Non-credit experiential learning

What are Work-Based Experiences?

Work-based learning is an approach to training in which a student or worker completes meaningful tasks in a workplace (JFF.org). Each experience has a different purpose but the bottom line is that it gives a student exposure to a potential career field that they would like to pursue and helps you work on professional skills and career competencies necessary for the workforce.

Why you should do it, even if you aren’t receiving credit for it

- Networking
- Get the experience before you graduate
- Opportunities to translate classroom knowledge into a real-world setting
- Evaluate your career goals and expectations
- Potential to turn into a job position

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a way for students to engage in a project or organization that is giving back to the community without receiving any sort of compensation. Although not directly related to the workforce, volunteerism allows students to foster and grow on career competencies such as leadership, critical thinking, professionalism, and teamwork.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an informal meeting with a person who has a job title or works in an industry that you aspire to learn more about or pursue. This can be either in-person, over the phone or video call, or through email correspondence. This allows a student to get inside knowledge of what it is like to pursue and work in certain industries and job positions. This is also a great way to network with professionals!

Job Shadowing

A structured time to get an inside look at the day-to-day activities of a professional in your desired career field. Normally it is a commitment of 4-8 hours. The focus of job shadowing is to get an understanding of the nature of a field or role and see what it may look like to pursue this career.

Internships

Integrate “knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting”, as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). These experiences typically last 3-6 months or within a semester. An internship is truly a career learning experience and the student is learning on-the-job under supervision.

Where do I start?

Meet with a Career Advisor via Handshake to explore ways to find non-credit work-based experiences and start working on your application materials. For-credit experiences will be found through your academic department via a program coordinator.
Always do your research before applying for a job to make sure that the opportunity is genuine and meets your needs. When you do research on a job or company, here are some tips to be aware of:

- The position initially appears as a traditional job. Upon further research, it sounds more like an independent contractor opportunity.
- Look at the company's website. Does it have an index that tells you what the site is about; or does it contain information only about the job in which you are interested? Scammers often create quick, basic web pages that seem legitimate at first glance.
- Watch for anonymity. If it is difficult to find an address, actual contact, company name, etc., this is cause to proceed with caution. Fraud postings are illegal, so scammers will try to keep themselves well hidden.
- When you Google the company name and the word “scam” (e.g., Acme Company Scam), the results show several scam reports concerning this company. Another source for scam reports is www.ripoffreport.com.
- Google the employer’s phone number, fax number, and/or email address. If it does not appear connected to an actual business organization, this is a red flag. You can use the following resources to verify organizations.
  - Better Business Bureau www.bbb.org
  - Hoovers www.dnb.com
  - AT&T’s Anywho www.anywho.com
- Use this site (www.WhoIs.net) to see when a domain name was created.