

The Work-Based Learning Continuum

CONTINUUM OF EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT & WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES



These experiences provide students with opportunities to practice and enhance the skills gained in their career and technical education (CTE) program of study. This professional learning experience also provides recommendations regarding the integration of work-based learning as a vital component for CTE programs. Key aspects of Work-Based Learning, such as job shadowing, simulated skill development, workplace experiences, internships, and apprenticeships are referenced throughout this professional learning experience. The Work-Based Learning Continuum outlines increasing levels of employer engagement intended to produce deeper, more targeted and meaningful experiences.

It is important to note that the activities on the left side of the Work-Based Learning Continuum are centered around career awareness, career exploration, and introducing students to a variety of different career options. Although these are important activities to help students build a foundational awareness of different careers and begin engaging students with business and community partners, these experiences alone do not meet the requirements of the Work-Based Learning internship experience as part of the College and Career Pathway Endorsement. Students looking to fulfill the Work-Based Learning requirements for a College and Career Pathway Endorsement would need to focus on Career Development Experience or Internship/Apprenticeship components of the continuum. Below is a brief outline of different components of the continuum and what each entails.

The first stage of the work-based learning continuum is career awareness. This section provides information about possible career clusters and specific jobs that are available, and how to explore one's own abilities and interests. Career awareness should begin with younger elementary students so they will be able to connect their current activities to a meaningful career path.

Next, Career exploration is applicable for students K through 12. The activities described here 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.

Workplace Experiences offer students the opportunity to participate in jobs through which they can explore careers and understand the nature of work via exposure to the workplace, whether in-person, virtually, or in a simulated workplace environment. These workplace experiences should align to the expectations of a Career Development Experience as defined by the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act. These courses help students meet the criteria for College and Career Readiness Indicators (CCRI), which are data points that help determine a student’s progress and identify adjustments needed toward postsecondary and/or career success.



Figure 3 Types of Workplace Experiences

In addition to the various forms of Workplace Experience activities, Work-Based Learning Programs may also offer students opportunities to learn and develop skills through a Workplace Experience Courses.