

Considerations for Equitable Participation in CTE Programs and Activities

Research has consistently shown that participation in CTE programs has a positive impact on student attendance, participation, and graduation rates. Additionally, CTE can prepare students to begin a career, or else place them squarely on a path leading to future preparation through apprenticeships, work based learning, or associated college courses. It is important that all students are provided equitable opportunities to participate and receive these benefits. With this important consideration in mind, schools and teachers should consider the following as they design their activities, courses, course descriptions, and prerequisites.

- **Do you have any of the following course/program/lottery prerequisites that unintentionally limit access?**
 - Teacher, counselor, or administrator recommendations/signatures
 - GPA requirements or requiring that students are “on track to graduate”
 - Applications, essays, or other requirements prior to registration
 - Interviews or other mandatory meetings
 - Interest or aptitude tests (see [Equitable Use of Aptitude Interest Assessments](#))
 - Record of low attendance
 - Behavior Records
 - Fees
 - Individual student health or liability insurance requirements (other than what the school provides)
- **Scheduling:**
 - Are there places in the schedule where pull-out classes are scheduled at the same time as a single CTE offering? This will limit the opportunity for students to take classes throughout a career path if they are not able to take advanced CTE courses due to inability to register in a given year.
 - Are counselors, and others involved in course scheduling, aware of the benefits for students if allowed to take consecutive CTE courses? (Work Based Learning or other career certifications through advanced coursework.)
 - When building a master schedule, is access to CTE courses and completion of a CTE program a consideration (especially for students required to take pull out classes)?
- **Inclusive Access and Support:**
 - Remove required additional preparation for certain student groups (for example, an additional course for EL students on safety measures).

- Ensure there is ample notification of course and activity opportunities to all students and families, and that notifications are translated into languages students and families can understand.
- Recognize and avoid counseling bias that may affect which students are encouraged to participate in certain CTE courses.
- Check all timelines and deadlines to ensure equitable access for mobile students, transfer students, students experiencing houselessness, and other students who may not have been present during forecasting.
- **Additional considerations:**
 - Background checks or other work site requests should not determine student placement in a class
 - Be sure to examine records from students new to the school in order to provide credit for any prior coursework.
 - Determine if all instructors have been trained about appropriate accommodations, best practices, and strategies for teaching all students.
- **Allowable prerequisites:**
 - Part I of a course can be a requirement to take Part II (or Part II can be required for Part III and so on.)

This document does not contain a complete list of considerations. When making decisions, schools should always stop to consider what the impact may be on focal student groups. Reviewing enrollment data by student groups helps schools to see which student groups are under- or over-represented in certain courses or programs. This makes it easier to identify and address barriers that may keep students from having equitable access.

Ensuring equitable opportunities to participate in CTE programs and activities is not only a compliance issue but a critical step toward preparing all students for future success.

If you have any questions, or would like assistance, please feel free to reach out to the Oregon Department of Education Methods of Administration Team at ode.civilrights.moa@ode.oregon.gov