



Critical Fact Sheet

A Publication of the Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Exceptional Work Experience and Students with Disabilities

Overview/Background:

Kentucky's minimum graduation requirements set forth in [704 KAR 3:305](#) specify students must complete one of eight graduation qualifiers beginning with students entering the ninth grade of the 2019-2020 school year. These qualifiers help ensure graduates are prepared for what comes after high school. One of the possible graduation qualifiers is exceptional work experience. According to the graduation qualifier, students must "Complete a Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) approved process to verify 500 hours of exceptional work experience or alternative requirements as outlined in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP)."

The KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education and Student Transition (OCTEST) provides guidance on how *exceptional work experience* is demonstrated. Exceptional work experience is demonstrated by a secondary student who proves recognition, achievements, growth, and essential skills through a work experience beyond traditional work-based learning by demonstrating knowledge, exposure, and/or skills that are aligned with a Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) approved industry-recognized certification(s) or End-of-Program exam in a similar area as the work experience.

The experience does not have to be paid. The experience may occur over multiple years between the time of enrolling in 9th grade and graduating high school.

For students with disabilities pursuing this qualifier to meet graduation requirements, the student's Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) may determine alternative requirements for the Exceptional Work Experience through the IEP. Alternative requirements are intended for students whose disability prevents them from meeting the requirements specified above. ARCs have the responsibility of making individual determinations for students that would require a differentiated approach to exceptional work experience. The differentiated path shall be prescribed in the student's IEP. ARCs shall make individual student determinations and may implement modifications as needed for this qualifier.

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