

Selecting an Apprenticeable Occupation

Purpose: When developing an apprenticeship program with an employer, selecting the right occupation(s) for the program is crucial. This page describes how a workforce development professional can help an employer make the right decision about which occupation(s) to include in their registered apprenticeship program.

Discuss Needs With Employer

Meet with the employer to discuss their needs. Ask the employer which job roles they're seeking to apprentice, which technologies their apprentices will be expected to learn in each role, and request a job description or job posting, if possible.

Review Apprenticeable Occupations

The DOL recognizes over 1,200 occupations as being "apprenticeable" in registered apprenticeship programs. The current list of DOL-recognized apprenticeable occupations can be found at the link below. Use ctrl+F to search for the job title and key words related to the employer's needs.

Related Resources:

<https://www.doleta.gov/OA/occupations.cfm>



Do Some Research

If the right apprenticeable occupation from the DOL list isn't immediately clear, do some research to determine whether there may be other names for the occupation the employer has described. For example, "Maintenance Technicians" are also sometimes called "Mechatronics Technicians." Use O*Net and other sources to find possible alternatives.

Related Resources: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Pull Samples & Review With Employer

The best way to know which occupation(s) are right for an apprenticeship program is to review some sample work processes for those occupations. Ask your DOL OA contact for work process samples, or search for relevant samples using online resources like the one below.

Related Resources: <https://apprenticeshipusa.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/11/30/09/34/Example-Apprenticeship-Standards-and-Work-Processes>

Try Again!

If the work process samples would require significant adjustments or customizations, it's possible that there's an occupation that would be a better fit. Try searching for alternative occupations with the new information you have from the employer.

Nothing Fits?

If you can't find an occupation that suits the employer's needs, it's possible that one does not exist yet (perhaps the occupation is in a very specific field or includes emerging technologies). In this case, you may be able to customize a program using an existing occupation, or can explore creating a new occupation. For more information on creating new apprenticeable occupations, consult with the DOL OA.