



Demystifying the Pre- Employment Career Training (PECT) Program

Illinois Department of Human Services –
Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS-DRS)

Agenda

- Who can participate?
- Understanding Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
- Description of the five required Pre-ETS with examples.
- Resources to support service delivery.



Terminology

- IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- IPE - Individualized Plan for Employment
- PECT - Pre-Employment Career Training Program
- Pre-ETS - Pre-Employment Transition Services
- RSA - Rehabilitation Services Administration
- TPCA - Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement
- VR - Vocational Rehabilitation



Who Can Participate in the PECT Contract?

- A student with a disability in Illinois is defined as one who will be at least 14 and not older than 21 years of age or fall under Public Act 102-0172 which extends eligibility to the end of the regular school year for students whose 22nd birthday falls within a regular school term.
- The individual must be in a secondary education program and must be eligible for and receiving special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or is a student who is an individual with a disability for purposes of section 504 of the Federal Register.
- Both potentially eligible and eligible students with a disability can be served.



Potentially Eligible and Eligible Students Defined

- **Potentially Eligible** - Students can be served as potentially eligible, which means that they are not moved through the full eligibility process. These students are in need of the Pre-ETS, but do not need individualized VR services at this time. They remain as potentially eligible until such time that further individualized services are needed, including adult services, assistance with training, or further supports. The Agreement form is required for service provision to begin.
- **Eligible** - Students that are in need of individualized services or those that participated under the previous program, STEP, are served as eligible. These students move through the VR process of completing an initial interview, being found eligible for VR services after documentation of disability is reviewed and will have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) completed.



Collaboration between schools and IDHS-DRS

- Working together for the good of students with a disability.
- Successful partnerships share common goals and work towards collaborative thinking.
- Providing necessary services to increase student success after school exit.
- Services are not duplicated to the students with a disability.
- Increased planning and coordination of services between the two partners.





Understanding Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Pre-ETS are a set of specialized federally mandated services designed to help students with a disability successfully transition from high school to further education or employment.

Pre-ETS increase opportunities for students with disabilities to increase and practice skills leading to meaningful competitive integrated employment.

Pre-ETS increase opportunities for further exploration of comprehensive training program, vocational and certificate training, and post-secondary education opportunities.

Services can be provided virtually, individually, or in a group setting.



Five Required Pre-ETS

- All contracts for students with a disability are based upon these five required services
 - Job Exploration Counseling: Discovering career interests and local labor market trends.
 - Work-Based Learning Experience: Gaining hands-on experience through a variety of opportunities. Including internships, job shadowing, or employer-paid employment.
 - Workplace Readiness Training: Building of soft skills and independent living skills related to employment.
 - Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities: Exploring different types of training based on interests.
 - Instruction in Self-Advocacy: Understanding rights, learning to communicate needs, and requesting accommodations.



Awareness of Changes Needed to Pre-ETS Statewide

- As most of you probably know, DRS had a visit by RSA in the Fall of 2024. During that visit, we learned of certain areas related to Pre-ETS and the PECT contract, which is a third-party cooperative arrangement (TPCA) contract type, are not meeting federal guidelines.
- We also learned that there were certain areas within the state that had no provision of Pre-ETS. Services must be offered statewide to any student with a disability.
- To ensure that we are meeting federal regulations, changes needed to be made to the provision and tracking of Pre-ETS.





Description of the five required Pre-ETS with examples

Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities

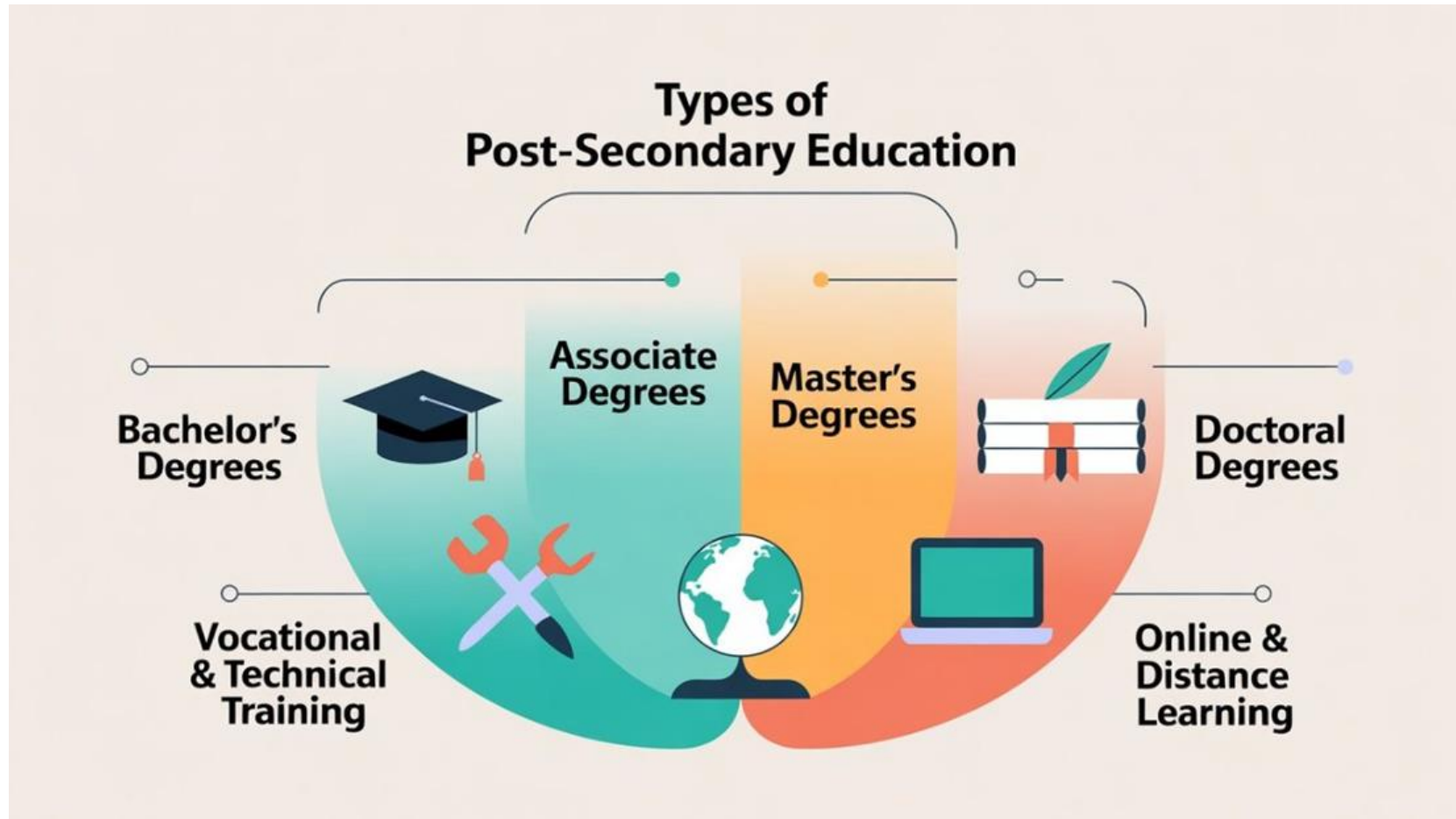
The full title under federal regulations is “Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.” This is typically shortened to Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities.

Students explore their career path of interest. Determine if further training is required to reach their goals.

Skill development and knowledge gained through the student's exploration is important to finding a career that fits their needs.



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Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities



Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities Guiding Questions

Does the student have awareness of available programs and requirements in their area of interest?

Has the student explored training that offers degree or certificate programs that fits their interests?

Are the family and student prepared and planning for post-secondary training?

Have alternate options been explored if they are not able to attend their training of choice?



Examples of Activities

- Visiting local post-secondary campuses.
- Reviewing examples of college applications.
- Discussing opportunities for financial aid, scholarships, or grants.
- Researching comprehensive transition programs available in area of interest.
- Inviting recent graduates who moved into post-secondary training to come back and talk with students.
- Researching how to request accommodations after high school and discussing the difference in supports.
- Offer lessons on financial planning and budgeting for college expenses.
- Provide information on available networks of support while participating in a post-secondary education opportunity.



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Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities



Instruction in Self-Advocacy



Activities that practice requesting reasonable accommodations at work

Provide opportunities for students to practice discussing their individual strengths and challenges and how their disabilities may impact work performance

Practice filling out generic Reasonable Accommodation requests



Instruction in Self-Advocacy



1. Knowing yourself: Is the student able to express and understanding of their strengths, abilities, disabilities, challenges, and career interests, utilizing their preferred method of communication?
2. Knowing your needs: Does the student have a working knowlege of the types of supports, services and accommodations they need to be successful at work, in a training program, in the community , and living independently?
3. Knowing how to get what you need: Is the student able to set goals/develop a plan for achieving those goals; advocate for their rights and responsibilities at work, in a training program or socially; and know where to go for assistance?

Instruction in Self-Advocacy – Job Accommodations Network

Explore Job Accommodations Network (JAN) with the student

Instruct students how to identify support needs, explore websites such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and practice requesting and using accommodations and/or modifications in a variety of settings



Instruction in Self-Advocacy, continued

Develop a peer mentoring group that works through issues related to self-advocacy skills in the workplace

- Connect students with peer mentors to talk about their experiences with self-advocacy in employment and/or post-secondary training
- Offer lessons on disability disclosure, how to advocate for their rights and responsibilities, and use role playing activities to allow students to practice.



Instruction in Self-Advocacy, continued

Develop individual self-advocacy goals

Have the students establish relevant personal self-advocacy goals for the year (for example, keeping a calendar, making medical appointments, order books in alternative formats)



Instruction in Self-Advocacy, continued

Participation in youth leadership group or activities

Provide opportunities for students to participate in Student Leadership activities or groups.

- Develop a peer mentor group for students to participate in
- Encourage students to lead their own IEP meeting

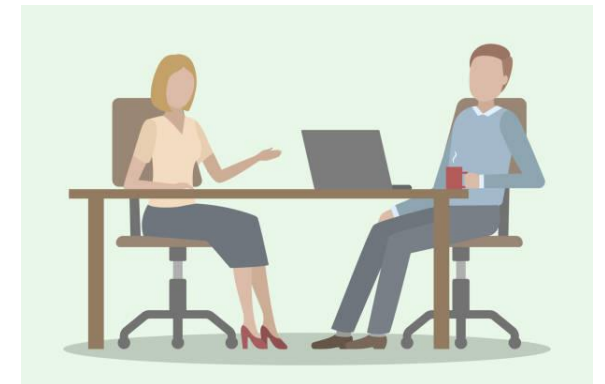


Instruction in Self-Advocacy, continued

Develop opportunities for students to discuss their strengths and challenges and how their disability may impact work

Provide lessons on

- Disability Disclosure
- Advocating for rights and responsibilities
- Use role playing activities to allow students to practice disability disclosure and accommodation needs.



Job Exploration Counseling

- Explore job tasks and requirements for at least two career options
 - This could include:
 - Interview people in the career path you are interested in
 - Use resources on Illinois WorkNet like Careers, Wages and Trends
 - Spend time in class writing what questions you will ask in the interview
 - Discuss how to remain professional, friendly and confident during the interview
 - Practice writing a thank you letter to the person you interview



Job Exploration Counseling – Interest Inventories

Interest Inventories:

Help students identify their preferences and patterns of interest in various activities, subjects and work environments.

Students tend to enjoy these types of activities.

Discovering preferences, along with Vocational Counseling, can help a student narrow down their vocational goal.



Job Exploration Counseling-Interest Inventories

[Photo Career Quiz Based on Holland Codes | RIASEC](#)
[Occupational Interest Inventory](#)



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Job Exploration Counseling – Interest Inventories

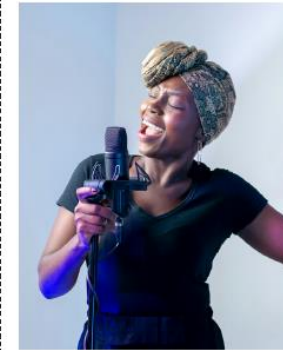
Hobbies Flash Cards



Reading



Dancing



Singing



Watching TV



Playing Chess



Collecting Coins



Volleyball



Swimming

Job Exploration Counseling

VR serves approximately 1 million individuals with disabilities per year. TAP offers the largest pool of candidates with disabilities in the US.

TAP also offers services for businesses to post jobs, search resumes based on skill sets and geography, interview candidates and have online job fairs

Talent Acquisition Portal®



Job Exploration Counseling – Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP)

- Profile creation and exploration of Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) website.
- TAP is a web site that was developed for persons with disabilities to find jobs in their area of interest. It is specifically for customers who are working with Vocational Rehabilitation or another approved agency.
 - Allow students to create their profile in TAP.
 - Show students how to search for jobs in their area of interest and geographical location

Talent Acquisition Portal®



Job Exploration Counseling – Interest Inventories, continued

The Princeton Review Career Quiz

In order for us to estimate your personal Interests and Usual Style, you will first need to answer a series of questions. Read each pair of phrases below and decide which one of the two most describes you, then select the radio button next to that phrase.

As you make your choices, assume that all jobs are of equal pay and prestige. When you have answered each of the questions, click "Continue" to go on. There are 24 total questions.

#1.

- I would rather be a wildlife expert.
- I would rather be a public relations professional.

#2.

- I would rather be a company controller.
- I would rather be a TV news anchor.



Job Exploration Counseling-Interest Inventories, continued.

OhioMeansJobs-Career Exploration Roadmap

What lights you up at your core?

Choose 1

Back

-  Accomplishing Goals
-  Being Creative
-  Being Physically Active
-  Building Things
-  Communicating / Sharing Stories
-  Helping People
-  Learning / Being Challenged
-  Problem Solving
-  Teaching / Mentoring
-  Upholding a Cause and Belief
-  Working Independently
-  Working with Others

Job Exploration Counseling – Interest Inventories, continued

Step 1: Read each list below and place a check mark beside any of the questions that you answer **yes**.

___ **R**

- ___ Do you like to work or play outdoors?
- ___ Do you like to build things?
- ___ Would you like to learn how to fix your bike?
- ___ Are you good at figuring out how things work?

___ **S**

- ___ Do you like to help your friends solve problems?
- ___ Do you like to care for sick people?
- ___ Do you enjoy having lots of friends in your class?
- ___ Do you like to work in a group or a team?



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Job Exploration Counseling – Interest Inventories, cont.



O*NET OnLine

Occupation keyword search:

Help ▾ Find Occupations ▾ Advanced Searches ▾ O*NET Data ▾ Crosswalks ▾ Share ▾ Sites ▾

O*NET OnLine features

- Military
- Education
- Occupation Handbook
- SOC
- DOT
- RAPIDS
- ESCO

career sites & resources

Introduction ▾

Occupation Keyword Search ^

Examples: 25-1011.00, dental assistant

Find Occupations ^

- Bright Outlook
- Career Cluster
- Hot Technology
- Industry

"I want to be a..."

Start the career you've dreamed about, or find one you never imagined. Discover your interests with the [O*NET Interest Profiler](#) and find more exploration options at [My Next Move](#).

ATTN: VETERANS

Put your military skills and experience to work in civilian life.

Army (MOS) ▾



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Guiding Questions-Job Exploration Counseling

1. Awareness: Does the student have a general awareness of careers, various occupations and career pathways?
2. Exploration: Has the student been able to explore occupations and career pathways in their area of interest?
3. Planning and Preparation: Is the student prepared to express their vocational interests, and identify the career pathway they want to pursue?



Workplace Readiness Training

- A wide variety of skills are explored through this Pre-ETS. This includes social skills, interpersonal skills, independent living skills, orientation and mobility training, and others related to work.
- This service includes skills that are common in the workplace. These are often referred to as soft skills.
- Students learn how to interact in the workplace with coworkers, supervisors, and others.
- They build an understanding of social and interpersonal skills and their importance in the workplace.



Workplace Readiness Guiding Questions

- Does the student have awareness of the skills necessary to obtain and then maintain competitive integrated employment?
- Does the student have the social and interpersonal skills to be successful in the workplace?
- Have there been opportunities to practice their social and/or interpersonal skills either in the classroom setting or in the community?
- Has the student explored independent living skills need to be successful in a competitive integrated employment setting?
- Does the student understand how punctuality and following deadlines affects employment?



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Workplace Readiness



Examples of Activities

- Provide financial literacy training based on the National Disability Institute training.
- Assist students in exploring how to set up or join virtual meetings.
- Participation in mock interviews.
- Orientation and mobility skills and training.
- Practice problem-solving skills and conflict resolution through workplace scenarios.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn about personal care.
- Practice skills such as food preparation, clothing management, and/or household maintenance.
- Provide travel training to students with transportation barriers.
- Assist student to organize appointments and deadlines and then meets them.



Work-Based Learning Experiences

- These include in-school or after school opportunities to participate in experiences in the community to the maximum extent possible.
- These include many different types of experiences depending on the student's interests. Some examples include, internships, job shadowing, workplace tours, paid and non-paid work opportunities.
- They strengthen opportunities to gain experience and work skills in a competitive integrated environment prior to school exit.



Work Based Learning Experience -Job Shadowing

- With Job Shadowing, a student can learn what really happens in the workplace.
 - This can be accompanied by school staff or alone.
 - Some things that a student can do during Job Shadowing:
 - Observe how a person uses software or technology
 - Sit in on Client/Team Meetings
 - Assist with minor administrative tasks
 - Take a tour of the location
 - Ask the person question about their career
 - Take notes about questions/ideas you may have



Work Based Learning Activity-Internship/Volunteer/Part-time work

Participate in a Volunteer Activities/Internships/Part-time jobs

- Aids in Skills Development and Employability-things like teamwork, communication, problem-solving
- Students who volunteer are more likely to graduate and also tend to perform better academically
- First-hand experience and exposure to different career fields
- Builds social network that can be helpful to future careers
- Improves confidence in career readiness, as well as experience navigating challenges and setbacks



Work-Based Learning Experiences – Interviews/Tours

Students can spend time in class determining:

- Who they want to interview.
- What they want to learn from them.
- Setting up the experiences.



Work-Based Learning Experience Guiding Questions

1. Awareness: Does the student have a general awareness of work or what it means to have a job?
2. Exploration: Has the student had opportunities to practice and/or improve workplace skills?
3. Planning and Preparation: Is the student prepared to use the workplace to gain the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities?
4. 4. Paid Work-Based Learning Experiences: Does the student/family understand the impact of participation in paid work-based learning experiences?





Resources

Resources for Pre-ETS

- [Pre-Employment Transition Services \(Pre-ETS\) - National Deaf Center](#)
- [Blind Abilities – Blind Abilities: Podcasts with a Blindness Perspective.](#)
- [Pre-Employment Transition Services - NTACTION](#)
- [JAN - Job Accommodation Network](#)



Resources for Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities

- [Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Postsecondary Education - NTACTION: C](#) – Must create an account, but it is free
- [Home page | Think College](#)
- [Think College | Autism Speaks](#)
- [Postsecondary Education & Training Preparation Toolkit - NTACTION: C](#)
- [Rethinking College | Think College](#)
- [Student Corner | Think College](#)
- [Illinois Post Secondary Profiles](#)



Resources for Instruction in Self-Advocacy

- [What is Job Shadowing? Definition, Benefits, and How to Set It Up – Forage](#)
- [Interest inventories | Psychology | Research Starters | EBSCO Research](#)
- [The Lasting Benefits of Youth Volunteering: Building Stronger Futures Through Service](#)
- [Volunteering: The pathway to personal growth and career success – OECD Education and Skills Today](#)
- [Service and Volunteer Work Linked to Key Benefits for Youth](#)





Resources for Job Exploration Counseling

Research on both local and national labor market trends that match career interest

- [Illinois Department of Employment Security Data and Statistics](#) - A clearinghouse of all IDES Labor Market Information, including Business Employment Dynamics, Illinois Labor Market Review, Help Wanted Online (HWOL), and Employment Projections.
- [Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information](#) - The Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information System interactively delivers labor market and occupational information and resources, such as local area profiles, industry employment trends, largest employers, average wages, population and employment data, available by geographic area including counties, metropolitan areas, and local workforce areas.
- [O*Net OnLine](#) - Find and search occupations and explore careers. Choose from industry, a field of work, and more to find wage and employment trends, job openings on the web, and more.
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) - The Occupational Outlook Handbook can help you find career information on duties, education, and training, pay, and outlook for hundreds of occupations.
- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) - Find economic news on employment and unemployment, employment projections, productivity & technology, inflation and prices, and more.
- [INTEREST INVENTORIES](#)

Resources for Workplace Readiness Training

- [Workplace Readiness Training - NTACTION](#) This requires a free account to be created.
- [Money Smart for Young People | FDIC.gov](#)
- [10 Tips to Teach Your Child to Save Money](#)
- [Health - Before Age 18](#)
- [Disability Hub MN - Work: Youth and work](#)
- [Financial Empowerment - National Disability Institute](#)



References

- Lite Facts [What is Post Secondary Education? Complete 2026 Guide, Types And Benefits](#)
- Sallie Mae clip art used with Workplace Readiness slides
- [Money Management And Budgeting](#)



Knowledge Checks

- Are associated only with the Pre-ETS provided and billed on the Flow Chart.
 - Are completed after the Pre-ETS has been provided to the student. Student can complete as they are provided or submit it once at the end of the school year.
 - If they did not participate in the activity/service under the Pre-ETS, they would click “no.”
 - The intent was to create a system where skills progression could be documented. After review, we will need to for FY27 to ensure that we can demonstrate the good work that is occurring. With the information learned from this year, we will be moving into a pre- and post-knowledge check for FY27.
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- These are not associated with the Match PowerPoints.



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Questions?