



## **SUPERVISED OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM – AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**

The Supervised Occupational Experience Program is an instructional methodology in which instruction is extended beyond the classroom. The program utilizes an individually designed sequence of practical agricultural activities that occurs outside class, meets established minimum criteria and is supervised by a qualified agricultural education teacher.

### **Scope**

The Supervised Occupational Experience Program develops competencies related to the agricultural careers selected by participating high school students. Program activities along with classroom instruction and leadership development are the three required core elements of a certified Vocational Education Program in California.

Although participation in a Supervised Occupational Experience Program can lead to a career in farming, that is not the program goal. The opportunities for students to become fully established in an agricultural enterprise are remote and most students should not be encouraged to think of the program as direct preparation for such a career. Skills, knowledge and attitudes developed through the program are relevant to most occupations and can be beneficial in preparing students for any career.

There are several types of Supervised Occupational Experience Programs.

*Ownership/Entrepreneurial/Productive-Agricultural Production or Agribusiness Mini-enterprises:* This program is conducted on or off school property and involves students directly in individually owned businesses or partnerships, cooperatives or other forms of group ownership. A key feature is that students engaged in this program have financial investments in the experience.

*Paid Placement:* In this program students are employed as paid workers in agricultural production or agribusiness jobs. The amount of compensation must be a matter of record, and applicable labor, safety and health laws and regulations must be observed.

*Unpaid Placement:* In this program students are job shadowing in agricultural businesses, are not compensated and are covered by school district workers compensation insurance.

*Directed Laboratory:* In this program students are in unpaid, practical agricultural group activities planned by the teacher. These are usually conducted on school property and funded through some source other than by the students themselves. The program is conducted partially during class time but must involve out-of-class hours as well. Students may share in any resulting profits.

### **Regulatory Authority**

Supervised Occupational Experience Programs are supported by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (*Public Law 105–332, Title II*) and the Agricultural Education Vocational Incentive Grant Program (*California State Legislature, 1983*). Supervised Occupational Experience Programs are defined as a part of the State's Agriculture Career Technical Education in the *CA Education Code Sections 52450 – 52454* and are overseen by the local education authority in conjunction with the California Department of Education's Agriculture Education Unit.

Source: *Work-Based Learning Guide*, California Department of Education, 1998 and CA Education Code.

### **For more information visit:**

Agricultural Education Unit of the California Department of Education <http://www.calaged.org>  
California Law, Education and Labor Code <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>

*This factsheet is part of the Work-Based Learning Toolkit and is intended to provide an overview of relevant quality, safety and legal issues relating to work-based learning placements at the time of publication.*

*It is not intended to provide comprehensive information nor to serve as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.*

*To access the complete toolkit, visit [www.stc-clearinghouse.com](http://www.stc-clearinghouse.com) or [www.nwwo.org](http://www.nwwo.org)*