

Student Learner Programs Toolkit

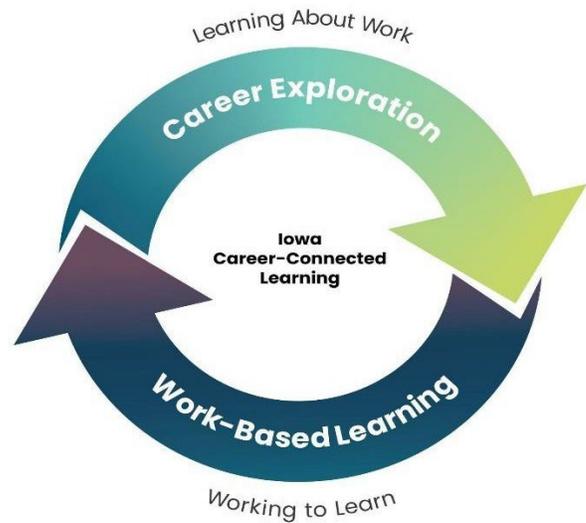
What is a Student Learner Program?

Student learner programs are **work-based learning (WBL)** experiences that are directly aligned with a state-approved CTE program or career pathway. Rather than a general work-release program, a student learner program provides a direct linkage between a work experience and student's identified career area of interest and study.

Some WBL experiences, such as student learner programs, internships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, expose students to [hazardous work activities that are prohibited by the state of Iowa](#).

However, [Iowa Code chapter 92.8A](#) allows minors aged sixteen to seventeen years of age participating in work-based learning to engage in these activities by providing additional youth employment protections or exceptions for certain hazardous occupations through the Iowa Youth Employment Waiver program, as long as certain guidelines are followed and industry stakeholders are active participants throughout the experience (see Appendix A for more information).

Note: Students must be working in their identified CTE program area or career pathway of choice to be considered a student learner. A school district may not count a student working in an unrelated industry or occupation for work-based learning.



Designing a Student Learner Program

Review Student Career Interests

- **Review Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP):** Meet with the student to discuss and review the student's ICAP. Discuss the student's chosen career area of interest and study.
- **Identify employer partner and align career interests to employment opportunity:** Ensure the job or employment opportunity provides a direct linkage between the work experience and the student's identified career area of interest and study.
- **Establish clear goals:** It is recommended that districts enroll students in a course specific to Student Learner experiences. During the course, have discussions with students enrolled about the specific skills and experiences students will gain that will be helpful in their career pursuits.

Evaluating a Student Learner Program

Incorporate Post-Student Learner Program Activities

- **Debriefing sessions:** During class time, hold regular discussions to help the student reflect on their experiences and connect them to their CTE program area or career pathway.
- **Conduct reflection sessions:** Dedicate time for the student to reflect on what went well, what challenges they faced and what they would do differently.

Evaluate and Reflect on the Experience

- **Gather feedback:** Have students self-assess their own performance and learning and update the student's ICAP to reflect continued or change in career interest.

Student Learner Program Examples

Seasonal Harvest Worker

- **Student Learner Program:** A student who has identified Agriculture as their career interest is working part-time for a local farmer to help with seasonal harvest.
- **Student Roles:** The student works part-time as a farm hand, which includes running machinery to harvest crops, moisture testing crops and equipment maintenance.

Manufacturing Process Assistant

- **Student Learner Program:** A student works as manufacturing process assistant at a local manufacturing facility and has an interest in industrial technology.
- **Student Roles:** A 16- or 17-year-old student would work alongside full-time employees, such as a Production Operator, assisting with basic production line checks, observing machine operation and quality routines, and helping with safe material loading and handling.
- **Hazardous Occupation Exemption:** The program is structured to meet the requirements of the student-learner exception for hazardous occupations, allowing students to work in areas like operating power-driven machinery.
- **CTE Student Learner Agreement and Permission Form:** Any permitted hazardous activities for 16- and 17-year-olds require parental permission forms to be submitted to the state by the employer prior to the student beginning training.

Small Business Owner

- **Student Learner Program:** A student owns and operates a summer mowing business and has a career interest in business.
- **Student Roles:** The student operates lawn mowing machinery; oversees all business operations including managing clients, invoicing and tracking expenses and communicates professionally with clients about mowing needs.

Child Development Associate

- **Student Learner Program:** A student who is interested in pursuing a career in early childhood education is employed part-time at a local daycare.
- **Student Roles:** The student works part-time as a child development associate, which includes observing and monitoring children's behavior to identify milestones and strengths and uses positive reinforcement and redirection to help children develop social skills.

Part-Time Certified Nursing Assistant

- **Student Learner Program:** A student who is interested in pursuing a career as a nurse is employed part-time at a local assisted living facility.
- **Student Roles:** The student works part-time as a certified nursing assistant (CNA), which includes assisting with bathing, showering, feeding, and interacting with residents at the local nursing home.

Reporting Student Learner Programs at the Course Level

The Department will rely on multiple specific data points to accurately collect and report work-based learning experiences for students across the state. Data will be used to calculate the work-based learning sub-

measure of the Postsecondary Readiness Accountability Measure for the, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and School Performance Profiles (percentage of students participating in work-based learning while in high school). Data will also be used to determine the Perkins Secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) 5S3 work-based learning indicator of performance (percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning). A CTE concentrator is defined in Iowa as a secondary student who has earned credit for two (2.0) or more Carnegie Units within a state-approved CTE program (e.g., health science).

While each of the following data points provides value, the combination of all three for each course is ideal to ensure the most accurate work-based learning data collection, analysis and reporting by Department staff. All of these data elements will be provided to the Department through the Winter collection of the Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) data during the time period of December-January of each academic year:

1. School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Codes
 - a. The SCED code initiative is a voluntary and nationally accepted common classification system for K-12 school courses that allows for an easier and more efficient process to collect, analyze and report information on various aspects of our education system. SCED is based on a 5-digit coding structure that provides a basis for classifying course content, while additional elements and attributes can provide descriptive information about each course.
 - i. A few Iowa-specific SCED codes have been added to provide additional distinction in work-based learning course offerings.
2. Embedded Work-Based Learning Indicator
 - a. An embedded work-based learning indicator was added starting in the 2022-2023 academic year to assist districts with clarifying which type of experience is being offered to students, as well as situations where the work-based learning experience may not be the primary focus. This is especially important for courses that may not be classified as CTE, but still include an opportunity for students to benefit from work-based learning experiences.
 - i. In order to qualify for usage, all students within the course must be provided with the reported experience, not just a select few (i.e., 100% of students take part in student-learner programs in partnerships with an employer, not just a few, in order for the course to be considered as embedding qualifying work-based learning).
3. Course Titles and Keywords
 - a. With Iowa’s expanding offerings of different work-based learning courses, specific course names/titles and keywords will be used to recognize districts offering quality work-based learning experiences.
 - i. Course titles and keywords are used primarily to review data records and provide targeted guidance to districts who may need to correct or modify SCED codes or embedded work-based learning indicators used in future data file submissions.

Reminder: All three of these data points should be used in combination with one another for each course, when appropriate, to ensure the most accurate data collection, analysis and reporting by Department staff.

Course/Content Area	Keyword(s) to Include in Course Title	SCED Codes	Embedded Work-Based Learning Indicator
Information Technology	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	10998	13
Communication and Audio/Visual Technology	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	11998	13
Business and Marketing	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	12998	13

Manufacturing	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	13998	13
Health Care Sciences	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	14998	13
Public, Protective and Government Services	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	15998	13
Hospitality and Tourism	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	16998	13
Architecture and Construction	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	17998	13
Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	18998	13
Family and Consumer Sciences (Human Services)	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	19998	13
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	20998	13
Engineering and Technology	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	21998	13
Miscellaneous	“Student Learner” or “Work Experience”	22998	13

Reporting Individual-Level Student Learner Programs

A fourth measure is available for districts wanting to count students who have completed work-based learning experiences that are not connected to course SCED codes or any Embedded WBL Indicator codes referenced in this resource.

4. Individual Work-Based Learning Code

- a. Districts can manually flag individual student(s) who participated in a qualified work-based learning experience within their student information system (SIS). This field is specifically designed for students who completed non-credit WBL or WBL not connected to SCED codes or Embedded WBL Indicator codes referenced in this resource. Districts need to manually review and make appropriate changes to this data field to ensure accurate coding and reporting by the end of June each year. Refer to Appendix C in the [Work-based Learning Course Name and Coding document](#) for additional information on this measure.

In such cases, school districts can use the Individual Work-Based Learning Code that was added to the SRI system starting in the 2025-2026 academic year. The tables below appear in the SRI Data Dictionary available at <https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/data/data-collections/student-reporting>. The Individual Work-Based Learning Code is a four-digit code where the first two numbers represent the SCED Subject Area and the second two numbers represent the type of WBL experience. For example, a student learner program in information technology would be coded as “1013.”

Note: In order for these experiences to be reported properly, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate these types of experiences, along with the outcomes learned during the experience, to their school counselor.

Code Area (First Two Numbers)	Keyword(s) to Include in Course Title
01	English Language and Literature
02	Mathematics
03	Life and Physical Science
04	Social Sciences and History
05	Visual and Performing Arts
07	Religious Education and Theology
08	Physical Health and Safety Education
09	Military Service
10	Information Technology
11	Communication and Audio/Visual Technology
12	Business and Marketing
13	Manufacturing
14	Health Care Services
15	Public, Protective, and Government Services
16	Hospitality and Tourism
17	Architecture and Construction
18	Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
19	Human Services
20	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
21	Engineering and Technology
22	Miscellaneous
24	World Languages
25	Integrative Learning

WBL Code (Second Two Numbers)	WBL Experience
13	Student Learner Program

User notes

1. Can be used to enter a work-based learning experience a student completed over the summer or if a student completes a work-based learning experience that is not embedded in a course.
2. The first two digits represent the SCED Subject Area of the experience and the last two digits represent the type of WBL experience.

Appendix A: Student Learner Programs for Hazardous Occupations

Creating a work-based learning program, such as a student learner program, for hazardous occupations in Iowa involves specific state and federal requirements designed to ensure student safety and educational value. The process requires collaboration between the school, employer, Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education.

Youth Employment Waiver

A July 1, 2023, update to Iowa's Youth Employment Law ([SF 542](#)) allows Iowa employers to apply for a waiver that permits 16- and 17-year-olds to participate in work-based learning or work-related programs that involve certain hazardous work activities under certain conditions.

The waiver process requires coordination between Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE), and the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals and Licensing (DIAL). The information included below outlines the waiver process, explains the two situations when a waiver or agreement/permission form may apply, and provides the list of hazardous and always-prohibited activities.

The youth waiver process is intended to, under certain conditions, provide an exception (waiver) for approved employer-administered work-related programs that include hazardous activities as part of training for 16- and 17-year-olds. This waiver is not intended for employers to hire minors to perform hazardous work as regular employees would (18 years and above). Instead, it allows short-term training in specific hazardous activities as part of a structured training and learning opportunity.

Employers who are actively sponsoring or developing a work-based learning program and would like to consider skills development on eligible hazardous activities (for 16- and 17-year-olds) can pursue one of two pathways:

- **Employer-led Student Learning Program:** No high school involved partner (requires a waiver).
- **High School Partnership Work-Based Learning Program:** Working with an approved high school partner (does not require waiver).

High School Partnership Work-Based Learning Program for Hazardous Activities

Student Agreement and Permission Form

School districts who are actively working with an employer partner on developing a work-based learning opportunity do not need a waiver. However, any permitted hazardous activities for 16- and 17-year-olds **DOES** require parental permission forms to be signed and submitted to the state by the employer prior to the student beginning training.

- Review the [CTE Student Agreement and Permission Form](#).
- Obtain the required information from both the student and the employer to complete the form, including student signature, parental signature, and employer signature, and specified hazardous work activities to be completed.
- Email the completed form with Kathy Leggett, Kathy.leggett@iwd.iowa.gov, with IWD to review.
- IWD will confirm the form is complete and notify the employer that the agreement and permission form is filed, and the specified hazardous work can begin per the agreement condition

Student Learner Program Employment Conditions

Any work-based learning program wishing to include certain hazardous activities to train 16- and 17-year olds must be conducted in partnership between an employer and approved high school work-based learning program and take place under specific agreed-upon conditions ([see Iowa Code §92.8A](#)).

The student learner must be enrolled in a career and technical education program or student learner program, and is employed under all of the following conditions:

- The student is employed in a craft recognizable as an apprenticeable trade or the student is employed under a written employment agreement.
- The work of the student employee in the work activities declared particularly hazardous is incidental to the student's training.
- The work is intermittent and for short periods of time and is under the direct and close supervision of a qualified and experienced person.
- Adequate on-the-job training and safety instructions are in place.
- The school or employer has provided a copy of all training materials given to the minor performing work to the minor's parent, guardian, or legal custodian.
- Terms and conditions of employment will not interfere with the minor's health, well-being or schooling.

Allowable Hazardous Work Activities with CTE Student Agreement and Permission Form

The following is a list of waiver eligible hazardous activities that may be performed by 16- and 17-year-old(s) with a signed Hazardous Activity Agreement and Parent Permission form on file with Iowa Workforce Development:

- Operation of power-driven woodworking machines
- Operation of elevators and other power-driven hoisting apparatus
- Operation of power-driven metal forming, punching and shearing machines
- Operation of certain-power drive bakery machines, except pizza dough roller
- Operation of certain power-driven paper products machines
 - No waiver required: operation of balers if the machine is powered off and the key is stored in a separate area from the machine
- Manufacturing of brick, tile and related products
- Operation of circular saws, band saws and guillotine shears
- Wrecking, demolition and shipbreaking operations
- Roofing operations
- Excavation
- Work activities in or about foundries
- Operation of dry cleaning or dyeing machinery
- Transmission, distribution or delivery of goods or messages between the hours of 10PM and 5AM