



BOSTON  
PRIVATE  
INDUSTRY  
COUNCIL

# TIPS FOR SUPERVISING A HIGH SCHOOL INTERN



## HOST AN ORIENTATION

In addition to the internship orientation program staff at your company may host, an orientation to your department is also helpful. This could include:

1. A tour of the space.
2. Introductions in person, or virtually, to the team and those you work with across the organization.
3. A review of platforms, tools and procedures, including dress code, cell phone & social media use, and/or any other policies.
4. Setting expectations and a cadence for regular checkins, including best method of communication (phone, text or email).
5. Providing the student with a warm welcome! This could mean taking them to lunch, providing them with a welcome letter, or giving the intern some company swag!

## NAVIGATING THE HYBRID AND/OR VIRTUAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

In a hybrid or virtual environment, communication, open-door policy, and regular check-ins are even more important.

- If you are working in a hybrid model, make sure there are other people on the team that students can go to when the direct manager can't be reached.
- Be clear about the best mode(s) for communicating in the hybrid workspace.



## SUPERVISOR, MENTOR, COACH

1. Balance Mentorship and Supervision – Try to think about your intern and their entirety as a person, not just as someone accomplishing a task. Ask them about their school and interests, and help them build professional skills.
  - Conversation topics: about the work, about their goals and how their internship fits into their college and/or career goals, about their interests outside of the internship.
  - Share your own story and interests. Acknowledging that you are coming from different spaces and places may make it easier to you work effectively together.
  - Supervisor, mentor, coach: Provide coaching on professional presence and why it's important in a corporate environment.
2. Be an Active Listener - Interns want to know that they are being heard. If you have feedback, make it a conversation! They might point out something that you wouldn't have thought about.
3. Value the Intern - Show the student that you are interested in their unique perspective and that you're interested in discovering skills that they might not even know they have themselves.



4. Avoid Intern Isolation - Invite your intern to observe team meetings to learn more about the work of your department and how their specific project(s) contribute to it.
5. Be Upfront About Expectations - Communicate, communicate, communicate!
  - Don't assume your intern will know how to do something. Provide clear communication and clear directions. Allow opportunity for students to ask clarifying questions. Provide context around projects or tasks so students understand the bigger picture.
  - If given multiple projects, advise student on how to plan their time and prioritize what is needed.
6. Give Specific and Actionable Feedback - Holding interns accountable and providing them with constructive feedback helps them grow professionally. The most effective feedback is specific, accurate, and provided right away so that interns have an opportunity to quickly demonstrate understanding and take actions that lead to improvement.
  - Example of unhelpful feedback: "You're always late."
  - Example of helpful feedback: "When you were 10 minutes late to the team meeting this morning, you missed an opportunity to hear some updates from colleagues that could have helped you with your project. Being on time will help you be successful, and I want you to be successful!"



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## USE THE TOOL

Use the MA Work Based Learning Plan (WBLP) as a way to structure summer – As part of your orientation with students, use the WBLP to identify skills and goals focused on the work place. Then revisit at regular intervals to assess growth and ensure students are reflecting on their goals and getting what they want out of the intern experience.

- Students want to do real work that has value.
- Soft skills (networking, communication, presentation skills, how you carry yourself) are just as important as the work product.



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## THE PIC CAN HELP

Call the PIC - If a conflict arises or you should need to give a student feedback, bring in the student's PIC Career Specialist and PIC Employer Engagement Manager. We would be happy to schedule a Zoom or a phone call, or come to an in-person meeting to help facilitate a conversation. PIC Career Specialists have worked with the students throughout the school year, and in some instances for multiple school years. Having a trusted adult in the room can often help navigate challenges.



# THE PIC EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TEAM



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## RESOURCES

- [Introduction to the MA Work-Based Learning Plan](#)
- [MA Work-Based Learning Plan](#)