

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services (OATELS) Washington, D.C. 20210	<u>Distribution:</u>  A-541 Hdqtrs. A-544 Field TC. A-547 SD + RD + SAC + Lab. Com.	Subject: Competency based Time and Performance Options for Apprenticeship Programs; and Minimum Work Experience Requirement to Award an Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion  Code 400.3
Symbols: DSNIP/CFV		Action: Immediate

**PURPOSE:** This Circular replaces Circular 95-05 and clarifies the acceptable options for Competency/Performance-Based on-the-job work process schedules and related instruction outlines to be submitted to the Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer, and Labor Services (OATELS).

In particular, this Circular explains how to comply with the requirements for 2,000-hour minimum work experience and approximate time allocation for each major work process competency. A registered apprentice must satisfy these requirements to receive a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship from OATELS.

**BACKGROUND:** Paragraphs 29.5 (2) and (3) of 29 CFR Part 29 indicate that a registered apprenticeship program must have, respectively, “a term of apprenticeship, not less than 2,000 hour minimum of work experience, consistent with training requirements as established by industry practice,” and “an outline of work processes in which the apprentice will receive supervised work experience and training on the job, and the allocation of the approximate time (emphasis added) to be spent in each major process.”

OATELS has recognized the following three methods for compliance with the minimum time and allocation requirements:

Time-Based Requirements

A time-based occupation requires a minimum of 2,000 hours, which includes an outline of the specific work processes and the approximate time requirement for each individual work process under that occupation.

Competency/Performance Program Requirements

Competency/performance based apprenticeship programs are premised on attainment of demonstrated, observable and measurable competencies in lieu of meeting time based work experience and training on-the-job requirements. However, these programs still have to comply with the requirement for the allocation of the approximate time to be spent in each major process. Therefore, work experience process schedules and related instruction outlines must specify approximate time of completion or attainment of each competency, which can be applied toward the 2,000-hour requirement (competencies demonstrated notwithstanding and assuming no credit for previous experience). In competency/performance based programs apprentices may accelerate the rate of competency achievement or take

additional time beyond the approximate time of completion or attainment due the open entry and exit design.

For the purpose of this Circular, a competency is defined as, "An observable, measurable pattern of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully."

Competency/performance based training programs have the following characteristics:

- Competencies should be identified and defined through a job/task analysis and directly related to the job/role.
- Organized learning activities should be structured and wherever possible, self-paced with open entry and open exit.
- Measures or tests of competency attainment should be observable, repeatable and agreed to in advance.
- Work experience process schedules and related instruction outlines should include the approximate time/hours or minimum - maximum times/hours for each competency attained in order to document successful completion.

#### Hybrid Program Requirements

In addition to time-based programs which have a fixed set time for completion (i.e., 2,000, 4,000, 6,000 hours) and competency/performance based programs, a third alternative has evolved which, in effect, is a "hybrid" of the two types of programs previously mentioned. This third type of program is basically a combination of time and performance considerations whereby work processes are developed with a minimum - maximum time/hours for each task or job requirement (i.e., minimum 200 hours - maximum 400 hours). [Reference Bulletin 95-06]

#### Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship - Minimum Hourly Requirements

While competency/performance based programs document the levels of an apprentice's skill attainment toward advancement and completion not addressed by the traditional time-based programs, time considerations are still important, especially in awarding a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship. In order for an apprentice to be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, he/she is required to have worked as a registered apprentice in the apprenticeable occupation under the program sponsor requesting the certificate for a minimum of 1,000 hours.

**ACTION:** This Circular supersedes Circular 95-05, issued April 10, 1995.

All apprenticeship program sponsors (existing and new) should be made aware of the options available to them in developing their work process schedules and related instruction outlines. Also, program sponsors should be informed that an apprentice must work as registered apprentice under the program sponsor within the apprenticeable occupation for a minimum of 1,000 hours (competencies demonstrated notwithstanding and assuming no credit for previous experience), before a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship will be awarded by OATELS.

NOTE: This Circular is being sent via Electronic-Mail (E-Mail).

