PLACEMENT SERVICES

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE
The role of Placement Coordinator at the Academies of Loudoun is to:

- Work closely with the business community to identify opportunities for Academies of Loudoun students, such as jobs, internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, service learning, mentorships and practicums.
- Assist students in securing those opportunities by coaching them through the interview process.
- Assist students in preparing for interviews, resumes, cover letters, etc.
- Monitor student progress in workplace settings.

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 practicums, student employment/work-study, and paid/unpaid internships, 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.

Learning that is considered "experiential" contains all 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, or physically
- A designed learning experience that includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes

(University of Colorado)
Why Should Academies of Loudoun Students Participate?

Whether you participate in an Internship, Mentorship, Job Shadowing Experience, Apprenticeship/Work-Study, Practicum, Service Learning Opportunity or Summer Enrichment, Academies of Loudoun Placement Services will ensure that you make the most of your experience. Most of your experience will depend on you, but we are there every step of the way to ensure that your participation:

- Provides authentic learning experiences that directly correlate with your skillset and areas of interest
- Enables you to build relationships with those in your field to begin networking for future opportunities
- Builds upon the classroom while helping you build your resume
- Stimulates a true career experience in your desired area of study
- Helps you determine if that area of study is the right pathway for you before you continue your education
- Experiential Learning directly aligns with the State of Virginia's the Profile of a Graduate initiative. For more information about the Profile of a Graduate visit: http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/profile-grad/index.shtml.

How Can Academies Students Participate?

**Step 1:** Complete the "Student Interest Survey". https://conta.cc/2O1zTuo. This will go to the Placement Coordinator, who will be able to begin to search for opportunities for your student. It will also give us the opportunity to get to know the student better and find the right match for the student's needs.

**Step 2:** Go to the Experiential Learning Google Classroom. Www.classroom.google.com. Students can join using the class code: quja8. Parents can join after their student has joined as the student's guardian. Here students can view opportunities by category (i.e. internship, job, summer opportunity, etc.). Or students can find their own opportunities.

For further instructions on how to seek out an Experiential Learning Opportunity, please consult the Checklists that can be found on page 16/17.
**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, the school counseling office will help you find summer enrichment opportunities throughout Loudoun County and beyond. Summer programs are offered through organizations such as The National Institutes of Health, Johns Hopkins University, Cornell University, United States Secret Service, National Security Administration, NASA, Smithsonian, and more. There is an extensive listing of Summer Opportunities on the Google Classroom called “Experiential Learning Opportunities” and many are free for students who qualify. The class code to join is: quja8.

**Service Learning**

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. In order to qualify as an official service learning experience, it is highly recommended that students complete the “Experiential Learning Experience” Form and work with Mrs. Yeager to have your service learning hours officially on record.

**Types of Experiential Learning:**

- Mentorships
- Summer Programs
- Service Learning/Volunteerism
- Internships
- Apprenticeships/Work Study
- Practicums
Mentorships

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the protege) 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.

**What does a mentor do?**
The following are among the mentor’s functions:
- Teaches the protege about a specific issue
- Coaches the protege on a particular skill
- Facilitates growth by sharing resources and networks
- Challenges the protege to move beyond comfort zones
- Creates a safe learning environment for taking risks
- Focuses on the protege’s total development

**Why do organizations implement mentoring programs?**
Organizations find today’s employees exhibit a more flexible approach to work. Organizations now look to mentoring to implement a strategic game plan that includes:
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Professional development
- Development of a multicultural workforce

**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
Job Shadowing

Job shadowing enables an Academies of Loudoun student to spend time observing 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” 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 please go to: www.lcps.org
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.

Offering internships is extremely beneficial to business owners, particularly small business owners. It’s a great way to find future employees and test-drive new talent. At the same time, it gives businesses the opportunity to give back to the community, and support students, especially economically disadvantaged youth that would not otherwise be able to participate.

The types of internships available depend up on the nature of the job as well as the employer’s needs. However, the various types are:

For credit: (Must be at least 120 hours and must align directly with course content in order to receive credit).
- Unpaid internships (see US Department of Labor Guidelines for Unpaid Internships)
- Paid Internships

Not for credit:
- Non-credit Non-paid Internships
- Non-credit Paid Internships

Why is 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.
Internship Resources

There are tremendous resources available to search for experiential learning experiences. If none of the opportunities that Student Services Office has available meet your needs, here are some suggestions of other places to look:

- **Indeed.com**: An employment related search engine listing jobs worldwide.
- **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 like Facebook for professionals. It’s an international social media site focused on connecting individuals in the business world.
- **Going Global**: GoinGlobal’s Internship database features millions of opportunities around the globe—all updated daily.
- **Intern Inc.**: contains a large pool of businesses (including Fortune 500 companies) that are always looking for interns. Access is easy, just sign up.
- **Internship Queen**: Lauren focuses on how to get an internship and all that entails: How to search for, apply for, and land an internships.
- **Think Intern**: allows you to browse internships by industry, job types, location.
- **Telos**: https://www.lcps.org/Page/200365
- **SummerJobs.com**: offers summer jobs and seasonal staff positions with camps, amusement staff positions, resorts, national parks, hotels, environmental organizations and more.
- **Youth Adult Services WOA Program**: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a Federal job training program sponsored by the Department of Labor.
- **Jobs on Facebook**: https://www.facebook.com/jobs/?init_composer=0
- **Craigslist**: https://washingtondc.craigslist.org/nva/
- **USAJobs.gov**: Federal government jobs and internships
- **Smithsonian**: https://www.smithsonianofi.com/internship-opportunities/
- **Loudoun County**: https://www.indeed.com/q-Summer-l-Loudoun-County,-VA-jobs.html
- **INNOVA Loudoun Hospital**: https://www.inova.org/get-involved/volunteer/inova-loudoun-hospital/index.jsp
- **National Security Agency (NSA)**: https://www.intelligencemcareers.gov/nsa/nsastudents.html
- **Naval Research Laboratory (NRL)**: https://www.nrl.navy.mil/careers/students/ssep/
- **Northrop Grumman Internship (CyberPatriot)**: https://www.lcps.org/Page/200365
- **Janelia Research Campus**: https://janelia.org/search-internships/
- **National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)**: https://www.lcps.org/Page/200365
Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying study (classroom work and reading). 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. Although the formal boundaries and terminology of the apprentice/journeyman/master system often do not extend outside guilds and trade unions, the concept of on-the-job training leading to competence over a period of years is found in any field of skilled labor.

Youth-Registered Apprenticeships:
Youth Registered Apprenticeship (YRA) is a career preparation method that integrates school-based and experiential 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.

"Growing the apprenticeship system today in the United States, even at a modest level, could be transformative. It's really an underutilized way of learning, something that's really been something of a best-kept secret in a handful of industries."

—Brent Parton, the New America Foundation
Apprenticeships (cont’d)

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.

Registered Apprenticeship:
Registered Apprenticeship is a career preparation Experiential Learning method that provides the student with hands-on training from an experienced mentor at the job site in the specified occupation. Student apprentices are paid employees of a company. Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and receive pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment. This rewards and motivates apprentices as they advance through their training. An apprentice must be paid at least the minimum federal hourly wage. Upon completion of a Registered Apprenticeship program, the apprentice receives a nationally recognized credential which consists of a Completion Certificate and journey-worker card. This is a portable credential that signifies to employers that employees with the journeymen status are fully qualified for the job.

Apprenticeship is good for business

- Helps recruit and develop a highly skilled workforce
- Improves productivity and the bottom line
- Provides opportunities for tax credits and employee tuition benefits in some states
- Reduces turnover costs & increases employee retention
- Creates industry-driven and flexible training solutions to meet national and local needs

Placement Services
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.

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.
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.
Placement Services is dedicated to ensuring that your experience matches your expectations. LCPS’s extensive database of business partners through Loudoun County Public Schools and the "Experiential Learning Opportunities" google classroom is growing regularly with opportunities for students.

**Before your Internship/Apprenticeship begins:**
- Complete the “Student Interest Survey” https://conta.cc/2O1zTuo.
- Enroll in the “Experiential Learning Opportunities” Google Classroom. The class code: **quja8**
- Select at least 3 opportunities to which you would like to apply.
- Meet with the Placement Coordinator in Student Services
- Notify your teacher that a **Teacher Recommendation** is needed.
- Work with Placement Services to review your resume and cover letter. If you do not yet have a resume and cover letter, please create one. You may bring a rough draft to the Placement Coordinator to obtain feedback.
- Speak to your instructor: How your internship will translate to a grade?
- Once the internship has been arranged, please complete all forms:
  - **PART I**: INTERNSHIP APPLICATION
  - **PART II**: PERMISSION, LIABILITY and INSURANCE
  - **PART III**: RULES, REGULATIONS, EXPECTATIONS AGREEMENT
  - **PART IV**: TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FORM
  - **PART V**: MEDIA RELEASE

**During your Experiential Learning Experience:**
- Maintain a log of the tasks completed during your internship/apprenticeship as well as the hours worked/volunteered. This is critical for your Instructor as well as your Site Supervisor to ensure that the internship is meeting course requirements and your own personal learning goals. A “daily task manager log” can be found on the Academies of Loudoun website.
- Check in with the Placement Coordinator, your school counselor, or your instructor weekly.

**End of Internship:**
- Reach out to your instructor to ensure that all learning targets were met through the tasks performed at the internship/apprenticeship. This will be reflected in your grade for the semester.

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Checklist and Requirements:

- **Paid/Unpaid Internships, Apprenticeships and Practicums**
  (please note, additional forms and information may be required by the internship/apprenticeship site)

***Please note: These forms are only necessary for those students that will be participating in their internship/apprenticeship during the school day. If the internship/apprenticeship/practicum takes place outside the normal school day, please just notify Student Services so that we may keep a record.

All forms can be located on the Academies of Loudoun Website: [www.lcps.org/acl](http://www.lcps.org/acl)
Click on School Counseling, then on the Placement Services
Before your Experiential Learning Experience begins:

- Complete the “Student Interest Survey” https://conta.cc/2O1zTuo.
- Enroll in the “Experiential Learning Opportunities” Google Classroom.
  The class code: quja8
- Select at least 3 opportunities to which you would like to apply.
- Meet with the Placement Coordinator in Student Services
- Once the opportunity has been secured, please complete:
  - Part I: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE PLAN
  - Part II: PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

All Experiential Learning Experiences should be registered through the Placement Coordinator in Student Services.

During your Experiential Learning Experience:

- Maintain a log of the tasks completed during your experience as well as the hours worked/volunteered. It is the student’s responsibility to track all hours and tasks performed as well as get it signed by the site supervisor. This mostly pertains to service learning and summer enrichment. A “daily task manager log” can be found under Placement Services on the Academies of Loudoun website www.lcps.org/acl.

End of ELE:

- Meet with Mrs. Yeager in Student Services to discuss the experience and complete exit survey.
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