

M-Cubed Work-Based Learning

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TRANSFORMING THE
FUTURE OF
MILWAUKEE THROUGH
EDUCATION



Employer Handbook

Contents

- 2 Sponsor Letter and M-Cubed Definition
- 3 WBL Definition and Value Proposition
- 4 WBL Continuum and Framework
- 5 Career Awareness
- 6 Career Exploration
- 7 Career Readiness and Employment
- 10 Helpful Tips for Engaging with Early Talent in the Workplace
- 10 Contact Information and Taking the Next Step



Sponsor Letter and M-Cubed Definition

Dear Partner,

Thank you for your interest in providing work-based learning experiences for our students. We hope this marks the beginning of a long partnership that will help develop the future workforce of Milwaukee and the larger region.

Through the leadership of the M-Cubed Work-Based Learning (WBL) team, students from Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee explore careers, gauge their personal interests, and try out various jobs to learn more about the world of work. Our students graduate with a career plan, sense of direction, and skills needed to succeed.

We value our employer partners who offer work-based learning opportunities for career awareness, exploration, and readiness. Employment opportunities, in particular, offer the richest experiences. Students who engage in paid work experiences benefit from skill building that reinforces the relevance of their coursework. These students are better prepared for college and careers in high-demand industries – and research shows that they are more likely to find higher-quality work and higher wages.

As industry professionals, you are critical to the success of our WBL programs and our plan for growth. We need you as our partner so more students have the opportunity to gain the on-the-job skills they'll need to succeed. We encourage you to read the options listed in this handbook and reach out to our M-Cubed Work-Based Learning team, who will guide you in implementing an outstanding experience that best meets your needs.

Sincerely,

Vicki Martin, PhD
President
Milwaukee Area Technical College

Mark A. Mone, PhD
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

Keith P. Posley, EdD
Superintendent
Milwaukee Public Schools

Our goal is to continue expanding WBL programs so more students have access to these valuable experiences.

What Is M-Cubed?

It's a partnership among Milwaukee's three largest public education institutions dedicated to transforming the future of our city through education.

In 2015, these three institutions came together to build seamless connections from high school to college, beginning with goals for college credit while still in high school, campus visits and tours, parent support, and financial aid navigation. M-Cubed is witnessing the rewards Milwaukee students are gaining through three key impact areas: Connecting Learning, Transitioning, and Driving Completion.



WBL Definition and Value Proposition

WBL Definition

Work-based learning (WBL) is the umbrella term used to identify activities which collaboratively engage employers and schools in providing structured learning experiences for students.

These experiences focus on assisting all students to develop broad, transferable skills for postsecondary education and the workplace. Experiences can include Internship, Apprenticeship/Youth Apprenticeship, School-to-Work Transition Program (in MPS), Service Learning and Clinical Experience/Practicum/Student Teaching.

WBL Value Proposition

 <p>Quality of the candidate is vetted</p>	 <p>Streamlined connection to high school, college, and university partners versus conversations with each</p>	 <p>Greater access to students</p>	 <p>Ability to offer unique or individualized experiences for engaged employer organizations</p>
 <p>Prepared students have already engaged in career readiness activities</p>	 <p>Access to students within the academic setting</p>	 <p>Diverse student populations across race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and age</p>	 <p>Premier invitations to M³ hosted events and fairs to connect with students surrounding work-based learning</p>
 <p>Readily available resources to answer any work-based learning questions your organization may have</p>	 <p>Playing a critical role in helping students to develop essential skills for continued and future workplace success</p>	 <p>Early recruitment opportunities of recent graduating cohorts</p>	

WBL Continuum and Framework

CAREER AWARENESS				
PURPOSE	EXPERIENCE DEFINED BY	EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES		
Expand student awareness of careers and work environments and the connection to post-secondary education.	One-time or short-term interactions between employer partners and groups of students, which may repeat with new groups of students.	MPS Company/Organization Site Visits Employer Guest Speaker Career Fairs	MATC Company/Organization Site Visits Employer Guest Speaker Early Career Events (e.g., Summer Camps)	UWM Company/Organization Site Visits Employer Guest Speaker Company Career Conversations Career Fairs
CAREER EXPLORATION				
PURPOSE	EXPERIENCE DEFINED BY	EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES		
Deepen student knowledge of day-to-day career responsibilities to facilitate career decision making and increase motivation for post secondary education.	Ongoing deeper interactions between employer partners and individual students or small groups. Students take an active role in choosing and engaging in experiences to meet personalized learning objectives.	MPS Informational Interviews Job Shadowing Industry-Led Projects	MATC Informational Interviews Job Shadowing Early Career Exploration Events (e.g., campus lab tours)	UWM Informational Interviews Industry-Led Projects Community Engagement
CAREER READINESS & EMPLOYMENT				
PURPOSE	EXPERIENCE DEFINED BY	EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES		
Develop student transferable and career-specific skills and understanding of professionalism to support success for employment and/or post secondary education.	Employer partners provide hands-on, practical learning opportunities including career readiness assistance and employment. These activities facilitate meaningful relationships and conversations between students and employers.	MPS Mock Interviews Mentorship Youth Apprenticeships Internships Career and Internship Fairs School-to-Work Transition Program Internships	MATC Mock Interviews Resume Coaching and Feedback Mentorship Apprenticeships Internships Clinical Experiences Career and Internship Fairs	UWM Mock Interviews Resume Coaching and Feedback Internships Clinical Experiences Cooperative Education Career and Internship Fairs

Career Awareness

Company/Organization Site Visits



Explanation

- Classes or small groups of students have the opportunity to visit and/or tour an organization.
- The company/organization plans the logistics of the visit such as speakers, tour guides, agenda, etc.
- Transportation to the site is coordinated by the school; chaperones attend to ensure appropriate student behavior and support the agenda.

Employer Time Commitment

- Approximately 1–2 hours, plus planning.

Goals

- Educate students on the variety of jobs within the organization, job roles and responsibilities, how the organization functions, and workplace expectations.
- Encourage students to engage in meaningful conversations with employees to expand their knowledge of careers.

Preparation

- Employers provide information about the company, industry, and various departments or functions. Teachers can use this information to prepare students for the visit.

Company Career Conversation



Explanation

- Organizations facilitate information sessions/conversations, usually led by multiple employees from various departments or with different job roles at one company.
- Sessions can be in person at the school or virtual.

Employer Time Commitment

- Approximately 60–90 minutes, plus planning.

Goal

- Educate students on the company's goals and various careers and career paths within the organization and industry, including responsibilities, required skills, education/training, tools/equipment used, etc.

Preparation

- Provide information about the company, industry and personal career pathways to organizers, who can use this information to prepare students for the visit.



Guest Speaker



Explanation

- One or more employees from an organization visit the school to speak with students in classes or attend an event as a speaker or panelist. These opportunities may also be held virtually.
- Speakers should be enthusiastic, structure the presentation around age and needs of the audience, and be mindful of start and end times for speaking opportunities, especially for classroom visits.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies depending on the class or event length; may range from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Goal

- Expand student awareness of career opportunities, knowledge of specific careers, and understanding of work environments.

Preparation

- Provide information about the industry and personal career pathways to teachers or event organizers, who can use this information to prepare students for the visit.

Career Fairs



Explanation

- One or more employees from an organization attend the fair and bring educational, hands-on, and visually engaging resources.
- Student attendance can range from 50 to 500 depending on the type of career fair and targeted audience.
- There may be a fee depending on the career fair.

Employer Time Commitment

- 3–6 hours, plus planning.

Goals

- Provide students with the opportunity to apply professional networking and interpersonal communication skills through conversations with company representatives.
- Increase student awareness of internships and jobs, requirements, and the application process.
- Educate students on various careers and career paths within the organization and industry.

Preparation

- Determine organization representatives to attend the career fair and identify careers/jobs to showcase which can be communicated with career fair organizer and shared in advance with participating students.

Career Exploration

Informal Interviews



Explanation

- Employees participate in conversations with students that allow them to ask questions about the employee's occupation and career journey.
- Organizations provide contact information of employees available to have informational conversations with students or participate in a structured event with one or multiple employees providing on-site informational conversations to groups of students.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies depending on format; conversations range from 5 to 20 minutes.

Goal

- Increase student understanding of the career paths, specific job responsibilities, skills and abilities needed, required education/training, and so on to support students in making career decisions.

Preparation

- Reflect on answers you anticipate to students' questions about your job or career, career advice, an overview of yourself, and education and/or work background.

Industry-Led Projects



Explanation

- Organizations provide students with the opportunity to work collaboratively with peers and professionals on a project focused on delivering a tangible result, solution or proposal that benefits the organization related to a specific need.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies depending on the depth of the project and includes coordinating the project, explaining to students, and student conversations and mentoring as needed.

Goal

- Engage students in an opportunity to contribute to hands-on work scenarios and gain valuable skills.

Preparation

- Identify a current need and determine tangible and realistic goals/solutions that students can support.



Job Shadowing



Explanation

- Organizations provide students with an opportunity to observe a professional in their work environment.

Employer Time Commitment

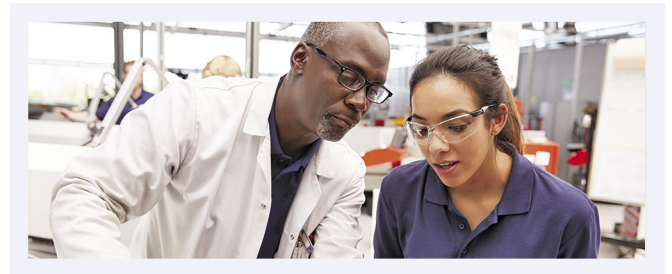
- Half day or full day, depending on format.

Goal

- Increase student awareness of the day-to-day responsibilities of a job they are considering or currently pursuing.

Preparation

- Provide job description and organization expectations for the visit that the student can review prior to job shadow.



Community Engagement



Explanation

- Non-profit and community organizations provide students with one-time and ongoing structured volunteer and service learning experiences.
- Students' personal and professional growth is supported through training, supervision, and opportunities for reflection supported by the organization.

Employer Time Commitment

- Approximately 1–3 hours per week.

Goal

- Provide students with the opportunity to develop a deeper sense of community and civic responsibility, professional and transferable skills, and an understanding of the Milwaukee community.

Preparation

- Develop a clear description of opportunities, time commitments and schedules, and prerequisite requirements such as background check, orientation, and training as well as a designated point of contact or supervisor for students.

Career Readiness and Employment

Mock Interviews



Explanation

- Organization provides students with the opportunity to practice and polish their interview skills with the assistance of a professional.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies depending on format; may range from 20–60 minutes per mock interview.

Goals

- Provide students a safe space to reflect on their experiences, practice formulating interview responses, and strengthen their interviewing skills.
- Coach students on techniques for answering behavioral-based interview questions and how employers assess responses.

Preparation

- Consider how you will create an atmosphere of safety for the student and provide feedback in a manner that is beneficial and encouraging.
- Bring interviewing resources and/or a rubric, if you would like.

Resume Coaching & Review



Explanation

- Organizations help students analyze and communicate accomplishments, skills, experiences, and goals on their resume.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies depending on format; may range from 20–60 minutes per resume review.

Goals

- Assist students in developing a resume reflective of their goals, relevant skills, and accomplishments.
- Educate students on an employer's resume preferences and expectations.

Preparation

- Consider how you will create an atmosphere of safety for the student and provide feedback in a manner that is beneficial and encouraging.
- Bring resume writing resources and/or a rubric, if you would like.

Mentorship



Explanation:

- Organizations provide a supportive professional conversation and/or relationship between a student and an experienced professional that involves career guidance, confidence, and networking connections.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies depending on the mentor/mentee relationship; could be a single event or an ongoing relationship over the course of time.

Goals

- Facilitate an impactful professional relationship that promotes self-confidence, motivation, and awareness of career decisions.
- Connect students to a professional(s) with a background that matches their own career interests and goals.

Preparation

- Identify the right form of mentorship for you or your organization: group mentoring, one-on-one mentorship, short-term mentoring, reverse mentorship (junior professionals mentoring more tenured professionals), or peer mentorship.



Career Readiness and Employment

Youth Apprenticeship



Explanation

- Organizations provide a structured work-based learning program for high school juniors and seniors administered by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) with specific mentorship, curriculum, hours, and competency requirements.

Employer Time Commitment

- A one- or two-year commitment. Level 1 youth apprenticeships equate to 450 hours. Level 2 youth apprenticeships equate to 900 hours.

Goals

- Provide students an opportunity to demonstrate acquired skill sets that align to a career field/trade.
- Solidify student commitment to establishing their career in the field/trade.

Preparation

- Establish regular touchpoints or meetings with the youth apprentice to provide mentorship and hands-on training for particular skill sets.

Apprenticeship



Explanation

- Organizations provide a paid work-based training experience that combines job-related technical instruction with structured on-the-job learning and results in a nationally-recognized credential.

Employer Time Commitment

- 3–6 years and a committed journey worker.

Goals

- Provide students an opportunity to demonstrate acquired skill sets that align to a career field/trade.
- Solidify student commitment to establishing their career in the field/trade.

Preparation

- Development of an employment agreement that offers wages and supports an apprentice in developing technical skills on the job and through classroom instruction. Employers need to be prepared for a long term commitment to the employee.

Clinical Experience



Explanation

- Organizations provide a job shadowing and direct patient care experience that students engage in while studying within their program.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies across one or more semesters.

Goals

- Enhance student's professional and clinical decisions; practice classroom theory in the workforce; navigate the theory-practice gap.
- Aid students in determining career interests by exploring multiple care units through clinical experience.
- Create an experience that adds value to a student's resume, builds a professional network, and increases confidence.

Preparation

- Establish an agreement with an educational partner connected to the focus of the experience and develop a plan that provides regular supervision, training, and mentorship.



Career Readiness and Employment

Internship



Explanation

- Organizations provide a structured work-based learning experience for post secondary students designed to advance the student's skill sets through meaningful work assignments, duties, and experiences. Interns should routinely participate in activities beyond the functions of basic entry-level employment.

Employer Time Commitment

- Varies; typically 8–12 weeks.

Goals

- Provide students an opportunity to apply classroom learnings in a workplace with mentorship/supervision of industry professionals that supports skill development and confidence.
- Create an experience that adds value to a student's resume.
- Develop student's professional connections and network.
- Increase student understanding of the career and career paths within the organization and industry.

Preparation

- Determine the purpose of establishing an internship (pipeline for talent, provide young professionals with experience, mentorship, or a combination) and develop a structure that includes mentorship, supervision, and training.
- Seek out up-to-date information about internships best practices from organizations such as the Milwaukee Area Internship Consortium and education partners.

Cooperative Education



Explanation

- Organizations create a partnership with a college or university that provides students with full-time employment directly related to their major and career goals before graduation.

Employer Time Commitment

- Employment site provides one to three full-time work terms that do not need to be consecutive.

Goal

- Engage students in opportunities to apply coursework principles and techniques to paid work-based experiences in fields related to career objectives, and support understanding of the decision-making and implementation process.

Preparation

- Determine if the purpose of a co-op in your organization is to provide students with hands-on experience, skill building opportunities, and/or mentorship.
- Commit to advancing student's responsibility and complexity of work each term.

Career & Internship Fairs



Explanation

- Organizations host hiring events that allow employers to connect with students and pipeline talent for upcoming work-based learning opportunities.

Employer Time Commitment

- Fairs typically range from 3–6 hours, plus pre-fair planning.

Goals

- Provide students with the opportunity to apply professional networking and interpersonal communication skills.
- Increase student awareness of internships and jobs, requirements, and the application process.
- Educate students on various careers and career paths within the organization and industry.

Preparation

- Determine which jobs to showcase, recruit volunteers from the organization, bring application materials, and communicate jobs to the fair organizer to share with students in advance.

School-to-Work Transition Program Internships



Explanation

- An organization provides MPS special education staff and students access to their community-based work site so students can build vocational skills. The organization encourages staff to mentor students with disabilities.

Employer Time Commitment

- Staff and students are on site for 5 hours during MPS student attendance days. The term of the MOU is three years.

Goals

- Provide students with special education needs opportunities to practice and build vocational skills in community settings.

Preparation

- The organization collaborates with School-to-Work staff to identify student jobs and work site mentors. An MOU between the organization and MPS is required.



Helpful Tips for Engaging with Early Talent in the Workplace

We believe employers are highly influential in training and shaping our future workforce. Consider the following when supervising and mentoring young professionals.

- ✓ Clearly outline expectations related to responsibilities, procedures, policies, and workplace professionalism and culture. These may include cell phone usage, attire, timeliness, attendance, socializing, and so on.
- ✓ Provide positive and constructive feedback immediately in person to ensure understanding and facilitate the development of interpersonal communication skills.
- ✓ Approach young professionals with a positive attitude to gain respect and cooperation.
- ✓ Offer frequent opportunities to ask questions and create an environment that does not make them feel embarrassed to do so; a supportive environment for learning and growth will enhance their abilities and confidence to take initiative.
- ✓ Be flexible and patient to allow individual opportunity to lead and demonstrate learning through experiences.
- ✓ Engage young professionals in the mission of the organization by asking for their assessment of situations, ideas for solving problems, and innovative suggestions.
- ✓ Serve as a role model and mentor, showing you care about their development, and provide career guidance such as resume support, networking, etc.
- ✓ MPS provides staff to support students with disabilities during career awareness and exploration activities, as well as for employment. Please reach out to MPS directly if you have interest in this type of support.

Contact Information and Taking the Next Step

For general information

- Visit: uwm.edu/m-cubed • Email: m-cubed@uwm.edu

Contact the institutions directly

- Milwaukee Public Schools: employmps@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
- Milwaukee Area Technical College: careerhub@matc.edu
- University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee: uwm-set-recruiting@uwm.edu

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