

# Elective Credit for Paid Work Experience

## Frequently Asked Questions

This resource provides information and guidance on [House Bill 1658 \(2023\)](#) that authorizes high schools to offer elective credit for paid work experience to students beginning in the 2023–24 school year. OSPI has established new rules for this legislation in the [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 392-410-316](#) and [392-121-139](#).

### Frequently Asked Questions

**What does HB 1658 (2023) require for a district to offer elective credit for paid work experience?**

To offer elective credit through paid work experience under the new legislation the board of directors of a district must adopt a written policy for the providing for the granting of elective high school credit for paid work experience. Only districts that provide students with the opportunity to learn and master the state financial education learning standards ([RCW 28A.300.469](#)) may offer credit under this policy.

**What rules (WAC) were passed to support the implementation of HB 1658 (2023)?**

New [WAC 392-410-316](#) Elective Credit for Paid Work Experience was added to Chapter 392-410 WAC Courses of Study to guide implementation of elective credit for paid work. New [WAC 392-121-139](#): Full-time equivalency enrollment for paid work experience for elective credit, as added to Chapter 392-121 WAC Finance – General Apportionment, to establish the calculation to determine FTE for elective credit for paid work.

**What are the work hour requirements to earn credit with paid work experience for elective credit?**

The district policy must provide elective credit for paid work experience using the calculation of no less than 360 hours of paid work for 1.0 credit and no less than 180 hours of paid work for 0.5 credit.

**What is the maximum number of elective credits a student may earn through HB1658 (2023)?**

A maximum of 2 elective credits may be earned through paid work experience reflected in [WAC 392-410-316](#).

**What are the requirements for a district to offer elective credit for paid work experience?**

The district must have an adopted written policy in place for granting elective high school credit for paid work experience that includes the following requirements for credit to be earned:

- Students must be legally eligible for paid employment and be at least 16 years old.
- Students must be approved in advance and in writing by the school counselor, principal, or school designee. Students are required to provide verification of employment and identify their supervisor.

- Students must complete a narrative that describes how the paid work experience will develop knowledge and skills for basic education; an understanding of work and finance; and how performance, effort, and decisions affect future career and education opportunities ([RCW 28A.150.210](#)).
- The student must demonstrate or be assessed on grade-level proficiency of the State Financial Education Learning Standards for employment, income, or financial decisions ([RCW 28A.300.469](#)) and growth in proficiency in meeting the State Financial Education Learning Standards that occurred pre-work and in post-work experience.
- Credit is accumulated at a rate of 360 hours for 1.0 credit: 180 hours for 0.5 credit.
- Students may earn up to 2 elective credits through verification of paid work experience.
- Paid hour verification must be completed by the school district no less than once per term.
- Students may earn credit for work experiences scheduled as part of their school day or through experience that occurs outside of the regular school day ([WAC 180-51-050](#)) and ([WAC 180-51-051](#)). Students scheduled during the school day qualify for apportionment if within their 1.0 FTE.
- The paid work experience for elective credit must be reported using the specific state course code WA0036 and designation code F- Paid Work Experience. Both will be added to CEDARS in mid-January 2024.
- The student's HSBP must be updated to reflect the work experience ([RCW 28A.230.090](#)).

### **Who at the school is responsible for approving students for paid work experience and managing documentation?**

Student work hour verification and documentation of meeting requirements for credit can be provided by a school counselor, principal, or school designee who is employed by the district and has a valid secondary teaching certificate. OSPI has a Sample Student Request & Credit Approval Form to serve as written approval and documentation of work hours and credit earned. Districts are also able to develop their own form and processes.

### **If the student is scheduled for paid work experience during the school day, can the district claim basic education apportionment?**

Students may earn elective credit for paid work experience scheduled during the school day if it is within the student's 1.0 full-time equivalency (FTE) limitation and are eligible to be claimed for basic education apportionment only, in alignment with [WAC 392-121-139](#).

### **What process should be followed for students who want to earn elective credit for paid work experience outside of the school day?**

Students will require the same approval and documentation process as required for students scheduled during the school day. The OSPI Sample Student Request and Credit Approval Form can be used for students participating in paid work experience during the school day or outside of the school day. Districts are also able to create their own forms.

### **How is the paid work experience for elective credit reported in the Student Information System (SIS)?**

The paid work experience for elective credit must be reported using a specific state course code and designation code that will be provided in the 2023–24 CEDARS manual's winter build.

**Can partial credit be offered if a student in an elective credit for paid work experience becomes unemployed?**

If the district has a policy on grading that permits awarding partial credit for other courses, a district would be able to assign partial credit to a student in paid work experience. When awarding partial elective credit for paid work experience, the calculations should be based on 1.0 credit granted for no less than 360 hours of paid work, 0.5 credit granted for no less than 180 hours of paid work.

**Will a district be able to choose to award credit in areas other than elective credit for this form of paid work experience?**

A district will be required to only award elective credit for this type of paid work experience.

**Will a student be able to earn paid work experience elective credit at any point in their high school experience?**

Paid work experience for elective credit is for students who are at least 16 years old and legally eligible to work.

**Will a district be required to document the elective credit paid work experience in a student's High School and Beyond Plan?**

Yes, this elective credit would be posted on the student's transcript and should be recorded in their High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP).

**Are students only permitted to earn credit for paid work experience that aligns to the career and educational goals in their High School and Beyond Plan?**

Paid work experience for elective credit is not required to be aligned to the career and educational goals of their HSBP, any paid work is eligible, and the paid work experience is required to be documented in their HSBP.

**What are the expectations for the Student Narrative and Financial Education Standards pre- and post-assessment?**

The student narrative is required to describe how the paid work experience will develop knowledge and skills for basic education; an understanding of work and finance; and how performance, effort, and decisions affect future career and education opportunities ([RCW 28A.150.210](#)). The process for pre- and post-assessment is not defined in [HB 1658 \(2023\)](#), but the district is required to have the student demonstrate or be assessed on grade-level proficiency of the [Washington State High School Financial Education Standards](#) that occurred in pre-work and post-work experiences. OSPI has a Sample Narrative and Financial Standards Assessment Form available for documenting these requirements or districts can also create their own processes or forms to meet requirements.

**How often will a district be required to verify a student's paid hours earned in their elective credit paid work experience?**

Paid hour verification is required to be completed by the school district no less than once per term.

**Is verification of work hours for elective credit only required when students are enrolled in the program as part of their school day?**

The district is responsible for verifying work hours for *all* students who are participating in paid work experience for elective credit, whether they are enrolled during the school day or participate outside of the school day. Enrollment in paid work experience for elective credit that is scheduled as part of a student's school day will be able to be claimed for basic education apportionment in alignment with [WAC 392-121-124](#).

**Can paid summer work hours be used toward a student's documented hours for elective credit for paid work experience in the following fall semester?**

Paid summer work that can be verified and documented by the district could be counted for elective credit for paid work experience if the school approval was given in advance and in writing and all other requirements for awarding credit in [WAC 392-410-316](#) are met.

**Is there any requirement on the type of paid work experience that qualifies for the elective credit?**

The company where the student is gaining work experience is required to have legally hired the student and be following all [WA State Child Labor Laws](#).

**Can volunteer work, unpaid internships, or unpaid work experiences be used to earn elective credit for paid work experience under [WAC 392-410-316](#)?**

[WAC 392-410-316](#) only provides elective credit for paid work experience. Districts may provide credit for these experiences through appropriate competency credit policy or worksite learning.

**Will the district be responsible for finding a job placement for a student interested in participating in paid work experience for elective credit?**

Paid work experience for elective credit is an opportunity for a student to earn credit for a job they already have.

**Will districts be required to develop worksite learning agreements, worksite learning plans, or provide site visits to a student's worksite if they are earning elective credit through a paid work experience?**

Worksite learning agreements, worksite learning plans, and worksite visitations will not be a requirement for elective credit paid for work experience. These remain requirements for cooperative worksite learning placements.

**How will districts ensure that students are safe on the worksite if they are not responsible for providing worksite visitations?**

All employers are required to follow [WA State Child Labor Laws](#) for employing minors, particularly on issues of occupational health and safety, discrimination, harassment, worker/employer rights and responsibilities, and work rules for minors including [WAC 296-125](#) and [WAC 296-131](#). District employees should follow risk management policies for students who are in learning environments outside of the campus. If a district employee has concerns that a minor student is not in a safe or legal environment for paid work experience, the district employee should follow the district policy as a mandated reporter and contact the Department of Labor & Industries if applicable.

**Does the credit limit for paid work experience prevent a district’s ability to increase student access to credit for Worksite Learning that includes Cooperative Worksite Learning?**

Cooperative Worksite Learning is an option for qualifying students and does not have a credit limit. [HB 1658 \(2023\)](#) and [WAC 392-410-316](#) do not modify a district's ability to increase student access to credit for Worksite Learning that includes Cooperative Worksite Learning in accordance with [WAC 392-410-315](#).

**Can the paid work experience for elective credit be included in a CTE Graduation Pathway?**

Credit earned is elective only, OSPI approved CTE courses are only allowed to be included in a CTE Graduation Pathway.

**Can a student be enrolled in credit for paid work experience and be encouraged to take qualifying CTE courses and enroll in CTE Worksite Learning instead of paid work experience?**

Students who qualify for CTE Worksite Learning can be encouraged to enroll in those programs to increase access to learning opportunities that align to the career and educational goals of their HSBP and for learning and earning credit to meet CTE, academic, or elective credit graduation requirements.

**What students would benefit from paid work experience for elective credit?**

Students who are already employed in a job where they are not currently earning credit and who have not previously passed or are currently enrolled in a CTE class that qualifies them for Worksite Learning.

**What is the benefit for a district to offer paid work experience for elective credit?**

- Paid work experience for elective credit allows the district to award elective credit toward graduation to qualifying students.
- Districts can award elective credit to qualifying students who already have an early release or late start period in their schedule to go to a job site that does not qualify for CTE worksite learning.
- The district can collect apportionment for qualifying students in paid work experiences scheduled during the school day.

**What is the benefit for a district to offer CTE Worksite Learning?**

- Student’s will earn credit that can apply to multiple credit areas (academic, CTE, elective) to meet graduation requirements including a CTE Graduation Pathway.
- The district will develop community partnerships through employer/district relationships that strengthen opportunities for students and build a workforce for the community.
- The district may qualify for enhanced funding to support CTE staffing, technology, and program development for Worksite Learning.
- The district prepares students for post-secondary learning and employment opportunities.

**What is the benefit for a student to take a qualifying CTE class and enroll in CTE Worksite Learning vs. credit for paid work experience?**

- CTE courses develop employment skills, provide opportunities for earning dual credit and Industry Recognized Credentials, and prepare students for post-secondary learning and employment opportunities.

- CTE Worksite Learning provides experiential learning that deepens and expands on the theory that was learned in the CTE classroom by allowing students to apply, develop, and strengthen their skills in the workplace.
- CTE Worksite Learning can be applied to academic, CTE, or elective credit to meet graduation requirements.
- CTE Worksite Learning can be a course in a student's CTE Graduation Pathway.
- CTE Worksite Learning requirements provide documentation of achieved learning objectives, skill attainment, and job performance evaluated by the employer and the district's Worksite Learning Coordinator.