

Work-Based Learning Language

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning in Illinois is defined as a continuum of authentic learning experiences that includes activities focused on career awareness and career exploration and culminates with a workplace experience related to the student's program of study.

Career Awareness Activities

As stated in the ISBE Work-Based Learning Manual, the first stage of the work-based learning continuum is career awareness. Career Awareness Activities provide information about possible career clusters and specific jobs that are available, and how to explore one's own abilities and interests. These may be career days, career fairs, career-based service learning, lunch and learn, guest speakers, interactive or video presentation tools, or other career awareness projects.

Career Exploration Activities

As stated in the ISBE Work-Based Learning Manual, Career Exploration Activities provide opportunities for direct student contact with employers or other partners for the purpose of gaining knowledge of one or more industry sectors or occupations. At this level, students begin to learn not just about careers but interaction of careers within an industry and more fully participate in experiences related to those careers. These may be worksite tours, job shadowing, career-related service learning, mentorship, team-based challenges and Career & Technical Education Student Organizations.

Career Development Experience

A supervised work experience relating to an individual's career area of interest that should:

- Occur in a workplace or under authentic working conditions, but could include a work simulation project or be offered through a virtual platform.
- Be co-developed by an education provider and at least one employer in the relevant field.
- Provide compensation OR educational credit (or both) to the participant.
- Reinforce foundational professional skills, including, at a minimum, those outlined in the Essential Employability Skills framework.
- Include a Professional Skills Assessment and be utilized as a participant feedback tool.
- Take place for a minimum of 60 total cumulative hours.

Workplace Experience

"Workplace Experience" refers to CTE courses that provide students with in person, remote, or simulated work experience within their CTE program of study. These courses must include remote or classroom instruction and a workplace practicum that aligns to the Career Development Experiences.