



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府  
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Education Bureau  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
of the People's Republic of China



資歷架構  
Qualifications  
Framework

# Reference Guide on Work-based Learning

## under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework







**Reference Guide**  
**on Work-based Learning**  
under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework

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# INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Reference Guide on Work-based Learning under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (Reference Guide) aims to provide useful references to education and training providers (or course providers) who wish to develop and incorporate work-based learning (WBL) elements into their learning programmes recognised under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF).
- 1.2 WBL has long been subsumed in some of the learning programmes provided by higher education institutes, vocational and education institutes, in-house training providers and professional bodies in different industries and at different levels, ranging from below sub-degree to postgraduate qualifications. In conjunction with the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) which enables youngsters to acquire work skills for the future, WBL is one of the key learning opportunities for learners to acquire knowledge and skills in an authentic environment.
- 1.3 WBL can bring a range of benefits to different stakeholders including course providers, employers, learners as well as the industries. Learners can gain hands-on experience in their chosen fields or study areas which prepare them for being work-ready and enhance their employability. WBL also provides learners with good opportunities to develop soft skills which are applicable in all industries. Employers are also benefited from WBL including easy access to a pool of suitable candidates who have the skills and knowledge that fit their organisations and setting job-specific standards in partnership with course providers, which all together help build a highly skilled workforce for their organisations as well as the industry concerned. By incorporating the WBL elements into learning programmes by course providers, such learning programmes will be more relevant to meet the industry needs which in turn can earn a higher level of recognition and be well received by employers and the general public.

## Part1 // INTRODUCTION

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

- 1.4 To further support the development of WBL, the Reference Guide in Chapter 2 is to set out definitions, general overview of WBL development in the local context and some key features of WBL.
- 1.5 In Chapter 3, a set of guiding principles are provided for course providers to consider when developing and incorporating WBL into their learning programmes with a view to providing a constructive and quality learning experience to learners.
- 1.6 The guiding principles are further illustrated in Chapter 4 where some good practices adopted by educational and training providers are presented for better understanding of the WBL in the local context.
- 1.7 The Reference Guide is based on a Study on WBL under the QF commissioned by the Education Bureau (EDB) where the research results both from the international and local contexts have been drawn to fit for the purposes of different types of WBL activities. References have been made from the international experiences in offering WBL, including Australia, New Zealand, Germany, the UK and Malaysia, during the development of the Reference Guide.
- 1.8 As the development of VPET and WBL evolves, the Reference Guide will from time to time be updated. To obtain the most up-to-date information, users may refer to the relevant websites of Education Bureau, Hong Kong Qualifications Framework and Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).



# OVERVIEW OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

2.1 This Chapter covers the definition of WBL both in the international and local contexts, the general overview of WBL in Hong Kong and some key features of WBL programmes with a view to providing an insight and summary for course providers' reference.

## Definition of WBL

2.2 According to UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, WBL is learning that occurs in a work environment, through participation in work practice and process, and is integral to vocational education and training<sup>1</sup>. While there are different types or models of WBL in different jurisdictions, WBL forms a part of the education and training that connects students from school experiences to real-life work activities.

2.3 With reference to the terminology of European education and training policy published by European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), WBL is defined as an acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out and reflecting on tasks in a vocational context, either at the workplace or in a vocational and educational training institution<sup>2</sup>. Often implemented in conjunction with classroom or related learning, WBL may take different approaches and carry different names, such as placement, workplace/industry attachment, practicum, internship, apprenticeship and on-the-job training, with variation in the length, the level of immersion, the assessment involved and the mode of engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre. (n.d.). VETipedia Glossary - Work-based learning. Retrieved from <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/show=term/term=Work-based+learning#start>

<sup>2</sup> European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). (2014). Terminology of European education and training policy Terminology of European education and training policy - A Selection of 130 key terms, 2nd ed. Retrieved from [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4117\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4117_en.pdf)

- 2.4 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) of the United Kingdom defined WBL as learning through work, learning for work and/or learning at work. It consists of authentic structured opportunities for learning which are achieved in a workplace setting or are designed to meet an identified workplace need<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.5 Taken into consideration of international practice and the local practice in offering learning programmes with WBL elements under the QF, the gist of WBL in the local context can be summarised as **a pedagogical approach that connects learners from classroom to real-life work activities. It provides learners with authentic structured opportunities for integrated learning in a real workplace or a simulated environment and acquiring the knowledge and skills that are relevant to their studies or work.**

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<sup>3</sup> The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). (2018). UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Advice and Guidance – Work-based Learning. Retrieved from [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-work-based-learning.pdf?sfvrsn=f625c181\\_2](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-work-based-learning.pdf?sfvrsn=f625c181_2)



### General Overview of WBL in Hong Kong

- 2.6 With the development of VPET in Hong Kong, apart from the traditional training programmes with licensing requirements, such as nursing, elderly care, teacher education and social work, it can be found from the Qualifications Register (QR) that more learning programmes have embedded WBL elements as a kind of experiential learning to provide learners with opportunities to experience real workplace environment and to integrate their classroom learning to workplace training.
- 2.7 Currently, there are many different terminologies or categorisation used in learning programmes with WBL elements in different disciplines. According to the QR data, some commonly used categories are attachment, placement, practicum, internship, field experience and on-the-job training, and there are also some associated terminologies under these types of WBL, including clinical attachment, industrial attachment, workplace attachment, fieldwork placement, clinical practicum, teaching practice, practical experience and work-integrated learning. It is also observed that these terminologies are even used interchangeably in a single programme, and no specific definition is adopted for a particular type of WBL.
- 2.8 In terms of study volume or duration of WBL, it also varies from one to another. For instance, some WBL in the form of “placement” can be as long as over 1,000 hours but some are only less than 100 hours. There are also a few placements bearing just one QF credit or 10 notional learning hours. For some WBL activities using the terminologies such as attachment and job shadowing, they are expected to be shorter in duration and the involvement in real work environment can be minimal. Hence, although there is some common understanding on the nature of certain WBL activities in terms of duration and work involvement, there is no common definition adopted for different types of WBL activities.

## Characteristics of WBL in the Local Context

2.9 From a research study through focus group meeting with local course providers and desktop research, some key characteristics of WBL are identified as below which can also be found from some accredited learning programmes under the QF currently offered by local course providers.

- Meeting of pre-service training requirements by licencing bodies
- Authentic and structured learning experience
- Integrating classroom learning and workplace application

2.10 In the local context, some types of WBL in learning programmes have been widely used in disciplines such as nursing, social work and teacher training. Although there is no common definition adopted for a particular type of WBL, some common characteristics can be found from the current learning programmes under the QF for some commonly used types of WBL. To provide a useful guide for course providers as a reference, characteristics of some commonly used types of WBL with categorisation of the degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training are given in the following table:

## Part 2 // OVERVIEW OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

Types of WBL	Characteristics	Degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governed under the Apprenticeship Ordinance (Cap 47)</li> <li>• With employment relationship between learners and employers</li> <li>• Learners receive pay from employer and employers receive government subsidies</li> <li>• Part-time or full-time work in a company with contractual agreement</li> <li>• Duration is usually long e.g. one year</li> </ul>	High
<b>Practicum</b> (clinical practicum, teaching practice, site practice, field practice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners gain work experience directly related to their study areas, a specialised field of study or, in particular, a profession needs to hold a license to practise</li> <li>• Can be paid or unpaid during the practicum period</li> <li>• Duration varies and usually depends on the licensing requirements</li> </ul>	High
<b>Internship</b> (sandwich course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place learners in a real workplace environment which allows them to develop and practise career-related knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Can be paid or unpaid during the internship period</li> <li>• Duration varies but is relatively long, e.g. one year, one semester, or during summer</li> </ul>	High
<b>Placement</b> (fieldwork placement, clinical placement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place learners in a real workplace environment which allows them to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge</li> <li>• Can be paid or unpaid during placement period</li> <li>• Duration is usually long but vary according to the types of work experience</li> </ul>	Medium to High

(to be continued on next page)

2.11 Course provider is advised to consider adopting the most suitable terminology for a particular type of WBL in its learning programme. It is also essential that course provider should strive to inform all relevant parties on the specifications of WBL in order to manage their expectation and help them assume their roles in the WBL.

## Part 2 // OVERVIEW OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

(continued from previous page)

Types of WBL	Characteristics	Degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training
<b>On-the-job training</b> (in-house training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees of an organisation as learners to get hands-on experiences or specific knowledge and skills to perform their current or future duties at work</li> <li>• Employment relationship usually exists during or after completion of the on-the-job training</li> <li>• Duration varies and usually depends on the job nature</li> </ul>	<p>Medium to High</p>
<b>Attachment</b> (clinical attachment, industry attachment, industrial attachment, workplace attachment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A temporary placement of a learner to a company/organisation to develop generic or specific skills and to learn practical aspects of a job</li> <li>• Some work opportunities that may not be specific to the study areas or disciplines</li> <li>• Duration is usually medium to short</li> </ul>	<p>Low to medium</p>
<b>Job shadowing</b> (visit, simulation at workplace)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners usually as observers to observe one or more employees in a real workplace and have opportunities to interact with employees</li> <li>• May have some opportunities to practise skills through simulation at the workplace environment</li> <li>• Duration is relatively short</li> </ul>	<p>Low</p>

2.12 With the development of VPET and the review of Sub-degree Education, including revisions in the Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes which features the incorporation of WBL, it is expected that more local learning programmes will include WBL as one of the major learning and teaching activities.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

- 3.1 To facilitate course providers to develop learning programmes with WBL elements, a set of guiding principles is given in this Chapter for reference. These guiding principles are a concise expression of the general practices and experience gained from the higher education sector and VPET sector, including in-house training providers and private training institutes. The guiding principles serve as a reference for course providers to consider when developing a new or reviewing an existing learning programme ranging from below sub-degree to post-graduate levels of qualification. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for course providers to meet their educational and training purposes when deemed appropriate.
- 3.2 In order to be user-friendly and simple to understand, some terminologies adopted in the Reference Guide may be different from those being adopted in various types of WBL activities covered in different learning programmes. Users can adopt an appropriate term which is suitable for their own case. Some examples are listed below for ease of reference:

Terms in the Reference Guide	Coverage or Similar Terms Used in Various Types of WBL
Course Provider	University, Post-secondary Institute, VPET Provider, Accredited Operator, In-house Training Provider, Private Education Institute
Learner	Student, Trainee, Apprentice, Intern, Mentee
Employer	Host organisation, Placement agency / unit, private or public company, WBL partner
Teaching staff	Placement supervisor, Fieldwork instructor, Clinical instructor, Teacher, Lecturer, Professor
Administrative staff	Placement / Fieldwork Coordinator
Workplace Trainer (from employer)	Industrial supervisor, Field mentor, Training manager
Workplace Coordinator (from employer)	Industrial coordinator, Human Resources Manager
Assessor	Examiner
Verifier	Reviewer, Checker

3.3 The guiding principles (GP) for developing learning programmes with WBL elements are as follows:

<p><b>GP-1</b></p>	<p><b>Alignment with Programme Objectives and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBL elements in a learning programme should align with its programme objectives and programme intended learning outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-2</b></p>	<p><b>Clearly Defined Intended Learning Outcomes of WBL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBL activities in various forms (e.g. apprenticeship, internship, placement, attachment, practicum and etc.) in a learning programme must have clear and measurable learning outcomes that are relevant to the programme objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-3</b></p>	<p><b>Structured Design and Delivery of WBL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBL activities consist of structured opportunities for learning and are conducted through authentic tasks under supervision in the workplace or a simulated environment where the delivery should be aligned with the relevant intended learning outcomes.</li> <li>• WBL activities enable learners to learn and apply knowledge and skills that are relevant to their learning programme and enable them to achieve the programme objectives and programme intended learning outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-4</b></p>	<p><b>Valid and Reliable Assessment of WBL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment tasks developed in various forms should be valid and reliable to assess learners' attainment of intended learning outcomes of WBL.</li> <li>• Assessment should take place during the WBL period while it can be conducted in or out of the work organisations where learners undertaking their WBL.</li> <li>• Pre-assessment and post-assessment moderations by internal and or external parties are conducted according to the quality assurance mechanism.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-5</b></p>	<p><b>Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders and Effective Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders must be clearly defined in the WBL activities. Stakeholders may include course providers, learners, employers, industry partners, Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs), licensing authorities, and government departments.</li> <li>• Course providers should maintain a close and effective communication with different stakeholders, including the employers and/or relevant parties, such that any matters arising from the implementation of WBL, such as the provision of appropriate support to learners with learning difficulties, can be identified and resolved in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

## Part 3 // GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

<p><b>GP-6</b></p>	<p><b>Proper Documentation by Course Providers, Employers and Learners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course providers and employers must have proper document(s), such as agreement, contract and letter, in place to ensure all of them understand the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations.</li> <li>• Course providers, employers and learners must have proper documents to register learners' participation in WBL activities.</li> <li>• Learners taking part in WBL activities are covered by insurance arrangements, which should be stated clearly in the relevant document(s), as applicable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-7</b></p>	<p><b>Learners Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All learners are provided with necessary support from course providers and employers during the whole period of WBL, including the pre- and post-WBL stages.</li> <li>• Course providers should maintain regular contact with learners to ensure that the learners are being taken care of.</li> <li>• Course providers should have fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all learners.</li> <li>• Course providers should take account of learners with special educational needs in order to facilitate the learners' access to WBL opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-8</b></p>	<p><b>Quality Assurance for WBL Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course providers should have a set of quality assurance measures in place to ensure that the WBL activities are developed, monitored, evaluated and reviewed in partnership with employers and/or relevant parties.</li> <li>• Guidelines to learners, employers, workplace trainers, assessors, verifiers (as appropriate) should be developed and made available to relevant parties.</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities and trainings on WBL delivery and assessments should be provided by course providers and/or employers to those who are involved in WBL to ensure that the involved parties are qualified to perform their roles effectively and make continuous improvement in the provision of WBL.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GP-9</b></p>	<p><b>Safety and Other Regulatory/Professional Bodies' Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course providers need to consider in conjunction with rules and regulations of professional bodies, licensing authorities and statutory bodies when developing WBL activities.</li> <li>• Course providers and employers should provide a safe and healthy working and learning environment to learners as well as guidance on occupational safety and health issue.</li> </ul>

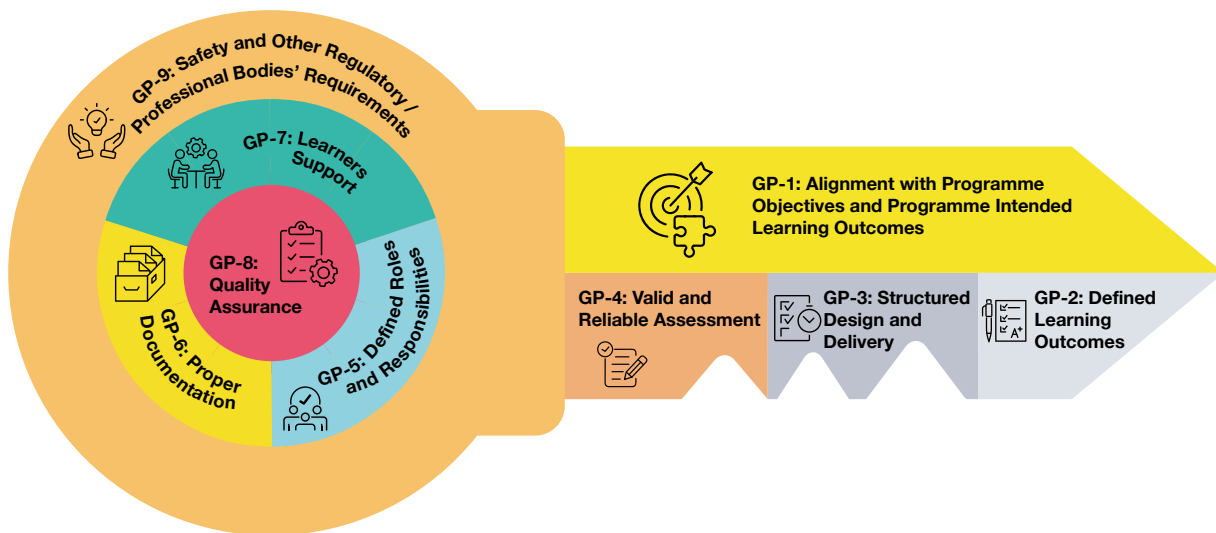


# Part 3 // GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

3.4 The 9 Guiding Principles are presented in the following diagram for easy reference.

## Key to Success Guiding Principles for Developing Learning Programmes with Work-Based Learning Elements



# GOOD PRACTICES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

- 4.1 WBL includes various types of pedagogical strategies that engage learners in direct experiential activities in authentic or real-world context to apply what they have learnt from the classroom and to learn from peers, colleagues, supervisors and practitioners at the workplace. WBL can be conducted in different forms, such as placement, attachment, practicum, internship, apprenticeship and on-the-job training which may vary in duration, the degree of integration between classroom learning and workplace training, and the mode of engagement. Following the guiding principles set out in Chapter 3, some good practices with illustrative examples of different types of WBL activities are given in this Chapter for reference. **Course providers are by any means to develop their own WBL programmes to fit for their purposes provided that the quality of WBL can be maintained and monitored.**

## GP-1 Alignment with Programme Objectives and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

- 4.2 WBL can be conducted in different forms with different degree of integration between classroom learning and workplace training from a well-structured practicum, internship, placement to a rather less-structured company/workplace visit. WBL as an element or a learning and teaching activity of a learning programme should align with its programme objectives and programme intended learning outcomes (PILOs). It should be stated clearly in the relevant document(s) how the WBL elements can contribute to the achievement of the programme objectives and PILOs as a whole.
- 4.3 Course providers should consider carefully the purposes of including WBL opportunities for learners, such as meeting pre-service or in-service training requirements by licensing bodies/authorities, enhancing employability, reinforcing the integration of classroom learning and workplace application, career development or aspiration for in-house training or other relevant goals, during programme development and review. These purposes should be clearly identified and reflected in the programme objectives and PILOs.

- 4.4 When considering the inclusion of WBL elements in a learning programme, it is a good practice for course providers to conduct analysis about the current and future market needs as well as skills requirements through appropriate methods, such as benchmarking study with similar courses available in the market, in particular, Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)-based courses and Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) courses, and collecting external inputs from employers, professional bodies, relevant authorities, trade associations or community representatives, so as to ensure that the WBL activities are relevant to the latest development of relevant industry or field.

## **GP-2 Clearly Defined Intended Learning Outcomes of WBL**

- 4.5 WBL activities in various forms in a learning programme must have clear and measurable learning outcomes that are relevant to the programme objectives.
- 4.6 The intended learning outcomes of WBL should explicitly advise learners what they can achieve in terms of skills, knowledge, personal attributes or development (values, attitudes, responsibility, problem solving and etc.) upon completion of the WBL activities. For WBL activities with high degree of integration between classroom learning and workplace training, such as clinical practicum for a nursing programme, the specialised skills and knowledge of that particular field must be explicitly spelt out in the intended learning outcomes. The WBL activities should be pitched at appropriate QF level(s) if they are standalone modules/courses. The intended learning outcomes should therefore be consistent with the Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) at the claimed QF level(s).

- 4.7 It is a good practice for course providers to use a mapping table to show the alignment between the intended learning outcomes of WBL, the programme objectives as well as some of the PILOs. For WBL activities meeting the competency requirements of particular job positions under the VQP defined by the relevant ITACs, a mapping between the selected job positions and the intended learning outcomes of WBL should also be shown.

### GP-3 Structured Design and Delivery of WBL

- 4.8 There are many different types and terminologies of WBL, such as placement, practicum, attachment, internship and so on, while these terminologies can be used in different learning programmes, in different disciplines and at different QF levels. Course providers can adopt a suitable terminology to fit for own purposes, such as meeting licensing requirements or industry practice.
- 4.9 Some common features of WBL, regardless of the types or terms used, are as follows:
- Whole or part of learning and training should be undertaken in the workplace
  - Authentic context for learning is provided
  - Different degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training
- 4.10 Regardless of the types of WBL embedded in a learning programme, the design of WBL activities should be structured and consist of structured opportunities for learning. The delivery of WBL should be aligned with the relevant intended learning outcomes and is achieved through authentic tasks carried out in the workplace or a simulated environment under supervision.

4.11 A well-structured WBL programme should link learning and work systematically which are related to each other, resulting in linking theory into practice. In some learning programmes with WBL, such as apprenticeship, classroom-based learning and WBL may take place in parallel such that learners can learn theory at part-time day and/or part-time evening classes in a VPET institution and apply what they have learnt in the workplace during WBL. It is also common in some other programmes that classroom-based learning is followed by block practicum. However, irrespective of the sequencing of classroom-based learning and WBL, WBL activities should enable learners to learn and apply knowledge and skills that are relevant to their learning programmes and enable them to achieve the programme objectives and PILOs.

4.12 Details of WBL should be drawn up to give a general picture to all stakeholders what is expected to do and learn, and what competences can be acquired by learners in the real workplace or a simulated environment. Details of WBL can include the following:

- Objectives
- Intended Learning Outcomes
- Duration
- Number of Hours per Day/Week
- Total Number of Attachment/Working Hours
- QF Credits (applicable when the WBL element is a standalone module)
- Major Tasks
- Assessment Method(s)
- Supervision Arrangement
- WBL Policy and/or Guidelines (to learners, supervisors, employers, etc.)
- Learning Plan and/or Class Schedule

## Part 4 // GOOD PRACTICES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

- 4.13 For VQP courses with WBL elements, course providers should pay attention to the adopted Units of Competency (UoCs), whether it can meet the requirements of a particular job positions defined by the relevant ITACs. Irrespective of the types and duration of the WBL that is embedded in a VQP courses, contents of WBL activities should be directly related to the selected job roles under the VQP and aim at facilitating learners to gain relevant occupational skills.
- 4.14 It is a good practice for course providers and employers to ensure learners' active and effective learning during the WBL period so that the learners can build up their hard skills and soft skills, knowledge covering the appropriate levels of breadth and depth of skills and experience needed to complete the tasks assigned in the WBL period.
- 4.15 Course providers and employers should ensure that learners are supervised or mentored during the whole period of WBL. The supervision may take many forms but should always include supportive and positive relationships to facilitate learners to complete the WBL activities effectively.

### GP-4 Valid and Reliable Assessment of WBL

- 4.16 Assessment is an important component of WBL to assess learners' knowledge and skills acquired in an authentic environment and therefore the assessment tasks in the form of continuous assessment and/or summative assessment should be developed. While assessment can serve the purpose for learning through the conduct of continuous assessments and learners' reflection on the assessment results, it also serves the purpose of evaluating learners' attainment of the intended learning outcomes and satisfying the requirements stated in a contractual agreement between course providers, employers and learners, as necessary.

- 4.17 Assessment of WBL may include a variety of methods, such as written test, oral test, skill or practical test, completion of log book, observation and feedback, appraisal, project and/or combination of various types of methods, depending on the nature and types of WBL.
- 4.18 For WBL with higher degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training, more specific performance criteria should be set for assessing learners' competence on a particular job function or skills required in a particular field.
- 4.19 Assessment should take place during the WBL period so that employers or their representatives, such as trainers, can participate in the assessment to a certain extent. For instance, learners' general work performance assessed by the trainers during WBL period may constitute some of the assessment weighting. Assessment can be conducted by course providers, such as a designated assessor or teaching staff who are responsible for delivery of relevant subjects or disciplines with relevant qualifications, or by employers, such as a designated workplace trainer who are experienced trade practitioner and works closely with learners during the WBL period, as long as the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- 4.20 Assessment tasks can be conducted in or out of the workplace where learners undertaking their WBL, depending on the nature of assessment methods. For example, for learners who are required to install and test an access control system in a practical test for a diploma programme in electronic engineering, the assessment task should take place in an authentic workplace and assessed by a designated trainer during the WBL period. For some assessment tasks, such as summative written test, presentation or project work, they can be conducted in classroom setting and assessed by teaching staff taken into consideration of comments and feedback provided by employers.



## Part 4 // GOOD PRACTICES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

REFERENCE GUIDE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

- 4.21 It is a good practice to provide learners, workplace trainers, assessors or relevant stakeholders with clear and concise assessment materials together with clear assessment criteria or rubrics for easy understanding and to ensure that the assessments are reliable, valid and fair to judge learners' performance. Assessment records should be developed for some assessment methods, particularly in skill-based tests.
- 4.22 It is also a good practice for course providers to provide feedback to learners' assessment for the purposes of consolidating their learning, identifying weakness and enabling reflection on their performance.
- 4.23 WBL assessment is a part of assessment in a learning programme and therefore pre-assessment and post-assessment moderations by internal and/or external parties should be conducted according to course provider's quality assurance mechanism. It is desirable that the WBL assessment can be verified by a third party, such as verifier appointed by a course provider, in particular, for skill-based test.

### GP-5 Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders and Effective Communication

- 4.24 It is important to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders, including but not limited to course providers, learners, employers, industry partners, Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITAC), licensing authorities, and government departments, for WBL programme.
- 4.25 The involvement and commitment of each party concerned may lead to the success of the implementation of WBL. Therefore, collaboration with different stakeholders, in particular, relevant industry partners and authorities, will enhance the WBL quality and learners' learning experience.

4.26 It is a good practice if there is a designated team or person from course providers to take charge of WBL arrangement for learners, including the liaison with employers and industries. To begin with, the roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders should be clearly defined with consideration of the following:

- Course providers should appoint appropriate staff, such as teaching staff / placement supervisors and administrative staff, who have relevant qualifications, knowledge and skills to assume the roles.
  - > Teaching staff and/or WBL supervisors should be assigned to equip learners with fundamental knowledge and skills to undertake the WBL activities and provide learners with guidance and support during the WBL period.
  - > Coordinator(s) should be appointed as administrative personnel to manage the operation of WBL activities, including the liaison with different parties involved, to ensure a smooth implementation of WBL activities.
- Course providers should maintain a close and effective communication with different stakeholders, including employers and/or relevant parties, such that any matters arising from the implementation of WBL, such as the provision of appropriate support to learners with learning difficulties, can be identified and resolved in a timely manner.
- Employers should nominate staff as workplace trainers with relevant qualifications and experiences to supervise learners, conduct assessments and give feedback to learners. It is also a good practice for employers to assign staff as workplace coordinators who act as a contact person for all matters related to WBL and maintain regular contacts with course providers and learners. This role is mainly responsible for the coordination work in the WBL activity.

## Part 4 // GOOD PRACTICES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH WORK-BASED LEARNING ELEMENTS

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- Learners who enroll in a WBL activity may be employed as trainees in a work organisation with formal agreement to perform assigned tasks in the workplace with or without pay and with or without employment relationship with employers, depending on the types of WBL activities.
- Industry partners and relevant parties should be involved in the WBL process and provide necessary support and feedback to the WBL activities. For Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)-based and VQP courses, inputs or feedback from relevant ITAC should be sought for better alignment of the adopted SCSs and specific job positions, as well as the latest development of industries. For WBL courses with licensing or regulatory requirements, such as social worker registration, nurse registration, teacher registration, advice or information from relevant authorities or professional bodies should be sought during the development process of WBL courses.

### GP-6 Proper Documentation by Course Providers, Employers and Learners

- 4.27 At institutional level, there should be a proper document, such as contract, agreement or letter, between course providers and employers concerning the collaboration in offering WBL opportunities to learners. The document should include scope and validity period of the collaboration, details of WBL activities through collaboration and the responsibilities of both parties.
- 4.28 At operational level, there should be some kinds of document, such as consent form or participation form between course providers, employers, learners and guardian (if needed), to register learners' participation in WBL activities and ensure mutual understanding and expectation of their respective roles and responsibilities so as to minimise any possible disputes among them.

4.29 The details of proper document can vary, depending on the nature of WBL. For example, an internship programme is arranged for learners to work and learn in ABC Hotel as summer intern for meeting the required WBL hours in a higher diploma in hospitality management programme offered by XYZ Institution and an agreement between the institution, the hotel, the learners and guardian (if needed) should include the following details in addition to the general items, such as names of the parties, dates, signatures and etc.

- Background of the collaboration/partnership in providing internship opportunity to learners
- Purpose of agreement, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the internship programme
- Roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party, including ABC Hotel, XYZ Institution and learners
- Learners' working conditions and details under the internship arrangement, such as working hours, allowance and benefits, salary/wage (if any), leave application, termination of internship and general rules and regulations
- Details of assessment which may include the assessment methods, requirements and time to carry out the assessment. It should also include the personnel involved, such as workplace trainers assigned by the Hotel and/or workplace supervisors assigned by the Institution in the conduct of assessment
- Insurance coverage for learners during the internship period
- Occupational safety and health related information which is applicable for the work as summer intern in ABC Hotel

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- 4.30 For some WBL activities with relatively low degree of integration between classroom learning and workplace training, such as workplace attachment or company visit, the proper document can be much simpler as long as all parties involved, including learners, employers and institutions, have clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.31 Under the Apprenticeship Ordinance and Regulations (Chapter 47 of the Laws of Hong Kong SAR), a formal Contract of Apprenticeship should be signed between Employer, Apprentice and Guardian of the Apprentice. The terms of the Contract of Apprenticeship may also include the above information as stated in para. 4.29.

### GP-7 Learners Support

- 4.32 All learners are provided with necessary support from course providers and employers during the whole period of WBL, including the pre-and post-WBL stages to ensure learners are well taken care of. Good practice for course providers is to provide some or all of the following support services to learners as appropriate:
- Provide briefing for learners before participating in WBL activities
  - Maintain regular contacts with learners to understand their learning progress and well-being during the WBL period
  - Provide debriefing after the WBL activities to help learners reflect on what they have learnt and to reinforce their learning
  - Pay site visits to learners' workplace to provide necessary support and understand their learning progress and difficulties
  - Provide appropriate level of pastoral and dispute resolution support if needed

- 4.33 Course providers should make reasonable accommodations and supports for learners with special educational needs and disabilities in order to facilitate learners' access to WBL opportunities.
- 4.34 Course providers should have fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals that enable learners and WBL employers to be informed of and understand their rights and responsibilities.

## **GP-8 Quality Assurance for WBL Activities**

- 4.35 In addition to the quality assurance mechanism to support and monitor the quality of a learning programme, course providers should have a set of quality assurance measures in place to ensure the WBL activities are developed, monitored, evaluated and reviewed in partnership with employers and relevant parties.
- 4.36 Clear guidelines to learners, employers or workplace trainers, assessors, verifiers (as appropriate) with details of roles and responsibilities, WBL activities, operational arrangement, assessments, support services, complaint policy and etc. should be developed and made available to relevant parties.
- 4.37 Professional development opportunities and trainings on WBL delivery and assessments should be provided to personnel who are involved in WBL, including staff responsible for WBL development, teaching staff, trainers, assessors, verifiers and support staff (as appropriate), to ensure that they are qualified to perform their roles effectively and make continuous improvement in the provision of WBL activities.

### GP-9 Safety and Other Regulatory / Professional Bodies' Requirements

- 4.38 Course providers need to consider in conjunction with other regulatory requirements, including professional bodies', licensing authorities' and statutory bodies' rules and regulations, when designing and developing learning programmes with WBL elements. There are some regulatory requirements on number of hours or duration for observation or practice under supervision, mode and areas of assessment and appointment criteria for workplace supervisor, trainer and assessor. Course providers are advised to carefully check if the WBL activities can fulfil such requirements.
- 4.39 Course providers, employers and learners have responsibilities to themselves and to others in relation to the workplace environment, including safety and health. Course providers and employers should provide a safe and healthy working and learning environment to learners as well as guidance on occupational safety and health issues. Training and demonstration on specific skills should be provided where required before allowing learners to practise on their own in the workplace.
- 4.40 It is a good practice for course providers to check whether any relevant ordinances and statutory requirements are applicable in the delivery of any types of WBL activities. Some relevant ordinances, such as Apprenticeship Ordinance, Minimum Wage Ordinance and Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, should also be attended to and fully complied, if applicable.



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### Conclusion

- 4.41 To conclude, for those types of WBL, such as apprenticeship, practicum and internship, with higher degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training, course providers are expected to develop a more structured WBL with longer duration which constitutes a larger component of a learning programme with adoption of a more stringent approach as well as the good practices mentioned in this Chapter in order to provide a quality WBL for learners and help develop learners' knowledge and skills necessary for success in employment and articulating to higher levels of education and training.
- 4.42 For some types of WBL, including short-term attachment, job shadowing with relatively low degree of integration between classroom-based learning and workplace training, course providers may develop a relatively less structured WBL with shorter duration which constitutes a smaller component of a learning programme, while those good practices, such as clearly defined intended learning outcomes and roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, as mentioned in this Chapter should be adopted to provide a meaningful and valuable learning experience to learners for their career exploration and future development.

# GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Generic Level Descriptors (GLD)	Each qualification is assigned a level in accordance with a set of Generic Level Descriptors (GLD) which specifies, in four domains, the outcome standards expected of the qualifications at each level.
Intended Learning Outcome	The knowledge, skills and application ability expected to be attained by a student/learner as a result of completing the learning programme.
Qualification	A formal award given in recognition of the skills, knowledge and experience acquired by an individual upon the satisfactory completion of a learning programme that meets specified QF standards. It is granted on the basis of formal assessment. The award title should follow the policy laid down by the EDB, and should not include a Statement of Attendance.
Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF)	A hierarchy of recognised qualifications in academic, vocational and continuing education as well as qualifications attained by individuals through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme in Hong Kong. It is characterised by three key features: level, which reflects the depth and complexity of learning leading to the qualification; award title, which reflects the nature, area of study and hierarchy of the qualification; and credit, which indicates the volume or size of learning leading to the qualification. There are seven levels in the QF.
Qualifications Framework Level	Under the QF, each qualification is assigned a level to indicate its position in the hierarchy relative to others. The level of a qualification is determined in accordance with a set of GLD which specifies the outcome standards expected of the qualification at each level.
Qualifications Framework Standards	The skills, knowledge or experience acquired upon the completion of the learning programme that are commensurate with the requirements under the specified level of the QF.
Qualifications Register (QR)	The public face of the QF containing all qualifications that have been quality assured under the QF. HKCAAVQ is specified in Cap 592 as the QR Authority.
SCS-based course	SCS-based course refers to education and training courses that adopt the Specifications of Competency Standards (SCSs) formulated by various Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) developed by the Education Bureau (EDB) under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF) as the main basis for curriculum design.
Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) course	VQP course refers to education and training courses/courses designed to meet the competencies requirements of specific job roles defined by an Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITAC). The corresponding ITAC specifies Units of Competency selected from the Specifications of Competency Standards according to the requirements for the specific job roles for education and training providers to include in its learning programme.
Work-based Learning (WBL)	A pedagogical approach that connects learners from classroom to real-life work activities. It provides learners with authentic structured opportunities for integrated learning in a real workplace or a simulated environment and acquiring the knowledge and skills that are relevant to their studies or work.



Qualifications Framework  
Website : [www.hkqf.gov.hk](http://www.hkqf.gov.hk)

Qualifications Register  
Website : [www.hkqr.gov.hk](http://www.hkqr.gov.hk)

Qualifications Framework Secretariat  
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