

WORKPLACE  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE  
mentor  
handbook

**2011-2012**



Dear Workplace Partner:

Thank you for your interest in providing a workplace learning experience for the students of Impact Academy of Arts and Technology. We appreciate your willingness to be part of an educational program that provides students with valuable knowledge and insights into career planning and the world of work.

The *Mentor Handbook* is designed to assist you in preparing and planning for the student in your place of business. It contains the following information:

- What is the Impact Academy Workplace Learning Experience?
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Tips for Working with Students
- Student Expectations and Assignments

Throughout your involvement in our program, Impact Faculty Advisors are available to provide ongoing support during the experience to solve problems or answer questions. It is our goal to make the experience meaningful for the students *and* the employers participating in the program.

Thank you very much for your interest. We look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact us at 510-300-1560 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Hoopes  
Principal  
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WLE director  
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# **WHAT IS THE IMPACT ACADEMY WORKPLACE LEARNING EXPERIENCE (WLE)?**

## **Key Elements of a Successful Workplace Learning Experience**

- The Impact Faculty Advisor, the student, and the mentor design the experience. The work is grounded in the student's capabilities, interests and goals, and results in a “project” that is presented by the student at the workplace.
- At the work site, the student has an immediate supervisor/mentor who provides direction or instruction and close supervision initially, then supervision as necessary.
- There is periodic evaluation by the mentor and the Impact Faculty Advisor, who will also visit the workplace site.

## **Role of the Mentor**

Because many of our young people rarely have positive interaction with successful adults outside the home or classroom, your main job as a mentor is to be yourself – a successful adult. Since, for the vast majority of the students, this will be their first “real world” work experience, the mentor will have to offer some training and guidance to the students. Since our students are capable of high caliber work, it is expected that the students will be given real work and problems to solve, will be offered continual challenges and at the same time will have the opportunity to master specific skills and/or achieve meaningful goals. Although this type of interaction takes time, mentors find the experience incredibly rewarding both personally and professionally. Many of our students continue to work at the site of their workplace experience.

## **Expectations of the Student**

Students are expected to arrive on time, notify the mentor and Impact Faculty Advisor if they are sick, actively participate in the workplace, and be productive while at the workplace. Students are expected to make up any missed hours and fulfill the time requirements. Students will maintain a blog (accessible to mentors, parents, and advisors) and develop a project relevant and meaningful to the workplace which will be presented to the mentor and staff at the culmination of the Workplace Learning Experience.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **When will the student be available?**

Students will generally be available between 8:00am and 5:00pm on Tuesdays, although earlier and/or later times are negotiable on an individual basis. Interns should work at least 7.5 hours per week in order to meet their overall hour requirement of 75 hours. Students should be able to use up to 10 percent of their time to complete school assignments connected to the workplace experience, such as writing their blog or preparing for their final project and reflection.

## **Do I need to pay the student?**

No. Students receive school credit and **cannot** be paid during the workplace learning experience. Many mentors hire students after the workplace experience is concluded, but this is not an expectation of the program.

## **How long is the Workplace Learning Experience?**

A total of 11 Tuesdays from October-December. The students' first day will be a Job Shadow with you on Tuesday October 4<sup>th</sup>, and then continues every Tuesday until December 13<sup>th</sup>, which is the last day of WLE.

## **What about insurance?**

The school district will be responsible for insurance coverage, as this is a school-sponsored activity. Naturally, employers would be liable in the event of gross negligence or sexual harassment. If you have legal concerns about a student interning with you, please contact Joel Key, our WLE director, at [joel@es-impact.org](mailto:joel@es-impact.org).

## **What type of support will I have?**

An Impact Faculty Advisor will meet with you and the student at the beginning of the internship to set goals, create a job description, and begin to design a project for the experience. The advisor will visit the workplace several times during the course of the experience period. We are always available by phone and/or email. Impact Faculty Advisor contact information:

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## **TIPS FOR WORKING WITH TEENS**

The role of the workplace mentor is to act as a role model, trainer, and mentor. You will assist the student(s) in making the connections between the world of work and the importance of doing well in school. You can do this by:

- Explaining carefully the expectations of the company/organization.
- Providing training, mentoring, and ongoing guidance.
- Providing continual feedback on performance.
- Providing a written evaluation of the student on a form provided by Impact. Meet with student at the end of the experience to provide assessment results.
- Showing the relevance of schoolwork. Students may observe and practice how English, math, problem solving and other basic skills are used each day on the job.
- Demonstrating necessary workplace skills. Students should be introduced to the skills required for success in your field of work.
- Emphasizing teamwork. Students will discover how each person and department plays an important role in the production or service delivery process.
- Assigning work projects and monitoring performance against the workplace standards.
- Monitoring attendance, ensuring compliance with workplace policies, introducing the student to other employees, and providing training, as well as frequent encouragement and feedback.
- Being available when the student is working. If you need to be away, designate someone to fill in for you.

# TIPS FOR HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR STUDENT INTERN

## **Student Orientation and “Rules” of your workplace**

The key to a successful experience is to develop clear expectations, skills to be mastered and projects or tasks to be accomplished. Just like new employees, students benefit greatly from a thorough orientation of the workplace. The student’s orientation should take place on the first day and be clear and specific. The more information you provide, the more successful the experience will be.

- What is the protocol if they have a schedule conflict?
- What should they do if they cannot come to work?
- What happens if they are late? Absent?
- Who depends upon the work they do? What happens if they do not produce?
- How will their work be evaluated?
- What happens if they have more than one supervisor? If the supervisor changes?

## **Creating a Job Description**

It is essential to have a clear concise job description that outlines the skills to be learned, and tasks or projects for which the student will be responsible. A clear job description can be used as a tool for supervising and evaluating the student’s performance and knowledge.

## **Fours Steps to Effective Training to Support High School Students:**

1. Preparation
  - Develop a training plan listing the tasks and skills required to meet the objectives.
  - Decide when and how training will be accomplished.
  - Decide who will conduct the training.
2. Telling and Showing
  - Describe what should be done.
  - Demonstrate how to do the task.
  - Ask questions, check for understanding.
3. Practice
  - Allow the student to do the task.
  - Correct errors.
  - Ask students to describe what they are doing.
4. Performance
  - Allow students to work on their own.
  - Designate someone to go to for help.
  - Check frequently for progress.
  - Ask questions.
  - Provide feedback on performance.

# WLE STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Students are responsible for completing many assignments during their WLE. Although you as the mentor are not responsible for monitoring students' progress on this work, we thought you would appreciate knowing what students will be working on to prepare for, complete, and reflect on their internship with you. WLE is a graduation requirement at Impact Academy. In order to fulfill their Workplace Learning Experience requirements and receive credit, students are expected to:

1. Complete the hour requirement for Junior Year WLE (75 hours)
2. Complete the hour requirement for Senior Year WLE (75 hours)
3. Give a proficient WLE exhibition project presentation in either junior or senior year (keynote uploaded to D.A.)

## **PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE WLE**

### **1. Resume AND Cover Letter**

Before students begin their Workplace Learning Experience, they will prepare a formal *resume and cover letter* that reflects their previous experiences (i.e.: volunteer work, community service, employment, education, and personal interests & talents, etc...)

### **2. Provide evidence of having completed:**

- a. Career Interest Survey
- b. Internship Contact Research
- c. Professional Informational Interview and Presentation
- d. Interviews with potential mentors
- e. Professional phone call, email, interview, and eating etiquette practice
- f. Job Shadow

## **THROUGHOUT THE WLE PROCESS**

### **1. Reflective Blog/Journal** (*see below for detailed description*)

Students will maintain a reflective journal throughout the Workplace Learning Experience (written or in 'blog' format) that is accessible to mentors, parents and advisors. This journal should be completed after each day at the site and will be checked by advisors on a regular basis.

### **2. WLE Essential Question, Thesis, and Project**

All students are required to propose and complete a thorough and comprehensive Workplace Learning Experience Project during the course of their WLE. The essential question, thesis and proposal for the project will be developed during the early weeks of the experience, and refined and completed during the latter part of the experience. The form it takes will depend upon the workplace, personal interest and need, and needs of the mentor. Some examples of student projects include:

- Web sites
- Teaching units and/or individual lessons in elementary classrooms
- Producing a Youth handbook
- Producing and directing a film or show
- Organizing a benefit concert
- Redesigning elements of an institution
- Writing a play and having it performed
- Designing an informational video
- Holding a series of workshops
- Assisting in the coordination of an event
- Assisting in the publication of a newsletter

### 3. **Mentor/Advisor Meetings**

Throughout the semester, students will meet with their advisor and mentor to discuss how the experience is progressing. This is the place to air concerns, share successes and struggles, reflect on experiences, develop the exhibition project, and review blog entries.

### 4. **WLE Project Documentation**

Students must collect and keep a record of ‘documents’ related to the work he or she does at the workplace site. These include, but are not limited to: photos, pamphlets, filings, brochures, examples of materials that you work with or create, assignments and/or work that you complete, etc...

### 5. **75 hours (or more) on the Time Sheet**

Students will get their time sheet signed by their WLE Mentor and submit it to their Advisor every Wednesday in Academic Seminar. Students must earn a minimum of 75 hours. Students who complete 75 hours before the final WLE day, must still attend their internship.

## **AT THE CLOSING OF THE WLE PROCESS**

### 1. **Grad Portfolio WLE Project Presentation**

At the culmination of the Workplace Learning Experience, students will present their WLE projects to workplace staff, parents, fellow students and faculty. This presentation (and it’s accompanying reflection) are a required part of the Graduation Portfolio. Students must present both years of WLE.

### 2. **Written Reflection**

After students have presented their exhibition, they will complete a reflection in which they will process the entire experience, tell the story of what they did and what they learned, and connect it to the leadership skills, their future goals, and college/workplace aspirations. This reflection is a required part of the Graduation Portfolio.

### 3. **Final Mentor Evaluation**

At the end of the WLE the student’s supervisor/mentor will complete an evaluation of his or her work at the site. This is used to assess a students overall performance and provide part of the Holistic Assessment for the WLE. Student attendance and punctuality is taken into consideration for this evaluation.

### 4. **Letter of Recommendation (optional)**

Before completing the WLE, students will ask their mentor for a *Letter of Recommendation*.