

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning (WBL) has been redesigned by the Tennessee Department of Education. Updated policies and resources took effect during the 2015-16 school year. WBL Coordinators are responsible for staying up-to-date with changes to WBL policies, which can be found on the [WBL home page](#).

### 1. **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, clinical experiences, and other practicum placements for credit.

### 2. **What should WBL look like in Tennessee?**

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 professional development resource called the **[WBL Implementation Guide](#)**, which provides guidance and best practices that districts may use to support quality WBL programs.

### 3. **What WBL professional development does the department offer?**

**WBL Certification and Recertification Networking Events:** This training is an intensive, two-part professional development opportunity, consisting of an online training module and a one-day introduction to WBL. WBL Certification and Recertification Networking Events are designed for educators and administrators who are not familiar with the new Tennessee State Board of Education Requirements for WBL, or for anyone in need of recertifying an existing WBL certificate. The majority of this training focuses on WBL Career Practicum standards, WBL documentation and reporting requirements, WBL policies that apply to all CTE capstone courses, and strategies for launching or improving upon a quality WBL program. Educators who complete these trainings will earn a certificate to be the teacher of record for any WBL course their TN Educator License endorsement allows.

### 4. **How do teachers become WBL certified?**

To become WBL certified, an educator or administrator must:

- provide documentation of non-teaching work experience, a TN occupational educator license, or a previous WBL certificate dated August 2014 or later;
- register for a WBL Networking Event training;
- complete a WBL online training module prior to the WBL Networking Event; and
- actively participate in a one-day, in-person WBL Networking Event Training.

### 5. **How often must a WBL coordinator renew his/her WBL certificate?**

WBL certificates remain active for two years. To maintain an active WBL certificate, a teacher must register for a WBL Recertification Networking Event every two years and complete the steps outlined in question 4.

## **6. 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.

## **7. When does the WBL framework apply?**

The WBL Framework applies to all activities along the [continuum of WBL experiences](#), including industry tours, job shadows, internships, and employment placements in which students develop and practice industry-specific skills. The WBL Framework increases the focus on technical skills development and employability skills that students need for long-term success. All department policies, implementation tools, and trainings focus on these qualities to ensure students participate in meaningful learning experiences that prepare them for the future.

## **8. 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 these updates. The updated WBL policies:

- encourage industry engagement earlier in the planning process and support clearly articulated student pathways through collaboration with intermediaries to scale WBL opportunities for students;
- support WBL programs that build on a student's previous experiences;
- align WBL experiences with the student's elective focus/CTE program of study rather than a single 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; and
- 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.

## **9. How will this impact [Clinical Internship \(C14H11\)](#) and [Nursing Education \(C14H16\)](#)?**

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, found in the [Personalized Learning Plan Packet](#), to ensure compliance with all of the above. In addition to the WBL Framework, course standards for Clinical Internship and Nursing Education will guide the student's experience. The teacher of record must have the proper TN educator license endorsement and hold an active WBL certificate.

## **10. How will this impact [WBL: Transitions \(S25H01\)](#)?**

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 have the proper TN educator license endorsement and hold an active WBL certificate.

## **11. Who can teach WBL courses?**

A teacher must hold the appropriate TN educator license endorsement for the assigned WBL course and have an active [WBL Certificate](#), renewed every two years, from the Tennessee Department of Education, to teach WBL courses and oversee credit-bearing experiences. Students may also participate in WBL experiences through other CTE Practicum courses when the teacher of record holds an active WBL Certificate. Refer to Policy 25 in the [WBL Policy Guide](#) for additional details.

**12. Which WBL courses require the teacher of record to maintain an active WBL certificate?**

New and revised WBL courses provide clear learning expectations for students. The [Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum \(C20H17\)](#) course aligns with any area of elective focus or CTE program of study and counts towards CTE concentrator status. [Work-Based Learning: Transitions \(S25H01\)](#), [Nursing Education \(C14H16\)](#), and [Clinical Internship \(C14H11\)](#) are also considered WBL courses that require the teacher of record to have the proper TN Educator License endorsement and an active WBL certificate.

**13. How can a student earn 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 \(C20H17\)](#) when they meet the standards for that course. Students may also earn credit for WBL experiences through other CTE practicum courses. A teacher must hold the appropriate TN educator license 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. Refer to Policy 25 in the [WBL Policy Guide](#) for additional details.

**14. How is the Work-Based Learning: [Career Practicum \(C20H17\)](#) 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. Refer to Policy 25 in the [WBL Policy Guide](#) for additional details.

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

Yes. Standards for [Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum \(C20H17\)](#) provide clear expectations for transferable skills that are highly valued in various work environments and postsecondary education. Students create a portfolio to demonstrate their personal and professional development throughout their WBL experience.

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

Policy 13 in the [WBL Policy Guide](#) states, "students who are 16 years or older may participate in capstone WBL placements for credit." Course standards for [Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum \(C20H17\)](#), [Nursing Education \(C14H16\)](#), and [Clinical Internship \(C14H11\)](#) additionally specify that students must be in grades 11 or 12. Thus, a student must be at least 16 years old and in grade 11 or 12 to participate in WBL.

### **17. What documents must be kept on file by employers of WBL students?**

Employers must keep copies of the following documentation for every WBL student placement:

- Proof of age
- [WBL Safety Training Log](#)
- [WBL Agreement](#)
- [WBL Insurance and Emergency Information](#)

### **18. Who is responsible for accident-related injuries to WBL students?**

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-6-103](#) (Workers' Compensation legislation) states:

*Every employer and employee subject to this chapter, shall, respectively, pay and accept compensation for personal injury or death by accident arising primarily out of and in the course of and scope of employment without regard to fault as a cause of the injury or death; provided, that any person who has an exemption pursuant to [§ 50-6-104](#) or part 9 of this chapter shall not be bound if the employee has given, prior to any accident resulting in injury or death, notice to be exempted from this chapter as provided in this part.*

Exemptions from [Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-6-103](#) include:

- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-6-104](#), Election of Corporate Officer to be Exempt from Chapter
- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-6-106](#), Employments Not Covered
  - Section 5 identifies employers with fewer than five regular employees as exempt.
- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-6-902](#), Requirement That Construction Services Providers Carry Workers' Compensation Insurance – Exemptions – Election by Subcontractor

Students involved in unpaid WBL placements must have sufficient insurance coverage to protect them in the event of an injury during a WBL placement.

### **19. What jobs are prohibited for Students?**

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-5-105](#), Employment of Minors Sixteen or Seventeen Years of Age, outlines detailed stipulations about the employment of sixteen and seventeen year-old students. Additionally, [Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-5-106](#), Prohibited Employment for Minors, identifies 21 hazardous occupations that are prohibited for minors. There are exemptions for apprentices and WBL students who are enrolled in a related CTE program of study, outlined in [Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-5-107](#). To participate in these placements, a [Hazardous Occupation Exemption Form](#) must be completed and kept on file with all other required paperwork.

#### **More information and updates about WBL**

Additional information related to WBL policies, professional development, and the [WBL Toolbox](#) can be found on the [WBL Home Page](#).