

Oregon Prepares Adoption Plan for the Modernized National Career Clusters® Framework

What is the Modernized National Career Clusters® Framework?

In 2002, the National Career Clusters® Framework reshaped traditional vocational education into what we now know as Career Technical Education (CTE)—a system that helps students connect classroom learning to real-world career pathways. The Framework organizes occupations into career clusters and sub-clusters, guiding schools in designing programs that prepare students for meaningful, high-wage, high-demand careers.

Two decades later, work and learning look very different. Technology, new industries, and evolving workforce needs have transformed the landscape. To reflect these changes, Advance CTE launched the *Advancing the Framework* initiative in 2022. After two years of national input, they released the [National Career Clusters® Framework](#), which:

- Reflects how work has become increasingly interdisciplinary and collaborative, rather than separated by industry silos;
- Updates the language and structure to better align education with how today's industries organize work;
- Includes emerging sectors, modern skills, and flexible pathways to prepare students for the jobs of the future.

Although adoption of the National Career Clusters® Framework ***is not mandatory***, the U.S. Department of Education now requires all states to use it for Perkins reporting beginning with the 2025–26 school year (data submitted in January 2027). Continue reading to learn more about Oregon's plans for adoption.

What This Means for Oregon Schools, Districts, and Colleges

Regardless of how Oregon implements the new framework, the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Office of Education Innovation and Improvement (EII) and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) will ensure our state meets federal requirements. To fulfill the new Perkins reporting requirement, ODE and HECC staff will use current procedures to align Oregon's current CTE program of study data by the new career clusters. This behind-the-scenes work ensures accurate federal reporting without affecting your currently approved CTE programs.

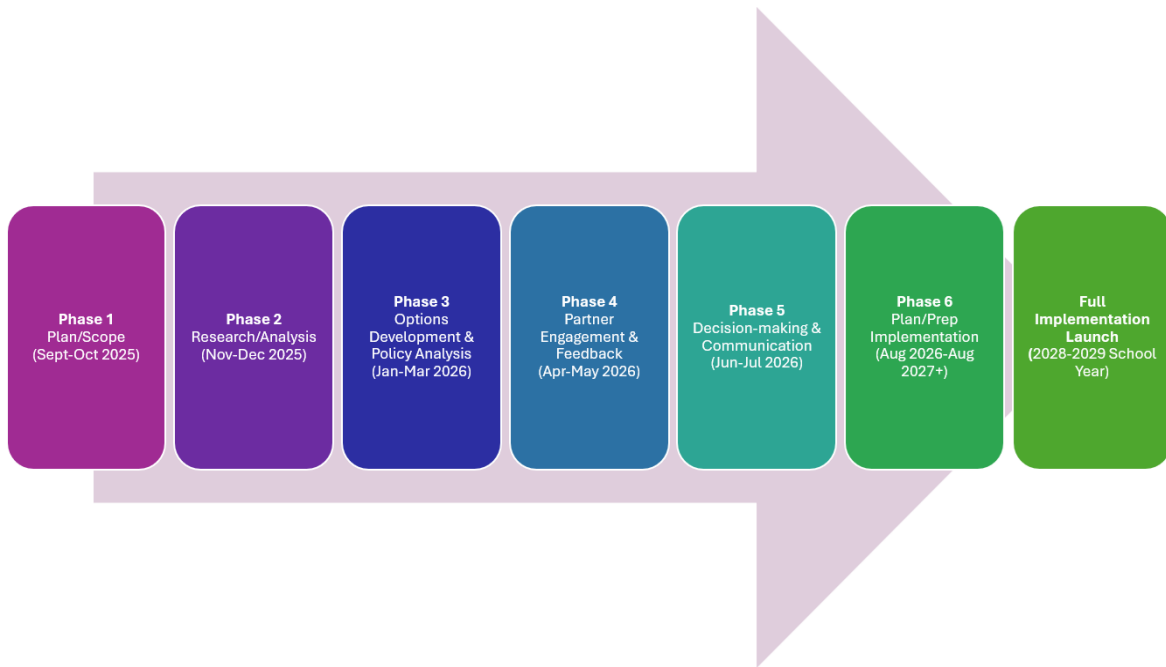


Figure 1: ODE and HECC Plans for Career Clusters Adoption Timeline

Looking ahead, ODE and HECC are launching a multi-phase plan to thoughtfully align Oregon’s systems and programs with the modernized framework (Figure 1).

Phase 1 – Planning & Scoping: Set the project foundation by confirming priorities, defining goals, establishing timelines, and developing a communication and engagement plan.

Phase 2 – Research & Alignment Analysis: Analyze the new framework’s alignment with current systems, identify impacts on data, licensure, and equity, and summarize findings to guide next steps.

Phase 3 – Proposal Development & Policy Analysis: Develop and refine policy and program design proposals through subcommittee collaboration and partner input.

Phase 4 – Partner Engagement & Feedback: Gather and incorporate feedback from diverse partners to ensure proposals are equitable, practical, and broadly supported.

Phase 5 – Decision-Making & Communication: Finalize recommendations, communicate policy updates, and prepare for adoption and legislative review.

Phase 6 – Implementation Planning: Create a detailed transition plan, update systems and processes, and provide professional development to support rollout.

Phase 7 – Full Implementation: Launch the modernized framework statewide in Fall 2028.

Why It Matters to You

This work is more than a compliance update—it's an opportunity to ensure CTE pathways are future-ready, aligned with workforce needs, and positioned to help every student connect learning to life after graduation. ODE and HECC envision the modernized framework will make it easier for organizations to:

- integrate academic and technical learning in ways that reflect real-world careers;
- strengthen connections with local industry and educational partners;
- expand equitable access to high-quality career pathways for all students.

What Has Already Been Completed

- Established a project leadership team including members from both HECC and ODE and a shared decision-making structure between the agencies. The team is represented by ODE's Johnnie Ferro and HECC's Marshall Curry.
- Received leadership approval on a project work plan outlining the phases and timeline identified above (Figure 1)
- Initiated internal discussions about potential budgets to support the phases of adoption.
- Finalized internal processes to complete the federal reporting requirements for 2025-2026.

What is Coming Next

ODE and HECC staff will share monthly updates on this work through the Aligned Message. It will include timelines, engagement opportunities, summaries of work completed, answers to questions from the field, and resources to support local planning.

If you are not already receiving the Aligned Message you can sign up to receive it here:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORED/subscriber/qualify>.