

Work-Based Learning within the Career Development Progression

Career Development	Definition	Age Range*	WBL Coordinator	WBL (sample)Experiences	Personalized Learning Plan (PLP)
Career Awareness	School-directed experiences, which may or may not involve industry participation, focused on exposing students to a broad range of industries and the career opportunities within them.	5-14+	No	Worksite Visits/Tours, Career Speakers/Career in the Classroom Days, Career Fairs, Interest Inventories, Aptitude Assessments	Students use the WBL experiences to shape their personal, academic, and career goals.
Career Exploration	Student-driven experiences with professionals that allow students to learn about specific areas of interest based on inventories/assessments.	14-18+	May be required depending on the location of the WBL experience**	Informational Interviews, Job Shadows, Virtual Learning, Unpaid Work Experience, Career Work Experience	Students' WBL experiences align with their personal, academic, and career goals outlined in their PLPs.
Career Preparation	Students are immersed in WBL experiences that augment their academic and career development. Experiences enhance curriculum, align with student goals, reinforce transferable skills, and take place in professional working environments and educational settings. Students work toward attaining identified academic and transferable skill proficiency through these experiences.	14-18+	Yes	Internships, Paid Work Experience, Transition Services, CTE programs	Through WBL experiences students demonstrate and document their progress towards identified academic proficiencies and transferable skills.
Career Training	Business and industry led training in which students demonstrate academic and career/technical proficiency through experiences that are directly related to a specific occupation or trade. These experiences are outlined in training plans that are an extension of the students' personalized learning plans.	16-18+	Yes	Apprenticeship and Cooperative Education through CTE programs	Students demonstrate and document academic and transferable skill proficiency through WBL experiences as part of their PLP process.

* Age Range- [Child Labor Laws](#) and [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) use age as a participation parameter in some WBL experiences.

** Depending on the industry, occupation, and/or worksite, job shadows and site visits may be considered hazardous according to the DOL. Such WBL experiences may need additional scrutiny by a WBL Coordinator and may not be appropriate for students below the age of 14.

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TYPES of WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES*

Work-based learning is an educational program or experience involving student interactions with industry or community professionals in real, virtual, online, or simulated work environments that exposes learners to postsecondary options, provides opportunities for skill development and proficiency attainment, and allows students to reinforce and deepen their school-based learning. For work-based learning experiences to have the greatest impact on students, a variety of WBL opportunities should be embedded into the student's pathway to secondary school completion. In elementary and middle school, students may participate in groups in broad **Career Awareness** experiences to learn about a variety of opportunities that may appeal to them. To dive deeper into their areas of interest, **Career Exploration** opportunities provide more focused experiences in which students take a proactive role in identifying and pursuing relevant career and postsecondary options to shape their long-term goals.

Once students have a deeper understanding of the world of work, they are able to shape their own pathway in preparation for their chosen careers. **Career Preparation** and **Career Training** experiences are learning opportunities in a workplace that enable students to demonstrate progress towards academic and career/technical proficiency through experiences that are directly related to a specific occupation or trade.

Career Awareness

Career Speakers/Career Days in the Classroom* are career awareness experiences for students to learn first-hand about the skills required in various occupations or career areas; the career paths taken by those in the field; the tools, materials and equipment used; and the work environment and expectations for performance in various occupations.

Worksite Visits and Tours* are career awareness experiences in which classes or small groups of students visit appropriate work sites to provide students with an up-close look at a workplace, the people working there, and then relate it to classroom learning. These activities are supervised and designed to explore a variety of jobs.

Career Fairs* are career awareness experiences for larger groups of students that may be organized by schools and employers to introduce students to opportunities within a business or career field. Career fairs bring together representatives from a variety of careers to share information about their company, their job, and what education, skills, and knowledge are required for success in their career.

Career Exploration

Informational interviewing* is a career exploration experience in which the student makes contact with a business/industry representative for a telephone or in-person interview, lasting approximately 15 minutes to an hour. The student prepares questions in advance to explore opportunities in a given career area or occupation, the skills and education required for entry and success, the long-term growth potential, and, often, the career path taken by the representative prior to arriving at his/her current position. Informational interviewing benefits students by giving them direct contact with an employer, offering them an opportunity to practice their interview skills, display their interest, and gather valuable information. The experience should be guided by a WBL agreement developed by the employer, WBL Coordinator, and the student.

Job Shadowing is a career exploration experience in which the student spends time with an employee currently working in his/her career field of interest. Job shadowing allows the student to observe and learn

about the skills and knowledge a person must possess to perform the duties required of the position. Job shadows are unpaid learning experiences and typically last a half to a full day. The experience should be guided by a WBL agreement developed by the employer, WBL Coordinator, and the student.

Unpaid Work Experience is a career exploration experience in an occupational field related to students' academic and career goals. Students spend short periods of time in a particular job with the opportunity to rotate into related areas at the same worksite. These unpaid placements allow for career exploration and provide in-depth knowledge of the day-to-day activities and skills needed to perform a job successfully. Career Technical Education Centers refer to unpaid work experience as Career Work Experience (CWE). Both unpaid work experiences and CWE require WBL agreements.

Career Preparation

Internship is a career preparation experience that may be paid or unpaid. Internships are supervised, structured work experiences designed for students to demonstrate and document their progress towards identified academic proficiencies and transferable skills. The internship should be of a fixed duration, established prior to the outset of the experience. Credit hours and the length of the internship may vary depending on its purpose and how it will support the students' growth toward achieving their academic and career goals. The federal [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) and the seven elements of the [Primary Beneficiary Test](#) provide guidelines to determine whether an internship is paid or unpaid. Internships are guided by clearly defined training plans developed by the employer, WBL Coordinator, and student.

Paid Work Experience is a career preparation experience that may occur in a public, private, or non-profit organization. The paid work experience should be designed for students to demonstrate and document their progress towards identified academic proficiencies and transferable skills. The employer is under no obligation to offer regular employment to the student subsequent to the paid work experience. This paid work experience must comply with the Federal and State laws including [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#), [Fair Labor Standards Act](#), [Vermont Child Labor Laws](#), and minimum wage laws. Paid work experiences are guided by clearly defined training plans developed by the employer, WBL Coordinator, and student.

Transition Services is a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that-

- (A) is designed to be a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
- (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests;
- (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. This definition is from the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA 2004), the federal special education law.

Career Training

Cooperative Technical Education (CTE)** is a career training experience in which students are placed in paid work experiences at training stations directly related to their technical education program. A training plan and a WBL agreement are required. All school-approved Coop placements shall meet the following requirements: (1) Each placement shall be planned and supervised by the school and employer so that the experience contributes to the student's education and employability, (2) The minimum age of students placed shall be 16. Student placements shall adhere to Child Labor Bulletin # 101 and/or 102 (Child Labor Requirements in Non-Agricultural/Agricultural Occupation Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 1977), (3) All local, state, and federal laws applying to wage and hour regulations shall be followed, (4) Students shall be covered by Workers' Compensation or comparable individual, school, or employer insurance while on the job, (5) Students shall have on file at the school a properly completed training agreement signed by the student, the student's parent, the WBL coordinator and the employer, (6) Students shall be visited regularly at the work site by the co-op coordinator/WBL Coordinator to assess student progress, (7) Students shall receive an educational program that addresses core technical competencies and tasks directly related to job-seeking and job-keeping skills, and (8) Students shall be eligible to receive credit/proficiency toward graduation upon successful completion of approved co-op programs when it is part of a state-approved course of study in technical education.

Pre-Apprenticeship is career training experience that teaches basic technical and job readiness skills in preparation to enter a Registered Apprenticeship program. A pre-apprenticeship can take many forms and may provide classroom training and hands on labs related to an apprenticeship occupation. It may also include paid work experience. Pre-apprenticeship experiences enable students to earn credit toward the completion requirements for a Registered Apprenticeship program. A training plan and a WBL agreement are required. By statute (16 V.S.A. ch.39), School Board approval may be required.

Registered Apprenticeship is a training system that produces highly skilled workers to meet the demands of employers competing in a global economy. The process of apprenticeship program registration with Federal and State government agencies is standards-based. It is a process designed to ensure that working apprentices, program sponsors, and the general public can gain a clear understanding of the training content and the measures that are in place to ensure ongoing quality. The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) and the [Vermont Department of Labor](#) offer detailed information about registered apprenticeship program elements.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Community Based Learning (Service Learning) combines meaningful service to the community with a student's learning goals. Students improve their academic and transferable skills and personal development by applying what they learn in school to a valuable, significant, and necessary service which has real consequences to the community; they then reflect on their experience to reinforce the link between their service and their learning.

School-Based Enterprise (Student Entrepreneurship) is an experience that takes students through the process of learning what it takes to become a successful small business owner or manager. Student entrepreneurship may take the form of school-based businesses that students help to set up and run, curricula that guides students through the process of creating business plans, working with local entrepreneurs and other community resources to plan and run enterprises, or any combination of these learning opportunities. Entrepreneurship offers students an interdisciplinary experience in understanding

small business. Entrepreneurship may be undertaken on or off the school site, and must identify which academic and transferable skill proficiencies are addressed in order to be considered for school credit/proficiency attainment. Students can engage in an entrepreneurship experience at all ages—from kindergarten through college.

PLANS and FORMS

Training Plan is a documented arrangement between the school, employer, and the student that specifies the occupational skills, transferable skills, and the academic proficiencies that the student will acquire in the paid and/or unpaid work experience. It also defines the relationships and responsibilities of all involved, and describes the evaluation process. Student progress in achieving the learning goals in the training plan is supervised and evaluated collaboratively by appropriate school and worksite personnel.

WBL Agreement is a documented understanding that specifies the type of WBL experience, contact information, and the roles and responsibilities of the school, student, employer, and/or other partners. It also defines the relationship between the WBL experience and the student’s learning goals as outlined in the PLP.

Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) is a plan created by the student, parents/guardians, and teachers that defines the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities which support the student in secondary school completion, postsecondary readiness and civic engagement. The planning process, updated at least annually, includes goal setting and reflection to ensure the student’s emerging abilities, aspirations, dispositions and interests chart the student’s path toward proficiency.

*Adapted from the [Tennessee DOE WBL Policy Guide](#)

**Vermont State Board of Education Rules, Series 2370-Career and Technical Education, CRV 22-000-007