This program is designed to provide a sound foundation in preparation for adult living for students with disabilities. Through participation in a standards based curriculum with a vocational focus students learn skills necessary to enter the world of work, retain employment, and seek other employment throughout their adult lives. Students with disabilities who eligible for this course of study, are provided common core academics and relevant work experiences through a variety of training formats.

The Occupational Course of Study is designed to provide eligible students as determined by the IEP Team, the skills needed to develop a foundation for work. This course of study consists of three components: (1) standards based curriculum, (2) job training, and (3) competitive work experiences. The program addresses the aptitudes that are necessary for successful adult living and employment. Students follow a course of study that emphasizes integration into the working community after high school graduation.

Criteria for Placement
Students with disabilities in grades 9-12 are determined eligible to follow the Occupational Course of Study by an IEP Team. All decisions regarding participation in the Occupational Course of Study are made by the IEP Team and are based on the individual student’s needs and goals for their future. The course of study is designed for students with mild intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Curriculum Requirements
Currently, Pitt County Schools requires the successful completion of 28 units of credit or 87.5% of total possible credits in order for a student with disabilities to receive a diploma through the Occupational Course of Study. Among graduation credit requirements is the completion of 300 hours of school-based training, 240 hours of community-based training, and 360 hours of paid employment. If necessary, the student could remain in school for additional semesters to complete all requirements, including the required training hours and paid employment hours, until the age of 22.

Community-based training hours will be completed during the school day, while paid employment may be completed at anytime while the student is enrolled in high school. Community-based training opportunities begin during a student’s second year in high school and are provided once the eligibility criteria have been met. Students who have obtained competitive employment are required to provide Occupational Course of Study staff with actual paycheck stubs for documentation toward the paid employment hours.

Students enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study are provided with a program designed to prepare them to live, work, play and continue to learn successfully in the community following high school graduation. Students also have the opportunity to take Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that provide on-campus and off-campus vocational training. These classes are modified to meet the student’s unique educational needs.

Registration Guidelines
Transition planning involves the school, the student, and his/her family, and must be initiated prior to entry into high school. Therefore, during the student's middle school experience, the IEP Team must discuss the specific
needs of the student. Consideration should be given to how well the student performs academically in class and on tests (standardized and non-standardized). The student’s interests, goals for the future, and personal habits and attitudes should also be considered.

If the IEP Team is unsure which course of study will be most appropriate for the student, it is recommended that the student follow the Future Ready Core Course of Study during their 9th grade year. If during that year the IEP Team, in collaboration with District Support Staff, determines that the student is unable to successfully meet the requirements, even with modifications, adaptations, and supplemental services, a transfer into the Occupational Course of Study will be considered. The IEP Team will review the student’s transcripts and determine if any earned credits can substitute for the course credits in the Occupational Course of Study. To be eligible to graduate with a North Carolina High School diploma following the Occupational Course of Study all course credits and training/work hours must be completed.

During the annual registration period the student, with the assistance of his/her special education teacher and family, will complete the appropriate registration form. The form identifies the courses that the student plans to take the following year. Information on the courses taken is maintained in the student’s career portfolio and reviewed annually to ensure that the student is progressing toward completion of graduation requirements.

Students with disabilities who graduate with a diploma following the Occupational Course of Study are not eligible to continue their education at a four-year university. Students who meet the graduation requirements for the Occupational Course of Study become eligible for the open enrollment process at local community colleges. Some programs require placement testing.

**Occupational Course of Study Graduation Requirements**

**Sample High School Plan**

**9th Grade**
- English I
- Introduction to Mathematics
- Applied Science
- Prep I
- Prep I Lab
- Health/PE
- CTE Elective
- Elective

**10th Grade**
- English II
- High School Math I
- Biology
- Prep II
- CTE Elective
- Elective
Elective

**11th Grade**
English III
Financial Management
American History I
Prep III
CTE Elective
CTE Elective
Elective

**12th Grade**
English IV
American History II
Co-op Work Release
Prep IV
Prep IV Lab
Elective
Elective

**Required Training and Paid Employment Hours:**
School Based Training (SBT): 300 hours
Community Based Training (CBT): 240 hours
Paid Employment: 360 hours

**Mathematics Graduation Requirements for Students Following the Occupational Course of Study**

1 - Foundational mathematics course: Introduction to Mathematics

2 - PLUS one core mathematics course: Math I

3 - PLUS one Application-based mathematics course:
Financial Management OR Personal Finance

Students who complete the sequence above should be classified as Occupational Course of Study (OCS). Students following OCS may also complete a CTE concentration.