



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE
ASE PROGRAM
FOR
MENTORS

Apprenticeships in Science and Engineering (ASE)
is a program of Saturday Academy

Table of Contents

1. What does “ASE” stand for?	1
2. Where is the ASE Program based?	1
3. What is the mission of Saturday Academy?	1
4. What is the mission of ASE?	1
5. What exactly is the ASE Program?	1
6. How does the ASE Program work? What is its schedule?	1
7. How are interns selected?	2
8. Does the intern get paid?	2
9. Why would I want to be a mentor?	2
10. How do I volunteer as a mentor?	2
11. What sort of information is requested for a Position Description?	2
12. Do I need to create a special project for my intern	3
13. What, precisely, are my duties as a mentor?	3
14. What are these conferences you mentioned?	4
15. What are the mentor’s responsibilities in helping the intern prepare his/her presentation for the August Symposium?	5
16. Can I assign another scientist, engineer, technician, graduate student, etc., to work with the intern on a daily basis	5
17. Do I have to pay for my intern?	5
18. How do most companies budget for their intern?	5
19. What if more than one intern is placed at my company?	5
20. Who issues the stipend check to my intern?	6
21. How are funds to support interns transferred to Saturday Academy?	6
22. When do we make the sponsorship contribution?	6
23. Is the sponsorship contribution tax deductible?	6
24. Is an internship outside of science or engineering acceptable?	6
25. Can an ASE apprentice participate more than one year in a specific internship? Can I arrange or talk to a student about coming back again the next summer?	6
26. What if the position I have planned calls for field work?	6
27. What if my position has activities at two sites that are distant from each other?	7

28. What if there is a medical emergency? 7

29. What about liability insurance? 7

30. What about worker’s compensation, social security, minimum wage, and child labor laws? 7

31. What if the work involves radioactive, chemically hazardous, or toxic materials, or other health and safety hazards? 7

32. How much time will the student spend as an intern? When does the internship begin and end?..... 7

33. What if the intern handles proprietary information? 8

34. What if I’m uncertain about mentoring a teenager? 8

35. What is a “Teacher Monitor?” 8

36. What if the internship doesn’t work out, even with the Teacher Monitor’s help? 8

37. How do students hear about the ASE Program? 8

38. Can I specify that my intern must have taken certain courses, be a certain age, be a U.S. Citizen, etc.? 9

39. Can I require affirmative action criteria for my intern such as gender, racial or ethnic origin, or financial status? 9

40. Do I have to interview all of the students who apply for my position? 9

41. Who tells the students whether or not they have been chosen? 9

42. What if the project I anticipate for the apprentice changes between the time I submit the position description and the time the apprenticeship begins?..... 9

43. What criteria should mentors use in selecting interns?..... 9

44. What if none of the students who apply for my position are qualified?10

45. If I interview someone who appears to be promising but who lacks a prerequisite, should I counsel him/her to re-apply the following year? 10

46. What happens if no student selects my position, or if all of the students I select decide to take other offers? 10

47. What if I offer a position and then find I can’t participate in the program?..... 10

48. Does the ASE Program provide support for transportation or housing? 10

49. Is it my job as a mentor to arrange housing or transportation? 10

50. What if I run out of things for my apprentice to do?..... 10

1. What does “ASE” stand for?

ASE stands for Apprenticeships in Science and Engineering. Science and engineering are broadly interpreted to include social science, mathematics, computing, and other careers that make use of the education one receives when majoring in science, engineering, mathematics, and/or computing.

2. Where is the ASE Program based?

The ASE Program is part of Saturday Academy, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon. Saturday Academy also operates at Oregon State University in Corvallis, OR.

3. What is the mission of Saturday Academy?

Saturday Academy's mission is to engage motivated young people in hands-on, in-depth learning and problem solving by connecting them with community experts who serve as instructors and mentors. For more information about Saturday Academy, contact Joyce Cresswell, Executive Director, Saturday Academy, 830 SW 10th Ave, Suite 200, Portland OR 97205. E-mail joyce.cresswell@saturdayacademy.org.

4. What is the mission of ASE?

The ASE mission is to "develop a pipeline of talent now to become our future scientists and engineers, by providing real-world work experiences for bright and motivated high school students."

5. What exactly is the ASE Program?

The ASE Program places bright, motivated high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors as interns for eight weeks during the summer with mentor scientists, engineers and other technical professionals employed by private business and industry, government agencies, colleges and universities, and non-profit agencies such as hospitals and research institutes. In addition to participating in a hands-on apprenticeship, ASE students participate in other activities, including two ASE-sponsored conferences. Some mentors also sponsor or ask their interns to attend seminars, conferences, field trips, etc. These activities are not a formal part of the ASE Program and depend strictly on mentor interest and initiative. In some cases, interns receive a monetary stipend to pay for subsistence expenses.

6. How does the ASE Program work? What is its schedule?

The ASE Program recruits mentors year round. We try to firm up positions for the following summer by the December holidays, but we can accept positions up to the time we publish our Position Description list on the web in late January. The Position Description list is composed of short paragraphs describing the project or activities each mentor is offering for the summer. See Question #11 for more details on “Position Descriptions.”

In mid November, the ASE Program is advertised to all Oregon and SW Washington 9th, 10th, and 11th graders. Students apply for “Phase I” by the end of January. Students who complete the Preliminary Application by the late January deadline are given access to the Position Description booklet. Applicants then select three positions in which they are interested, and write a short essay specific for each position. They also provide two letters of recommendation and a transcript. In early March, each mentor receives a copy of the application packet of each student applying for his/her position. In February and March, the ASE Program offers workshops on interviewing skills for all applicants. During March and early April, mentors interview 3-5 applicants if possible. Mentors can use whatever professional criteria they choose in order to select which students to interview.

By mid- April, each mentor submits to the ASE staff a rank-ordered list of applicants with whom s/he is willing to work. The ASE staff then contacts the applicants and confirms placements.

Mentors do not offer positions directly to students because some applicants receive multiple offers. An applicant who receives multiple offers gets to select the position s/he wants, and the rejected position is then offered to the next candidate on the mentor's list. After all placements have been made, mentors and apprentices are informed by mail. Confirmation letters are mailed around May 1.

In May, mentors, interns and parents attend one of several orientation sessions held regionally. Expectations, calendars, the scope of the program and particular program elements are reviewed. Time is allocated for questions and answers and for mentors and students to go over summer schedules.

Internships typically start in mid-to-late June and end in early-to-mid August, although occasionally some interns start as late as July and extend their internship until late August or even early September. The starting and ending dates for each intern are negotiated with the mentor to enable each intern/mentor pair to schedule vacations, professional conferences, etc. In most cases, internships finish before the start of school.

During the summer, all interns are required to attend two conferences, the "ASE Midsummer Conference," which occurs in mid-July, and the "ASE Symposium," which occurs in mid-August. See Question #14 for more details about the conferences.

7. How are interns selected?

Each mentor selects his or her own apprentice(s) from among students who apply specifically for the mentor's particular position. Apprentices are never assigned to the mentor without the mentor's approval. Mentors can use any non-discriminating, professional criteria they desire in selecting students. See question #43.

8. Does the intern get paid?

We recommend that each intern receives a stipend of \$1,000, with the cost covered by the mentor/mentoring organization. In all cases, low income students receive stipends. See Question #17.

9. Why would I want to be a mentor?

Here are some reasons technical and scientific professionals give for becoming mentors:

- Motivated high school students often contribute significant insight into problems and processes. This is especially surprising to first time mentors.
- "As technical and scientific professionals, we need to replenish our professions by attracting young people to take our places when we retire."
- "As citizens, we should support education and training of the next generation as a responsibility to our society."
- Many mentors derive strong personal satisfaction from serving as a mentor to a student of the high caliber of typical ASE interns.
- Many mentors say that being a mentor is a lot of fun. Numerous past mentors have commented that the intern helped to rekindle their enthusiasm for their careers.

10. How do I volunteer as a mentor?

First, we'll ask you to fill out a Position Description Form (see question #11), describing the type(s) of project(s) and activity (ies) you have in mind. If we contacted you directly, we included this form in our communication. Otherwise, this form is available on our website, or we would be happy to mail/email you a copy. A typical position description is approximately 100-200 words long. Descriptions that attract the best students are not too technical and include your sense of excitement about your work. If you have not received these forms, please phone us at (503) 200-5860 or (503) 200-5861 (both have voice mail), fax us at (503) 200-5899, or send e-mail to ase@saturdayacademy.org.

11. What sort of information is requested for a Position Description?

The position description is the primary method used to recruit applicants for your position. Our Position Description form will walk you through the process of writing your description. If you have not received that form, please phone us at (503) 200-5860 or (503) 200-5861 (both have voice mail), fax us at (503) 200-5899, or send e-mail to ase@saturdayacademy.org. We will then mail, e-mail, or fax it to you, along with examples of descriptions from past positions in industries similar to yours. After you send us the completed position description form, we will edit the information into a single paragraph that will be provided to students in the Position Description Booklet.

The first step to writing a position description is to decide what you want the intern to do. As you consider this, please remember that the goal of ASE is to *give your student a taste of what your profession is like*. ASE exists in order to offer pre-professional internships for students. While any professional position involves a certain amount of what the students call "grunge" work, it would not be appropriate to have a student do **only** this kind of work. Washing glassware, repetitive assembly, cleaning out animal cages, filing, photocopying or doing keyboard data entry are examples of tasks that might be included but cannot dominate the internship. The internship is first and foremost an educational experience. The intern should learn science/math-based content from the work s/he does. We occasionally reject proposals for internships that engage students at too low a level.

The second step to writing a position description is to keep in mind that the students who apply for ASE are very bright and highly motivated, but also teenagers, so the more interesting, challenging and "zippy" your description and title of your description, the better. While we do not suggest that you misrepresent your position, you may want to mention highlights (i.e. hikes, observing surgeries, learning a new computer language or using high tech equipment) in your description. In general, more detail is better than less, and terminology should be for an educated lay person. Be specific about complicated course work, age and physical requirements (we do have disabled students who apply for the program, and we need to be aware of any physical requirements for the internship). If age, school course pre-requisites or affirmative action criteria are required as part of the position, we ask that you clearly identify them in the position description, (see Question #39 regarding optional affirmative action criteria).

The clearer your expectations are, the more likely it is that the internship will be successful. While there will always be some improvisation, it is best to have a master plan for the full eight weeks. The most typical pitfall is not expecting enough. A significant number of first time mentors report having their interns finish the summer's projects in a couple of weeks. If you're not sure how to describe the position you have in mind, please contact us and we'll be glad to help.

12. Do I need to create a special project for my intern?

We ask mentors to provide a pre-professional experience for interns, but establishing a special individual project is not necessary. It is appropriate for an ASE intern to work side-by-side with your staff on on-going projects. Some students contribute a small piece to a large project, others are assigned a small project they can bring to closure by summer's end, and the rest are given several smaller projects and tasks which represent the range of work of many applied scientists and technical professionals. The key is that the student be engaged primarily in true scientific work. The particular format of that experience is up to the mentor.

13. What, precisely, are my duties as a mentor?

As a mentor, we ask that you:

- Provide the intern with learning experiences that convey the nature of the scientific, technical or engineering work regularly performed by professionals employed by your organization.
- Provide safety training and then **follow up** to ensure that your intern is using safe practices. With some positions (e.g., writing software), this is not very complicated; with others (e.g., using toxic chemicals), it will require more effort.
- Provide training regarding proper company etiquette when using company computer networks. Make sure the rules are clear with regard to what may and may not be accessed or downloaded over the internet.
- Provide information about your company's sexual harassment policies. (This is important not only to protect the student and your company, but also to educate the intern about appropriate work-place conduct and safety.)
- For the mentoring organization: carry general liability insurance as dictated by prudent practice within the mentoring organization's industry.

- Orient the apprentice to the organization, check regularly on his/her work, answer his/her questions, explain role expectations (e.g., how the intern should address his/her adult colleagues, dress code, etc.) and generally serve as a positive role model.
- Provide a “home base” or work station for your intern.
- Establish a daily schedule and mutually acceptable starting and ending dates for the internship that approximates 8 weeks of full time work, minus three days for ASE conferences.
- Allow your intern’s parent(s) or guardian(s) to visit the internship site at least once prior to or during the internship.
- Specify the duties and responsibilities your intern is being asked to perform.
- If applicable, train your intern to keep a log in the style appropriate to the work being done and, if proprietary information is involved, make appropriate arrangements to safeguard confidentiality.
- If applicable, identify pertinent reading material, including some background material appropriate to an advanced high school level.
- Meet with your intern at least once a week.
- Talk with your intern or your intern’s Teacher Monitor right away in the unlikely event of any unacceptable behavior (i.e. inappropriate use of the Internet).
- Speak with the Teacher Monitor assigned to your intern regarding the intern's progress at least twice during the eight-week period (preferably during week 2 and week 8) if things go well, and more often in the rare event that they don't.
- Notify your intern’s parents or guardians and the ASE Program immediately if the intern is taken to a doctor/hospital and/or treated for any injury/illness.

These and other expectations are included on a form we ask all mentors and their organizations to sign prior to the beginning of the apprenticeship. Equivalent expectation forms are required of each intern and of his/her parent/guardian, (see Exhibits 2 and 3).

14. What are these conferences you mentioned?

ASE organizes two conferences during the summer in order to enhance the educational value of the program. The goal of the first conference, the Midsummer Conference (MSC), is to give interns the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of careers in science and engineering, beyond what they’re experiencing in their internships. The MSC includes short presentations, workshops to teach hands-on skills such as DNA electrophoresis and CAD applications, a session on presentation skills, information about college selection and scholarships, and social activities. All short presentations and hands-on workshops at this conference are delivered by technical and scientific professionals. The MSC is a one-day event held in mid-July. The event is held on a college, which gives students a chance to experience a college environment. ASE arranges transportation for apprentices as needed. We ask that you release your intern from duties for one day in order for him/her to attend the Midsummer Conference.

The second conference, the ASE Symposium, is the capstone event of the summer. At this one-day event in mid-August, students present their summer experience to peers, parents, mentors and potential mentors via poster sessions and oral presentations. ASE arranges transportation and lodging for those interns who must travel long distances to attend the Symposium. We realize this is prime vacation time for families; if at all possible, we hope you will arrange your summer schedule so you can attend the Symposium. It means a lot to the students to have their mentors present to see their presentations.

15. What are the mentor's responsibilities in helping the intern prepare his/her presentations for the August Symposium?

Intern presentations should be treated as a homework assignment. However, many mentors choose to help interns with their presentations by providing photos, illustrations, slides, graphics, etc.; allowing interns to practice before the mentor and other colleagues who then offer feedback; and allowing interns time on site to work on their presentations.

We caution against devoting too much time and too many resources to what should be the intern's presentation. Sometimes there is a misguided expectation that the intern's presentation should rise to the quality of those observed at national meetings of professional associations. Even though making professional quality presentations is something all technical professionals do, we believe the high school intern will benefit most by spending his/her internship time working on projects/tasks that you assign, and by using "homework time" to prepare his or her presentation.

- *We do ask that, at a minimum, all mentors review interns' final posters and PowerPoint presentations to ensure they are accurate, professional and sensitive to proprietary information issues.*

16. Can I assign another scientist, engineer, technician, graduate student, etc., to work with the intern on a daily basis?

Yes. Many mentors ask a colleague or subordinate to interact with the intern on a daily basis. But the mentor still has an obligation to meet *at least* weekly (except when the mentor is out of town) with the intern to follow the intern's work in progress and to answer any questions the intern might have. If another person in your workplace, i.e., technician, graduate student, junior scientist or engineer, etc., is assigned day-to-day responsibility for the intern, **please let us know**. If you know in advance who that person will be, please ask him or her to attend the May orientation session for mentors if at all possible.

17. Do I have to pay for my intern?

Saturday Academy, a non-profit organization, asks participating organizations to sponsor their students by making a contribution of \$3,200 per student to Saturday Academy. This contribution covers a \$1,000 stipend for the student as well as our out-of-pocket costs for teacher monitor wages, student workshops, student registration, selection and orientation, position development and write-ups, yearbook publication, transportation for two conferences, logistics and troubleshooting. If a mentor cannot provide the full \$3,200 sponsorship, an internship can be underwritten for \$2,200 by eliminating the stipend to the student. While that is not our preferred arrangement, we believe some students would rather have the experience without the stipend than not have it at all.

In some cases, Saturday Academy is able to underwrite the cost of an internship with grant funds. When we do so, we will NOT pay a stipend unless the student qualifies for free or reduced price school lunch under federal school lunch guidelines. This allows us to stretch grant funds to cover more students. The criteria used to determine if an internship can be underwritten by a grant include:

- Potential for full sponsorship by the mentor in the future
- Diversity of discipline and career
- Geographic location
- Submission date of position description (first come, first served)
- Student demand for position

18. How do most companies budget for their intern?

Organizations budget the sponsorship fee through various departments, including Human Resources, Public Affairs, marketing or departmental budgets. Some use company foundation funds or research budgets.

19. What if more than one intern is placed at my company?

For organizations with several intern, we encourage you to handle financial matters centrally. However, sometimes different funding sources sponsor different students, making it necessary to have varied arrangements.

20. Who issues the stipend check to my intern?

In nearly all cases, Saturday Academy issues stipend checks to interns. In those rare instances when an organization is required to issue checks directly to interns, such an arrangement can be made. An additional contribution to Saturday Academy of \$2,200 is required to constitute a full sponsorship of the student.

21. How are funds to support interns transferred to Saturday Academy?

The preferred method of funding is a voluntary contribution to Saturday Academy. Some mentoring organizations request that Saturday Academy submit an invoice or enter into a form of contract that requires payment of the sponsorship amount. While we are happy to comply with whatever paperwork the mentor organization requires, it is important to remember that the interns are intended to be “trainees” rather than employees of the company, and are NOT agents or employees of Saturday Academy.

22. When do we make the sponsorship contribution?

At the time you agree to host a student, we will ask you to make a pledge to support that student by filling out a Sponsorship Pledge Form. We will send a pledge reminder in the spring, after you have selected your intern. Pledges are due according to the date you have indicated on the pledge form, preferably before June 30. It is imperative that we have at least half of your payment in hand by the time of the first ½ payment of the student stipend in July.

23. Is the sponsorship contribution tax deductible?

Saturday Academy is a non-profit organization. Sponsorship contributions to Saturday Academy may qualify as a charitable gift or business expense for tax purposes. We suggest that you consult with a qualified tax professional regarding your particular tax situation. Acknowledgement of the sponsorship contribution will come from Saturday Academy.

24. Is an internship outside of science or engineering acceptable?

Yes, but . . .

The internship must be a pre-professional experience in a profession requiring a college education in science, engineering, mathematics, or computing. For example, we encourage internships that engage young people in science policy analysis, technical writing, science education, environmental law, and other such professions related to science, engineering, mathematics, and computing.

We believe that society would be well-served by programs similar to the ASE Program specializing in other disciplines such as law, journalism, and the like. However, ASE Program internships must be related to scientific and technical professions.

25. Can an ASE intern participate more than one year in a specific internship? Can I arrange or talk to a student about coming back again the next summer?

No, but . . .

The ASE Program is a one-year program. The Program policy is to provide single opportunities for many students rather than double opportunities for fewer students. Students are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship. On the other hand, we encourage mentors to bring their former interns back outside of the ASE Program in addition to offering opportunities to new students on a regular basis. We also encourage interns to continue working with their mentors after the internship ends if both parties are amenable to it.

26. What if the position I have planned calls for field work?

Many ASE mentors take their interns into the field. Some positions are almost entirely field-based. If the intern will be going into the field, this should be noted in the Position Description. Also, the Position Description should specify physical requirements so applicants with disabilities are aware of the requirements. Students are

still required to attend the summer conferences. Depending on the nature of the field work, we may be required by our insurance to conduct a background check on the mentor. This is the exception rather than the rule, however.

27. What if my position has activities at two sites that are distant from each other?

Make sure this requirement is clearly stated in the position description, so parents can make appropriate housing and/or commuting arrangements. The ASE Program does **NOT** provide housing or transportation, outside of the Midsummer Conference and Symposium.

28. What if there is a medical emergency?

The program requires every intern to submit an emergency medical treatment authorization form. One copy of that form is given to the mentor. The intern's Teacher Monitor and the ASE office at Saturday Academy will also receive copies of medical treatment authorization forms. We ask that you notify the Teacher Monitor or Saturday Academy about any injuries or incidents as soon as possible.

29. What about liability insurance?

At the beginning of each summer, Saturday Academy purchases a student intern personal liability policy that covers all student participants in the Saturday Academy ASE program. We also require parents to certify that they carry health insurance for their children and ask that mentors have liability insurance that is appropriate for their organization or industry. **Saturday Academy also purchases a policy that covers the interns in case of injury, similar to worker's compensation insurance.** Although insurance coverage will be in place, no one can guarantee that you will not be sued or, if negligence is demonstrated in court, found liable.

30. What about worker's compensation, social security, minimum wage, and child labor laws?

ASE is an educational program, not a job. In addition to their on-site activities, students are required to participate in significant educational components of the program, including the Midsummer Conference and the Symposium. Most students receive credit from their schools for participation in the ASE Program. The student stipend is not a payment for services rendered, but is intended to cover any expenses the students incur while participating in the program. Because of the educational nature of the ASE Program, we treat students as "TRAINEES," exempt from federal and state minimum wage, child labor and Workers' Compensation requirements. Therefore, we purchase a special insurance policy to replace the workers' compensation coverage. (See question 29). You may wish to check with your company's legal advisor if you have further questions in this regard.

31. What if my work involves radioactive, chemically hazardous, or toxic materials, or other health and safety hazards?

In some cases, students below a certain age are legally prohibited from working with some classes of hazardous materials or situations. For example, it is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to work directly with radioactive materials. However, younger people can work in the same area as radioactive materials if certain precautions are followed. High school age students can also generally work with toxic chemicals, potentially dangerous apparatus, and other hazardous situations if they are taught proper safety procedures, **and if their mentor checks to ensure that they then follow proper safety procedures.** By this point in the ASE Program, one or more of our past mentors have dealt with nearly any kind of hazardous situation you can imagine for interns, from working in the lab with radioactive materials to using high-voltage equipment. If you have any questions or concerns about health and safety, please call us at (503) 200-5860 or (503) 200-5861 (both have voice mail), fax us at (503) 200-5899, or send e-mail to ase@saturdayacademy.org.

32. How much time will the student spend as an intern? When does the internship begin and end?

We ask that each intern spend the equivalent of eight weeks "full-time" in his/her internship. The typical schedule is 37 days plus two days for the mandatory conferences. The beginning and ending dates, daily schedule, and so forth are negotiated between the mentor and the intern, allowing for vacations, travel to conferences and the like. The only strict criterion is that the experience occurs after the intern is released from school in the spring and before s/he starts back to school in the fall.

33. What if the intern handles proprietary information?

Because each intern reports on his/her summer experience at the ASE Symposium in August to other interns and the community at large, (including potential interns and mentors from competing organizations) you should discuss with your intern what information can and cannot be communicated about his/her experience in this and other public settings. A WRITTEN NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT not only protects your company; it also gives the student a valuable experience in the real world of business. Such experiences are integral to the educational component of the internship. We encourage you to discuss the importance of proprietary information, rules governing conduct regarding proprietary information at your company and your expectations for the intern in this regard.

34. What if I am uncertain about mentoring a teenager?

The ASE Program contracts with experienced science, math, and computer teachers to serve as program facilitators in the local area, and to monitor internship placements. These "Teacher Monitors" help mentors communicate with interns and vice versa if necessary. Teacher Monitors serve as a liaison between interns, mentors and the program director; and chaperone and teach at conferences. Teacher Monitors are also responsible for writing a report on each intern's summer project, and may ask you to help explain the work and/or to suggest reading if the work is not in his/her area of academic expertise.

Aside from getting acquainted in the beginning, clarifying and verifying expectations between mentor and apprentice, and conducting exit interviews (interviews near the end of the summer with both parties for the purpose of program evaluation), a Teacher Monitor's intervention is rarely needed or desired by either mentor or intern. Teenagers are much brighter and more motivated, mature and responsible than images in the popular media suggest. First-year ASE mentors typically discover that the intern completes work on a project faster and at a higher quality than initially expected. Interns who complete projects early are a fairly common phenomenon. Given the high caliber of the students who are involved in the ASE Program, problems are extremely rare. They can happen, however. If a problem arises don't hesitate to call on the Teacher Monitor or ASE staff for help. Given that the internship is only eight weeks long, our policy and expectation is to take appropriate corrective action quickly.

35. What is a "Teacher Monitor?"

See Question #34.

36. What if the internship doesn't work out, even with the Teacher Monitor's help?

Interns can be counseled out of the program. It is better to avoid letting things get that far. If any problems seem impossible to resolve, you should contact the Teacher Monitor and allow him/her to attempt to solve the problem. One reason we use experienced teachers is that they are accustomed to communicating with young people in language they understand. If necessary, an intern will get a phone call or a visit from the ASE Program Director, or even the Saturday Academy Director. We expect mentors to take any corrective actions quickly because eight weeks is a very short period of time. Historically, problems have arisen when mentors try to be "nice" to their students and allow the problems to intensify. The bottom line is, however, if you want to terminate the internship you can. Just please give us the opportunity to try to salvage the situation first.

37. How do students hear about the ASE Program?

Students hear about the ASE Program from a variety of sources. The two most common are announcements by a particular teacher in school and word of mouth from fellow students. We send program announcements to staff at each high school in the region: career counselors, and math, computer/technology and science department heads. We also send to members of teacher organizations such as the Oregon Science Teachers Association, to all former applicants who still qualify for the program, to members of particular community groups (e.g., MESA, OCHA), to participants in other Saturday Academy programs and to anyone who has requested to be on our mailing list.

38. Can I specify that my intern must have taken certain courses, reached a certain age, be a U.S. Citizen, etc.?

Yes, just spell it out in the Position Description. One of the questions on the Position Description Form asks for precisely this information.

39. Can I require affirmative action criteria for my intern such as gender, racial or ethnic origin, or financial status?

Although the ASE Program is not specifically an affirmative action program, you may use affirmative action criteria as long as you spell out any such requirements in the Position Description. You might wish to say that such criteria will be “strongly considered,” thereby giving yourself the ability to accept an outstanding student who does not meet the criteria. In some cases, mentors or organizations support their interns with grants that specify certain affirmative action criteria as a funding prerequisite. Our policy is to encourage mentors to include criteria that would lead them to accept interns from groups that are traditionally under-represented in science, math, engineering and computing. If affirmative action criteria are *requirements* of the position, we request that you include that clearly in your position description.

40. Do I have to interview all the students who apply for my position?

No, but **we do recommend that you interview your finalist applicants**, at least by telephone. The interview process gives students a chance to meet the mentor as well as giving you a chance to meet the student. **Historically, many of our applicants have turned down positions where no interview was given.** Finally, remember that teenagers exhibit a range of maturity levels that is sometimes not apparent on written applications, and many mentors report changing their ranking after the interview process.

41. Who tells the students whether or not they have been chosen?

ASE, not the mentor, will inform both the successful applicants and those not selected. **It is important that mentors not communicate offers directly to students.** Mentors do not offer positions directly to students because some applicants receive multiple offers. An applicant who receives multiple offers gets to select the position s/he wants, and the rejected position is then offered to the next candidate on the mentor's list. In order to be fair and to prevent misunderstandings that can arise when different messages get conveyed by different people, this “matching” task must be coordinated by ASE. Once all placements have been made, mentors and apprentices are informed by mail. Confirmation letters are mailed by early May.

42. What if the project I anticipate for the intern changes between the time I submit the position description and the time the internship begins?

This happens fairly often. Also, many first-time mentors underestimate the capabilities of the teenagers who apply for the ASE Program. Those mentors often find themselves adjusting their plans to include more difficult assignments for their interns. Although the Position Description is important, it serves mainly to give applicants an idea of the kind of projects they'll be working on. Most changes you are likely to make will not be so radical that the activity will fail totally to resemble the Position Description. Remember that your understanding of your job is much more detailed than your intern's. In the rare event that the changes you are making are that radical, explain the changes to the intern at the beginning of the summer and give him/her a chance to resign the internship. In the past when this has happened, the intern has always elected to work on the new project and under the new conditions.

43. What criteria should mentors use in selecting interns?

Each mentor uses his/her own criteria. Some mentors seek applicants with very high grades, test scores, and a good school record. Other mentors look more to essays, letters of recommendation, evidence of student-initiated projects/hobbies, and/or specific skills. A few mentors specifically seek applicants whose academic records aren't as strong as the rest of the applicant pool but who show evidence of interest and ability through extracurricular pursuits. Some mentors cannot take a student younger than 16 years of age, while others are able to take students of any age. Some mentors choose to apply affirmative action criteria. In cases where applicants are otherwise equal, such a strategy might help to increase the number of professionals from groups that are traditionally under-represented in the technical professions.

44. What if none of the students who apply for my position are qualified?

You are under no obligation to take a student you don't want to work with. In this case, let us know and we will close the position offering.

45. If I interview someone who appears to be promising but who lacks a prerequisite, should I counsel him/her to re-apply the following year?

Certainly, *unless* s/he is already a junior in high school. High school seniors are not eligible for the ASE Program. If such an applicant is already a junior, perhaps you should consider hiring him/her as an employee after s/he picks up the prerequisite.

46. What happens if no student selects my position, or if all the students I select decide to take other offers?

We have several potential solutions to this unlikely problem, which we can discuss with you in more detail if it actually occurs. If you are requesting the use of ASE grant funds, then we will close this position (remember that one criterion for disbursement of funds is applicant numbers). Possible solutions include: (a) closing the position; (b) offering the position to second and lower ranked applicants from similar positions with other mentors; (c) reviewing your original applicant pool to see if other students are qualified; and (d) advertising it to applicants who were not selected for any internship in order to generate a second applicant pool. If you provide ASE with a list of several students whom you find acceptable, it is unlikely they will all have other offers.

47. What if I offer a position and then find I can't participate in the program?

This sometimes happens. If you give us a position description to send to the student applicants, we assume you are making a good faith offer, but your position description is not a binding contract. Business cycles take downturns. Government grants and contracts don't always come through. People get sick. We understand that positions must sometimes be closed. However, it is **highly desirable** that we have a firm list of positions at the time when student applicants are selecting their three choices in **February and March**. If one of the student's three position choices is closed, then obviously that student has a lower probability of being awarded an internship.

48. Does the ASE Program provide support for transportation or housing?

No! The ASE Program does **NOT** provide transportation or housing associated with the internship except as required for attendance at the two conferences. Your intern must either live within commuting distance of your position, or be able to arrange housing and transportation for him- or herself. The ASE Program does not provide chaperones for students who live away from home. If a student lives away from home, the parent/guardian must provide a letter giving permission and describing the student's summer arrangements.

49. Is it my job as a mentor to arrange housing or transportation?

No! The student must be able to make arrangements for housing or transportation before s/he can apply for a position that is outside of the ASE commuting boundary (30 miles maximum, one way).

50. What if I run out of things for my intern to do?

Look on this as an opportunity. Remember that the ASE Program is a pre-professional, educational experience. If your intern is so good that you run out of educational tasks and projects, consider having him/her work with another professional in your organization for a few weeks. This will provide your intern with a view of another related profession and a deeper understanding of your organization and its mission. Remember, these young people are there to learn. The more you put in front of them, the more they will rise to the challenge!

THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO MENTOR A YOUNG PERSON AT YOUR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT! YOU ARE MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION NOT ONLY TO THAT STUDENT'S LIFE BUT ALSO TO YOUR PROFESSION, THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF YOUR COMMUNITY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU!!