



PAID WORK EXPERIENCE

Paid Work Experience is a career preparation activity in which students are at a worksite doing real work for pay. They are held to the same expectations as all employees. The workplace supervisor conducts evaluations based on workplace expectations and performance. These experiences range from regular, paid employment to subsidized employment and learning-rich work experience.

Work experiences are designed to promote:

- Exposure of the student to careers and jobs;
- Development of pre-employment and work maturity skills; and
- Building occupational knowledge and technical skills.

Learning-Rich Work Experience is a career preparation activity that is highly structured to promote learning through paid work. Students participate in planning the work and problem solving. Worksite supervisors act as coaches. The experiences are generally based on projects (instead of tasks) where students interact with other employees, often work in teams and are paid an appropriate wage.

In addition to the desired elements of paid work experience, learning-rich work experiences are designed to promote:

- Facilitation of an active learning process;
- Exploration of a career field of interest;
- Development of research and project-based skills;
- Development of teamwork skills; and
- Development of the SCANS¹ competencies.

Success Factors

- Assist students with making connections between workplace duties and related coursework.
- Provide students with training about potential workplace hazards and how to protect themselves.
- Enhance the work permit process by offering workshop training to enable students to make connections to work-based learning as well as orienting students about legal, safety and health issues.
- Arrange for students to receive academic credit for learning completed on the job.

¹SCANS is an acronym for the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills which created The SCANS Report for America 2000, issued by the US Department of Labor, April, 1992. The report defines a set of skills and competencies necessary for success in the workplace.



Subsidized Work Experience

In some programs, the student's wages are subsidized (i.e., not paid by the workplace, but by the program through an outside funding source, usually a state- or federally funded program). In these cases, the program is the actual employer, subsidizes all wages and is responsible for taxes and workers' compensation insurance. Students must be paid at least the California minimum wage for all hours worked.

Key Legal, Safety & Health Issues

- The employer or the entity responsible for student wages is also responsible for all taxes, liability and workers' compensation coverage.
- The student should be oriented to all safety and health issues.
- The California Department of Education sponsors Work Experience Education, which has specific program components, definitions and regulations regarding work-based learning activity conducted through the program. For more information review the factsheet titled "Work Experience Education." (*CA Education Code Section 51760*)

Resources (to locate a resource visit stc-clearinghouse.com or www.org)

The Work-Learning Process: What Every Worksite Supervisor Should Know – Strumpf Associates

Worksite Handbook – Mayor's Youth Employment & Education Program

California Law, Education and Labor Code

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>

REMEMBER... All Work-Based Learning Experiences Should:

- Be developmentally appropriate;
- Include an orientation for all parties;
- Identify learning objectives;
- Explore all aspects of the industry;
- Develop the SCANS¹ competencies;
- Assess student performance;
- Provide opportunities for reflection;
- Link to the student's next step;
- Be documented and recorded; and
- Comply with state and federal labor laws.

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