

FAQs for Intermediaries

How is an individual WBL experience now defined?

IDOE has clarified that experiences are distinguished by the employer partner. If a student works with the same employer across multiple periods of time (e.g., during the fall, spring, and summer) that may still be considered one experience rather than three. This matters because students may use a maximum of three experiences toward the WBL requirements for an Honors or Honors Plus Seal.

Can any type of WBL experience count toward any diploma seal?

Yes. IDOE removed the previous “star” tables that suggested certain experience types were better aligned to specific seals. The updated guidance states that any experience meeting the WBL definition can count toward applicable diploma seals. Schools are still encouraged to select experiences that make sense based on a student’s goals and the number of hours required for the seal they are pursuing.

Can an intermediary take responsibility for workers’ compensation or liability?

The updated guide references [HEA 1098](#) and notes that, for applicable employer-site experiences, workers’ compensation and liability may be taken on by the employer partner or a third-party employer of record.

FAQs for Schools

If a student participates with the same employer more than once, does that count as multiple WBL experiences?

Not necessarily. IDOE now clarifies that experiences are distinguished by employer partner. Multiple placements with the same organization across different parts of the year may be treated as a single experience toward the three-experience maximum for diploma seals.

Does a school-based experience still need an outside industry professional?

Yes. A teacher or other school employee may supervise a school-based enterprise, workplace simulation, or similar experience, but the student must also have meaningful interaction with a currently employed industry professional. A former industry professional or teacher with past industry experience does not satisfy this requirement on their own.

Does a workplace simulation have to generate revenue or serve paying customers?

No. The updated definition explicitly clarifies that a workplace simulation does not need to generate revenue or function as a real business. It must, however, replicate authentic industry roles, tools, expectations, workflows, and job tasks.



What makes a SBE different from a Workplace Simulation?

The new SBE definition places greater emphasis on functioning as an actual business: providing goods or services to real customers, conducting ongoing business activity, and giving students responsibility for real business functions such as finance, operations, marketing, and customer service. A workplace simulation is designed to replicate a workplace but does not need to operate as a real business.

Can summer WBL count?

Yes. Summer experiences that meet the WBL definition can count toward diploma seal requirements. The updated guide also includes more detailed guidance about how summer hours should be documented and how they interact with courses taken during the school year.

Questions You May Hear from Students, Families, and Employers

As schools and intermediaries begin implementing the updated guidance, students, families, and employer partners may have questions about what counts as WBL and what is required. Below are some of the questions you may hear, and how the updated guidance can help you answer them.

“Can any kind of WBL experience count toward a diploma seal?”

Potentially. IDOE no longer identifies certain experience types as better aligned to specific seals. Any experience that meets Indiana’s WBL definition may count toward an applicable diploma seal. The right experience will depend on the student’s goals, interests, and the number of WBL hours required for the seal they are pursuing.

“Can a student complete more than one WBL experience?”

Yes. Students may use up to three qualifying experiences toward the WBL hours required for an applicable Honors or Honors Plus Seal. Each experience must include at least 25 hours.

“If a student works with the same employer more than once, does each placement count as a separate experience?”

Not necessarily. IDOE now clarifies that experiences are distinguished by employer partner. If a student participates with the same organization during different parts of the year, those placements may still be considered one experience for purposes of the three-experience maximum.



“Can a student’s part-time job count as WBL?”

It can, but employment alone does not automatically make a job a qualifying WBL experience. The experience must meet Indiana’s WBL requirements, including elements such as a written training plan, partnership agreement, intentional skill development, and employer evaluation.

“Can WBL completed during the summer count?”

Yes. Summer experiences can count as long as they meet the state’s WBL definition and are appropriately documented. The updated guidance also provides additional direction on how summer hours interact with coursework completed during the school year.

“What does an employer need to do for an experience to qualify as WBL?”

A qualifying experience involves more than having a student present in the workplace. Students should engage in authentic work, develop relevant skills, interact meaningfully with industry professionals, and receive feedback or evaluation against identified competencies. The experience must also include the required written training plan and partnership agreement.

“Does the employer have to evaluate the student?”

Yes. The experience should identify the skills or competencies the student is expected to develop and include a way for an industry professional to assess progress and provide feedback.

“Who can serve as the student’s industry professional?”

A student’s supervisor or another employee may fill this role if they are currently employed in the relevant industry and have the knowledge and experience needed to supervise, mentor, review work, or evaluate the student’s performance.

“What paperwork does an employer need to complete?”

Qualifying experiences require a written training plan and partnership agreement that establish responsibilities, expectations, learning outcomes, and how the student’s skills will be developed and evaluated.

“Does the employer have to provide workers’ compensation coverage?”

For employer-based WBL experiences in which the student is earning academic credit, a written agreement must be on file confirming that the student is covered by workers’



compensation insurance. The employer may provide that coverage directly. If the employer is unable to do so, a third-party employer of record may provide the coverage and sign the agreement instead. This requirement reflects changes established through HEA 1098.

