



# Iowa Community College Work-Based Learning Opportunities



There is a statewide need to increase the number of high-quality, earning and learning opportunities for high school and community college students. Work-Based Learning (WBL) is one strategy that can increase this supply by successfully integrating academics with real-world, hands-on learning. Students can see the connection between academics and careers when they are engaged in learning with curriculum that is personally and occupationally relevant to their specific goals.

Iowa's 15 community college districts, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education and Future Ready Iowa, are focused on increasing Work-Based Learning opportunities for students and employers, regardless of industry, size and geographic location to meet Iowa's workforce needs.

## What is Work-Based Learning?

Work-Based Learning is a partnership between businesses and secondary and post-secondary educators and training providers. It helps students develop new skills and connections through things like industry tours and field trips, job shadows, class projects, cooperative work experience, internships, apprenticeships, and other on-the-job work that are embedded into classwork.

## Who is Involved in Work-Based Learning?

Setting up a successful Work-Based Learning program is often easier and less time consuming than employers may realize, especially when leveraging established and experienced community partners and resources, such as Iowa Community College staff. Iowa has developed Work-Based Learning guides and toolkits that help employers, educators, parents and students understand the process for establishing Work-Based Learning programs. These guides provide general considerations across five primary areas of privacy, safety, labor standards and rights, liability/insurance and transportation/logistics as well as sample forms, materials and resources to get started.



## Work-Based Learning Courses: Available to Both High School and College Students

- WBL 100: Exploring Careers provides the opportunity to assess and identify personal and career interests.
- WBL 110: Employability Skills offers students important job-success competencies.
- WBL 140: Workplace Project-Based Learning provides an opportunity to work directly with a local business on a project.
- WBL 150: Job Shadowing allows students to explore careers in more depth, including visits to learn about specific jobs.
- WBL 200: Practicum/Field Experience allows learning in a chosen work setting to obtain practical job experience.
- WBL 300: Internship is an advanced experience where students learn specific job training in a chosen occupation.

All of these courses except WBL 110 are available in each of nine industry pathways as well.





## Types of Work-Based Learning

## Work-Based Learning Defined



**Career Awareness**  
Learn ABOUT Work

Career awareness programs allow students to learn more about potential job opportunities without any hands-on experience. These opportunities include guest speakers, career fairs and online career research.

**Career Exploration**  
Learn AROUND Work

Career exploration is a process to help students navigate career and training decisions based on personal interest and employer opportunities. These experiences include job shadow/workplace tours, interviews with potential employers and in-class team projects.

**Career Preparation**  
Learn THROUGH Work

Career preparation allows students to apply learning and develop experiences necessary for future career success. These opportunities include group projects in conjunction with business and industry, volunteer experiences, paid internships and pre-apprenticeships.

**Career Training**  
Learn FOR Work

Career training provides students with hands-on learning in a workplace setting. These experiences include apprenticeships, lab work, on-the-job training and employer mentorships.

**Career Advising**

One-on-one academic and career coaching provided by success coaches.

**Employability Skills**

Learning opportunities for educators (counselors and teachers) provided by employers. Educators gain real world insight which can be shared with students for career decision making.

**Job Shadows/Work Site Tours**

A career exploration opportunity where a student shadows an employee for a short period of time, confirming their interest in a particular occupation or industry.

**Project-Based Learning and Practicums**

A process to help individuals navigate career and training decisions based on personal interest and employer opportunities.

**Internships**

An Earn and Learn opportunity in which a student learns an art, trade or job through quality instruction and work-based experience.

**Apprenticeships**

A Work-Based Learning program that allows students to earn while they learn. Options for apprenticeships include DOL registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs.

**Customized Programs**

Customized technical training, designed in partnership with employers, to provide individuals with the training and education to enhance essential skills.



Iowa Association of Business and Industry





## Work-Based Learning Employer Planning Checklist

### WHY do this? What are the short- and long-term goals of participating in Work-Based Learning?

- Consider specific goals before doing anything else! (Talent attraction, development, retention, etc.)
- What do you wish people knew about your program or opportunities in your field?
- Are there specific metrics to define "success"? (# application increase, % employee satisfaction growth, etc.)

### WHAT will everyone be doing? How do we keep everyone engaged?

- Work with your local community college to plan engaging, hands-on activities for students that help them 'experience' the careers you offer. Determine types of Work-Based Learning opportunities you are able/willing to provide:

#### Career Awareness

- Classroom/guest speakers
- Career fairs and career experience days

#### Career Exploration

- Facility/site tours
- Job shadows/work observations

#### Career Preparation

- Projects/team challenges (in class or on-site)
- Volunteer experiences
- Paid or unpaid internships
- DOL registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships
- Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Program (IRAP)

#### Career Training

- Summer/part-time employment
- Mock interviews/resume assistance
- Clinical or lab experiences
- On-the-job training program
- Mentorship/sponsorship of a current or prospective student
- Sponsor career pathway certificates or degree programs at community colleges

### WHO will be involved? Work smart by leveraging available resources.

- Determine desired number, grade level, and ages of students for each Work-Based Learning opportunity.
- Engage partners from your local Iowa Intermediary Network contact, community college, Iowa Area Education Agency (AEA), economic/workforce/community development, and/or K-12 school districts.
- Find champions at your company who are well suited for each Work-Based Learning opportunity (Consider employees interested in advancement or who show leadership potential).

### WHEN & WHERE will these experiences take place? What is best for both your organization and students?








- Is the activity better on-site or at the school? Consider if travel is necessary and determine who will provide transportation for the students.
- Schedule times/days that work best for your company to engage in Work-Based Learning. Consider holidays, budgets/fiscal year, class schedules, shift schedules, sports events, etc.
- Communicate information that students should receive in advance such as dress policy, privacy policy, confidentiality, permission slips, etc. (Create a process to distribute and collect forms if needed.)





## HOW will we achieve our Work-Based Learning goals?

### How do we ensure participants have a positive and lasting experience?

-  Share personal stories about your career path, why you chose this company/career, promotion pathways, actual Work-Based Learning examples and outcomes, etc. Bring real examples of work and products if possible. Students appreciate genuine, authentic interactions.
-  Create engaging activities and encourage student questions and be prepared for a wide variety of questions.
-  Develop policies and procedures for Work-Based Learning at your company/organization and clearly communicate them to all involved parties.
-  Ensure internal Human Resources is familiar with state and federal codes regarding student learners, including liability and other considerations based on your specific type of organization, products, etc.
-  Train employees working with student learners so they are familiar with “hazardous occupations” orders:  
<https://www.youthrules.gov/documents/for-employers/YouthRulesBrochure.pdf>  
<https://www.youthrules.gov/support/toolkit/index.htm>  
<https://www.youthrules.gov/documents/news/EmployerGuides/EmployerGuideEnglish.pdf>
-  Determine if internship opportunities can be paid or unpaid using Department of Labor standards:  
<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>
-  Address student learner issues directly with student and involve educator/intermediary when necessary – remember this is a learning experience for the student on how to perform in a professional work environment!

**Your local community college will help you walk through the process to Work-Based learning success.**

{INSERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONTACT INFO}

