Identifying Required Courses in the CTE Program Update

Starting in the 2009-2010 academic year, schools may begin reporting and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will begin collecting data on secondary students who have taken technical skill assessments. The annual report to the US Department of Education (USDOE) must include data on technical skill assessments beginning in 2010-20. Part of this process involves identifying those students who are required to take the assessments. We are in the process of redesigning the CTE data collection system to accommodate this and other changes in Perkins IV accountability.

Until all changes in the data collection system occur within the next year, we are asking that schools identify certain courses in a CTE Program of Study as "required" for technical skill assessment. These courses encompass the standards and instruction that will be assessed through technical skill assessments. They should be identified as the "required" courses in the CTE Program Update.

We are currently classifying students who are CTE concentrators **and** who have completed all the required courses in the secondary component of a single CTE Program of Study as secondary completers. This definition will be used to identify students who should take technical skill assessments.

Definitions

Secondary Program Completer – A secondary program completer is a student who is a CTE concentrator and has completed all of the required courses in the secondary component of a CTE Program of Study.

Required Courses - The required courses are a sub-set of the core courses identified in the secondary component of the CTE Program of Study application. Standards, as defined by the Oregon Skill Sets, addressed in the required courses must be assessed using valid and reliable technical skill assessments. Data from those technical skill assessments is used to report performance on technical skill attainment.

Core Courses – The core courses are those courses in which a teacher will teach, with intent and purpose, the industry standards included in the Oregon Skill Sets and will assess and record student achievement of those standards.

Contacts

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For additional assistance and information on Technical Skill Assessment, contact Tom Thompson Tom.Thompson@state.or.us or (503) 947-5790.

Questions and Answers

Q: How many courses should I mark as required?

A: The number of courses will depend on the standards that will be assessed in the chosen technical skill assessment. Not all standards need to be assessed. Assessment should focus on standards that are central to the knowledge and skills for the program. At the same time, if the number of required courses is too high, there may be insufficient data to use for evaluation of technical skill attainment in a program. For most programs, 1.0 to 3.0 credits of required courses would be a reasonable range. The entire secondary component of a CTE Program of Study must have at least 2.0 credits of career and technical courses. At least 0.5 credits of those must be required.

Q. Our program includes focus areas. Each focus area has two common courses. Each focus area will also have a separate assessment. How do we indicate this in the CTE Program Update?

A: All the courses in all focus areas that have content to be assessed using technical skill assessments should be identified as required. You can use the grouping feature in the current CTE Program Update to identify the choices reflected in your program. For example, an agriculture program has AgI and AgII as a common requirement. Students can then choose between Mechanics, Horticulture, or Animal Science as a third course or focus area. All five classes would be listed as required. The three focus courses would be placed in a single group. This will tell ODE that the students must take AgI, AgII and any one of the other three focus courses to be considered a completer who should be assessed.

Q: In the past we have listed required courses as prerequisites for more advanced courses. Should we continue this practice?

A: The courses should only be classified as required if their content is being assessed by the technical skill assessment. In some cases, prerequisites may not address standards to the depth that would warrant technical skill assessment. The final decision should be based on which standards are being taught, to what level they are being taught, and whether or not they will be assessed through technical skill assessments.

Q: What is the consequence of having no students eligible for technical skill assessments based on our choice of required courses?

A: Each Perkins recipient is required to provide data on technical skill attainment. If a program consistently does not report data on technical skill attainment, ODE will expect the recipient to review the processes they are using to identify the standards and content to be assessed, designate required courses, and identify students for assessment. Programs that do not report data will lose eligibility for Perkins funds.

Q: We have been using the definition for required courses from the CTE Annual Program Review User Manual. How is this different?

A: The manual was developed to address CTE program requirements under Perkins III. The manual and the current definitions align. However, the most current guidance and rules from ODE should apply when there are discrepancies. Questions and answers will be included in this FAQ and addressed in other meetings and communications with the Regional CTE Coordinators and Perkins Grant Managers.

Q: How do these newer definitions relate to eligible use of Perkins funds?

A: Recipients can continue to use funds to support CTE Program of Study instruction for CTE students who are enrolled in required and optional courses identified in the CTE Program Update. As before, funds may not be used to support instruction in courses identified as recommended and general education.

Q: I would like to change the classification of programs in the current database. Can I do that?

A: At this time, you can make those changes in programs as long as you have access to the online application. However, frequent changes make it difficult to identify program completers. Consult with a Regional CTE Coordinator if you have questions about the appropriateness of a change.

Q: How do I identify the required courses in the new CTE Program of Study application?

A: We suggest that you mark the required courses in the course matrix that should be included in the application or list the courses on a separate document that should be submitted with the CTE Program of Study application.

Q: Should I delete a required course if it is not being offered this year?

A: The CTE Program Update identifies all courses that are part of the CTE Program of Study. In some cases, courses may be offered in alternating years. If that is the case, indicate so in the course description but do not delete the course from the program.

Q: In the past we have used the "required" designation to make sure certain courses were not eliminated from the CTE program. Should we continue this practice?

A: There should be stability in approved CTE Programs of Study. Address that issue through communication with administrators in a district and not through the CTE Program Update. Required courses used to determine completer status and eligibility for technical skill assessment. Any other use of that designation could produce inaccurate data.