



# CLASSROOM TO CAREER PLAYBOOK

A reference for educators and employers to define  
career path engagement opportunities.

[Abstract](#)

Summary of playbook

COMPACT

McLean County Chamber of Commerce

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# Employer On-Site Engagements

Engagements that take place at the employer's place of business.

## Short-Term Engagement

Engagements that range from a single 30-minute visit to several visits that are spread across weeks or months (generally less than a semester in length).

### Job Shadow

An opportunity for students to go to an employer's worksite and learn from experienced employees in the field of study. Experienced employees will show the students what a typical work-day consists of and could give the students a small task to work on. Employers determine the timeline and details of the Job shadows. They could range from 30 minutes to a full work day, but they typically will not be longer than 1 work day. (also known as Career Shadow and Desk Shadow)

### Externship

Like a job shadow, but with possible hands-on experience, an externship is applicable for professionals (faculty/school personnel) seeking knowledge in an industry or workplace a student has interest in pursuing. Externships are typically held for short time period lasting anywhere from a week long up to X (eight) weeks and are often held over a student's winter, spring or summer break.

### Workplace Learning Activities

Educational opportunities in which students engage in authentic and relevant work aligned with a career pathway. These experiences allow students to participate in a professional work environment and assist with career skill development and decision making.

### Field Study

The objective collection of raw data outside a of a controlled environment such as a laboratory or library. Field studies involve collecting data outside of an experimental or lab setting. This type of data collection is most often done in natural settings or environments and can be done in a variety of ways for various disciplines. A field study involves a range of methods: informal interviews, direct observation, participation in the group, collective discussions, analyses of personal documents produced within the group, self-analysis, results from activities undertaken off- or on-line.

### Facility/Building Tour

Purpose: Learn how a business operates by experiencing their building, facility or campus.

Setting: Groups of students and their teacher(s) tour a building/facility during a pre-arranged time with the employer. In most situations, the tour should include a brief history of the company, a high-level explanation of the company's operations and a guided tour with pre-arranged stops at areas (or with people) of interest within the company.

Food: Should be pre-arranged between the school and employer if there are options to eat at the facility or if students should bring their own lunch. Also consider what accommodations are available if the students will be eating on site.

Format: Will vary by employer and should be discussed and documented.

Audience: K-12 (Employer should dictate ideal grade levels)

Other considerations:

The employer should consider requirements for the number of chaperones (example: 1 for every 10 children), printed materials to help with the educational experience, promotional merchandise (examples: stickers, keychains, etc.), alternate arrangements if there is an outdoor tour, parking for school transportation, dress code, security concerns (backpacks, coats, etc.), check-in procedures (meeting place arranged, visitor badges, etc.), check-out procedures, and any fees or costs related to the tour or related activities (example: Caterpillar visitors center). Note: This may also be categorized by some employers as a Field Trip.

Examples:

[Caterpillar Field Trip](#)

[FBI Experience](#)

## Long-Term Engagements

Engagements are generally for a semester or school year (may be longer if agreed to by all parties). May include requirements that must be met to earn the student credits toward their graduation.

### Internship

An official program offered by an employer to potential employees. Interns work either part or full time for a minimum and maximum period. For high school students' internships are often unpaid, but still involve exploratory duties and responsibilities that give students entry level experience in many different job functions or even departments. Paid internships for high school students are typically offered over the summer break.

Example: [McLean County Health Department Internship](#)

### Co-op

High School cooperative educational programs are designed to provide supervised workplace employment opportunities and learning experiences. Co-op programs are based on agreements made between the employer and the high school faculty for the student to split campus time with employers. For "job-ready" students, students are matched with employers who offers full-time work hours in a job related to the student's career program for up to months at a time.

Example:

[Bloomington Area Career Center](#) (similar)

### Apprenticeship

A training program that combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction that culminates in the award of an industry credential.

### Work-Study (available once the student gets to college)

Relating to a college (or private high school) program that enables students to work part-time while attending school and is based on financial need. In the formal sense, Federal Work-Study provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses.

### Mentoring

A formally arranged pairing of individuals in which one agrees to share their skills, knowledge, expertise, and professional contacts with you. Mentors can help you navigate professional/career decisions and considerations that come into play when choosing a line of work, an academic major, or a prospective school or employer. These relationships are intended to assist making sound school and/or career decisions.

### Work Program

Course that enables students to develop and refine occupational competencies needed to acquire and succeed in a job, adjust to the employment, and advance in an occupation of their choice. On-the-job instruction is supervised by the employer. They work closely with the teacher-coordinator in planning and student learning experiences, which are compatible with student goals. Students are required to work an average of 15 hours a week.

### Entrepreneurial Experiences

This class is a year-long experience that engages students in startup business development and processes and creates meaningful connections with local business owners and innovators. Students will visit local businesses, partner with a business mentor, learn from guest speakers, develop their own business idea and pitch their idea to local business owners and entrepreneurs at the end of the year. Students must apply and go through an interview as part of the course selection process.

Example: [Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program](#)

## School/Classroom Engagement Activities

Engagements that take place in a school or classroom.

### Career Days

**Purpose:** Provide students with a day to experience connections between their academic pursuits and potential career paths. Allows students to explore their interests and better understand themselves and their community.

**Setting:** Generally done inside the school and includes a career fair, break-out sessions with employers providing classroom presentations (defined below), and auditorium presentations by key speakers.

**Format:** Often a full day with a pre-arranged schedule that defines the time and place of each stage of the event. Could be done in conjunction with neighboring schools.

**Audience:** K-12; Could be a single grade (High School Seniors) or the range of grades housed within a school (i.e., Elementary, Middle School, or High School)

Example: [Career Day](#)

### Classroom Presentation

Purpose: Employer speaks in a classroom setting about their professional experiences and expertise on a topic within a discipline.

Setting: Elementary school would be a grade level classroom (example: 3rd grade class); Middle school through high school would likely be a subject area classroom (example: biology).

Format: Presentation materials should be coordinated between the teacher and employer and the employer should come with a presentation that fits within an agreed upon timeframe. This could also be online webinars or various online offerings.

Audience: K-12

### Lunch & Learn

Purpose: Students gain understanding of the relevance of high school course work, real world application of skills, paths to employment, and industry outlooks in an informal roundtable or dinner table setting.

Setting: May be best for small to medium sized groups and done in a "roundtable" setting where signup is on a first come, first serve basis and limited to a certain number of seats.

Food: It is recommended that students and the employer bring their own lunch, but the employer could also provide lunch if they so desire - This should be clearly stated in all communications.

Format: Casual; The employer should come ready to discuss how their pre-college planning and decisions led them to their current career and then allow plenty of time for students to ask questions. The employer should also consider bringing questions to encourage engagement from the students.

Audience: Generally middle school and high school students.

Example: [Lunch & Learn](#)

## Other Activities & Definitions

### Career Cluster

Groups of occupations and industries that have a set of foundational knowledge and skills in common. There are 16 nationally recognized clusters within which are multiple career pathways.

### Career Exploration

Career exploration is a self-assessment activity in which an individual is simply learning about various occupations and their "fit" with your unique career preferences, e.g. the skills, interests and values satisfied by a career. Ideally, you engage in career exploration during or after identifying your career preferences through the self-assessment. Self-Exploration included, also.

### Career Pathway:

Multi-year programs of academic and technical study that prepare high school students for a full

range of postsecondary options within each of the 16 clusters. These pathways provide a context for exploring career options at all levels of education and a framework for linking learning to the knowledge and skills needed for future education and employment.

#### Certification

Credentials awarded to students by an independent third-party verifying qualifications or competencies in a career skill area. Certifications are sought or accepted by employers as preferred or required credentials for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention or advancement purposes of their employees.

#### Curriculum Building

Used when districts are building their own curriculum using grade level or subject area teams. Allows for multiple lessons to meet the same common core standard to provide teachers with more flexibility.