

Pre-Employment Transition Services: Work-Based Learning Experiences

Work-Based Learning Experiences is one of the [five pre-employment transition services \(pre-ETS\) categories](#). These experiences provide useful activities to help students connect classroom learning to real-life work. They offer students the chance to explore potential careers of interest and develop important soft skills valued by employers. Work-based learning provides chances for paid or non-paid work in the school or community. Most importantly, it gives students a glimpse of the many possibilities that await them after high school. These activities can include a variety of different experiences that may occur while receiving other pre-ETS services such as job exploration counseling or workplace-readiness training.

Activities

Students have a number of opportunities to engage in work-based learning. While activities may look different for each student, experiences tailored to the student's career interests and support needs are more successful. Work-based learning experiences are also driven by student outcomes such as identifying a potential career to explore, having a paid work experience in a career interest area, or developing working relationships with co-workers.

Additionally, there are several points for everyone to consider when developing work-based learning experiences for students. For example, will students participate alone or in small groups? During school hours or after school? In-school or within the community? To ensure student engagement, it is essential that activities directly involve employers or community partners. Consider private, public, and nonprofit businesses as potential settings for student learning. Also, make certain that experiences are in integrated settings and that students receive at least minimum wage for paid experiences.

Finally, be sure to capture data on student skill development and progress through ongoing evaluation to identify areas of strength and need. Whatever the activity, remember that the ultimate goal is for students to develop workplace skills and gain hands-on knowledge to inform their future career choices.

Examples of Work-Based Learning

- Job shadowing
- Career mentorship
- Career-related competitions
- Informational interviews
- Paid/non-paid internships
- Service learning
- Student-led enterprises
- Paid/non-paid work experience
- Volunteering
- Workplace tours/field trips

School

- Create a student-led enterprise
- Offer instruction in soft skills, financial literacy, and travel training
- Match students with a non-paid work experience of interest within the school

Pre-ETS Providers

- Review labor market and job outlook research with students
- Coordinate a job shadow or work experience within the community
- Schedule an informational interview or workplace tour with a business

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

- Support a paid summer work experience in a career area of interest
- Provide transportation for students to attend local career fairs
- Discuss training available for specific work credentials and certifications

Families

- Identify possible career pathways based on the student's strengths and interests
- Ensure the student has a state-issued identification card for potential work experiences
- Create a portfolio of your student's resume, personal references, and work samples

Conclusion

Pre-Employment Transition Services provide an opportunity for students to receive early access to instruction on job exploration counseling, workplace readiness skills, postsecondary education counseling, work-based learning, and instruction in self-advocacy. In the area of work-based learning experiences, these activities provide real-world experiences to help students develop valuable skills for employment. Coordinated services across home, school, and community settings allow students to build skills that they can generalize across environments as they prepare for life after high school.

