



July 10, 2019

# Competency-Based Education (CBE) Program Standards Guidance

## Introduction

Integrating authentic learning experiences into a student's day can present questions about curriculum, assessment, and awarding credit. It is possible for students to earn high school credit in non-traditional learning experiences while schools maintain compliance with the requirements of Iowa Code. This document is meant to help educators create multiple pathways for students to earn credit in addition to traditional seat time.

CBE is a system of education in which learners advance through content or earn credit based on demonstration of proficiency on Iowa Academic Standards and competencies integrating those standards. Some students may advance through more content or earn more credit than in a traditional school year while others might take more than a traditional school year to advance through the same standards or earn credit. Credit may also be earned for out-of-school experiences or accomplishments. Students at all grade levels are afforded opportunities for more explicit or intensive instruction or enrichment within the content. Source: [Iowa Department of Education Guidelines for PK-12 Competency-Based Education](#)

## Iowa Code

### **Competency-based Education** [281-IAC 12.5\(14\)](#)

A course can meet the definition of a unit without meeting 120 hours of instruction if it requires the demonstration of proficiency of the required Iowa Academic Standards associated with the course according to the State Guidelines for Competency-Based Education. Districts and schools participating in [competency-based pathways](#) will determine proficiency levels and appropriate assessments to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to be successful at the next level.

### **Awarding high school credit** [256.7\(26\)\(a\)\(2\)](#)

School districts or accredited nonpublic schools may award high school credit to an enrolled student upon demonstration of required Iowa Academic Standards for a course or content area, as approved by a teacher licensed under chapter 272. Assessment methods by which a student demonstrated sufficient evidence of the required standards is a local district or accredited nonpublic school decision.

### **Content hours for grades K-8** [281-IAC 15.5\(3\)\(4\)](#)

The number of hours a school or school district provides for content areas/courses in grades K-8 is locally determined.

### **Offer and Teach Requirements** [281-IAC 12.5\(5\)](#)

The following shall be offered and taught as the minimum high school, 9-12, program:

- English-language arts: six units
- Social studies: five units
- Mathematics: six units
- Science: five units
- Health: one unit

*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A as enacted by Senate File 475. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

- Physical education: one unit
- Fine arts: three units
- Foreign language: four units
- Vocational education: 12 units

**Teacher Licensure** guidance from BOEE can be found [here](#)

**Reporting Requirements:** Schools will document CBE pathways in the annual desk audit in CASA.

- Courses using CBE Pathways must be identified in the master schedule by including “CBE Pathway” in the course title.
- A description in the school’s course handbook is also required. Both documents are uploaded into CASA.
- [Find information about best practices using CBE pathways here.](#)

The course SCED code in the student information system (SIS) must match certification.

Each district or school should develop procedures and policy that outline district or school competency-based pathways. Evidence will show that the district is in the process of developing materials and vehicles for communicating about competency-based education to students, parents/guardians, teachers, and community members.

**General Guidelines**

- The teacher awarding credit must be licensed in the content area for which credit is earned.
- The teacher responsible for evaluating the evidence of learning is ultimately responsible for verifying the student learning and academic honesty/integrity.
- The learning experience needs to be aligned to the required Iowa Academic Standards.
- The learning experiences must be equally accessible by all students. Considerations for equity include disabilities, socio-economic status, gender, etc.
- Both the student and the teacher are responsible parties.
- One project/task can meet multiple standards in multiple content areas when the learning is aligned and assessed by certified teachers from each content area.

**Scenarios**

Scenarios	Response
Student meets with a business partner on Saturday(s) and does some off-site (outside of school grounds) learning as part of a class. May a student earn credit for this time outside of the school day?	Yes, School districts or accredited nonpublic schools may award high school credit to an enrolled student upon demonstration of required standards and competencies for a course or content area, as approved by a teacher licensed under chapter 272. Assessment methods by which a student demonstrated sufficient evidence of the required competencies is a local district or accredited nonpublic school decision. <a href="#">256.7(26)(a)(2)</a>
Student is enrolled in a class for which they complete a project, along with other in-class work. During the project, the student is not in class; (S)He is working off-site, working with other teachers, and/or working with a	Yes, see above.

*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A as enacted by Senate File 475. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

Scenarios	Response
business partner. May the student earn course credit if their course doesn't meet everyday in a classroom setting?	
Student uses a project(s) to meet the requirements for an entire course. May a student meet the requirements for a course via project completion?	Yes, see above.  Examples: Find examples of projects connected to the world of work by exploring the <a href="#">Future Ready Project Clearinghouse</a> to compliment learning standards in a course.
Student meets with a business partner and completes an apprenticeship off school grounds under the supervision of another adult besides a content teacher. May the student receive credit for completing the apprenticeship?	Yes, see above.
Student completes a project that meets content for more than one course (or standards content area). How can they get credit for their learning in both content areas? May a student's learning be honored for multiple courses through one project?	Yes, see above.
Student in eight grade has demonstrated mastery for 9th grade Algebra class standards. May the student receive high school credit?	Yes, see above.
Student in eighth grade has demonstrated mastery for 9th grade Government class standards. May the student receive high school credit?	Yes, see above.
Student completes an internship with local employer. The student did not coordinate the experience with the school. Will this count as a CBE experience?	No, the student needs to coordinate the internship with the school prior to beginning to ensure it meets the district criteria.