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# FHI 360 WORK-BASED LEARNING MANUAL: A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

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include program design (e.g., the creation of models, protocols, tools and materials), project management, professional development, school-based coaching, creation of local and national networks, and collective impact and program evaluation. We have worked at the intersection of schools and communities for nearly 40 years, solving critical issues in education, health and youth development through projects in 48 states and with more than 400 school districts. Our staff are experts in education, health services, youth development, gender, school improvement, nutrition, communications, research and evaluation, technology and advocacy.

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## 8. Teacher Workplace Tours

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### 8.1 Overview

#### What Are Teacher Workplace Tours?

Teacher workplace tours are professional development and work-based learning activities that enable classroom teachers to gain first-hand insights into the career opportunities open to their students and the nature of the workplaces that offer those careers. Like the student workplace tours described in *Chapter 3*, teacher workplace tours can provide fresh perspectives on the skills required in different careers and about the ways in which academic skills are applied in the workplace. For some teachers, they are the first exposure in a long time to a workplace other than a school. Teacher workplace tours also provide opportunities for dialogues between teachers and employees<sup>1</sup> to enhance understanding about how the knowledge and skills gained in school are applied in the workplace and how those connections can be strengthened.

#### Which Teachers Participate in Workplace Tours?

All teachers can benefit from workplace tours, especially those involved with WBL activities for students in the 7th through 12th grades. Teacher workplace tours can also assist teachers by providing real-world examples they can use in their lesson plans. One teacher workplace tour per year per teacher is a typical practice, but individual districts or schools may wish to set different targets.

Workplace tours are also helpful for administrators, counselors, and career advisors -- especially those new to WBL activities. The term “teacher” used throughout this chapter should be taken to include these other educators.

#### How Are Teacher Workplace Tours Structured?

Teacher workplace tours are often scheduled for weekdays when it is convenient for an employer to host a small group of teachers (up to five or six). Unless the tours are scheduled for days already set aside for professional development or take place after school or on a weekend day, schools will need to secure substitute teachers or make other arrangements for the classes the teachers miss to be covered. To avoid imposing excessively on an employer, teacher tours should be planned for small groups rather than individual teachers. Grouping teachers in different subjects from the same school may be beneficial, because they will have more opportunities to reflect together on what they learned and how they can apply it to their teaching. Teachers from the same school who tour a workplace together can support one another as they try out different ways of using workplace applications in the content they teach.

Teacher workplace tours typically include an introductory overview, a tour, a presentation about various career opportunities and the skills and education required, and a discussion session for teachers and the employer representative. Many teacher workplace tours also incorporate some time for teachers to shadow a professional to allow for more in-depth one-on-one exchanges. The discussion period can be the most valuable part of the tour, both for teachers and hosts, so ample time should be provided.

Teacher tours are usually planned to be three to four hours in duration. While each tour should be tailored based on the preferences of the teachers, the employer representative, and the school schedule, a sample outline for the experience might include:

- Introductions, welcome, and overview of the industry and the employer: 15-30 minutes

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, “employer” refers to the workplace that teachers are visiting, “employer representative” refers to the person who works with the WBL coordinator to plan a visit, and “employee” refers to the individual(s) with whom teachers interact during their visit.

- Workplace tour: 30 minutes (more if employees at each stop on the tour talk about their fields)
- Presentation on industry, the careers it offers, and the skills and education or training required: 30 minutes (unless covered as part of the tour)
- Job shadow time, if desired: 1 hour
- Discussion time: 30-45 minutes (perhaps over lunch)

The employer representative is often a human resources manager who is particularly knowledgeable about the hiring requirements for different jobs and the degree to which candidates typically fulfill those requirements or fall short. Employees from different disciplines or departments usually participate as well.

Following the tour, time should be set aside at school for the group of teachers to reflect on their experiences and how they can be used to enhance what they do in their classrooms.

## 8.2 How to Implement a Teacher Workplace Tour

Successful teacher workplace tours require collaboration, communication, and preparation by the WBL coordinator, school administrators, teachers, and employer representatives. As noted in the *Introduction*, the following basic steps are involved in planning and implementing a teacher workplace tour.

1. Engage district and/or school administrators, teachers, counselors, career advisors, and representatives of employers and employer associations in the planning process.
2. Work with school administrators to determine how many tours to schedule and identify multiple options for dates.
3. Gather input from the teachers (and others) who might be participating in the tour(s) on which industries and/or employers they would most like to visit.
4. Using the WBL database and other resources, contact the top-priority employers to request that they host a small group of teachers. Work with each willing employer to plan a tour that will be an enriching experience for both teachers and employees.
5. Prepare teachers and employees for the tour.
6. Carry out the teacher workplace tour.
7. Provide structured opportunities for reflection by teachers.
8. Obtain evaluations from teachers and employer representative.

The following pages provide more detailed descriptions of steps that should be taken to implement a well-organized teacher workplace tour. These steps are presented in the form of a time line, which can be condensed or elongated, based on local needs.

## 8.3 Suggested Implementation Time Line

**Note:** Throughout this manual, the term WBL coordinator (typically, a district or staff member) is used to refer to the individual responsible for planning and implementing WBL activities. Depending on the activity and context, stakeholders from school sites (counselors, teachers, and administrative staff) may be involved. The WBL coordinator should be sure to use the WBL database, as described in the *Introduction*, to track employer and school contact information as well as the tasks each has agreed to carry out with respect to teacher workplace tours.

The WBL coordinator should refer to the overall WBL plan (see *Introduction*), if there is one, to ensure that the scheduling of workplace tours with specific employers or teachers from particular schools is coordinated with the implementation of other WBL activities planned for those employers or schools. Both the employers and the school staff will appreciate it if the WBL coordinator initiates contact for workplace tours in that larger context.



Note: The WBL coordinator is assumed to be responsible for completing or assigning each task described below, except as noted otherwise.

### Three months before the teacher workplace tours

- Work with school administrators to determine how many tours should be planned and identify multiple options for dates on which to schedule them.
- Gather input from teachers and others who may be eligible to participate in a workplace tour about what industries and/or employers they would like to visit.
- Based on teachers' interests, use the WBL database and other sources (e.g., organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, workforce development boards, state departments of labor or commerce, and the personal networks of district and school staff members) to identify employers to target.
- Review the information on employer outreach in the *Introduction*.
- Begin outreach to employers, based on teachers' interests, to request that they consider hosting a small group of teachers. The sample email and employer participation form in the *Resources* section may be used or adapted for this purpose.
- Identify an employer representative at each workplace that agrees to host a group of teachers. Work with each employer representative to schedule the tour for a convenient date and to develop a tour agenda that will be informative and engaging for both teachers and employees. See the sample checklist in the *Resources* section.
- Determine whether there are special security or safety precautions that must be observed and obtain permission to take photographs of the teachers and employees, if desired.
- **(Principals)** Select which teachers will participate in each workplace tour.
- **(School administrators)** Make plans to ensure that any classes teachers will miss will be covered by substitutes or other teachers, unless the tour is scheduled for a professional development day when students will not be in school.

### One month before the teacher workplace tours

- Work with employer representatives to complete plans for the tours, make sure they understand what is expected of them, and clarify what is expected of the visiting teachers.
- Work with the employer representatives to identify employees who will be shadowed by teachers (if applicable). Match teachers with employees who will be shadowed.
- Work with school administrators to determine what teachers will be expected to produce after the workplace tours. Deliverables may include written reflections on their experiences or lesson plans that incorporate what teachers learned about the skills required in the workplaces they visited.
- Prepare teachers by providing information about each employer's dress code and other expectations for tour participants.
- Make sure teachers have made plans for transportation on the days of the tours (e.g., carpool from school or meet at the employer site).
- **(Teachers)** Collect information about the employers and their industries, including: the products and services the employers provide; the nature and size of their workforces; and any other information that would be useful. Sources might include employer representatives, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, the employers' websites, or acquaintances who work for these employers.

### One week before the teacher workplace tour

- Confirm that the school administration has made plans for teachers' classes to be covered, if necessary.
- Reconfirm arrangements with the employer representatives. This includes ordering food, if needed.

- Reconfirm plans with teachers.

### **One day before the teacher workplace tour**

- Send final emails to the employer representatives and the teachers.
  - Include driving directions, a time line for the day, and whom to contact upon arrival.
  - Make sure the employer representatives have the names of all the teachers.
  - Provide contact information for the WBL coordinator in case a participant is ill or delayed en route.
  - Distribute evaluation forms for employer representatives and teachers to complete (see samples in *Resources* section).

### **Day of the teacher workplace tour**

- Stop in during the tour, if possible, to make sure everything is going as planned, take photographs, and answer questions as needed.
- Ensure evaluation forms are completed and collected from the employer representatives and the teachers.

### **One day to one week after the teacher workplace tour**

- Review evaluation forms and send emails thanking employer representatives and sharing highlights of the feedback received from teachers. Address any employer or teacher questions or concerns.
- Compile and share the evaluation responses and identify recurring themes.
- Confirm that teachers have completed their deliverables (e.g., written reflections or lesson plans) and obtain copies to share with other teachers, as appropriate.
- Give appropriate recognition to host employers (see the *Introduction* for some of the ways to do so).

## **8.4 Teacher Workplace Tour Resources**

Note: These forms can be printed with expanded space for written responses or adapted in other ways.

WBL coordinator:

- Outreach email to employers
- Participation form

Employer:

- Preparation checklist/expectations
- Evaluation

Teacher:

- Evaluation

## Sample Email to Employer from WBL Coordinator

Good Morning,

My name is John Doe, and I work for the XYZ district or school. We have five teachers from (district or school) who have identified your organization as one they would like to visit to learn about the kinds of careers for which they are preparing their students. In addition to providing instruction in academic subjects, these teachers help prepare students for work-based learning opportunities, such as job shadows, workplace tours, and internships. Workplace tours can give teachers valuable insights into how they can better prepare their students for careers in your industry.

A teacher workplace tour typically lasts about three to four hours and usually involves time for an introduction to the host organization, a tour of the workplace, and an open-ended discussion by teachers and employer representatives about how best to prepare students for the future. Sometimes the tour also provides time for a one-on-one job shadowing experience.

I would like the opportunity to answer any questions you may have, provide more information, and work with you to plan a teacher workplace tour that will be rewarding to both the teachers and your employees who serve as hosts. If you are interested, please complete the attached participation form or contact me directly.

Thank you,

John Doe, Title  
XYZ District or School  
Contact info

## Sample Email for Employers or Others to Forward

Good Morning,

My name is Jane Doe, and I lead the marketing and communications department for (Blue Star Telephone Company). (Blue Star) has been working with teachers and students from (XYZ district or school) for (how long?) and would like to encourage you to host a workplace tour for a small group of teachers. We've found it to be a rewarding experience for our employees as well as a good way to build awareness of Blue Star in the community.

Five teachers from (XYZ district or school) have identified your organization as one they would like to visit and tour. Learning more about local employers and the careers they offer will help teachers find better ways to connect their academic lessons to real-world applications in the workplace.

Teacher workplace tours are typically scheduled to last three or four hours and usually involve an introduction to the host organization, a tour of the workplace, time for individual teachers to shadow individual employees, and an open-ended discussion among teachers and their hosts.

For more information, please see the attached participation form or contact (WBL coordinator name, email, and phone). (WBL coordinator name) will be happy to work with you to plan a workplace tour that will be convenient for you and your employees and of great benefit to teachers. If you are not able to participate but would like to learn more about other opportunities to participate in work-based learning activities, (WBL coordinator name) will be pleased to talk with about workplace tours for students, guest speaker engagements, job shadows, or internships.

Thank you,

Jane Doe, Title  
Organization  
Contact info



**Teacher Workplace Tour Employer Participation Form** (WBL coordinator to fill in own name and contact information)

Five teachers from (school) have identified your organization as one they would like to tour. Workplace tours can give teachers valuable insights into how they can better prepare their students for careers in your industry.

Workplace tours typically last three to four hours and usually involves time for an introduction to the host organization, a tour of the workplace, time for individual teachers to shadow individual employees, and an open discussion among teachers and their hosts, perhaps over lunch.

Please complete the following information and return it to the work-based learning coordinator by (date). He/she will confirm receipt, send you more information about hosting teachers, and work with you to prepare a proposed agenda for the day.

Company/organization:	
Industry/business type:	
Address:	
Number of teachers you can accommodate:	
Location (office number or conference room) to which teachers should report:	Lunch provided: Y or N
Dress code:	
Employer representative name:	
Phone:	Email:
Signature:	
Work-based learning coordinator name, phone, email, fax:	

Your support of work-based learning opportunities is a valuable complement to the classroom and enables teachers to help their students make informed choices about their future education and career plans. Thank you!

## Teacher Workplace Tours Checklist/Expectations for Employer (Top part to be completed by WBL coordinator)

To help you prepare to host a teacher workplace tour, we have created the following checklist. Please contact the work-based learning coordinator (WBL) with any questions. Thank you for agreeing to host a teacher workplace tour.

Date:	Teacher arrival time:
Number of teachers:	Teacher departure time:
Teacher name(s):	
School:	
School contact name, phone, and email:	
WBL coordinator name, phone, and email:	

Expectations of employer representative (typically a human resources manager or other individual who can speak knowledgeably about hiring requirements and industry trends)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet or speak with the WBL coordinator to plan the agenda for the tour and work out the details. This should take no more than 15-20 minutes.</li> <li>2. Let the WBL coordinator know if lunch will be provided or if teachers should bring their own (if tour schedule includes lunch time).</li> <li>3. Identify one or more employees from different departments who can provide information about (or demonstrate) the nature of their work.</li> <li>4. Ask each participating employee to review this checklist.</li> <li>5. Develop final teacher workplace tour agenda that might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions/welcome and overview of the host organization: 15-30 minutes</li> <li>• Workplace tour: about 30 minutes (more if the tour pauses at various departments for an employee to talk about or demonstrate the work he or she does)</li> <li>• Presentation on the host organization and its industry, its products and services, career opportunities it offers, and the skills, education, or training required for employment: 30 minutes (unless covered during the tour)</li> <li>• (Optional) One-on-one job shadow time, either with the employees who participated in the tour or with different employees: 1 hour</li> <li>• Open discussion with teachers and hosts: 30-45 minutes, perhaps over lunch</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Let the WBL coordinator know if there are any special security or safety precautions that need to be observed and if you give permission for photographs to be taken.</li> <li>7. Complete and return the employer representative evaluation after the tour.</li> </ol>	

**Teacher Workplace Tour Employer Representative Evaluation** (WBL coordinator to provide list participating teachers and date of tour)

Thank you for taking the time to host teachers in your workplace. Your feedback is valuable to ensuring high quality experiences for future employer hosts and teachers. Please take a few minutes to complete this form and return it to the WBL coordinator (name and contact information) at your earliest convenience.

Name:	Phone:
Title:	Email:
Organization:	Teachers you hosted:
Date of tour:	

Please evaluate the teacher workplace tour in each of the following areas:

Teachers asked good questions	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Teachers seemed interested	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Teachers seemed to learn	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Preparation for the tour	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Employees learned from the experience	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Overall teacher workplace tour experience	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable

Would you be willing to host another teacher workplace tour in the future? YES NO

Please use the rest of this page for comments or suggestions to improve our program.

[illegible]

**Teacher Workplace Tour Teacher Evaluation** (WBL coordinator to complete all but teacher name in top section)

Thank you for participating in the teacher workplace tour program. Your feedback is important to continue providing quality teacher workplace tours. Please complete the form and return it to the WBL coordinator (name and contact information).

Name:	
Employer representative name:	Employer representative email and phone:
Employer organization:	Date of tour:

Please evaluate the experience in each of the following areas.

EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE AND EMPLOYEES				
Were well-prepared	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Provided information about careers	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Provided information about industry and trends	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
Provided ample time for questions and discussion	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
OVERALL EVALUATION				
This experience was beneficial	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable

Would you recommend other teachers tour this workplace? Circle one and explain. YES NO

Did you gain insights that will enrich your classroom teaching? Explain how.

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Did you complete a lesson plan or other product? Please describe.

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Please use the rest of this page for comments or suggestions for improving future teacher workplace tours.

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