

Work-Based Learning (WBL) Frequently Asked Questions

Rhode Island Department of Education
Office of College and Career Readiness

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RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

Background

The standards for work-based learning (WBL) are outlined in the [Governor's Workforce Board's work-based learning guidance](#), hereafter simply called "GWB Guidance." That document sets the standards for WBL in Rhode Island, for schools, industry groups, and other entities.

RIDE released this document to build on the GWB Guidance, and provide additional details to answer questions from schools. This FAQ document will be updated as RIDE and GWB receive more questions from schools.

Learn more about work-based learning at www.prepare-ri.org/wbl.

Requirements

1. Is work-based learning required for all students?

No. Rhode Island, through its PrepareRI initiative, has a goal that all students will participate in work-based learning by the time they graduate high school, so every student has the opportunity to connect academic, technical and professional skills in a professional setting.

At this time, however, work-based learning is only required for students in career and technical education (CTE) programs and for high school students pursuing a Pathway Endorsement Council Designation. Rhode Island's CTE Board Standards require every student to complete at least one WBL activity. For CTE programs that were approved in 2018, this WBL activity must meet the GWB Guidance starting with the 2018-19 freshman class. Likewise, Pathway Endorsement Council Designation requires the same to satisfy the Career Interest or Engagement requirement. Local programs may and are encouraged to exceed these minimum requirements.

2. How many WBL activities do students need to complete?

The minimum requirement for all students engaging in a WBL experience is at least one WBL activity that meets the rigor and depth, as defined by the GWB. As always, schools may and are encouraged to offer more than one WBL activity to students and career exploration activities that lead up to high-quality WBL activities.

That WBL activity may be any of the five types of WBL identified in the GWB Guidance (Internships, Apprenticeships, Service-learning, School-based enterprises, or Industry

Projects). Students only need to complete one of the five types to meet the requirement.

Data and Tracking

3. How should programs track WBL at this time? Does RIDE have a system in place?

Career and technical education (CTE) programs should track work-based learning. RIDE has not yet released an official statewide tracking document, so districts can use and develop their own work-based learning tracking systems during the 2018-19 school year. Districts are encouraged to collaborate and use whatever tracking system best meets their needs. RIDE will develop its official tracking system(s) based on feedback from schools during the 2018-19 school year; schools would be asked to use a RIDE-approved system during the 2019-20 school year.

The key elements any tracking system should include are:

- Type of work-based learning (internship, school-based enterprise, industry project, apprenticeship, or service learning project)
- Number of hours each student completed
- Courses associated with the WBL
- Whether the WBL activity is paid
- Whether the WBL activity earns academic credit and, if so, what type of credit
- Any other credits or credentials earned with the WBL activity

Types of WBL

4. Do guest speakers and job shadowing qualify as work based learning?

No. The GWB Guidance defines WBL as: Internships, Apprenticeships, Service-learning, School-based enterprises, and Industry Projects. WBL activities are intended to be rigorous, impactful experiences in an industry or career field. Speakers and job shadowing are important career exploration activities that should occur prior to more rigorous WBL experiences.

5. Do you have specific examples of WBL you can share?

The GWB Guidance linked in the background describes each of the five types of WBL activities. RIDE encourages schools and districts to share examples of best practices for

WBL via the Career Coordinator Network. A PrepareRI Ambassador is working to create a toolkit of best practices for WBL to be shared at the PrepareRI Summit in March 2019.

Definition of WBL

6. How many WBL hours are enough to meet requirements?

GWB, following similar practices in other states, defines a rigorous WBL experience as one that consists of at least 80 hours of time spent on the activity and corresponding classroom time. For example, a student may spend some portion of time in the classroom learning the academic content and skills that they will use in the WBL activity, a majority of the 80 hours doing the WBL activity itself, and some time in their classroom reflecting on what they learned in the WBL activity. (The ratio of corresponding classroom time versus WBL activity time in the 80 hours is up to local discretion).

The 80 hours should be considered a baseline requirement of WBL; a better measure of the success of the WBL activity is whether it achieved the student outcomes described in the GWB Guidance.

7. What does “corresponding classroom time” mean? How is it quantified as part of WBL?

Corresponding classroom time allows a student to practice and gain measurable skills, whether those are essential skills (also known as professional skills, cross-curricular skills, soft skills, or 21st century skills), academic skills, or technical skills that directly relate to the WBL experience. The number of corresponding classroom time hours that count towards the 80 required WBL hours is a local decision.

8. Does the WBL 80 hour minimum time requirement apply to each separate WBL activity or is the 80 hours a combined total for all the WBL activities included in a program?

The 80-hour minimum requirement applies to the WBL hours per activity, per student. The 80-hour requirement cannot be met by combining participation time in multiple activities. For example, it would be acceptable to spend 80 hours working on a single school-based enterprise project, including time spent both inside and outside the classroom. It would not be acceptable to meet the 80 hours by spending 40 hours on a school-based enterprise project, and 40 hours on a wholly unrelated industry project.

If programs include more than one WBL activity, each additional activity must include 80 hours of student participation to meet the GWB Guidance. Schools are, of course, welcome to have other WBL-like activities that do not completely meet the GWB Guidance standards; the CTE Board Standards simply require CTE programs to have *at least one* WBL activity that fully meets the GWB Guidance.

9. Do the 80 hours of WBL need to happen in one year?

Not necessarily. The corresponding classroom time for each WBL activity should be directly linked to the WBL experience, and reference the WBL experience as an application of the course content. In general, this classroom time will frequently happen around the same time as the WBL activity, to ensure that students understand the connection between the coursework and the WBL activity. However, schools may choose to spread that coursework across multiple years, such as in the spring of one academic year and the fall of the following academic year.

Legal Issues

10. What are the legal requirements and liability issues related to work-based learning?

Please see the last two pages of the GWB Guidance for more information on the legal issues related to WBL.

11. Are working papers required for students under age 17 who earn academic credit as part of a class requirement in lieu of payment?

Per the [RI Child Labor Laws](#), working papers are required for 14 and 15 year olds as verification of age. Working papers are not required for students ages 16 and older however, some employers may request them as an additional student verification.

Relationship to CTE Program Approval

12. Are the existing CTE programs required to provide WBL information by the October 1, 2018 deadline?

No. The October 1 WBL deadline pertains only to new CTE programs that were provisionally approved, pending WBL evidence submission, by the CTE Board in summer 2018. Programs that are currently fully approved are not required to submit WBL

evidence at this time. RIDE will request WBL information from all programs at a future date, but programs will be provided advanced notice before that happens.

13. Are existing CTE programs required to document their WBL experiences in the same manner as provisionally approved programs?

Existing CTE programs are not required to submit WBL evidence at this time. Districts are, however, encouraged to incorporate WBL requirements into their CTE programs and track students' WBL activities (see the above section about Data and Tracking).

Information for Provisionally-Approved CTE Programs

The following section only applies to new CTE programs that received provisional approval in summer 2018 due to WBL. Those programs are required to fill out the [WBL Application – Fall 2018](#) by October 1, 2018 to earn full approval.

14. Should districts who have drafted WBL systems before this guidance/process was released include those documents along with the required forms for application?

Districts with pre-existing WBL systems in place may include relevant documents, provided: a) the WBL falls within at least one of the five priority areas framework, b) the WBL is considered successful; and c) the WBL experience can be validated through eRIDE data collection. Please consider brevity if submitting an additional appendix for this purpose.

15. Does RIDE have an assurance form that meets the requirements of Section B. of the application, or is a Superintendent-signed form that incorporates Section B. language acceptable?

RIDE does not have an assurance template at this time. Applicants may complete their own forms. RIDE will hold programs accountable for all commitments included in submitted assurances.

16. Can new/additional activities be added after the application is submitted?

Yes. This application ensures that new programs provide students with at least one work-based learning experience, as required by CTE Board Standards. RIDE is working to develop an ongoing data collection related to work-based learning. (See section above.)

17. How are activities listed? Example: Carpentry students work the RI Home show annually. Are we looking for specific examples from past school activities?

Applicants provide a list of whatever CTE program activities they qualify as WBL, in order to meet the requirements of the CTE Board Standards.

18. What is meant by “Describe academic credit earned as applicable” in Appendix A, the Program Details Chart? How many hours is academic credit worth? Should students receive academic credit for completing work based learning, or completing a course?

All students should receive credit for work-based learning experiences. The amount of credit granted for work-based learning is a local decision, contingent upon the relative “weight” of the experience. RIDE encourages granting core academic credit for the experience. However, elective credit is acceptable, or the WBL experience may be embedded in a course. As a practical matter, core academic credit is most often awarded in the health careers and pre-engineering/robotics programs.