

Guidance Regarding Required, Optional, Technical, Minimum, and Maximum Credits In SECONDARY State-approved CTE Programs



Performance measurement, data reporting, and the description of allowable parameters require the use of consistent terminology and specific definitions. As related to state-approved CTE programs, the terminology used consists of uncommon words and/or words with competing definitions.

This document is a summary of terminology and parameters, most of which can be found in other online and print documents. It is assembled here for convenience, intended to reduce confusion and increase consistency. It will provide guidance, but cannot address every variation or exception that may exist. When needed, please submit questions and requests for technical assistance in writing to the appropriate personnel at the Oregon Department of Education.

Note: Words and phrases that appear in italics are defined elsewhere in this document.

CTE Concentrator:

Any secondary student who has earned one (1) or more credits in *technical skill-based courses* as part of an Oregon *state-approved CTE program*, of which at least one-half (.5) credit must be designated as a *required course*.

General education course:

In the context of *state-approved CTE programs*, the purpose of identifying general education courses is two-fold: 1) to ensure that Perkins funds are not expended on courses that are the district's responsibility (supplanting), and 2) to ensure that data is not inadvertently gathered on students who are not part of a *state-approved CTE program*.

General education courses usually address academic content standards and are not primarily based on *industry-recognized standards*. A general education course typically is not included in the ODE database as part of a *state-approved CTE program*. However, a general education course might be appropriately identified in state records as part of a *state-approved CTE program* if, for example, it is the only course at the school that addresses specific *industry-recognized standards* necessary for that program. Exceptions must be approved by ODE.

Note: The inclusion of a general education course as part of a *state-approved CTE program* does not imply automatic eligibility for use of Perkins funds.

Industry-recognized standards:

State-approved CTE programs must be based on current standards that are identified and acknowledged by industry representatives, employer representatives, and/or professional organizations. In addition, valid and reliable *technical skill assessments* based on the industry-recognized standards must be approved by ODE. The *Oregon Skill Sets* is a widely-used example of industry-recognized standards.

Maximum required credits:

Due to performance measurement and data-reporting requirements, *state-approved CTE programs* are limited to a maximum of three (3) credits of *required courses*. *CTE concentrators* are required to be assessed after completion of all *required courses* in their *state-approved CTE program*. Therefore, a large number of credits for *required courses* make it difficult for students to complete a program and be assessed. In addition, a large number of *required credits* increase content and the comprehensiveness required of the *technical skill assessment(s)* used. Exceptions must be approved by ODE.

Minimum credits:

The appropriate minimum number of credits is determined by *industry-recognized standards* and input of the advisory committee. In addition, the breadth and depth of a *state-approved CTE program* must involve consideration of size, scope, sequence, and quality issues. As a minimum, two (2) full *technical skill-based* credits are necessary for *state-approved CTE programs*, of which no less than one (1) credit must be *required courses*.

Optional course:

Optional courses are *technical skill-based courses* that are not designated as *required courses*.

Oregon Skill Sets:

The Oregon Skill Sets are a collection of state-approved *industry-recognized standards* that define what students should know and be able to do in order to be successful in educational and career environments.

Program completion:

For local purposes, schools/districts may include *optional courses* or other criteria before they consider a CTE student as having 'completed' a CTE program. However, for performance measurement and data-reporting purposes, a *CTE concentrator* is considered to have completed a *state-approved CTE program* when he or she has passed all of the courses designated as *required courses*.

Recommended course:

This is an out-of-date designation existing in the CTE Program Update application, remaining from before Perkins IV. This designation is not applicable to categorizing courses in *state-approved CTE programs* and should not be used. During the CTE Program Update process, schools/districts, Regional CTE Coordinators, and ODE Specialists are asked to ensure that no courses are designated as Recommended.

Required course:

A required course is a *technical skill-based course* that provides students the opportunity to learn the *industry-recognized standards* included within the approved *technical skill assessment (TSA)* for that particular *state-approved CTE program*. *CTE concentrators* are required to be assessed after they have completed all *required courses*.

State-approved CTE Programs:

CTE programs that have applied to ODE and have been approved as either a State-Recognized CTE Program (SRP) or a CTE Program of Study (POS), as determined by the application submitted by the school/district and/or the criteria met by the program.

Technical skill assessment (TSA):

Valid and reliable technical skill measurements aligned with *industry-recognized standards*. A *CTE concentrator* who completes the *required courses* in his or her *state-approved CTE Program* must be assessed with a technical skill assessment (TSA). Technical skill assessments used in *state-approved CTE Programs* must be approved by ODE.

Technical skill-based course:

Technical skill-based courses are based on *industry-recognized standards* which are identified for a particular *state-approved CTE program*. Those *industry-recognized standards* are taught by the appropriately licensed CTE teacher/instructor with intent and purpose, and are assessed as part of the instructional delivery of those courses. Only courses categorized as technical skill-based courses should be included in the ODE records of a *state-approved CTE program*. They are designated in the CTE Program Update application as *required courses* or as *optional courses*. (See also *General education course*)