



At-a-Glance: Three Approaches to Apprenticeship Program Completion Apprenticeship Final Rule, 29 CFR Part 29

What are the three approaches to apprenticeship program completion?

The revised regulations, specifically § 29.5(b)(2), present three ways in which an apprentice may progress through a registered apprenticeship program:

1. A competency-based approach, involving successful demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge by an apprentice, as verified by the program sponsor, with an on-the-job learning component and related technical instruction (RTI);
2. A traditional, time-based approach involving completion of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning experience; and
3. A hybrid approach which requires the apprentice to complete a specified minimum number of on-the-job-learning hours and RTI hours to demonstrate competency in the defined subject areas.

Program sponsors determine the most appropriate approach, subject to approval by the Registration Agency.

How was the issue addressed in the original regulations?

Previously, the regulations provided explicitly only for a traditional, time-based approach for completion of an apprenticeship program, defined as not less than 2,000 hours of work experience, consistent with training requirements as established by industry practice.

What is the reason for the change?

As part of the Department's strategic emphasis on meeting the training needs of business and workers and expanding apprenticeship opportunity, it became clear that the traditional time-based approach to training did not fit the circumstances of all industries or occupations seeking to use the registered apprenticeship model. This revision seeks to provide a variety of industries with greater flexibility and options for approaches that address their talent-development needs through apprenticeship. For further information, please refer to pages 64408-64409 of the Federal Register Notice for the final rule (73 FR 64402, Oct. 29, 2008).

What are the next steps?

The final rule was published October 29, 2008, in the Federal Register, and takes effect on December 29, 2008. The final rule provides State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs) with two years from the effective date.

As a first step to learning more about competency-based and hybrid approaches, stakeholders are encouraged to review existing guidance for recognizing competency development under the previous regulatory standards, such as the Office of Apprenticeship's (OA) Circular 2005-03, which describes these two approaches. Additionally, materials available on the CareerOneStop Web site, (<http://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel>), provide examples of recently approved competency-based apprenticeship programs in the advanced manufacturing and health care industries.

OA recognizes that program sponsors and SAAs may require more detailed information and training on competency-based and hybrid approaches. OA intends to issue additional policy guidance and hold meetings and training sessions to provide further explanation and technical assistance about competency-based apprenticeship and other aspects of the final rule. These training and technical assistance materials and additional policy guidance about final rule implementation will be posted on the OA's regulations Web page, www.doleta.gov/oa/regulations.cfm.

For more information about the revised regulations, please contact OA at (202) 693-2796 or Regs.Apprenticeship@dol.gov.