities to develop an appreciation for the world of work.

THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

In order to ensure that all students receive a high-quality experience, SCPS has created the following requirements:

- The student and employer will develop an internship plan that identifies goals and expectations for both parties. It is important for employers to clearly identify company policies that the students will follow.
- The employer will verify that the student's weekly timecard is accurate.
- The employers will work with an SCPS Intern Support Specialist to evaluate the student's progress.
- The employer will conduct a final evaluation of the intern utilizing either the company's evaluation instrument (to be shared with SCPS) or a generic evaluation developed by SCPS.



OUR COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYERS

Seminole County Public Schools understands the significant commitment of time and human resources necessary to mentor a student intern. For this reason, the following expectations have been developed for all interns participating in Executive Internship 1:

- Interns are representatives of Seminole County Public Schools and as such are expected to not only adhere to the Seminole County Code of Conduct but also to reflect the high standards of the district.
- Interns will check their email regularly and respond to teachers, site supervisors and employers appropriately. Interns will also submit timecards, reflect on their experiences and participate in online discussions virtually.
- Interns will work the required 136 hours to earn 1 high school credit. An intern who does not fulfill this obligation will receive a failing grade.
- An internship plan will be created to outline the goals and expectations for the internship for both the intern and employer. Employers reserve the right to terminate an intern for failure to meet the expectations outlined in the internship plan or for violations of company policies at their will. The school district and employer are not responsible for finding alternative placement opportunities in the event an intern is terminated.
- Reliable transportation is the responsibility of the student. No transportation will be provided by Seminole County Public Schools or participating employers.
- Internships can be paid or unpaid at the discretion of the employer.
- The internship begins Monday, June 8th and will be completed by Friday, August 7th.

THE BASICS

SCPS STAFF SUPPORT

All interns participate in an online course taught by an SCPS instructor; this teacher maintains the course pages, monitors the progress of all interns and assigns grades. Additionally, an Intern Support Specialist will be assigned to each participating employer. The Intern Support Specialist will be the first point of contact for employers and interns who have questions about any element of the experience.

THE INTERNSHIP PLAN

Students will work with their employer to develop an internship plan that outlines the learning outcomes and goals for the internship. The plan also identifies the final evaluation tool to be used by the employer, either a corporate evaluation or a generic evaluation developed by SCPS. Students are expected to make progress towards the goals outlined in this plan. The SCPS internship course teacher will support the student in achieving these goals through course content. The employer will aid the student by providing work opportunities that help the student make satisfactory progress towards the goals. If at any time adequate progress is not being made, the Intern Support Specialist should be contacted to facilitate communication. The employer reserves the right to end employment for failure to adhere to the internship plan at their discretion.

SITE VISITS

The Intern Support Specialist will conduct site visits and help answer questions that interns or employers have as they arise throughout the internship. The Intern Support Specialist will visit interns at the beginning and midway through the internship. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their Intern Support Specialist and employer to establish mutually agreeable dates and times for site visits. Intern Support Specialists will check in with students to evaluate their performance and ensure that the internship plan expectations and goals are being met.



VERIFYING HOURS

The student will complete a timecard document for the school, listing the hours, days, and weekly/monthly totals for the job. Federal and state labor laws must be followed. The timecard is the official audit record for the school and is an important document needed for attendance. Students will utilize a Google Doc to create a digital record of their attendance. Employers will have a separate, secure login that they will use to verify the student's hours. Students must input their hours for the week by 11:59 PM on Sundays. Employers then have the following week to verify the student's hours. Students will be penalized for late timecards. Students should call and email their employer in the event that they will be absent from work. The Intern Support Specialist should be copied on the email. In the course materials, students are made aware that a failure to provide prior notice of absence is grounds for termination in many organizations.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student participation in the internship experience is counted as enrollment for Florida school attendance reporting. Attendance documents are important records for every school. Audits of these records may occur annually, and all student timecards must be kept by the school district for five years. Because this course also leads to high school credit, the teacher must maintain accurate attendance records. It should be noted that student falsification of the timecard is a violation of the honor code and subject to the consequences in the SCPS Student Code of Conduct.



FINAL EVALUATION

During the final week of employment, the student will schedule a meeting with the employer to participate in a final evaluation. The employer will use the evaluation tool identified in the internship plan (either the corporate tool or the generic tool developed for this course). The intern will be evaluated on the goals outlined in the internship plan along with other essential elements identified by the employer.

GETTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT

The first week of the internship sets the tone for the overall experience. If the employer gives interns very little to do, it sends the message that the job is easy and expectations are low.

Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment, and objectives of business and industry. Interns may have volunteered or worked part-time before but these experiences may not have exposed them to organizational politics, the need for confidentiality, the importance of teamwork and the entrepreneurial aspects of business. Including an orientation session at the beginning of the intern training process emphasizes the partnership and commitment to internships in your workplace.

The sooner interns understand what the organization does and how it operates, the sooner they can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. Employers can communicate this information in several ways:

- Take interns on a tour of the facilities and introduce them to the other employees
- Give interns company materials to read such as newsletters, annual reports, an organization chart, or memos from the CEO
- Encourage interns to spend break and lunchtimes in places where employees gather
- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with them
- Give the interns opportunities to observe (or participate in) professional meetings
- Allow the interns to interview company personnel
- Encourage the interns to walk around and observe others at work



PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERN

Prior to the intern's start date, the employer should consider the following:

1. Who will serve as the intern's direct supervisor?
2. Where will the intern be located within the office? Will the intern have a desk of their own or will they share a space with another employee?
3. What are the essential job training elements the intern will need prior to beginning industry-related work?
4. Who will provide this training?
5. Are there any state or federally mandated safety regulations related to your industry? Are there any other safety considerations?
6. Who will provide the necessary safety instruction to the intern?

BENEFITS OF WORKPLACE LEARNING

Through business partnerships, SCPS is able to respond to the changing demands of local industry and provide relevant learning opportunities to students.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers surveyed employers in 2010 and found that hiring interns decreases new employee turnover and increases overall retention rates.

Employers are able to cultivate talent of potential long-term employees.

In 2013, researchers Shoenfelt, Stone and Kottke identified internships as an established mechanism to increase employability through the development of skills important to employers and the future workforce success of participating students.

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

An orientation session is an effective way to provide students with an overview of the organization. Investment of time in a high-quality orientation will help the intern to quickly acclimate to the workplace, resulting in increased productivity in the early stages of the internship. The following elements are recommended components of the orientation:

Explain the Mission of the Organization

- How did the organization start? Why?
- What is unique about your product or service?
- Who benefits from your product or service?
- What are the organization's current objectives?
- How will the intern contribute to those objectives?

Outline Organizational Rules, Policies, Decorum and Expectations

- Is there specific industry jargon?
- What are the specific work standards and procedures?
- What access to the supervisor (days, times, and duration) does the intern have?
- How do the mail and telephone systems work?
- What are the approved methods of communication?
- By what safety regulations must the intern abide?
- What are the expectations related to confidentiality?
- What is acceptable with regard to dress and appearance?
- How should the intern maintain the premises and the work area?

Explain the Organization Structure

- Who reports to whom?
- Who, specifically, is the intern's supervisor?
- What is the role of the intern's department?
- How are decisions made?
- Which personnel can answer different kinds of questions?

Define the Intern's Responsibilities

- What is the intern's role? Provide a clear job description.
- What projects will be assigned to the intern?
- What resources are available to the intern?
- What training is necessary?
- How does the organization want the intern to deal with clients and vendors?
- What tasks can be completed without supervisory approval?
- Do other employees understand the intern's role?

SUSTAINING A POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE EXPERIENCE

It is suggested that the employer and intern meet regularly to provide feedback concerning the intern's performance. These brief meetings will give the supervisor an opportunity to coach, counsel and reinforce positive attitudes and performance. During these meetings, the intern can:

- Report on the status of a project
- Ask questions
- Learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- Participate in an evaluation of their strengths
- Discuss areas needing growth and development
- Get a sense of future projects

The employers will also interact with an SCPS Intern Support Specialist, who will conduct two site visits during the internship, and the course instructor. Intern Support Specialists will work with the student if difficulties occur (e.g. intern attendance or punctuality problems, low motivation, unsatisfactory work or personal conflicts). The course instructor is also available to assist with these concerns if problems persist or require immediate attention. You should contact the Internship Support Specialist and course instructor in the event that the internship conditions must be altered (i.e. a change in supervisor, delays in the availability of data needed by the students to complete an assignment, a strike by unionized employees, transfer or termination of an employee involved in the interns' work, or other unanticipated changes).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: An intern's transportation fell through, is that an acceptable reason for the intern to fail to report to work?

A: Unfortunately, reliable transportation is the responsibility of the students and it would not be an acceptable reason to miss work. Students should follow the employer's procedure for reporting absences. Students should also follow-up with an email to Intern Support Specialist to inform them of their absence.

Q: Can an intern receive community service hours for the internship experience?

A: No, interns are receiving high school credit for their experience and for this reason cannot be awarded community service hours.

Q: Can interns begin working prior to the start date provided by the district?

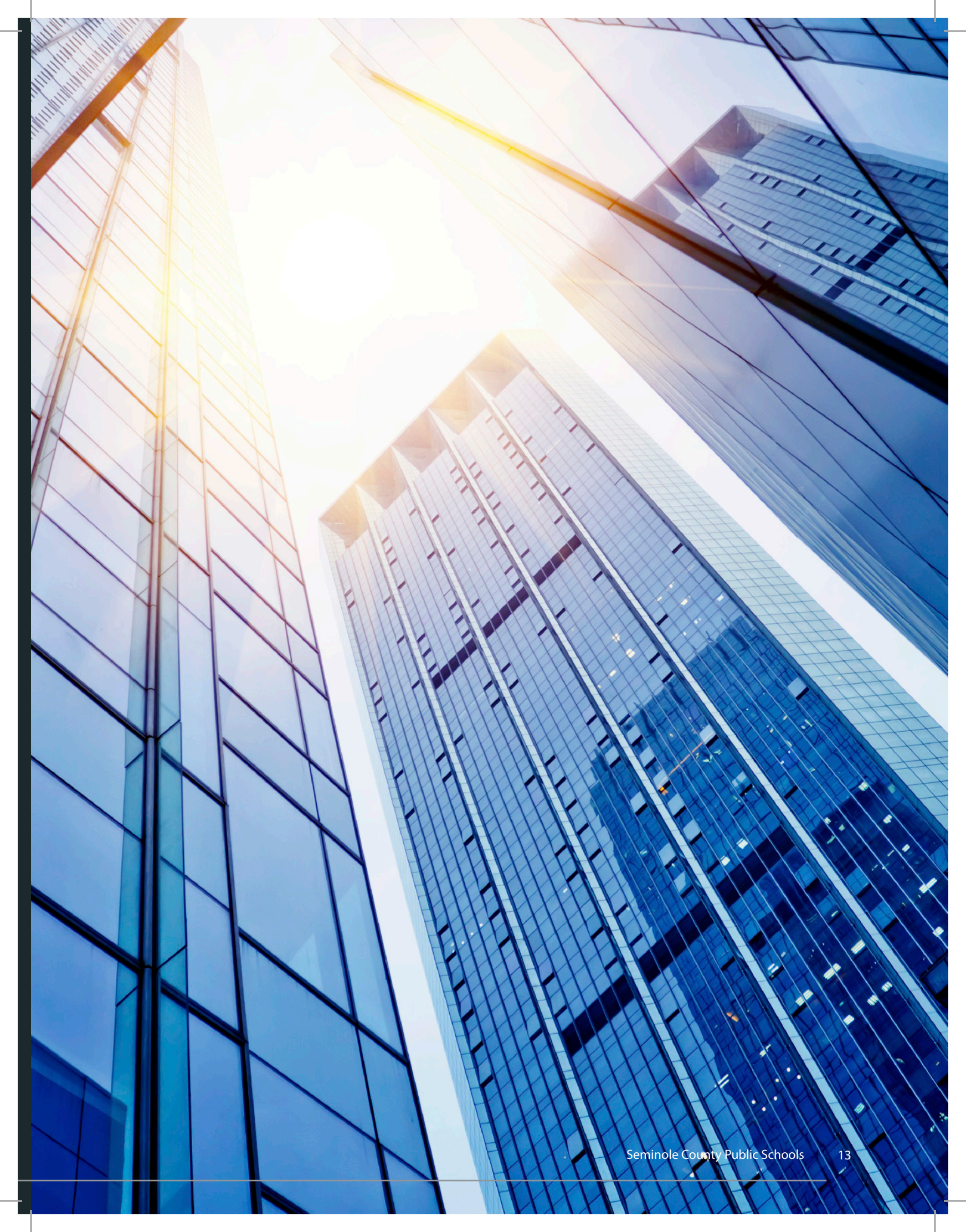
A: No, students must begin on or after the start date provided by the district. It is important for SCPS staff to ensure that all student schedules have been finalized, students have been enrolled in the online course and have received the required introductory information prior to beginning work.

Q: Can students work after the completion date provided by the district?

A: Student hours must be completed prior to the deadline provided by the district to ensure that grades are calculated and submitted in time to meet graduation deadlines and other grading requirements. If, at the end of the internship, an employer wishes to retain an intern as an employee, this arrangement will be between the employer and intern.

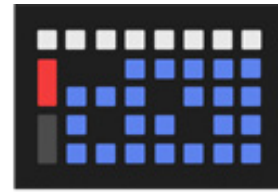
Q: What action should the employer take if an intern is not meeting expectations?

A: Please contact the assigned Intern Support Specialist or the course instructor, who will make every effort to work with the student to improve performance. The employer reserves the right to terminate the intern at their discretion at any time.



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