

Onboarding and Supporting High School Interns

Building a Strong Foundation for Success

Set up expectations for communication and regular check-ins

Regular check-ins between an intern and their direct mentor/supervisor provide an opportunity for continuous feedback as well as an opportunity for relationship building by providing a space for interns who may still be hesitant to ask questions. These meetings can be brief (15 minutes or less) as long as they have an intentional structure and are productive.

These conversations should not focus solely on the tasks an intern is completing but extend to reflection and consideration of how their experience is shaping their career aspirations.

⇒ Download the [check-in meetings](#) template

Integrate interns into the team and culture of the company

To ensure a positive internship experience, employers should proactively welcome interns, recognizing that it might be their first exposure to a professional environment and that they may feel anxious.

This can be done through staff meetings, introduction emails, or other intentional gestures, demonstrating the value and respect the company has for interns.

Additionally, interns should be included in relevant employee meetings and events, familiarized with company policies and physical layouts, and aware of the “unwritten rules” to help them integrate into the company culture more effectively.

⇒ Download the Participant “About Me” Profile: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

Providing targeted supports and resources

Internships should balance industry-related tasks and professional development opportunities, including one-on-one guidance. Employers should provide interns with a toolkit of targeted resources to support interns in areas where they may need additional help as they progress through their internship.



COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

[Ingredion](#) has 1:1 bi-monthly check-ins documented in their management information system and schedules a welcoming lunch at the beginning of the program.

[MAC Medical, Inc.](#) provides pizza and hosts weekly meetings to support networking. They also created a designated area for one-one-one training with interns

[Nucor](#) sets up a meet and greet opportunity with the Human Resources team, so that high school interns can learn more about how to apply and opportunities available.

McHenry County Manufacturing Pathways Consortium created an [activity guide for high school interns](#).

GPEAK provides a free curriculum to help interns develop essential employability skills ([view samples on their website](#)).