

**Tulare County Partnership for Quality Internships**  
Adapted from National Academy Foundation Gold Standards for Internships  
[http://naf.org/files/press\\_release/2010/03/InternshipGoldStandards\\_final.pdf](http://naf.org/files/press_release/2010/03/InternshipGoldStandards_final.pdf)

The undersigned agree to endorse the standards presented in this document and stand ready to further define and measure each standard. Parties to this memorandum agree to voluntarily coordinate activities, share tools and collaborate on the development of an internship system. The purpose of this memorandum is to build multi agency and system support for high quality work based experiences for youth and young adults.

**Standard 1**  
**Internships are part of a continuum of work-based learning.**

Internships exist within a developmental learning framework as the culmination of this continuum (see attached). High quality youth internships are informed by previous student activities that include:

- Opportunities to acquire career skills and investigate fields of interest related to the intern’s career and college goals.
- Career preparation that links the internship experience to the skills and attributes needed to enter and succeed in the world of work and college

**Standard 2**  
**Internships are compensated**

Internships are defined as any compensated work based experience that occurs through school-based and/or community based experiences. Compensation may include a salary, payment for college credit or other appropriate solutions.

- Youth receive compensation for their work in a manner that rewards them for their efforts, thereby mirroring the real-world work place; this compensation also holds employers accountable for developing meaningful, structured learning experiences.
- Internship providers comply with all components of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**Standard 3**  
**Internships drive education equity and access**

Internship agencies aim to achieve excellence (high student achievement) and equity (opportunity and success for each and every student). Youth today need internships as a part of a high quality education that equips them with the knowledge and skills to achieve their full intellectual and social potential. Ensuring that the internship experience is available for all students, and that appropriate supports are built into the experience, allows all students to be successful in this endeavor.

**Standard 4**  
**Internships are based on identified youth interests and learning objectives**

Internships and their objectives are stated in youth-centered, written, individual learning plans, differentiated for youth skill levels, and are based on work-based learning research and employer-defined work readiness skills needed for success. The continuum of experiences and learning for youth include interest surveys, mentoring and career exploration experiences to allow the internship to be aligned to a young person’s interests.

**Standard 5**  
**Internship experiences align with academic learning**

Internships complement and support core competencies and academic requirements and are included as part of course curriculum or agency **continuum of service**.

- Internship and academic learning objectives align
- Curriculum is developed to incorporate learning from internships and 21st Century skills
- Internships provide an avenue to college and career opportunities for youth who would otherwise not consider these options

**Standard 6**  
**Internships produce valuable work that furthers employers' organizational goals**

Interns support the goals and efforts of the host organization. Internships help employers to develop their future workforce while creating long-term, sustainable partnerships that link the education and workforce development of youth with the bottom line for businesses.

**Standard 7**  
**All participants are prepared for, and reflect upon, internship experiences**

The internship includes comprehensive preparation beforehand for youth, schools and employers to understand its goals, as well as a debrief after the internship has ended to reflect on the experience. Those involved in the learning experience understand the responsibilities and expected outcomes of the internship which are detailed in youth's written, individual learning plans.

- School and workforce personnel, partners and intermediaries are responsible for preparing youth and employers for internship experiences, through the use of written, individual learning plans
- School and workforce personnel and partners have the support needed to help establish structured learning objectives and facilitate interaction between employers and learners
- Youth are committed to implementing the individual learning plan and are supported by school personnel, partners and employers in meeting its established objectives; youth understand what to expect from an internship, and what they must contribute to maximize career skill development
- Employers receive orientation and training about how to engage youth in internships to maximize their own participation and youth's learning experiences

**Standard 8**  
**Systems are in place to support internship participants throughout the experience**

Internships are supported by an operational structure with supports that allow participants to work together effectively. This includes:

- Employers' points of contact with school personnel, agency or other intermediary
- A vehicle to broker the school and employer cultures (i.e., a person, a system)
- A quality control and supervision system to support learning in an effective and safe environment
- A role for interested parties to be involved in and trained in helping procure internships
- A well-defined employer guidebook and orientation/preparation process
- A system that reasonably protects employers' liability for employing and working with youth
- An evaluation process of and by employers, youth, educators and parents
- A defined timeframe for internships—Internships generally are implemented for a period of 8-10 weeks for 35-40 hours a week
- A third party (intermediary) or a school district to provide continuity of pre-internship training, implementation and post-internship follow-up activities, as well as recruit new internship-providing employers

**Standard 9**  
**Internships are assessed against identified youth interests and learning objectives**

Internships are assessed against youth-centered, written, individual learning plans. Performance is evaluated by the employer/supervisor and the teacher/coordinator before, during and after the internship experience. Assessment data is used to measure changes in motivation, attendance, engagement and achievement in the classroom.

**Standard 10**  
**Internships occur in safe and supportive environments**

Internship experiences are compliant with legal, health, and safety regulations. Participants understand how to work with a diverse workforce.

The partners to this agreement believe that youth learn about essential aspects of the world of work, the correlation between school skills and work skills, and the components of success in the workplace through quality work based experiences.

High quality internships result in the following for youth:

- Youth are motivated to be successful in school or training
- Youth increase their career preparedness and knowledge of the habits (skills and competencies) of compensated work. Ultimately, youth understand their own interests and abilities as they relate to the world of work
- Youth increase their skills to respond to the demands of the 21st century workforce and economy. This includes navigating learning, life, and information technology; understanding content knowledge and current topics; organizing and allocating resources; and working effectively with others
- Youth build an understanding of themselves as lifelong learners and apply this to their future schooling and careers
- Youth understand the relationship between work, personal income and lifelong earning: compensated internships reinforce the relevance of work in life.
- Youth strengthen and improve their academic success, with behaviors such as enhanced motivation, attendance, and engagement in learning
- Youth understand the importance of, and strive to build and maintain, relationships with people different from themselves
- Youth increase their sense of civic engagement and responsibility. They understand how work addresses a community or public purpose in addition to the commercial and profit-seeking aspects
- Youth build self-confidence and maturity by working with adults in a business environment
- Youth improve their oral and written communications skills.
- Youth include their families in the learning experience.
- Youth help build pride among family members for their involvement in learning and new opportunities, leading to higher expectations for lifelong achievement.
- Youth and families receive support to make internships a collective learning experience.

### **Workbased Learning Continuum**

- **Guest Speaker**
- **Company Tour/Field Trip/Visit**
- **Job Shadow**
- **Service Learning**
- **Student-run Enterprise**
- **Teacher Externship**
- **Mentor/Tutor**
- **Internship**

