

South Carolina High School Credential: A Guide to Work Experiences

Introduction

South Carolina school districts have long understood the critical importance of providing work experiences to students with disabilities that are aligned with their post-secondary employment goals. A 2017 amendment to section 59-39-100 of the South Carolina Code of Laws underscores this importance for students for whom an Individuated Education Program (IEP) team has deemed the Employability Credential to be a good fit. The (proposed) regulations that correspond to the Employability Credential mandate that students complete a combined 360 hours of work-based learning or training (i.e. work experiences) during their high school career (Reg. 43-235). These experiences include job shadowing, job tryouts, internships, participation in school-based enterprises, and competitive employment. To provide clarity on what constitutes a quality work experience and to highlight the wealth of possibilities for students accumulating hours, a team of education professionals from throughout South Carolina crafted *SC High School Credential: A Guide to Work Experiences*. This tool is comprised of two main components that define the parameters of work experiences as well as provides example scenarios.

Explanation of Sections

Firstly, the Work Experience Matrix defines the parameters of each type of work experience. These experiences are arranged from top to bottom in order of the rigor typically needed to facilitate the experience. The rating scale of these experiences is intended to serve an evaluative function. Experiences that are coordinated and fit the criteria of the “0” column are not sufficient to be considered as part of a student’s 360 hour total. All experiences that meet the criteria in the “1,” “2,” or “3” column satisfy the requirements of the 360 hours needed to obtain the South Carolina High School Credential. . The higher the number a given work experience fits, the better aligned with best practices it is. Although the literature supporting this alignment is expansive, a more manageable-sized list of references has been collected at the end of this document to illustrate this alignment.

Secondly, like other requirements of the South Carolina High School Credential, collaboration is key! No school district should feel the weight of being solely responsible for arranging work experiences for students working towards the South Carolina High School Credential, but the role of effective collaboration in accumulating these hours may not be clear for all. For this reason, this document culminates, through examples of students acquiring work experience hours, demonstrating both the sequencing of work experiences, and the possible role of professionals from outside agencies.

Hours of Work Experience Guidelines

Both research and federal mandates point our support of students with disabilities in transition towards individualized activities that are aligned with post-secondary goals, preferences, and interests. To achieve this alignment, many professionals see the value in activities that lead into a work experience or gather input from a student following a work experience. These activities may be as simple as asking students to keep work experience journals, or as intense as formal vocational assessments. Whatever those transitional activities are that we do with students to support work experiences, the team that crafted *SC Employability Credential: A Guide to Work Experiences* remained in agreement that a certain portion of a student's 360 hour total could be allowed to be used for these supporting activities. In short, supporting activities are defined as anything done by a student with the express purpose of supporting a work experience (e.g. interest/preference inventories and related transition assessments, reflective activities, etc.). The total number of supporting activity hours for work experiences should not exceed 25% of the total hours (e.g., 90 hours/360 hours). Further, while the importance of career exploration work experiences (i.e. job shadowing and job tryouts) is clear enough to be included in South Carolina High School Credential, the team that crafted this guide also agreed upon a similar recommendation; no more than 25% (e.g., 90 hours/360 hours) of total work experience hours should be comprised of hours spent in career exploration work experiences. These ratios (explored below in *Table 1*) are intended to act only as parameters for accumulating work experience hours; the ways in which these hours are accumulated for each individual student should be a highly individual process and is subject to an IEP team decision. Additionally, all work experiences should be aligned with federal regulations governing the labor of minors set forth by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

Table 1: Definitions of Work Experience Types

| Work Experiences | Types | Example Hours |
|--|--|--|
| Supporting Activities | Relevant transition assessments (e.g. interest or preference inventories, strengths-based assessments, etc.) Post-work experience student evaluation Reflective activities | 25% (or less) of 360 Hours = 90 Hours |
| Career Exploration Work Experiences (Typically 9th and 10th grade) | Job tryouts Job shadowing | 25% (or less) of 360 Hours = 90 hours |
| Career Preparation Work Experiences (Typically 11th and 12th grade) | Internships School-based enterprise Competitive employment | 50% (or more) of 360 Hours = 180 hours |
| <i>All Work Based Learning/Training</i> | <i>All</i> | <i>Total = 360 hours (or more)</i> |



Work Experience Matrix

| | 0 Does Not Meet Standards | 1 Narrowly Meets Standards | 2 Satisfactorily Meets Standards | 3 Exemplary |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Job Shadowing: A defined student work experience that provides an opportunity to observe the duties of a particular job or career area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term • Unpaid • In-Person or Virtual | <p>Minimal to no support or structure provided No student input collected Not aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Some structure given No student input collected Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Clear guidelines given including follow-up activities and collection of student input Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Clear guidelines given including follow-up activities and collection of student input Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP Community-based</p> |
| <p>Job Tryout: A defined student work experience that provides the opportunity to physically engage in some or all functions of a specific job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term (1 day to 6 months) • Paid or Unpaid • May be school-based or community-based | <p>Minimum to no support or structure provided No student input collected Not aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP No student performance data collected</p> | <p>Some structure given No student input collected Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP No student performance data collected</p> | <p>Clear guidelines given including follow-up activities and collection of student input Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Community-based experience with clear expectations for student performance Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP Objective student performance data collected Follow-up activities for gathering student input</p> |
| <p>Internship: A clearly outlined student work experience that provides the opportunity to physically engage in some or all functions of a specific job</p> | <p>Minimal to no support or structure provided No student input</p> | <p>Some structure given No student input collected</p> | <p>Clear guidelines given Regular collection of student input and performance data</p> | <p>Community-based with clear expectations for student performance Aligned with student interests,</p> |



| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Duration of engagement may vary but the frequency of the activity will be well-defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid or Unpaid • May be school-based or community-based | <p>collected Not aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>preferences, PS goals, and IGP Objective student performance data collected</p> |
| <p><u>School-Based Enterprise:</u> A regularly scheduled student work experience within a school-sponsored business with clear job duties and expectations. Duration of engagement may vary but the regularity of the activity will be well-defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid or Unpaid | <p>Minimal to no support or structure provided No student input collected Not aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Some structure given No student input collected Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Clear guidelines given Regular collection of student input Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Clear expectations for student performance Regular collection of student input Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP Objective student performance data collected</p> |
| <p><u>Competitive Employment Experience:</u> A paid, community-based (i.e. a setting in the community where people with and without disabilities work) student work experience providing hands-on experience with the functions of a particular job. Duration of engagement may vary but the regularity of the activity will be well-defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be a job that has been developed and/or carved • May include supported employment experience (e.g. on site job coaching) • May include formal apprenticeships | <p>Minimal to no support or structure provided No student input collected Not aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Some structure given No student input collected Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Clear guidelines given Regular collection of student input and performance data Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP</p> | <p>Community-based with clear expectations for student performance Aligned with student interests, preferences, PS goals, and IGP Objective student performance data collected and student input gathered regularly</p> |

Student Examples of Acquiring Work Experience Hours

For districts accustomed to coordinating multiple work experiences for students across their high school career and collaborating with other agencies to maximize the resources coordinating 360 hours of work experiences for students working towards the South Carolina High School Credential will be no problem! For some however, coordinating experiences on this scale may be something with which we have minimal experience. Regardless of where you may fall on the continuum of exposure to coordinating work experiences, the following examples should prove helpful in conceptualizing both the sequence of activity types while increasing the rigor of the type of work experience across one's high school career and collaborating with local agencies and organizations towards that end. Although the details of these work experiences are examined in isolation, it is understood that these experiences will exist within the full scope of transition programming called for in the South Carolina High School Credential (e.g., student portfolio creation). The details of each sample are fictitious and are one of many scenarios that could take place with regards to implementing the work experience requirement of the South Carolina High School Credential. They are not intended to serve as guidance for incorporating work experiences into an individual's IEP.

Scenario 1

Hallie: Hallie began her first year at SC High School with the postsecondary employment goal of working full time in a local bakery upon graduation; experience with robust career awareness activities in middle school; and transition assessments supporting her current vocational strengths, career preferences, and areas for improvement.

Freshman year

- Fall: Career exploration was built into her coursework.
 - Hallie completed Virtual job shadowing modules aligned with her fields of interest.
 - A Small project to identify personal strengths, areas of improvement, likes, and dislikes related to the field was completed.

Total: 25 hours (15 hours of Job Shadowing, 10 hours of Supporting Activities)
- Spring: Transition Specialist contacted the local bakery to arrange for an in-person job shadow one Monday morning for 3 hours for Hallie to observe the duties of the person on staff there.
 - A half-page sheet was created using input from bakery staff to help Hallie understand what she would be observing and what her role would be during the job shadowing.
 - Hallie was given a KWL chart to help her frame the experience and was provided time at the end of the community-based job shadowing to ask questions of the staff person and of the Transition Specialist. In class, Hallie followed-up

with her KWL chart and completed a short, reflective assignment about her experience.

- **Total: 6 hours** (3 hours of Job Shadowing, 3 hours of Supporting Activities)

Sophomore year

- Fall: Transition Specialist worked with Hallie to open a case with her local SC Vocational Rehabilitation office.
 - Hallie's VR Counselor coordinated a series of paid job tryouts in the local, VR work training center with data collection on Hallie's performance in a variety of tasks
 - These tryouts are clearly outlined in terms of content, time span, and support provided
 - Hallie completed a reflective activity to highlight what she observed as her strengths, preferences, and areas for improvement in her job tryout

Total: 35 hours (28 hours of Job Tryouts, 7 hours of Supporting Activities)
- Spring: Hallie's Transition Specialist and VR Counselor worked with the local bakery to create a structured, paid internship - (funded through VR).
 - VR Counselor worked with bakery staff to identify periods in which support is needed in the bakery and the specific tasks for which support is needed.
 - Hallie agreed that the outlined tasks fit within her interest and, she worked as a bakery intern for three hours each Friday for three months.
 - Bakery staff responsible for supervising and supporting Hallie used a short performance evaluation metric provided by Hallie's VR counselor to evaluate her performance monthly. Strengths and areas for improvement are identified objectively.
 - As a class project, Hallie created a video at the end of the year describing her tasks at the bakery and what she feels to be her strengths and areas for improvement.

Total: 55 hours (40 hours of Internship, 15 hours of Supporting Activities)

Junior and Senior year

- Hallie filled a vacancy at the bakery as a part-time baker and sales clerk on the weekends.
 - Hallie's VR Counselor worked with Hallie and the owner of the local bakery to set-up a period agreed to by VR and the employer for a part-time work experience. SCVRD agreed to pay her wages during the 90-day trial in exchange for the owner's consideration of bringing her on as an employee if her performance is up to par.
 - Hallie stayed on after her 90-day trial and begins receiving \$8.00/hr. from the bakery.
 - Hallie worked 6 hours each week and keeps a log of her hours that is signed monthly by her supervisor.

- Her VR Counselor checked in with Hallie during school hours about her progress on the job.
- Hallie continued her employment with the bakery through high school graduation, accumulating over 400 work experience hours.

High School Total: 500+ Work Experience Hours (31 hours of Career Exploration Work Experiences, 35 hours of Supporting Activities, 450+ hours of Direct Work Experiences)

Hallie's case is an example of great transition planning that's a clear and concise course of action for getting her involved in great, hands-on activities. It demonstrates how collaboration can pave the way into a part-time job for a student and lead to the entirety of their work experience hours being accumulated with minimal staff cost to a school district.

Scenario 2

Jose: As a transfer student from another state, Jose entered a SC high school as a sophomore with a great deal of uncertainty about his career path. His postsecondary employment goal was in a field that Jose said he had no interest in pursuing. When the IEP team decided that the South Carolina High School Credential would be the best direction to take in high school, Jose began his sophomore year in need of career exploration work experiences.

Sophomore year:

- Fall: Career exploration was built into his coursework.
 - Jose completed virtual job shadowing modules and in-person job shadowing, facilitated with the local SCVRD office's Disability Mentoring Day and these were aligned with his areas of interest.
 - A small project to identify his employment-related strengths, areas of improvement, likes, and dislikes was completed.
Total: 55 hours (45 hours of Job Shadowing, 10 hours of Supporting Activities).
- Spring: Through job shadowing activities and preference/interest activities, Jose identified that a physical job working indoors is his ideal role.
 - Jose's SPED teacher facilitated a school-based enterprise that handles the school's recycling, and Jose accepted an invitation to begin working there 5-hours per week for 3 months.
 - Jose continued virtual job shadowing as part of his career exploration coursework.
 - Each week, Jose spends 15 minutes writing a reflection on his experience.
Total: 91 Hours (70 hours of work experience in a School-Based Enterprise, 15 hours of Virtual Job Shadowing, 6 hours of Supporting Activities).

Junior year:

- Fall: Jose finished the second half of his sophomore year expressing a strong interest in hospitality, namely, working in hotels.
 - Jose's Transition Specialist works with him and his parents to open a case with SCVRD.
 - Jose's SCVRD Transition Counselor arranged for job shadowing experiences in 2 local hotels. He shadowed 4 different employees working in different areas of each hotel. Each job shadowing experience took place for 2.5-hours every Monday afternoon for one month.
 - With the help of Jose's SCVRD Transition Counselor, Jose's Transition Specialist created an outline of what he could expect during each area of his job shadowing experience.
 - As a follow-up to the experience, Jose created a Google Slides presentation on his experience about what he learned, his likes, his dislikes, and why/why not he could see himself working as a hotel employee. He delivered his presentation in his IEP meeting in November.
Total: 16 hours (10 hours of Job Shadowing, 6 hours of Supporting Activities)
- Spring: After a great experience with job shadowing in hotel maintenance, Jose and his IEP team changed his postsecondary goal to reflect his desire to work full-time in maintenance at the time of high school completion.
 - Jose's Transition Specialist worked with the school maintenance department to create an internship for the school year. The internship ran from January to mid-April with Jose working 2 hours/day, 3 days/week.
 - Performance expectations, duties, and schedule were all clearly outlined and agreed upon.
 - Jose's SCVRD Transition Counselor worked with the Transition Specialist to pay Jose's wages during the course of the internship.
 - A simple system for collecting objective performance data was created for use by Jose's supervisor in maintenance and data was reviewed bi-weekly with Jose. Jose's SPED teacher facilitated the use of a tool for self-evaluation data that was collected weekly by Jose and stored in his portfolio.
Total: 94 hours (84 hours of Internship, 10 hours of Supporting Activities)

Senior Year:

- Fall: After a great internship experience and positive reviews of Jose's performance all around, a request was made of the District Office to support an internship for a high school student in the district. With their buy-in, Jose was selected to begin a 4-month apprenticeship at the D.O. with the possibility to continue on for an additional 4-months with satisfactory performance reviews.

- Jose began his internship in September of his senior year, working alongside various maintenance staff at the D.O. He worked as an apprentice for 4 hours on Monday afternoons and 4 hours on Wednesday mornings.
- Jose's position was clearly outlined in terms of schedule and duties, and a weekly, short performance review form was created for use by whomever he worked alongside each week.
- Jose solicited feedback via performance review each week and kept track of each form in his portfolio
- While the D.O. did not have it in their budget to pay an intern hourly, they agreed to a stipend for each 4-month term of \$350.
Total: 133 hours (128 hours of Internship, 5 hours of Supporting Activities)
- Spring: Jose was offered a second, 4-month internship at the D.O. and continued on in a similar capacity.
 - To increase the rigor of the experience, Jose agreed to work for one, full day each week on Wednesdays.
 - Jose worked with his SPED teacher to create a poster board presentation of his internship to deliver in his IEP meeting, highlighting his areas of strength and needs for improvement and jobs that he might like to pursue in the future.
 - With a vacancy in the maintenance department as Jose approached graduation, he applied and was hired to continue on as a full-time employee.
Total: 135 hours (120 hours of Competitive Employment Experience as an Intern, 15 hours of Supporting Activities)
High School Total: 500+ Work Experience Hours (55 hours of Career Exploration Work Experiences, 52 hours of Supporting Activities, 399 hours of Direct Work Experiences)

References

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