2017-18 Work-Based Learning Policy Updates
Frequently Asked Questions

Work-Based Learning and Graduation Requirements

How has graduation with distinction changed, and how does this impact WBL?

According to current language in the state board's High School Policy 2.103, capstone WBL experiences are not eligible as sole criteria for graduation with distinction. However, capstone WBL experiences are valuable for students in becoming postsecondary and career ready, and districts are encouraged to provide local recognition for the accomplishments of students through capstone WBL experiences.

How does “area of elective focus” differ from “CTE concentration,” and what can capstone WBL courses count toward?

Area of elective focus: According to Tennessee graduation requirements, all students must complete an “area of elective focus” to graduate. This area of focus is comprised of three elective courses in a focus area, which is defined by local school districts. Any elective capstone WBL course may count toward a student's area of elective focus when the placement aligns with the student's chosen area of focus. This enables students to more deeply explore careers that relate to their interests and long-term aspirations.

CTE Concentration: A “CTE concentration” refers to three or more sequential courses in a specific technical skill area, called a CTE program of study. CTE programs of study are comprised of four sequential courses that are aligned with a specific technical skill area aligned to careers. Many CTE programs of study culminate in a fourth-level course, or practicum, which may allow students to participate in a workplace-based capstone WBL experience. Students may complete this practicum course or an alternate WBL: Career Practicum (6105) course to further pursue their interest in a particular employment sector. For more information, see WBL General Policies #1 and #3.

Teacher of Record

Do all capstone CTE practicum courses require a teacher to be WBL certified?

No. Teachers have the option to teach practicum courses as school-based experiences, which does not require them to maintain a WBL certificate. Additionally, Policy #25 states that a certified WBL coordinator may assist the teacher of record for level four CTE practicum courses to enable his/her students to participate in workplace-based capstone WBL experiences through these courses. The WBL coordinator is not required to be the teacher of record when up to five students or no more than 30 percent of the class are placed in workplace settings—whichever number is higher. For districts scaling up WBL or offering practicum courses for the first time, this flexibility enables them greater flexibility to expand workplace-based student experiences. For more information, see WBL General Policy #25, “Teacher of Record for Capstone WBL Courses” on page 21 and “Content Endorsed Teachers” on page 26 of the WBL Policy Guide.
Students with Healthcare Certifications

Can students who hold a CNA or EMR certification participate in WBL outside of a health science course?

Yes. Student safety is paramount. For this reason, students may only be placed in a health-related WBL experience involving the treatment of patients where blood-borne pathogens may be present when they are supervised by a properly endorsed WBL coordinator and enrolled in a Health Science career cluster course. However, for students who have completed a health science program of study and demonstrated mastery of content by passing either the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) certification, they may work in an appropriate patient-care setting related to their certification. For more information, see WBL General Policies #24 and #27 as well as “Placement and Supervision with Specialized Requirements” on page 23 of the WBL Policy Guide.

Additional WBL General Policy Clarifications

Policy #7: language updated to reflect current Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual
Policy #9: combines two previously related policies related to attendance
Policy #17: clarifies the length of time required paperwork should be maintained by the school or district
Policy #27: clarifies which student placements are required to comply with OSHA standards related to the Universal Precautions/Blood-borne Pathogens Test
Policy #32: clarifies that all WBL CTE courses are required to report and attest credits for compliance under Perkins IV
Teacher of Record for Capstone WBL Courses (p. 21): clarifies courses for which a teacher must be WBL certified as the teacher of record
Work-Based Learning Coordination (p. 22): adds item “IV c” to include the WBL Student Placement Portal as a required form of Personalized Learning Plan documentation
Recertification and Ongoing Learning for WBL Coordinators (p. 25): reflects changes to the recertification process and improvements in the flexibility and availability of WBL professional development

More Information

For more complete information, download the current WBL Policy Guide.
For more information about the 2017-18 WBL recertification and available professional development, download the 2017-18 WBL PD Updates.
For an overview and checklist of the WBL reporting requirements, download the WBL Reporting Requirements and Checklist.