

PROGRAMS OF STUDY AND CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is the LEA required to implement Programs of Study?

Yes, the local plan must document how the LEA will develop and implement Programs of Study. Their stakeholders should include, but are not limited to, higher education, adult education providers, and, as appropriate, other entities such as employers, labor organizations, parents, and local partners and other stakeholders that enable students to achieve State academic standards and career and technical skills.

Are Programs of Study new?

Programs of Study have always existed in schools. A student's schedule may be considered a program of study; however, Perkins IV puts emphasis on the development of a comprehensive plan that identifies the purpose for going to school, and is used to facilitate academic skill attainment tied to relevant career education. The program of study creates a seamless transition into postsecondary that defines the "New (Perkins IV) CTE" where there does not appear to be a separation between secondary and postsecondary education.

What may be included in a Program of Study?

- Secondary and postsecondary elements
- Rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that aligns secondary education with postsecondary education to adequately prepare every student to succeed in postsecondary education.
- Opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual, concurrent, Tech Prep, online enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits
- Lead to industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate, baccalaureate, or professional degree
- Extended learning opportunities including, but not limited to, work based learning experiences such as cooperative education, job shadow, internships, extracurricular, co-curricular, and service-learning experiences tied to the student's program of study.
- Occupational information about the careers aligned to the program of study

Why is there a recommendation to reduce the number of CTE courses in Texas?

There is no specific number of CTE courses recommended but most states have approximately 250-300 CTE courses. It is not about the number of courses but the knowledge and skills within courses, and ultimately programs of study, that is important. The CTE TEKS Writing Teams developed courses that satisfy the necessary knowledge and skills within cluster areas. There is a reduction in the number of CTE courses in Texas but not necessarily the numbers of students enrolled in CTE as CTE is more broad that will equate to more interest in all CTE courses.

What happens to teachers who came into the field solely based on their desire to share their specialized content?

CTE teachers, like all teachers, have the responsibility to serve the needs of their students. CTE teachers have the opportunity to use their content for more than job training. CTE teachers help students learn knowledge and skills that are academic and technical at the same time. A CTE teacher is not expected to be a reading teacher, math teacher, science teacher; however, they are expected to apply embedded academic skills into their teaching so students can be successful in all aspects of life.

What is the current dichotomy of CTE?

CTE is pedagogy and CTE is content. It is essential for all stakeholders to understand that it is not just one or the other. The CTE community, itself, must come to terms with the new identity as it is currently used for school redesign, applied academics, and technical skill attainment to ensure college and career readiness for all students.

Should districts require licensure/certification for students in high school?

No. There is no intent in Perkins IV that would require high school students to obtain industry credentials. In fact, the legislation is very specific as it states “in postsecondary.” However, credentials are good, if appropriate, available, and the high school courses lead to an end product. States’ may request information from LEA’s about numbers of students who acquire industry credentials but there is no financial incentive to do so. Currently, many states use industry credentials to report technical skill attainment for secondary education to OVAE. This practice may change as OVAE assists States’ in defining technical skill attainment and options for reporting are developed. Districts must be careful to ensure that there is one educational system for all students, starts broad leading to specialization in postsecondary, and using programs of study create opportunity to earn college credit in high school. All programs of study should lead to an industry license, certification, and/ or degrees at the post-secondary level.

How can a LEA do it all, the 4X4, CTE, and enrichment?

Most LEA’s have realized that it will take 32 credits in a 4 year period of time to accomplish college and career readiness for all students, especially if they maintain enrichment in the school day. LEA’s are doing many different things to ensure that students have 32 credits including dual credit, concurrent enrollment, online courses, etc. Many schools are looking at an 8 period day, block scheduling, and other options to serve student and community needs.

How will students cross over career clusters with course taking?

The LEA will develop their own programs of study. Some programs of study will require courses from multiple career clusters to achieve an identified objective. The concept of “programs” no longer exist in CTE. There are no barriers that would restrict a student to courses that may fall under one career cluster. The CTE TEKS Writing Teams also recognized that students will cross clusters when participating in a program of study. Students will also cross Career and Technical Student Organizations (FFA, BPA, FBPA, DECA, HOSA, TSA, SkillsUSA, FCCLA) as they may participate in multiple leadership opportunities. Some programs of study may not contain any CTE courses.