



2026-2027

Work-Based Learning and Practicum Course Handbook

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Site Visit Timeline

25-26	Beginning Date	Ending Date & # of Days
1st	Aug 12, 2026	Sept 18, 2026 27
2nd	Sep 21, 2026	Oct 30, 2026 28
3rd	Nov 2, 2026	Dec 18, 2026 28
4th	Jan 04, 2027	Feb 19, 2027 32
5th	Feb 22, 2027	Apr 16, 2027 32
6th	Apr 19, 2027	May 28, 2027 28

Work-Based Learning Overview

Building the pipeline by providing skills that students need to prepare for the workforce through partnerships with business and industries.

Quality Experiences

1. A purposeful focus on applied learning in preparation for postsecondary education and careers
2. Learning outcomes as the foundation for designing experiences and personalized learning plans
3. Relevance to student interests, their program of study, or personal learning goals
4. Integration with curriculum or connection to related instruction
5. Sufficient variety to provide exposure to multiple career options
6. Sufficient depth to allow for employability skill development and professional community engagement
7. Ongoing interaction with professionals from industry and the community
8. Close supervision and guidance from both teachers and employers
9. Opportunities for reflection and analysis
10. Assessment of student learning that is aligned with industry specific expectations
11. Alignment with postsecondary and career opportunities regionally
12. Documentation of student learning through the development of portfolios, presentations and other deliverables

Quality Program

1. Sequenced experiences to ensure preparation and 'next step'
2. Coordination of services among supervising teachers, employers, and the Innovations Program Counselor
3. Partnerships with postsecondary institutions, community partners in business and industry, and Schedules that enable quality work-based learning and supervision
4. Communication materials to inform employers, parents, students, and teachers of opportunities
5. Technology infrastructure to support placements, orientations, and actual WBL experiences
6. Processes and documentation for quality control and compliance with legal requirements
7. Regionally aligned pathways with community-shared expectations for WBL experiences and learning outcomes
8. Evaluative measures
9. Employability skills

Definitions of Work-Based Learning

Shadowing is learning through observation and is a way to form partnerships between employers and the local schools. Shadowing is an opportunity for a student to spend a limited amount of time with an individual in a chosen occupation in order to become familiar with the duties associated with that occupation, the physical setting of the occupation, and the compatibility of the occupation with his or her own career goals. Students should provide evidence of career shadowing

Internships give students opportunities to explore careers via workplace learning experiences. Internship is a paid or un-paid, short -term work-based learning experience. One of the major purposes of internship is the opportunity to gain exploration experiences in one or more careers. Internship is longer than job shadowing, but it is not a long term paid cooperative education placement.

Apprenticeship is a partnership between the Office of Innovation and a community partner to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities to secondary students. This is a skills trade industry driven program to create a pipeline for students to enter post-secondary apprenticeship training. The unique feature of the apprenticeship concept is that on-the-job training is supplemented with technical classroom instruction. Apprentices work under the supervision of qualified journey workers to develop their chosen trade or skill and learn the techniques, materials, and equipment associated with that trade.

Clinical experiences are found in health occupations and are designed to integrate meaningful work-site experiences with prior knowledge. The student is not paid. A MOU among the affiliating agency, school, student, and parent is required. The teacher is on-site with the students. The student receives a grade for the experience as a component of the related health class. The teacher and the affiliating agency coordinator complete the records for evaluation and attendance. An example would be a health student completing related experience at a hospital during school hours and is being supervised by a hospital employee.

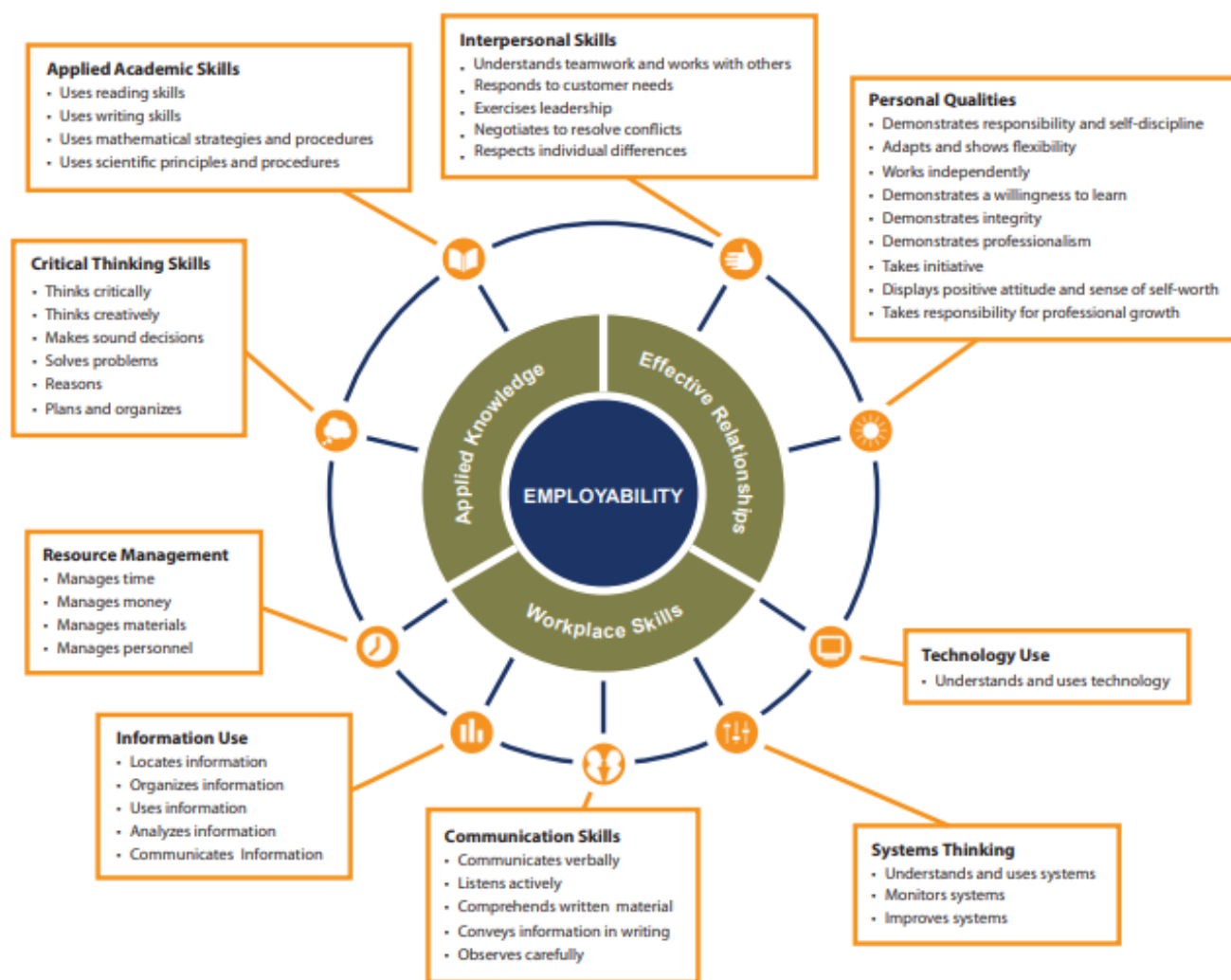
Career Preparation Class is a paid/unpaid experience for qualifying students that are in good academic standing, are on track to graduate, and have met the college and/or career ready requirements

Practicum Courses are courses at the end of a program of study sequence and will consist of project-based learning experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and shadowing experiences.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Employability Skills: A Crucial Component of College and Career Readiness

Individuals require many skills to be college and career ready, including academic knowledge, technical expertise, and a set of general, cross-cutting abilities called “employability skills.”



Common Framework for Employability Skills

The Employability Skills Framework advances a unifying set of skills that cuts across the workforce development and education sectors based on an inventory of existing employability skills standards and assessments.

The Employability Skills Framework was developed as part of the Support for States Employability Standards in Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Adult Education project, an initiative of the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Framework development was guided by CTE, adult education, workforce development and business organizations, and twelve federal agencies.

<http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills>

Stakeholder Expectations

Student Expectations

1. Perform classroom and job responsibilities
2. Communicate needs and suggest support strategies
3. Adhere to workplace guidelines and procedures including expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
4. Show respect, be responsible, and follow through on commitments
5. Take responsibility for the learning process

Business and Industry Partners/ Employers Expectations

1. Model professionalism and job practices
2. Communicate detailed job directions and clear expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
3. Explain all safety and compliance necessary to the job and inform students of consequences of inappropriate behavior
4. Identify the best method to communicate for each student
5. Identify support strategies
6. Discuss progress and improvements in performance or project outcomes
7. Teach skills needed for successful job performance
8. Communicate with the student on a regular basis
9. Communicate with the school liaison on a regular basis (teachers and Innovations Program Counselor)

Teacher Expectations

1. Orient students to the career field or specific workplace
2. Orient students to their roles and responsibilities
3. Communicate expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
4. Explain consequences for inappropriate behavior
5. Orient employers to their roles as mentors and supervisors
6. Help students communicate their support needs
7. Collaborate with employers as needed regarding student progress and goals
8. Link the classroom curriculum to the work-based learning experiences

Stakeholder Expectations

In School

1. The student is enrolled in academic courses and in Career Preparation or a Practicum course. The student attends school for a portion of the day.
2. Classroom instruction in Career Preparation and Practicum focuses on the skills and knowledge needed for the student to be a responsible, knowledgeable member of the workforce community.
3. The classroom teacher correlates student instruction to job requirements and individual needs. Related classroom instruction must occur one class period each day for every school week for Career Prep and one class period a week for Practicum.

At the Training Site – Paid

1. The student becomes a member of the business organization's staff of employees on a part-time basis, receiving regular wages.
2. The student must work a minimum of 90 minutes a day/4 days a week at an approved training site and attend 1 day a week in their VISD classroom.
3. The site supervisor serves as a mentor and/or trainer. Work experiences are scheduled to benefit both the student and employer.
4. Work experiences on training sites allow students to apply academic and job-related skills in meaningful ways.
5. As a student improves their knowledge and skills, he/she may be eligible for promotion to higher levels of responsibility as determined by the employer.

At the Training Site – Unpaid (Not Applicable for Career Preparation I & II)

1. The site supervisor serves as a mentor and/or trainer. Work experiences are scheduled to benefit the student.
2. The student must work a minimum of 90 minutes a day/4 days a week at an approved training site and attend 1 day a week in their VISD classroom.
3. Work experiences on training sites allow students to apply academic and job-related skills in meaningful ways.
4. As a student improves their knowledge and skills, he/she may be eligible for promotion to higher levels of responsibility as determined by the supervisor.

Chapter 5.7 of the 2025–2026 Student Attendance Accounting Handbook:

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5.7 Career Preparation and Practicum Learning Experiences

Career Preparation consists of time spent at an approved training site and classroom instruction. Practicums and Career Preparation for Programs of Study are specific to a career cluster and combine classroom instruction with learning experiences in a laboratory setting or at an approved training site.

Career Preparation and practicums require that the LEA and the training sponsor plan and supervise instruction cooperatively. Students receive instruction by participating in occupationally specific classroom instruction and training site experiences.

Note: Time a student spends at a training site is instructionally engaged time. Up to 120 minutes per day required time at the training station counts toward meeting full-time and half-time attendance requirements. (See [3.2 Membership and Eligibility for Attendance and Foundation School Program \(FSP\) Funding](#).)

5.7.1 Career Preparation Eligibility Requirements

CTE Career Preparation eligibility requirements are as follows. Refer to [5.7.3 Training Plan Requirements and Date on Which Students May Earn Contact Hours](#) through [5.7.5 Required Site Visits by Teachers](#) for additional information and to the [Glossary](#) for definitions.

- The Career Preparation course¹⁴⁴ is for **paid or unpaid** experiences. The classroom component must address all the TEKS for the course, with accommodations or modifications as specified by the student's IEP if it is a student who receives special education services. The training site will provide students with a variety of learning experiences that will give them the broadest possible understanding of the business or industry.
- Each Career Preparation course must consist of student participation in career preparation training appropriate to the instructional program plus participation in related CTE classroom instruction. The course should **span the entire school year**, and classroom instruction must average one class period each day for every school week. Class periods are required to be a

minimum of 45 minutes in length. A student is expected to be enrolled the entire school year. However, in accordance with LEA policy, a student may enter or exit the course when extenuating circumstances require such a change.

- A student must be a minimum age of 16 and hold valid work documentation, such as a Social Security card, to participate in paid Career Preparation learning experiences.
- Students unemployed or without an unpaid work-based learning experience for more than 15 consecutive school days are not eligible for contact hours.
- An LEA must not enroll a student in a Career Preparation course in any setting that does not allow a student to be enrolled for the entire school year, such as credit recovery.

Use the following chart to determine the CTE code for students participating in CTE Career Preparation.

Classroom Instruction	Work-Based Instruction	Units of Credit	CTE Code
1 class period per day (average)	10 hours per week (average)	2	V2
1 class period per day (average)	15 hours per week (average)	3	V3

5.7.2 Practicum Course Eligibility Requirements

CTE practicum course eligibility requirements are as follows. Refer to [5.7.3 Training Plan Requirements and Date on Which Students May Earn Contact Hours](#) through [5.7.5 Required Site Visits by Teachers](#) for additional information and to the Glossary for definitions.

- Practicum courses and other two credit or three credit CTE courses found in [19 TAC Chapter 127](#) may be used as laboratory-based, **paid**, or **unpaid** work experiences for students.
- Each practicum course using a work-based learning instructional arrangement must consist of student participation in training aligned with the student's program of study plus participation in related CTE classroom instruction. A practicum course **spans the entire year**. A student is expected to be enrolled the entire school year. However, in accordance with LEA policy, a student may enter or exit the course when extenuating circumstances require such a change.
- **In a practicum instructional arrangement, related classroom instruction must average one class period per week during the school year. Student instruction during the one class period per week is required to be a minimum of 45 minutes in length.**
- A student must be a minimum age of 16 and hold valid work documentation such as a Social Security card to enroll in any of the practicum learning experiences that have a **paid** component.
- Students unemployed for more than 15 consecutive school days in a practicum learning experience must be placed in an unpaid learning experience.

Combination of Classroom Instruction and Work-Based Instruction (Work Site or Lab Based)	Units of Credit	CTE Code
2 class periods per day (average)	2	V2
3 class periods per day (average)	3	V3

5.7.3 Training Plan Requirements and Date on Which Students May Earn Contact Hours

Written training plans must be on file for any student participating in either a paid or unpaid work-based learning experience at an approved training site except for a student participating in an unpaid practicum for which the teacher of record provides all training. The training plan form is available at http://tea.texas.gov/CTE_Career_Preparation_and_Practicum_Courses/.

A student in **paid** or **unpaid** work-based instruction may be counted for contact hours on the first day of enrollment, provided a training plan for the student is on file within 15 school days of the student's employment date.

5.7.4 Additional Requirements for Students Participating in Paid or Unpaid Learning Experiences

For a student participating in **paid** or **unpaid** experiences, employment must begin within 15 school days of the student's enrollment date. If a student's employment ends before the end of the school year, contact hours may be counted without interruption provided the student's training resumes within 15 school days and a written training plan is on file within 15 school days of employment.

5.7.5 Required Site Visits by Teachers

A teacher assigned to teach courses involving work-based learning experiences, both **paid** and **unpaid**, must *physically* visit each student training site at least six times each school year. If a student's work-based learning experience is 100 percent remote, the teacher assigned may conduct online video site visits. The teacher must be provided time within his or her schedule to visit the training sites. The training site visits must not be conducted during the teacher's planning and preparation period.¹⁴⁵ Regardless of the length of a grading period, at least one training site visit must be conducted during each grading period to earn contact hours for that reporting period.

5.8 Career and Technical Education Project-Based Capstone

The Career and Technical Education Project-Based Capstone course¹⁴⁶ must be cooperatively planned by the student and teacher, continuously supervised by the teacher, and conducted by the student with the guidance and support of a mentor or interdisciplinary team. Adaptations such as accommodations or modifications must be implemented as specified by a student's IEP, as applicable.

An LEA must maintain a written project plan for each student enrolled in the Career and Technical Education Project-Based Capstone course. An LEA may count a student in the Career and Technical Education Project-Based Capstone course for contact hours on the first day of enrollment, provided the

student's project plan is written within 15 school days of the student's enrollment date. If a student's project plan is not written within this time period, an LEA may count the student for contact hours beginning on the first day the project plan is written.

The Career and Technical Education Project-Based Capstone course provides a combination of classroom instruction and supervised research equivalent to an average of five class periods per week. The student and teacher must meet for instruction at least once each week for the purpose of project planning, reporting, evaluation, supervision, and coordination. The student must use remaining class time to conduct research, work with the project mentor or interdisciplinary team, analyze and interpret project data, compile evaluation results, and compose a project presentation. A project progress evaluation for each grading period is required for the student to earn contact hours for that reporting period.

In an On-campus Practicum Instruction, a student will participate in coursework related to a program of study. The related classroom instruction must average five class periods, and each period be a minimum of 45 minutes in length. The Work-Based Instruction (Work Site or Lab-Based) hours will meet on campus throughout the week unless otherwise stated by the program of study Career and Readiness Specialist.

Practicum Course Procedures

Students in Practicum courses must be placed by the 15th class day of the academic year. Students placed at a location for longer than one week need to have training plan agreement on file. *****All students, are still required to attend class at least one day of the week.** A folder must be kept for each student with all training plan agreements, permission forms, and any other necessary documentation for the duration of the school year. Practicum teachers are required to do site visits once every six weeks. Documentation for site visits must be kept on file. Signatures are required by training sponsor for each site visit. Below is a guide for site visit expectations.

Initial Visits – A series of coordination calls are made prior to the opening of school. Some of these calls may be made during the preceding spring or during extended employment time in the summer to:

- Evaluate a company as a potential training station including safety evaluation
- Seek cooperation as a work-based learning site
- Develop a Work-Based Learning Plan/Agreement
- Orient the work-based learning sponsor (mentor) to his/her cooperative program responsibilities.
- Discuss legal issues – Workers' Compensation Insurance, Child Labor Laws, Wage and Hour regulations First Visit

Following Placement – Visit the work-based learning site during the first week the student starts to work to ensure that the student and work-based learning sponsor (mentor) are getting started in the right direction. Observe and discuss the following work-related activities with the student and/or work-based learning sponsor:

- Purpose of related instruction
- Punctuality of student
- Dress and behavior guidelines of the company
- Work-Based Learning Plan/Agreement review
- Future visits for discussing job related activities Provide the work-based learning sponsor with a file folder at this time.

A folder should contain a full set of information including items such as the following:

- Benefits of the program (company, student, and school)
- Copy of Work-Based Learning Plan/Agreement
- Student's school schedule
- Business card and how you can be reached
- Sample copy of the Employer Evaluation form
- Other items you feel will promote the work-based learning sponsor's interest and knowledge of the program

Periodic Visits – Visits to check on student progress, supervision by a work-based learning sponsor (mentor), and job-related issues may be made as often as once every two weeks. During these visits you may check on a variety of things such as

- Working situation/safety conditions
- Attitudes of student, co-workers, and work-based learning sponsor
- Use of skills and knowledge from related instruction
- Need for additional related instruction
- Attendance
- Exploitation of students
- Training provided by training sponsor
- Need to read just the Learning Plan/Agreement If the work-based learning sponsor has little or no previous supervisory experience and/or has not been involved with the cooperative program before, he/she should visit more frequently to ensure a successful partnership.

Job Shadow Student Checklist

- Confirm time and location of the job-shadowing location

- Map out job-shadow location and allow extra time to ensure you are not late
- Dress appropriately. Companies have various professional dressing standards and some locations may require casual wear or PPE; we will communicate with you before the event, so you know what is appropriate.
- Research your job-shadow employer/organization and host to better prepare you for the day. Go to the organization's website and conduct a search using its name to find other news.
- Develop a list of questions you could ask your job shadowing host.
- Take a notepad to record observations and insights.
- Consider your career aspirations and be prepared to answer questions about your interests and goals.

During Job Shadowing Tips

- Turn off your cell phone and resist the urge to text, tweet, or update your social media
- Make good first impressions. As you introduce yourself – or get introduced – shake hands with everyone you meet, smile, and make good eye contact.
- Act professionally throughout the job-shadowing experience, showing your enthusiasm and appreciation.
- Listen and learn as much as possible during the shadowing
- Gather business cards from the people you meet so that you can add them to your network – and to thank them for taking time from their work to meet with you.
- Thank each person you spend time with during the shadow – and follow up with an emailed OR hand written thank-you note after you've completed the shadow experience***

JOB SHADOWING QUESTIONS

- What are the major attractions or attributes to your career?
- What are the advantages of working in this field? Disadvantages?
- What skills, training, education/degrees are required?
- What are the main duties of the job?
- What skills, talents, and personality traits are important for this job?
- How does the current economic picture affect your work?
- How does technology impact your work?
- What changes do you foresee in your field/company?
- Are there any opportunities for internships?
- What salary and benefits can one expect?
- Where can interested students find out more about this job and related fields?

Teacher Checklist
Seek cooperation regularly with work-based learning sites
Develop a plan for work-based learning for each semester (at least one event per semester)
Orient the work-based learning partner/volunteer to their responsibilities or expectations based on the determined WBL (presentation, job shadow, tour, etc.)
Discuss legal issues – Workers’ Compensation, District Liability, Child Labor Laws, Wage/hour regulations, age requirements, follow-up visits
Orient students to career field or specific workplace
Orient students to their roles and responsibilities
Communicate expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
Explain consequences for inappropriate behavior
Orient employers to their roles as mentors and supervisors
Help students communicate their support needs
Parent permission forms/Training plan agreement complete and filed
Emergency contact form complete and filed
Dates set for all follow up visits to host sites
Additional waivers or forms on file from host site



Career and Technical Education Employer Recruitment Letter

Dear _____:

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program offers Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities for students to gain hands-on “21st century” workplace skills and to test their academic knowledge in the real world. The CTE WBL program has been designed to promote students’ success in both postsecondary education and careers.

This program centers on varying levels of engagement from community businesses and industry to provide authentic learning experiences for students. Employer engagement experiences range from career speakers and tours to internships and other forms of work experience. We would welcome your participation in any of the following activities:

- Informational interviews
- Offering student tours
- Working with students in the classroom (technical mentoring)
- Job shadowing opportunities
- Working with teachers to enhance curriculum
- Serving as a career mentor
- Providing an internship
- Providing paid/unpaid work experience
- Providing a teacher externship

If you are interested in working with our schools to provide work-based learning opportunities, please contact us at **andrea.prihodapope@visd.net**. We can then let you know more about the program and the easiest ways to participate.

Thank you very much for your interest. We look forward to working with you. Please feel free call with any questions at **361-788-9288 ext. 33119**.

Sincerely,

Andrea Pope
CTE Principal & Career Readiness Specialist