



NEW MEXICO WORK-BASED LEARNING Academic Credit and Graduation Alignment Guide



This guide expands on the **New Mexico Work-Based Learning Framework** by illustrating how work-based learning (WBL) experiences may count toward core academic credit under New Mexico law. It is designed to support implementation by building on and clarifying existing guidance in [Section 2 of *High School Graduation Requirements Guidance: HB171*](#) and outlining what is required for WBL to count for academic credit, the quality standards for awarding credit, and common scenarios to explore.

AWARDING ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR WBL

As part of the passage of House Bill (HB) 171(2024), [graduation requirements](#) were updated and took effect for students entering ninth grade in the 2025–2026 school year. Importantly, the updated law now allows WBL and Career Technical Education (CTE) courses approved by the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) to count toward academic credit in English, mathematics, and science.¹ All students must complete 24 credits to graduate, including four credits each in English and mathematics and three credits in science.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE ACADEMIC CREDIT

New Mexico's graduation requirements now allow students to earn core academic credits through high-quality WBL experiences when certain conditions are met:

1. Prerequisite credits have been completed.
2. A properly licensed teacher supervises and evaluates the learning.
3. The experience aligns with WBL standards, academic content standards, and WBL quality indicators.

Once conditions are met, the process for awarding credit is outlined in the [HB171 graduation manual](#) for school districts and charter schools.



¹ As of May 2026, the PED is in the process of determining which CTE courses will be approved and eligible for academic credit.



1. Prerequisite Credits Completed

The following table outlines which academic credits may be earned through PED-approved CTE or WBL courses. Students must complete prerequisite academic coursework before becoming eligible to earn credit through PED-approved CTE or WBL courses.

Students must complete English 1, 2, and 3 with a grade of C or better before being eligible to earn credit for English 4 through a PED-approved CTE or WBL course. Students must complete Algebra 1/Integrated Math 1 and Geometry/Integrated Math 2 with a grade of C or better before they are eligible to earn credit for Math 3 or Math 4 through a PED-approved CTE or WBL course. Finally, students must complete two lab sciences with a grade of C or better before they are eligible to earn credit for their third science course through a PED-approved CTE or WBL course. Students are eligible to earn core academic credit through a PED-approved CTE or WBL course only after completing all prerequisite courses in that academic content area. Table 1 shows how core academic coursework is sequenced to allow a CTE or WBL course to fulfill a core academic credit requirement.

TABLE 1: CORE ACADEMIC COURSEWORK SEQUENCING WITH CTE OR WBL COURSE REPLACEMENT

COURSEWORK SEQUENCE	SUBJECT AREA		
	English (4 Credits)	Math (4 Credits)	Science (3 Credits)
	English 1	Algebra 1/Integrated Math 1	Lab science
	English 2	Geometry/Integrated Math 2	Lab science
	English 3	Math 3 or <i>CTE/WBL course</i>	Science or <i>CTE/WBL course</i>
	English 4 or <i>CTE/WBL course</i>	Math 4 or <i>CTE/WBL course</i>	

2. Properly Licensed Teacher

For a WBL course to qualify for academic credit, the instructor must hold the proper license(s) in the relevant academic content area. For instance, if a student is earning math credit through a WBL course, the instructor must hold a secondary math endorsement.

3. Aligned to WBL Standards, Academic Content Standards, and WBL Quality Indicators

The WBL course experience must:

- ⚙️ Align to the WBL standard associated with the applicable stage of the WBL continuum, as outlined in the **New Mexico Work-Based Learning Continuum and Progression Guide**. Only experiences categorized as **Learning For Work** or **Learning Through Work** are eligible for academic credit.
- ⚙️ Align to the New Mexico Adopted Content Standards for that particular academic content area.
- ⚙️ Meet the quality indicators associated with the applicable stage of the WBL continuum, as outlined in the **New Mexico Work-Based Learning Quality, Evidence, and Readiness Guide**.



TABLE 2: WBL STANDARDS MATRIX

This table provides a crosswalk of the two WBL continuum stages in which experiences may be eligible for academic credit, the corresponding WBL grade-band standards, and the WBL quality indicators associated with each stage. It also includes a link to the [New Mexico Adopted Content Standards](#) to support required alignment by subject area and ensure that students demonstrate mastery of relevant academic content standards when pursuing credit.

	WBL STANDARD	WBL QUALITY INDICATORS	CORE ACADEMIC CONTENT
 Learning For Work	Students can apply technical skills and career-ready practices in simulated or workplace settings and demonstrate readiness for real-world experiences.	⚙️ All students have access to skill-building experiences, including students who have been historically underrepresented in WBL. ⚙️ Participation is not restricted by prior experience or other program enrollment barriers. ⚙️ Schools provide necessary resources to participate (e.g., materials, transportation, scheduling flexibility). ⚙️ Any additional barriers to participation are proactively addressed through supports such as accessible materials. ⚙️ Experiences reflect real-world workplace expectations and include the development of technical skills and career-ready practices. ⚙️ Students receive feedback that is aligned to clear performance criteria before, during, and after experiences. ⚙️ Experiences align with local workforce needs and are designed with industry input. ⚙️ Schools adapt WBL arrangements (e.g., student-led enterprises, service learning) based on available resources.	Refer to grade-band and academic content area standards in the New Mexico Adopted Content Standards .
 Learning Through Work	Students can demonstrate advanced technical skills and career-ready practices in real-world settings and apply their learning toward postsecondary education, training, or employment.	⚙️ Students from all backgrounds are represented in high-quality placements (e.g., internships, apprenticeships). ⚙️ Students are paid or otherwise compensated (e.g., wages, stipends, credit, bus passes, gas cards, equipment, meals) in ways that make participation possible, regardless of barriers related to income, transportation, caregiving responsibilities, or other circumstances. ⚙️ Students can earn credit and/or compensation without financial or logistical barriers. Supports such as required equipment, uniforms, certifications, transportation, flexible scheduling, and child or dependent care are available when needed. ⚙️ Flexible WBL arrangements (e.g., part time, summer, virtual) expand access and participation. ⚙️ Experiences include structured supervision, clearly defined learning objectives, and alignment to programs of study. ⚙️ Students demonstrate mastery of technical skills and career-ready practices in authentic workplace settings. ⚙️ Experiences are shaped by local industry partnerships and aligned with state and regional economic priorities. ⚙️ Experiences are regularly refined in response to employer feedback, labor market trends, and evolving workforce needs.	Refer to grade-band and academic content area standards in the New Mexico Adopted Content Standards .

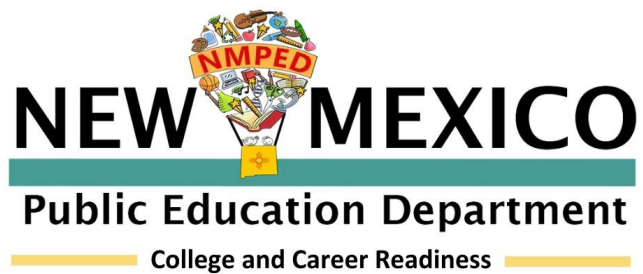
For additional information and guidance on the WBL continuum stages and associated WBL experiences and arrangements, visit the [New Mexico Work-Based Learning Continuum and Progression Guide](#).



DESIGNING WBL EXPERIENCES FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT: EXAMPLE SCENARIOS

	 LEARNING FOR WORK	 LEARNING THROUGH WORK
ENGLISH	A class operates as a simulated communications agency where students take on roles such as content writer, editor, or social media manager to develop materials for established clients within the school or community. During this experience, students apply technical skills, career-ready practices, and English core content standards that prepare them for real-world work settings while demonstrating mastery of aligned academic content.	A student works as an intern with a local organization, managing newsletters and social media. During this experience, the student has an opportunity to demonstrate advanced technical skills by producing written deliverables and receiving feedback from a supervisor and a teacher. The experience and associated work tasks are designed with clear learning objectives that embed English core content standards.
MATHEMATICS	A student manages pricing, budgeting, and sales tracking for a student-run business through a school-based enterprise. During this experience, the student has the opportunity to meet clear learning objectives and demonstrate mastery of mathematics core content standards while applying technical skills and career-ready practices to demonstrate readiness for real-world application.	A student participates in an apprenticeship with a construction team to develop material estimates and project cost projections. During this experience, the student has opportunities to demonstrate advanced technical skills and career-ready practices in a real-world setting while also meeting clear learning objectives that include mastery of mathematics core content standards.
SCIENCE	A student works with a local organization to conduct environmental testing and analysis as part of a service-learning experience. During this experience, the student receives related technical instruction and applies technical skills and career-ready practices to meet learning objectives aligned to science core content standards.	A student completes a supervised pre-apprenticeship in a healthcare setting, applying concepts in medical science and biology to demonstrate advanced technical skills and career-ready practices. During this experience, the student is supervised on site by a third-party organization, and a properly licensed educator evaluates work-based demonstrations of mastery aligned to science core content standards.

This resource is Part 3 of the *New Mexico Work-Based Learning Toolkit*, a suite of resources that support the development of sustainable, equitable, and high-quality WBL systems across New Mexico. All resources are housed on the [New Mexico Work-Based Learning website](#).



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