

Work-Based Learning Online Course

Information, FAQ, and Registration

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in collaboration with NIU Illinois CTE Project, designed an online course for Career and Technical Education (CTE) educators to complete the required learning experience to lead Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs in their schools and districts as defined on the state's Work-Based Learning continuum and the Perkins V State Plan. This document is intended to provide general information about the Work-Based Learning online course.

Why is this course offered?

The state of Illinois has moved away from the traditional cooperative education model for workplace experiences and has implemented a more comprehensive Work-Based Learning Continuum, which includes activities ranging from career awareness to Workplace Experience courses. The Work-Based Learning Continuum allows increased opportunities for students to learn about college and careers. These changes created a need for the state of Illinois to offer a more extensive educator course that reflects these reforms in Work-Based Learning education.

What does the course entail?

The Work-Based Learning online course outlines new guidelines and provides in-depth knowledge, programmatic resources, and learning materials on topics required for the successful management of the WBL continuum and WBL Workplace Experiences in the state of Illinois.

Participants will progress through eight modules that extensively cover topics related to Work-Based Learning. In these modules, participants will review content, listen to podcasts and video presentations, engage in discussion forums, review WBL resources, and complete relevant assignments they will use in their practice. The final module (Module 9) leads participants through the completion of a comprehensive WBL Portfolio that can be readily used to support new/ongoing Work-Based Learning within their schools.

The Work-Based Learning online course, while rigorous, remains flexible for teachers to conduct completion of their work over an eight-week period.

Who should take the course?

This course is one option for endorsed CTE educators who are seeking the WBL special designation to lead work-based learning within their school or district. See page 61 of the [ISBE Work-Based Learning Manual](#) for more details outlining who is required to complete additional coursework in order to be an educator-coordinator for WBL.

When is the course offered?

The Work-Based Learning online course will be offered five times this year to meet the increased needs of the field. Teachers can sign up for one of the two open registrations this fall or can join the course in one of three of the cohorts offered in spring of 2026. Each cohort lasts eight weeks.

How do I sign up for the course?

All interested participants can sign up using the calendar links below. Once registered, potential participants will be contacted with additional enrollment information to see if the course/cohort is the right fit for them. Each cohort will have limited capacity.

WBL Online Course Registration

2025 Course Offerings	Registration Link	Registration Close Date (or until it fills)
September 1 – October 31	Fall Cohort A - Registration	August 15
November 1 – December 31	Fall Cohort B - Registration	October 10
2026 Course Offerings		
January 1 – February 28	Spring Cohort C - Registration	December 10
March 1 – April 30	Spring Cohort D - Registration	February 10
May 1 – June 30	Spring Cohort E - Registration	April 10

*Online courses have two synchronous meetings to assist teachers with questions and portfolio submission requirements.

*Spots may be limited and registration dates may be closed earlier due to courses being filled.

What is the format of the course?

This is an online course that is offered via Moodle, which is a course management platform. Each cohort lasts approximately 8 weeks. Participants are asked to attend two synchronous meetings. No special software is required.

What are the benefits for educators?

This course is offered to educators in the state of Illinois **free of charge**. Successful completion of this course will earn participants an ISBE Work-Based Learning designation credential and can serve as the teacher of record for Perkins-funded Workplace Experiences. This designation is equal to the recognition of teachers who successfully complete the two WBL-focused (previously Co-op) graduate-level courses. In addition, educators who successfully complete the course will receive 40 professional development hours. Other benefits include knowing the newest innovative approaches used in Work-Based Learning and understanding teacher resources and strategies to implement successful Work-Based Learning initiatives and programming.

Questions?

Additional questions can be directed to Abbi Barton at abarton@isbe.net or Bill Rose at wrose1@niu.edu.