

Work-Based Learning FAQ

Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Tennessee is being revitalized by the Department of Education. Updated policies and resources went into effect beginning in the 2015-16 school year. WBL Coordinators are responsible for staying up-to-date with changes to WBL policies, which are posted to the Department of Education's website:

<https://tn.gov/education/topic/work-based-learning>

WBL GENERAL UPDATES

How is WBL Defined?

WBL is a strategy to reinforce academic, technical and social skills through collaborative activities with industry.

WBL experiences allow students to apply classroom theories to practical problems, to explore career options, and pursue personal and professional goals. Introductory WBL activities may include industry tours and classroom speakers. More advanced activities may include job shadows and industry-led project-based learning. Ultimately, students may participate in capstone WBL experiences that include activities such as apprenticeships, internships, clinicals, and practicum experiences for credit.

Why change WBL?

In an increasingly complex global economy, all students need the academic, technical, and social skills to compete and contribute meaningfully to their communities. WBL has been redesigned to promote the use of sequential WBL activities that reinforce the skills that students need to be successful in postsecondary education and careers and that may culminate in capstone-level experiences for students. As the definition of WBL has expanded to include activities from elementary school through high school, the Department of Education is updating policies and professional development resources to provide clear expectations and additional assistance to teachers and districts.

What has changed?

A **WBL Framework** has been adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) to govern all WBL experiences. The **Department of Education's WBL Policy Guide** has been revised to align with the state board's WBL Framework and set clear expectations for districts' WBL programs, for student experiences, and for learning outcomes. The Department of Education has also released a new professional development resource called the **WBL Implementation Guide**. This guide provides recommended practices, examples, and supporting documentation that districts may use to support quality WBL programs, beyond what is required in WBL policy. Finally, two WBL courses were approved for the 2015-16 school year: **Career Exploration** and **Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum**. These courses provide clear learning expectations for postsecondary and career skill development.

What is the timeline for these changes?

March 2015 – New WBL policies, curriculum, and trainings released by the department.

March-September 2015 – TDOE hosts WBL Training Sessions for over 575 WBL Coordinators.

October 2015 – TDOE launches WBL PLCs in each CORE region to support continuous improvement

WBL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What professional development is available?

WBL Two-day Training: A two-day crash course in all things WBL for teachers and CTE Directors who are not familiar with the new state requirements. Training addresses *WBL Career Practicum* standards, new paperwork and reporting requirements, updated WBL policies, and how to launch or improve your WBL program. This training will certify new teachers and recertify returning teachers who need to become familiar with WBL changes.

WBL PLCs: Open to certified WBL Coordinators who are already familiar with changes to WBL policy, curriculum, and paperwork. These monthly meetings focus on continuous improvement for existing programs and teachers who are actively coordinating WBL for students. Teachers will be asked to bring samples of their students' work and should be familiar with updated policies to participate for the benefit of all. Teachers who [become a member](#), attend [4 or more meetings](#) in one school year, and certificate will be replaced with a new one automatically.

NOTE: WBL PLCs do not provide the same information as the two-day training. Teachers who are unfamiliar with updated policies will be unprepared to benefit from PLC discussions.

For more information on trainings or to register to attend, please see "WBL Training Information" on the WBL website: <https://tn.gov/education/topic/work-based-learning>

How do teachers become WBL certified?

Teachers must have an active WBL Certificate (renewed every two years) from the Tennessee Department of Education to teach most WBL courses and oversee credit-bearing experiences. For more information on how to certify, visit the WBL Certification webpage: <https://tn.gov/education/article/wbl-certification>

WBL FRAMEWORK

What is the WBL Framework?

The State Board of Education (SBE) identified criteria that govern all WBL experiences to allow students to apply classroom theories to practical problems and to explore career options. The WBL Framework is established in SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.06 and is outlined in High School Policy 2.103. All Department of Education policies and resources will be aligned with this framework.

When does the WBL Framework apply?

Whether students take tours to learn about industries, participate in job shadows to experience a particular career, or complete an internship to develop and practice specific skills, the WBL Framework applies to all work-based learning experiences. The WBL Framework increases the focus on technical skills development and the employability skills students need for long-term success. All department policies, implementation tools, and trainings are centered on these qualities to ensure all students experience meaningful learning experiences that prepare them for the future.

WBL POLICIES

What has changed in WBL Policy?

The WBL Policy Guide has been revised to align with the SBE's WBL Framework and was released in March 2015.

WBL Coordinators are responsible for complying with updated WBL policies for the 2015-16 school year.

Updated WBL policies:

- Encourage industry engagement earlier in the planning process and support a Pathways Tennessee approach to collaboration with intermediaries to scale up WBL opportunities for students
- Support WBL programs that build on a student's previous experiences
- Align WBL placements with the student's elective focus/CTE program of study rather than one related course
- Encourage more collaboration between WBL Coordinators and teachers who hold endorsements related to the student's area of elective focus and/or CTE program of study
- Provide increased scheduling flexibility for WBL Coordinators to oversee additional placements when they collaborate with a teacher who holds an endorsement related to the student's placement

How will this impact Health Science Clinicals and Nursing Education?

All WBL experiences are subject to state and federal Child Labor Laws and SBE policies as they are outlined in the WBL Framework. As such, health science placements will be required to use the TDOE's updated forms (the Personalized Learning Plan Packet) to ensure compliance with all of the above. Beyond the WBL Framework, course standards for Clinical Internship and Nursing Education will guide the student's experience. The teacher of record must be a properly endorsed teacher with an active WBL Certificate.

How will this impact Special Education Transitions?

All WBL experiences are subject to state and federal Child Labor Laws and SBE policies as they are outlined in the WBL Framework. The skills-based focus of the new WBL policies complements Special Education Transition programs to ensure that all students are practicing the skills they need to be successful. The Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) is aligned with the SBE's WBL Framework. Student experiences are guided by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and the teacher of record must be a properly endorsed teacher with an active WBL Certificate. No changes have been made to Special Education Transition (6107).

WBL COURSE STANDARDS:

What courses are considered WBL?

New and revised WBL courses provide clear learning expectations for students. The *Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum* (6105) course aligns with any area of elective focus or CTE program of study and counts towards CTE concentrator status. The *Career Exploration* course is an introductory course for 8th or 9th grade students and does not require the teacher to hold a WBL certificate. Other courses may be considered forms of WBL and may require the teacher to hold the WBL Certificate. These include, but are not limited to:

- Applied Arts Practicum (6158)
- Career Exploration (6166)
- Business and Entrepreneurship Practicum (6159)
- Clinical Internship (5993)

- Construction Practicum (6160)
- Early Childhood Education Careers IV (6135)
- Engineering Practicum (6141)
- Human Services Practicum (6138)
- IT Clinical Internship (6096)
- Manufacturing Practicum (5926)
- Nursing Education (6000)
- Programming and Software Development Practicum (5908)
- [Service Learning \(6104\)](#)
- STEM Practicum (6147)
- Supervised Agricultural Experience (5964)
- Teaching as a Profession III (6126)
- WBL: Career Practicum (6105)
- WBL: Special Education Transition (6107)
- Web Design Practicum (6171)

Please refer to course documents for specific requirements: <http://www.tn.gov/education/cte/clusters.shtml>

How can a student get credit for work experience?

Students who participate in WBL activities such as apprenticeships, internships, or cooperative education (co-op) may earn high school credits through the *Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum (6105)* when they meet the standards for that course. Students may also earn credit for WBL experiences through other CTE practicum courses, such as those listed in the previous question. A teacher must hold the appropriate endorsement for the assigned practicum course. A teacher must also hold an active WBL Certificate if placing students in external WBL experiences while the student is enrolled in the practicum course.

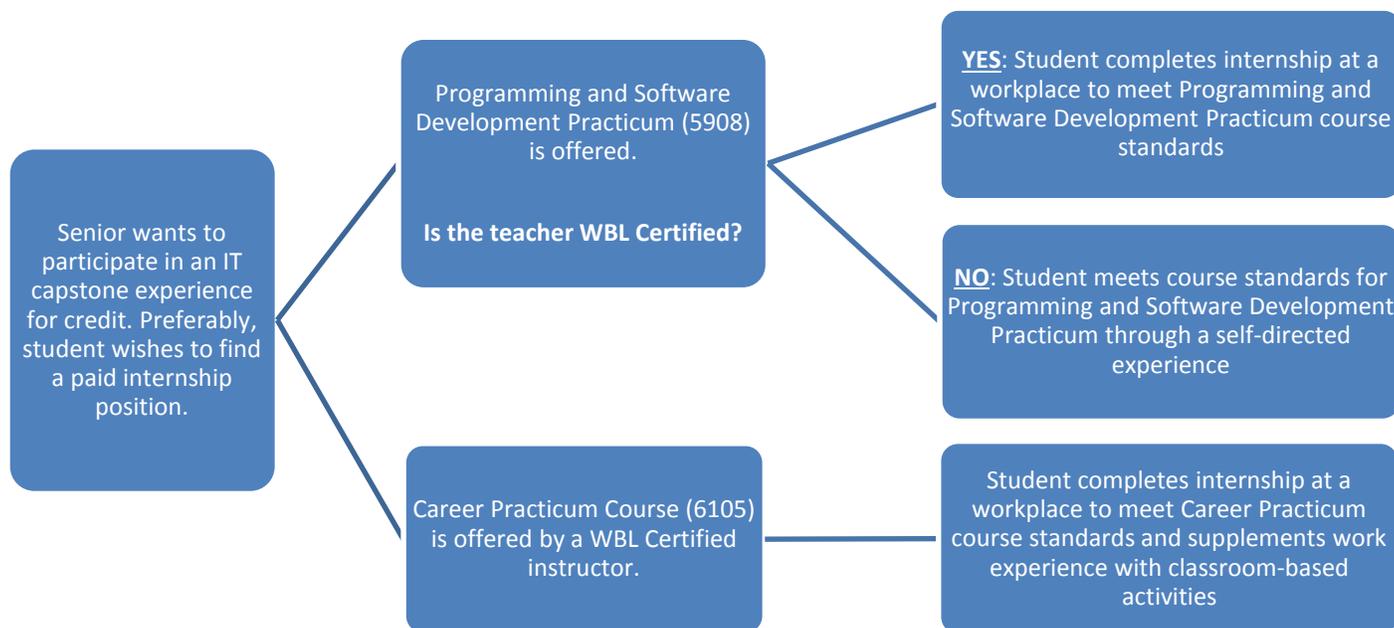
How is the Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum (6105) different from other CTE practicum courses?

The *Career Practicum* course allows students from multiple career clusters and/or areas of elective focus to be scheduled with one WBL Coordinator during a class period. The WBL Coordinator must collaborate with the students' elective focus or content area teacher(s) to ensure that each student's experience is aligned with his/her coursework. The *Career Practicum* course standards are not specific to any particular industry and focus primarily on transferable employability skills. As such, this course allows more flexibility in scheduling.

A content-specific practicum course must be taught by an appropriately endorsed teacher. Course standards combine advanced technical knowledge and skills from the related industry with soft skills through experiential learning. Teachers may place students in external WBL experiences through these practicum courses only if they hold an active WBL certificate. Otherwise, students must complete classroom-based experiences and projects to meet course standards.

Example Scenario: A student wishes to have a practicum experience during his/her senior year by working with a programming company as an intern. The student may do this either through the Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum (6105) course or the Programming and Software Development Practicum (5908) course aligned with his/her program of study. If the school does not offer the

Programming and Software Development Practicum course, the student can take the Career Practicum course with any WBL certified instructor. If the school does offer the Programming and Software Development Practicum course, the student may either meet the course standards through a self-directed classroom-based experience or complete an IT internship if the teacher holds an active WBL certificate.



Who can teach WBL courses?

Teachers must have an active [WBL Certificate](#) (renewed every two years) from the Tennessee Department of Education to teach most WBL courses and oversee credit-bearing experiences. Students may also participate in WBL experiences through various other CTE Practicum courses when the teacher of record holds an active WBL Certificate. The new *Career Exploration* course is intended to be an introductory course and does not require a teacher held WBL certificate. WBL activities such as industry tours, guest speakers, and job shadows may be embedded into other courses to reinforce those course standards and may be taught by the teacher of record who may or may not hold the WBL certificate when the requirements of the WBL Framework are met. It is recommended that a WBL Coordinator work with the teacher of record to ensure compliance.

Are the standards for Career Practicum flexible enough for students in different placements?

Yes. Standards for *Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum* provide clear expectations for transferable skills that are applicable in various work environments and valuable in postsecondary education. Students demonstrate their growth using pre- and post-assessments and compile work samples that demonstrate proficiency.

WBL LIABILITY

How old must a student be to work or to participate in WBL?

Minors may work in Tennessee at the age of 14 or 15 when they meet the requirements outlined in Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) 50-5-104; however, students may NOT participate in WBL internships or apprenticeships until they are 16 or 17 years of age and meet the requirements of TCA 50-5-105. The state's WBL policies and required paperwork are designed to help ensure that all child labor law requirements are met.

Who is liable for WBL students?

Businesses who host WBL students are liable, just as with any other employee. However, for all WBL students, both the school and the business sign off on a Safety Training Log to document safety trainings the student completes in the classroom AND at the worksite. This documentation is required by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) and an up-to-date copy is kept on file at the school and at the worksite. In the case of an accident, this documentation helps protect the student, the business, and the school by providing evidence that appropriate precautions were made to keep the student safe.

What jobs are prohibited for students?

Child Labor Laws in Tennessee identify Hazardous Occupations that are prohibited to minors, which are outlined in Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA 50-5-106). There are exemptions for apprentices and WBL students who are enrolled in a related CTE program of study in TCA 50-5-107. To participate in these placements, a Hazardous Occupation Exemption form must be completed and kept on file with the other required paperwork. All required documentation may be found under "WBL Coordinator Resources" on the WBL webpage: http://tn.gov/education/cte/work_based_learning.shtml

More information and updates about WBL

All WBL policies, professional development, and the WBL Toolbox are posted to the WBL webpage:

<https://tn.gov/education/topic/work-based-learning>