Advance CTE
Research Request
Validation of Industry-Recognized Credentials (*Prepared for Oklahoma)*

Request: *I am reaching out to get your input on industry credentials/degrees list for your state. I am working on collecting information for a working group in Oklahoma. They have reviewed the latest publication by Advance CTE and have a few more questions. Below are the questions.*

- *Does your state have industry credentials/degrees of value definitions?*
- *If you have an industry credentials/degrees list, who uses the list and how?*
- *What are the criteria used to identify credentials/degrees on a state approved list?*
- *Any additional information you would like to provide on industry credentials is greatly appreciated.*

The following states submitted responses: Arkansas, California, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin. Of those states:

- Nine reported that they publish a list of industry-recognized credentials at the state level;
- Four specifically described criteria and processes for identifying and validating which credentials are included on the list. However, the processes states described range from intensive, collaborative processes that rely on data and employed input to more relaxed approaches whereby the state reviews and approves locally-submitted credentials without much scrutiny.
- Many are still working to develop processes and criteria for developing and validating a statewide list of industry-recognized credentials.

State responses and materials are available on Advance CTE's website at https://careertech.org/member-research-requests. Additional information on industry-recognized credentials is available on the Learning that Works Resource Center at https://careertech.org/resources/credentials-and-assessments.

Arkansas

Arkansas does have credentials/degrees of value definitions defined in state statute. Senate Bill 4232 (Act 554) was revised in 2017 and section 6-5-1004 (Technical Skills Assessments) is addressed.

A list of 111 industry certifications has been released to the Career and Technical Education teachers to use as a guide of what certifications to review for their specific POS needs.

The Department of Education (per Act 554) shall provide a list of approved third party, industry recognized assessments. ARCareerEd shall review the list and approve the list using a process developed by the department.

It has been difficult in obtaining a valid list of student's certification(s) to report. As of now, we rely on self-reporting by the state CTE coordinators. Our goal is to obtain individual student lists directly from the third party vendors.

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California

CA has put together a vetting process for industry certifications. While there are many lists in the state, the certifications on those lists have not been vetted for quality. We plan to pre-populate a list of certifications with those that are issued by the state and then our LEAs will submit industry certs to us for vetting. The result will be a list of certifications that we know are high quality , accepted by industry and we will also be able to provide a profile of the certification. It's a little more complicated than what I can put in an email so let me know if you want more detail and we can set up a phone call.

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Iowa

We do not have credential value definitions in place currently, but we are in the process of collecting data on how the most commonly offered industry credentials at community colleges are connected to state-identified high demand occupations (by CIP#), and which of the credentials employers value most in their industry (via survey).

We have assembled a draft list of industry credentials as described above for review and future use by community college academic administrators for decision-making, and we will possibly use the list as information for requested future education legislation incentives.

The definition of industry credential (from 2018-19 Iowa Community Colleges MIS reporting manual) is that the credential is "Endorsed by a 3rd party certification or state/federal regulatory agency leading to or enhancing employment."   Colleges report students who meet one, two or all of the following conditions:

1) a college reported a successfully completed program (no test required but competencies met) to the governing agency, when such a completion is the requirement for the governing agency to award the 3rd party credential or state board (e.g., Coaching Certificate/License);
2) a college administered the required test and then reported findings to the state governing agency that a student had successfully passed and the credential is then awarded to the student by the governing agency or state board (e.g., CNA License);

3) a college obtained information regarding students' 3rd party credentials from the governing agency, state board, or directly from the student. Colleges only include initial certifications and do not include recertifications or relicensures.   Our recent credentials survey of colleges allowed them to also include credentials for which the college holds student preparation classes.

While Iowa has so far concentrated on collecting the information at the community college level, this upcoming Fall, Iowa will be collecting similar information from secondary school districts. Iowa has still to work some conceptual and methodological issues that need addressing when it come to the application of industry certifications at the high school level.

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Louisiana

We are always happy to share the IBC process in LA. Please visit the following website to address the questions below-- http://www.laworks.net/PublicRelations/WIC_IndustryBasedCertification.asp. According to the website, the certification must:

1) Fit the definition of an Industry-Based Certification which is a credential, usually issued by an industry or industry group, that verifies an individual has met the skill standards established by that industry or industry group, as minimal requirements to successfully enter the workforce and compete in a particular occupational area. Industry-based standards are usually monitored and updated in accordance with changes by the sponsoring/certifying agency. Certifications normally have a finite life and a re-certification process must be undertaken by recipients of credentials to keep the certification in force.
2) Provide opportunities for entry-level employment in occupations recognized state-wide as a 4 or 5 Star job by the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council and its Occupational Forecasting Conference. Documentation detailing demand and wages for occupations must be submitted with the application.
3) Have state, national, or international recognition. An IBC is tangible evidence that an individual has successfully demonstrated skill competencies in a specific set of work-related tasks, a single occupational area, or a cluster of related occupational areas as recognized by the specific industry and verified by successful completion of required assessment components.
4) Have the support of at least three (3) Louisiana employers recognizing the credential. Letters of support on company letterhead must accompany the application.
5) Be generic, not vendor-specific, except in special cases as determined by the IBC Council.

The process for identifying and validating industry-based credentials is as follows:

1) The IBC application must be completed and submitted to the Director of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council no later than one month prior to an IBC Council meeting. Incomplete applications will not be considered. This form and all supporting documentation may be

completed and submitted by any entity wishing to have a certification added to the State Focus List and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved IBC matrix. Please send the completed application and all supporting documentation to IBCcouncil@la.gov.

2) The Chairperson of the IBC Council will direct appropriate staff (Louisiana Department of Education – LDOE, Louisiana Community and Technical College System – LCTCS, Louisiana Economic Development – LED, or Louisiana Workforce Commission – LWC) to research the requested certification to verify occupational demand and wages and to ensure that all basic requirements are met.

3) The approval process to add new IBCs to the State Focus list is as follows:
   a. Requesting entity submits completed application and all supporting documentation to the Director of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council.
   b. Staff (LDOE, LCTCS, LED, or LWC) will provide requested information to the IBC Council.
   c. Upon completion of review of information provided by Staff, the IBC Council will determine if there is substantial evidence for the inclusion of a new IBC.
   d. Should the IBC Council determine substantial evidence for the inclusion of a new IBC, the submitting entity and employers supporting the request will be required to present the IBC application, answer additional questions or provide additional information.
   e. Upon approval by the IBC Council, the application will be placed on the next Workforce Investment Council (WIC) meeting agenda for review and final approval.

4) Once certification is approved by the WIC, it will be sent to the Education Providers as an action item to be added to LDOE's IBC matrix.

5) Updated information about the approved IBC and its link to a high-wage, high-demand career must be submitted to the Director of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council every two years for review and determination of whether the IBC remains on the State Focus list.

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Massachusetts

Massachusetts does not have a formal definition at this time, work is underway to refine that. MA does have a list. It is primarily used by districts/schools with CTE programs that receive Perkins funding as they report credential attainment to the state annually through the Student Information Management System.

The current list includes credentials that have been identified by districts in consultation with their Program Advisory Committees (which include industry and postsecondary education and training representatives). MA also conducted surveys with employers regarding credentials on the list. The credentials must be ones attainable by secondary students.

MA is currently engaged in a project to: 1) identify credentials of value; 2) determine levels of worth and difficulty in attainment; and 3) explore procedures for regular updates of the list. One outcome of the project thus far has been enhancements to the Student Information Management System to allow

districts to report on the attainment by individual students of up to three specific credentials. Prior reporting of credentials was not specific—they were simply reported as federal or state issued, or industry-issued.

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Missouri

Missouri's TSA/IRC guidance document can be found here https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/cte-irc-tsa-guidance.pdf.

An online application process is used by schools to request that an IRC be added to the approved list. Applications are reviewed once a year by a committee of practitioners. I don't have access to the application at this time but will forward it once the person that oversees that process returns.

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Rhode Island

For RI, please see: http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Educational-Programming/Career-and-Tech/CTE%20Trust/CTEBOT_Support_Standards%20List%20-%20Updated%205.3.18.pdf.

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South Dakota

South Dakota does not have industry credentials/ degrees of value definitions at this time.

For our list, please see: https://doe.sd.gov/gradrequirements/documents/Industry.pdf. Approved CTE programs use it to report credentials earned; they are also a component of one of the endorsements a student can earn as part of the state's newly adopted high school graduation requirements.

Currently we work with the postsecondary, secondary schools, and industry to identify and approve the industry credentials. Additionally, a school may petition to have a credential added to the list. Any additions are vetted through the cluster advisory group for approval.

We recognize we will have work to do to align what has been our practice regarding industry recognized credentials with the WIOA definition to come into line with Perkins V.

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Vermont

Vermont has realized that every state program and entity has their own list and their own process for determining what is on the list. This last session, our general assembly directed the state workforce development board to address the issue – to hopefully create a more transparent coordinated credentialing environment. The board created a workgroup to study the issue and recommend a charge for a formal committee of the board. The workgroup had its first meeting yesterday.

We do not have a unified definition…yet. Our Lumina Foundation funded 70 x 2025 initiative is advocating a definition.

The Agency of Education's CTE team has a list that is published on our website. We have a process for teachers to request approval of an IRC to be added to their curriculum and that's how an IRC gets on the list. The review process isn't very rigorous. The primary audience for the list is CTE teachers, but other entities use it.

The criteria:
- it has to be requested
- it needs a third party assessment
- it has to have a clear connection to the curriculum.

Additional information:

WIOA requires an eligible training provider vetting/approval process. For Vermont, this will likely be driven by the new committee that is formed. The new committee will likely design a review process and examine providers and credentials. This will help sort out how state funds will be used to support individuals, and further, will help sort out the credentials that federal funds could be used for.

Our Business Round Table is working on a Talent Pipeline Management process that works directly with employers in certain industries to help identify the credentials they look for, communicate those to education providers, and that also works with those employers to help them say specifically what they do or will do when a candidate comes to them with the requested/required credentials.

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Wisconsin

Through work on Career Pathways (https://www.wtcsystem.edu/initiatives/career-pathways) Wisconsin has worked with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to identify pathways for K-12 students organized within the National Career Cluster Framework™ allowing high school students to earn postsecondary credits, accelerating the attainment of industry-recognized postsecondary credentials.

A document from the DWD is attached that provided credentialing guidance. This link https://dpi.wi.gov/cte/technical-incentive describes how DPI uses this list to help award Technical Incentive Grants to K-12 district:

School Districts can claim funds annually based on the number of students who meet the following eligibility criteria:
- Certifications earned were on the approved graduating year Certifications List.
- Students graduated with a regular high school diploma or a technical education high school diploma.
- Funding is limited to $1000 per pupil regardless of the number certifications the student earned on the approved list.

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