

# Vocational Adjustment Class Instructional Setting

The Secondary Transition/Post-School Results Network recognizes a need for statewide guidance regarding the Vocational Adjustment Class (VAC) instructional arrangement setting. This document has been developed using researched data from local, regional, and state sources. The intent of this document is to provide a **framework for development of local district practices** for vocational adjustment class implementation. This document should be used in conjunction with regulations, laws, and rules that govern the employment and education of students.



## ***Vocational Adjustment Class***

This instructional arrangement/setting is for providing special education and related services to a student who is placed on a job with regularly scheduled direct involvement by special education personnel in the implementation of the student's IEP. This instructional arrangement/setting shall be used in conjunction with the student's individual transition plan and only after the school district's career and technology classes have been considered and determined inappropriate for the student. 19 TAC § 89.63(c)(9)

*“This code [instructional arrangement/setting] applies to students in full-time or part-time employment, as documented in the IEP. This instructional setting code **should not be confused with general career and technical education classes that are offered by the district.**”*

*A student with a disability may participate in other occupational preparation programs (which do not generate special education contact hours), including general career and technical education and career and technical education for the disabled (CTED) classes. However, **the student must be employed**, receiving special education services as required in the IEP, and coded VAC (08) to claim special education contact hours.”*

## Purpose

The vocational adjustment class is an instructional arrangement/setting that provides special education and related services through work-based learning activities and experiences. A student's IEP may be implemented through VAC when career and technical education cannot meet the needs of the student and all other options have been determined to be inappropriate. Instruction is designed to allow students to develop the competencies and skills necessary to function successfully on the job and in the community.

## Critical Considerations

When determining the appropriateness of VAC, the ARD committee should consider the following factors:

- The student meets child labor law requirements for eligibility to work.
- Current vocational assessment data is available and indicates that the student has a need for vocational courses with special education and related services.
- Based on the student's IEP goals, the ARD committee has determined that the student requires modification, accommodation, and support in a work-based learning environment.
- District CTE courses have been considered and determined inappropriate to meet the individual needs of the student.
- Least restrictive environment, including participation in the general education curriculum, has been considered.
- The student's IEP defines the amount of time the student is at work and the vocational credit awarded.

## Instructional Guidelines

Instruction provided through VAC should meet the following criteria:

- Instruction is designed to meet the needs of the individual student, as defined by the ARD committee.
- Instruction may be provided in a variety of environments, including on the job.
- Ongoing direct involvement of special education personnel is provided according to individual student needs, change in the student's duties or responsibilities on the job, or change in the job site.
- Instruction includes a continuum of skill development related to employability skills.
- Workplace competencies are the focus of instruction, based on individual student needs as determined by the ARD committee.

## Attendance

- The student is expected to attend school according to compulsory attendance requirements and local district attendance policies and procedures.
- The student is expected to comply with the attendance policies of their employer and regulations established by state and federal departments of labor.
- The VAC teacher is responsible for maintaining documentation of the student's daily attendance and participation in the work-based learning environment according to district policies and procedures.
- The TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook should be consulted for specific requirements for coding VAC in PEIMS.

## Grading

- Grading policies of the school district will be followed.
- Grades may be based on a variety of factors as determined by the ARD committee including the following:
  - \* work-based learning activities,
  - \* employer evaluations,
  - \* vocational adjustment coordinator observation of the student on the job,
  - \* student compliance with school rules, including VAC rules and guidelines,
  - \* progress on IEP goals and objectives, and
  - \* attendance.

## Employment and the IEP

The ARD committee should consider the following when developing the IEP for a student receiving special education and related services through VAC instructional arrangement/setting:

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and access to the general curriculum, including consideration of district CTE courses,
- skill areas to be addressed,
- number of class periods allowed per day for work-based learning,
- level of support needed,
- average number of hours the student will be expected to work per day and/or per week, and
- strategies for continued instruction and a continuum of services when a student's employment status changes.
  - \* Student-initiated job changes require vocational adjustment coordinator approval.
  - \* The student must notify the coordinator immediately of unplanned job changes (termination, layoff, etc.).
  - \* The ARD committee will make all decisions regarding continued participation in, or removal from, the VAC instructional arrangement/setting.

*“A student who loses a job must be provided with a full instructional day during the time he or she is without a job. A student may not stay at home during the time in which he or she was previously on the job.”*

Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (2009-2010)

## Vocational Adjustment Coordinator Responsibilities

The vocational adjustment coordinator's primary responsibility is to provide special education and related services and appropriate learning activities and experiences that are designed to develop student potential for intellectual, emotional, vocational, and social growth. The goal is to enable the student to develop competencies and skills to function successfully on the job and in the community.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities and to ensure student growth and development, the vocational adjustment coordinator should

- identify/develop job opportunities, assist students with completion of applications, participate in job interviews, and provide job coaching according to the individual needs of the student.
- maintain a regular schedule of direct involvement with the student in the implementation of the student's IEP, including progress toward postsecondary goals.
- train students in appropriate work-related attitudes, habits, behavior, dress, and communication skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment.
- evaluate student vocational skills and behavior to assist in determining work readiness, abilities, interests, and preferences.
- provide opportunities for the student to develop self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- monitor and document progress toward mastery of employment goals and objectives in the implementation of the IEP.
- disseminate information to parents and students on the purpose and expected outcomes of participation in work-based learning.

To ensure parent involvement, the coordinator should

- disseminate information to parents and students on the purpose and expected outcomes of work-based learning.
- involve parents in the development, implementation, and mastery of employment goals and objectives.
- how student's work-based learning is helping student move toward attainment of postsecondary goals.
- problem solve with the parent, student and the ARD committee regarding transportation to and from work.

To ensure professional employer relationships, the coordinator should

- provide a continuum of supports and services to employers.
  - regularly scheduled job site visits
  - ongoing communication (written correspondence, phone calls, e-mail, etc.)
  - on-the-job supports/job coaching
- collaborate with employers to provide learning opportunities for students.
- maintain and document ongoing contact with employers.

To ensure appropriate community interaction, the coordinator should

- network with local business and community leaders to gain knowledge of the job market in the community and help develop job sites.
- collaborate with other service providers in building employability skills for students.
- maintain an active role in developing positive public relations between school and community.

To ensure professional growth and development, the coordinator should

- maintain current knowledge of labor market trends and needs.
- participate in ongoing professional growth opportunities.
- possess knowledge and understanding of current federal and state education and child labor laws.
- facilitate compliance with local district policies and procedures.

To ensure quality instruction and classroom management, the coordinator should

- serve as a member of the ARD committee when initial or continued participation is being considered for a student.
- participate in development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.
- instruct students in vocational, employability, self-help skills, and access to services.
- provide on-the-job support as needed for student success. The vocational adjustment coordinator may be required to provide job coaching services or supervise the activities of job coaches assigned to students.
- monitor and report student progress toward attainment of postsecondary goals.
- maintain records as required by the local school district and assigned campus(es).
- collaborate with colleagues in the implementation of employment goals and objectives for students.

To ensure effective communication, the coordinator should

- maintain and document communication with support staff assigned to work with VAC students (job coaches, behavior specialists, etc.).
- demonstrate professional, ethical, and responsible behavior.
- maintain and document effective communication between student, parent, and employer.
- maintain confidentiality of specific student information in accordance with federal and state rules and regulations and local district policies.

## Student Responsibilities

The ARD committee, based on individual student abilities, prior training and coursework, and appropriate supports needed, should define responsibilities and expectations for students receiving special education and related services through the VAC instructional arrangement/setting. Student responsibilities may include the following activities:

- Provide documentation of eligibility to work to the employer.
- Demonstrate ability to participate in the job search process.
- Provide documentation of current employment (copy of work schedule, paycheck stub, etc.).
- Maintain employment at a work site approved by the VAC.
- Demonstrate work ethic by observing workplace rules, exhibiting social skills/behaviors appropriate for the work environment, and performing assigned duties as directed by the employer.
- Maintain contact with the vocational adjustment coordinator regarding changes in work schedules and employment situation.
- Demonstrate acceptable performance on the job and in classes at school.
- Participate in the development of goals and objectives for success in work-based learning.
- Follow school rules while in school and on the job.
- Follow procedures for work-based learning as defined by the ARD committee, the vocational adjustment coordinator, and local district policies.

## Parent Responsibilities

Parents are encouraged to provide support for students receiving services through the VAC instructional arrangement/setting. To ensure student success, parents should:

- actively support and/or participate in the development, implementation, and mastery of IEP goals and objectives that will be implemented through VAC.
- maintain contact with the vocational adjustment coordinator whenever problems arise at the student's job site.
- agree to support the student by helping them to understand the following:
  - \* the student will be employed in a paid work situation.
  - \* the student may be removed from the work-based learning program if he/she fails to comply with the requirements.
  - \* the student may be fired from his/her job for unsatisfactory performance on the job.
  - \* the student is responsible for complying with his/her employer's policies and procedures.

## Employer Responsibilities

As partners with the school in supporting students in work-based learning, employers should be willing to provide the following information and support:

- provide verification of employment and ongoing documentation of employment status.
- provide training as necessary to fulfill job requirements.
- provide accommodations as necessary for student needs.
- define and clarify job description, duties, responsibilities, and expectations.
- collaborate with the school, the vocational adjustment coordinator, and the student to provide appropriate work-based learning experiences.
- provide opportunities for student growth in their job assignments.
- provide periodic evaluation of student success/progress.
- maintain communication with the vocational adjustment coordinator.

## School Administrative Responsibilities

The district and campus administration is expected to support the VAC instructional arrangement/setting as a part of the overall school program and as a special education service. School administrators should:

- demonstrate knowledge of the VAC instructional arrangement/setting, including district policies and procedures for participation in work-based learning.
- participate in the ARD committee decision-making process.
- ensure that students receiving special education services through the VAC instructional arrangement/setting are informed of student activities that may occur while the student is not on campus.
- provide a continuum of curriculum options to meet individual student needs.
- ensure that the vocational adjustment coordinator has adequate time for direct involvement, as determined by the ARD committee, to meet the individual needs of the student.



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