



ACADEMIES
OF LOUDOUN

EXPLORE • RESEARCH • COLLABORATE • INNOVATE



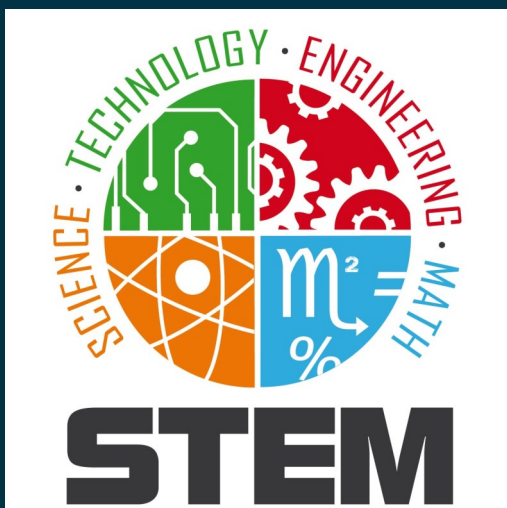
PLACEMENT SERVICES

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE



MISSION: *The mission of the Academies of Loudoun is to empower students to explore, research, collaborate, innovate, and to make meaningful contributions to the world in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.*

Vision: *All Academies of Loudoun scholars will achieve personal success in their learning and become responsible and productive citizens. Our vision, as a school community, is to inspire our students' passion for STEM learning.*



WELCOME TO PLACEMENT SERVICES!

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

While our teachers and staff at the Academies of Loudoun are committed to ensuring that our students have the best possible academic experience, there are many ways to develop knowledge, skills, and values through direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting through experiential learning.

The Academies of Loudoun Placement Services offer students a structured learning experience as they explore career fields, and apply academic coursework to the workplace. These services enable a collaborative partnership between the student, employers and the Academies of Loudoun Placement Services. By formulating learning goals and creating a training plan at the onset of the experience, students are empowered to declare what they hope to learn, achieve and contribute. The student's progress is monitored throughout the process and will be evaluated to ensure that the student has met, if not exceeded goals.

What is Experiential Learning?

Experiential learning is a school-coordinated, coherent sequence of workplace experiences through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting. It encompasses a wide variety of enriching opportunities for students, such as jobs, internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, service learning, and job shadowing. Well-planned, supervised and assessed experiential learning programs can stimulate academic inquiry by promoting interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development, cultural awareness, leadership, and other professional and intellectual skills.

Experiential learning allows students to develop critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills. In such an environment, students are free to experiment, try new things, learn in a safe and controlled atmosphere, and gain real-time feedback. This kind of learning helps students build an emotional connect with the subject, leverage real examples for inspiration and enhance their experiences in a manner that leaves them with rich stories to share back with their friends and peers.

TYPES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Summer Enrichment

Summer is always an excellent time to continue learning and explore potential career opportunities. From camps to leadership programs to Governor's School, Placement Services will help you find summer enrichment opportunities throughout Loudoun County and beyond. Summer Pre-College Programs are also a great way to earn college credit while in high school.

Service Learning/Volunteerism

A method in which the student engages in community service work for a specified number of hours in order to gain developmental experience. The Academies of Loudoun assists students in finding volunteer opportunities that correlate with the student's academic interests. Please note that students are required to maintain a log of their own service learning hours and the service learning hours must be confirmed by the volunteer supervisor. For a comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities email the Placement Coordinator.

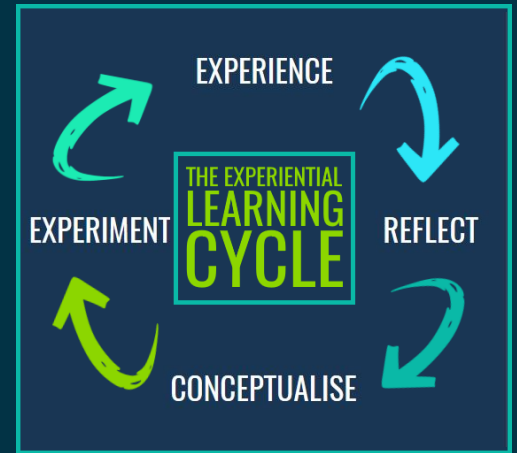
Job Shadowing

Job shadowing enables a student to observe a professional on the job for a brief pre-determined period of time. The benefits to job-shadowing for high school students are numerous and include:

- Helping students determine a career path to follow
- Showing students how their textbook learning can be applied in the real world
- Learning about companies by experiencing them in the actual trenches
- Exploring the cultural differences of different workplace environments



Students are able to arrange job shadowing experiences through the Academies of Loudoun Placement Coordinator. Additionally, the Loudoun County School-Business Partnership, currently comprised of over 200 business partners, offers a Job for a Day Program. The Job for a Day (JFD) program is a career exploration activity providing an opportunity for eligible students to "shadow" (follow) an individual for a day at his or her workplace to observe the performance and tasks necessary in a particular career cluster, field or job. To learn more about Job for a Day visit the LCPS Community Connections page: <https://www.lcps.org/Page/211980>.



Learning that is considered "experiential" contains all of the following elements:

- Reflection, critical analysis and synthesis
- Opportunities for students to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results
- Opportunities for students to engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, and physically
- A designed learning experience that includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes
(University of Colorado)

Why is Getting an Internship Important?

- 25% of employers surveyed indicated that their new college hires come from within the companies internship program.
- 55% of responding employers indicate that new college hires have previous internship experience.
- 64% of the employers say they pay new full-time hires with internship experience an average of 8.9% more than their inexperienced counterparts.

(Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook Survey)

Mentorships

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the protégé) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth. Mentors work together with candidates to accomplish certain tasks for the benefit of their company. As they work together, Mentors provide feedback and guidance to the candidates as well as evaluate for certain skill sets and cultural fit to report to the hiring manager.

Protégé Benefits:

- Assistance in defining career goals, strategies, and outcomes
- Developing meaningful professional relationships
- Gains knowledge of workplace expectations
- Builds self-advocacy skills and confidence to be successful
- Access to potential internships and job opportunities

"One of the greatest values of mentors is the ability to see ahead what others cannot see and to help them navigate a course to their destination."

—John C. Maxwell

Internships

An internship is a form of school-coordinated experiential learning that integrates a student's academic experience with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. The experience is mutually beneficial, allowing Academies of Loudoun students to gain valuable applied experience and make professional connections, and giving employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. Each of the employers we assist in listing opportunities shares this commitment to making their internship program a true learning experience.

Students Who Successfully Obtain Internships

Internships in high school can be a rarity and will not always be readily available. The students at the Academies of Loudoun that have had the most success in obtaining internships do the following:

- **Recognize the importance of the foot in the door:** Successful students hop on every opportunity that comes their way even if an opportunity is not exactly what they want to do in the future. They know that this summer, they may be doing something of interest, but they establish a relationship with a business and possibly get invited back for an internship in their desired career field.
- **They have a resume and cover letter at the ready:** Your resume and cover letter must be ready to go as new opportunities arise daily. Many students are competing for the same internships and if a student is prepared, they have a better chance of being called for an interview.

- **They Start Early:** Students who are serious about obtaining a summer internship start looking in the fall before. Internships are posted throughout the school year and the students that are constantly looking tend to better their chances of being selected.

They Are Always Prepared to Network: We have business partners in the Academies of Loudoun building all the time. We live in a “who-you-know” world. They find ways to interact with the business community to start creating a professional network.

They Are Willing to Learn and Have a “Can-Do” Attitude: They are ready and willing to do anything and everything to ensure they have the best experience possible.

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners in a trade or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying classroom study.

Apprenticeship also enables practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated profession. Most of their training is done while working for an employer who helps the apprentices learn their trade or profession, in exchange for their continued labor for an agreed period after they have achieved measurable competencies. Apprenticeships typically last 3 to 7 years. People who successfully complete an apprenticeship reach the “journeyman” or professional certification level of competence.



Youth-Registered Apprenticeship: A Youth-Registered Apprenticeship (YRA) is a career preparation method that integrates school-based and hands-on learning to help students gain employability and occupational skills. Local programs provide training based on statewide youth apprenticeship curriculum guidelines, endorsed by business and industry. Students are instructed by qualified teachers and skilled journey-worker worksite experts. Students are simultaneously enrolled in academic classes to meet high school graduation requirements and in occupation specific related instruction classes. Once an employer becomes an approved YRA sponsor, the student is hired and registered as an apprentice. The participating sponsor/employer provides supervision of a skilled mentor and the student continues on with the Career Technical Education (CTE) training at his/her school. Upon completion of the requirements for a high school diploma, youth registered apprentices may continue as full-time registered apprentices, subject to all standard on-the-job and related instruction requirements. For companies who would like to participate in a Registered or Youth-Registered apprenticeship, please contact the Placement Coordinator at the Academies of Loudoun.

The Role of Placement Coordinator is to:

- Work closely with the business community to identify opportunities for Academies of Loudoun students,
- Assist students in securing those opportunities by coaching them through the interview process.
- Assist students in preparing for interviews, resumes, cover letters, etc. Examples of great student resumes can be found on the Academies of Loudoun website.
- Monitor student progress in workplace settings.
- Plan and execute opportunities for students to connect with businesses, such as Career Fairs, Lunch and Learns, and Guest Speaking Events.



Did you know?...

Just about every major US company is bringing back the apprenticeship? Students can begin working right out of high school for companies like Mantech, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, learn on-the-job and obtain tuition assistance for their bachelor's degree, particularly in critical needs areas such as Information Technology and Manufacturing. Here are a few apprenticeship programs to explore.



Student Arranged Opportunities

Students may also participate in independently-arranged experiential learning experiences. This would include any internships, mentorships, work-study opportunities, etc. that a student finds on his/her own through various resources. Placement Services would like to request that students register their student-arranged opportunity for tracking and documentation purposes, even if that opportunity was discovered by means other than through the Academies of Loudoun Placement Services.

Internship Resources

The Academies of Loudoun provides resources for Experiential Learning, but students are encouraged to explore opportunities through other sources as well. Friends and family can often be the best place to obtain an experiential learning opportunity.

- **Indeed:** An employment related search engine listing jobs worldwide.
- **Glass Door:** Glassdoor has millions of jobs, salary information, company reviews, and interview questions – all posted anonymously by employees and job seekers.
- **Zip Recruiter:** ZipRecruiter is an online job board that allows employers to post jobs to hundreds of job boards.
- **Internships.com:** The world's largest student-focused internship marketplace.
- **Friends/Family Network:** Communicate with family and friends via email or social media to let them know you are looking for an opportunity.
- **Idealist:** A job board focused on service and non-profit internships across job functions ranging from marketing to web development.
- **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is an American business and employment-oriented online service that operates via websites and mobile apps.
- **GoinGlobal:** GoinGlobal's Internship database features millions of opportunities around the globe—all updated daily.
- **Intern Queen:** How to search for, apply for, and land an internship.
- **SummerJobs.com:** offers summer jobs and seasonal staff positions with camps, amusement parks, resorts, national parks, hotels, environmental organizations and more.
- **Youth Adult Services WIOA Program:** Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a Federal job training program sponsored by the Department of Labor.
- **CoolWorks:** a website dedicated to Jobs In Great Places
- **Media Bistro:** Careers for Graphic Designers, Copywriters, Social Media Managers, Proofreaders and More.
- **USAJobs.gov:** Federal Government Jobs and Internships



Practicums

Practicums are field experiences that allow a student to observe and document how working professionals perform their job responsibilities. Students will also participate to a limited extent in performing tasks under supervision by program professors and on-site staff. Concurrently, students enroll in a course which outlines the expectations and requirements of the practicum.

The expectations associated with a practicum vary according to the career. For example, a practicum in teaching may require assisting the teacher with implementing small group instruction, whereas a practicum in nursing may entail recording vital signs for one or two patients under supervision. General characteristics of practicums include:

- Shadowing one or more assigned employees who will guide the on-site experience.
- Observing and correlating practices in the field with theories and methods previously studied.
- Recording data or assisting with tasks as directed by on-site personnel.
- Completing practicum course assignments. Participation at the practicum site is typically two or three times per week for a few hours per session. No remuneration is expected for a practicum, but it does qualify for academic credit.

Placement Services by Grade

All Academies of Loudoun students can participate in some form of Experiential Learning. Here is a breakdown by grade as to which experiences are best suited for each age group:

Freshman Year-Awareness and Gaining Confidence: As students adjust to the demands of high school, we recommend that this be an exploratory year for Experiential Learning. Begin by exploring different career paths and what each can offer. This would be the perfect time to participate in a job shadowing experience, service learning, or summer enrichment. There will also be workshops available to students in this first year to build strengths in career exploration, goals, and planning.

Sophomore Year-Coaching, Exploring and Gaining Skills: Sophomores begin to develop resumes, cover letters, research career exploration websites to discover their interests, work on interviewing skills. Students can participate in mentorships, job shadowing experiences, volunteerism, and summer enrichment.



Junior Year-Hands-On Experience: In junior year, students gain experience across different professional sectors, explore possibilities, expand their skills, demonstrate capabilities and develop networks. Students begin to gain direct experience in the professional world. Students can begin to participate in mentorships, job shadowing experiences, internships, service learning, and summer enrichment.

Senior Year-Launch: By senior year, students can enter into any type of experiential learning and are encouraged to do so. Some students in select programs may attend their internship in exchange for coming to their MATA program. Students learn how to set appropriate milestones to achieve their goals, how to navigate resources, and how to deliver clear messaging to prospective employers through written and face-to-face communication.



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