

Frequently Asked Questions

Work-Based Learning: Special Education

1. How does work-based learning (WBL) work for students in a self-contained classroom?

All students can benefit from work-based learning and are not limited to taking *WBL: Special Education Transition (6107)*. For many students with disabilities, [WBL: Career Practicum \(6105\)](#) may be the appropriate course code depending on the needs and skills of the student. Appropriate site-based supervision and accommodation of disabilities are important considerations and should be discussed with the business partner prior to placement.

2. When should a student take WBL: Special Education Transition (6107) or another course such as WBL: Career Practicum (6105)?

The IEP determines the most appropriate option. *WBL: Special Education Transition (6107)* is intended for students who require a special education teacher to supervise their work experiences due to the unique needs associated with their disability. For the majority of students on an IEP taking WBL for credit as a capstone experience, [WBL: Career Practicum \(6105\)](#) is appropriate.

3. Who is responsible for students while off campus in non-paid community experience as part of their transition services?

For students who are engaged in non-paid community experience as part of their transition services, the school is ultimately responsible, as the placement is an extension of the school day. It is important to clearly explain to parents that their student needs to be insured for their own protection. If parents do not provide insurance, local policy can determine how to cover students.

4. Where is WBL documented in a student's IEP?

If a student is taking WBL for credit, it should be documented in the course of study section of the student's transition plan. If the student is participating in a transition activity separate or in addition to WBL for credit, it should be documented in the transition services section (below the line) as a community experience.

5. Who decides if WBL experience should be structured as a course versus a transition activity?

Based on the needs of the student, the IEP team determines if the student should take WBL for credit or gain work experience through a community-based transition activity.

6. Can a special educator, who is also a WBL coordinator, supervise students who are not on an IEP?

A special educator who holds an active WBL certificate may oversee the [WBL: Career Practicum \(6105\)](#) course to supervise students who are not on an IEP as well as students with minor disabilities, as deemed appropriate by the IEP.

7. If the student is not being paid, does it count as a WBL course?

Yes. WBL courses may provide students with paid or unpaid experiences. WBL courses offer career exploration and skill development that prepare students for successful employment after high

school. A rich and rigorous framework guides the development of work skills. For all students who participate in WBL courses, an appropriate safety plan, a training agreement, and a training plan (comprised of skills expected from the experience) must be in place and on file at the workplace and at the school. Students must also have a personal work skills portfolio to demonstrate skill attainment. An effective approach to documenting for a portfolio may be the [Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment \(SKEMA\)](#).

For more information about work-based learning and transition for special populations, contact:

Blake Shearer

Director, Support Services for Student Readiness
Division of Special Populations
(615) 741-3834 | Blake.Shearer@tn.gov