

Industry-Based Certifications For Public School Accountability Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What are certifications?

A certification is a validation that an individual possesses certain skills. These are usually related to an occupation and measured against a set of accepted standards. An occupation may have multiple certifications, with different levels of expertise. An individual earns a certification by successfully passing a test or battery of tests. Certifications are not administered by an institution of higher education; instead, certifications are administered by a certification body, usually an organization such as a trade association or industry-approved testing entity. Certifications are often time-limited credentials, where individuals need to meet ongoing requirements to maintain the currency of the certification. **For additional background see - [Understanding Credentials in Texas: Certificates & Certifications](#) .**

2. What is the difference between a certification and a certificate?

Both certificates and certifications are types of credentials. Credential is a broad term that refers to a verified proficiency or competency and is issued to an individual by a third party that has relevant authority or jurisdiction (U.S. Department of Labor definition, 2010). Third-party entities include accredited education institutions, professional or trade associations, and government agencies, among others. Credentials are often categorized as work credentials, including certifications and licenses, or education credentials, which include educational certificates, diplomas, and degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

A certificate is a formal award granted by an institution of higher education (IHE) certifying the satisfactory completion of a higher education program. Upon completion, a certificate is valid without further action on the individual's part. They are usually awarded in workforce education areas by public and private two-year institutions. In Texas, certificates can have different levels, often based on the number of hours required by the program.

- Level I certificate: awarded for completing a program consisting of at least 15 and no more than 42 semester credit hours
- Level II certificate: awarded for completing a program of at least 30 but not more than 51 semester credit hours
- Advanced Technical Certificate: 16-50 hours and a previously awarded associate degree, a previously awarded bachelor's degree, or junior status toward a baccalaureate, depending on the program
- Shorter certificates, including Enhanced Skills and Occupational Skills Certificates: generally 9-15 hours.

3. Why were Industry-Based Certifications (IBC) included in the accountability system?

House Bill 22 (85th Texas Legislature, 2017) requires the state to account for high school students who earn an industry-based certification as one indicator within the Student Achievement domain of the state's public-school accountability system. While hundreds of credentials are earned by public school students, the public-school accountability system measures success in preparing students for valuable careers, whether through entering the workforce directly or persisting through higher education institutions. Industry-based certifications represent skills and learning that open doors and act as a springboard for higher levels of achievement to ensure students' independence and success in life beyond high school; hence industry-based certifications are one of the measures to demonstrate college and career readiness.

4. Will TEA revise the current list of industry-based certifications and what is the timeline for publishing the new list for the accountability system?



Important to note: though IBCs will be available in 2019-2020, they will not be reflected in the calculation for accountability until 2020-2021 due accountability measures being based on prior year performance.

5. What criteria are used to determine what qualifies as an IBC in the accountability system?

In determining the criteria for the list of IBCs in accountability, TEA utilized Texas Administrative Code Chapter 74. Subchapter B. 74.14 as well as responses from a district survey sent out in February 2018 which asked districts to provide input on what they wanted the IBC criteria to include. The following criteria were identified:

- **Industry recognized:** national or international businesses, industries, professional organizations, state agencies, government entities, or state-based industry associations are familiar with the certification and know of it.
- **Industry-Valued:** employers within an industry sector signal the value of the occupation-specific certification by: (a) including the certification in job postings as required or highly recommended; (b) using the certification as a factor in selecting candidates for an interview and/or hire; and/or (c) offering higher pay for those who possess the certification.

- **Third-party provider:** the assessment of the certification is provided by/signed off by an independent, third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- **Capstone:** certification is offered at the conclusion of an aligned course, and/or at the conclusion of a student's successful completion of a program of study in a secondary career and technical education program.
- **Attainable by HS students:** all eligibility requirements (e.g., age and experience) are met and the certification is awarded before or within the summer after a student's high school graduation.
- **Transferable:** be stackable and portable as evidenced by: (a) transferring seamlessly to postsecondary work through acceptance for credit or hours in core program courses at an institution of higher education; (b) counting toward hours in an aligned apprenticeship program; (c) being a part of a prescribed coherent sequence of industry recognized credentials to show progressive skills development and/or (d) fostering mobility across employers within the same industry.

6. What process was used by TEA to receive input from districts, business, and industry about the list of certifications?

- February 2018: district survey sent through "To the Administrator Addressed" letter as well as CTE listserv soliciting feedback on industry certification criteria.
- March 2018 IBC survey sent through "To the Administrator Addressed" letter as well as CTE listserv, emails to industry associations, teacher associations, and workforce boards soliciting recommendations on IBCs to add to the list.
- August 2018 TEA sends IBC list to all 28 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) for regional employer validation process
- August 2018 each LWDA will disseminate list for validation to local employers.
- October 2018 revised list of IBCs for 2019-2020 posted for public comment
- December 2018 IBC list for 2019-2020 finalized and posted
- March 2018 collected data from IBCs listed in the Perkins Program Effectiveness Report (PER)
- March 2018 pulled recommendations submitted through the PER on IBCs to add to the list CTE directors from 2015-2018.
- April 2018 included IBCs recommended in email, phone, and in person conversations since the release of the 2016-17 IBC list was released and added these recommendations for consideration.
- April 2018 included IBCs from work previously conducted by Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC)
- September 2018 TEA applies criteria (see question 5) to IBCs which are validated by regional employers and industry

7. Why are there two lists of IBCs (one for Perkins Program Effectiveness Report and one for accountability)?

IBCs included in the Perkins Program Effectiveness Report (PER) are how TEA reports technical skill attainment to the U.S. Department of Education as a part of Perkins core indicators of performance. Though several of these IBCs may cover a specific skill or TEK, many do not meet criteria established to demonstrate college and career readiness as a capstone IBC that would address an entire course or program. IBCs listed in accountability are a measure of college and career readiness; hence have more stringent criteria than those listed in the PER.

8. How will districts provide TEA with information about the students earning certifications?

Districts enter information about IBCs in PEIMS through the PEIMS code table (C214). Information will be reported during the Fall 2020 collection (reporting on data related to prior year graduates). Districts have the ability to enter up to three IBCs per student. However, only one IBC is necessary to meet College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR).

9. How will the list of industry certifications be calculated within the accountability system?

The agency provides the following clarification. The methodology for the calculation of College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) for accountability purposes will be included in the state accountability manual, which is adopted in rule under 19 TAC §97.1001, [Accountability Rating System](#). For high schools, K-12, and districts. One point is given for each annual graduate who accomplishes any one of the CCMR indicators.

10. How does the IBC accountability list impact the industry certifications eligible for student performance acknowledgments in the Foundation High School Program?

It is the responsibility of the district to apply the definition adopted by the State Board of Education in determining what qualifies as a certification for performance acknowledgments. They may or may not include certifications on the list for accountability. TEA does not have the authority to define criteria for industry certifications eligible for student performance acknowledgements.

11. If our district has invested in certifications that are not included in the final list, what should we do?

Districts should ensure that the IBCs offered in their district are aligned with labor market data in their local area. It is also important to note that IBCs are not the only way to demonstrate college and career readiness. Students who concentrate in CTE can meet college and career readiness measures in any of the other areas within domain one of accountability.

12. How will TEA account for changes in certifications and industry needs, including allowing business and industry to provide input into which credentials qualify as industry-based certifications?

TEA understands that new developments in industry occur regularly. Therefore, TEA will engage in a bi-annual review of the list of certifications to coincide with the updates from the Texas Workforce Commission on labor projections. TEA will work with the Texas Workforce Investment Council and the 28 regional workforce development boards to validate certifications included on the list and to solicit feedback from industry councils and employers about additional certifications that should be included. The agency will ensure that all proposed certifications meet the criteria and will engage in a Commissioner’s rule change, which will include an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback during the public comment period. A finalized list for each upcoming school year will be available in early Spring of alternating years (beginning in Spring 2019).

13. Why are all career clusters not represented on the final accountability list?

TEA will continue to evaluate certifications that meet the criteria within each industry cluster through the annual review process. Some career clusters include occupations that require a higher level credential for entry level positions into a particular industry (e.g. Associate’s Degree) and, therefore, may not include industry-based certifications that are attainable in high school. The agency will continue to work to identify industry-based certifications that are aligned with industry demand within as many career clusters as possible; however, it is unlikely that there will be an industry-based certification for every program of study within a career cluster. It is important to note that IBCs are not the only way to demonstrate college and career readiness. Students who concentrate in CTE can meet college and career readiness measures in any of the other areas within domain one of accountability.

Links/Resources:

Texas Education Agency 2017 Accountability Rating System

<https://tea.texas.gov/2017accountability.aspx>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2018 (Understanding Credentials in Texas: Certificates & Certifications)

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/10494.PDF?CFID=76332627&CFTOKEN=16342436>

Texas Workforce Investment Council, 2015 (Tracking Industry-Based Certifications: Promising Practices in Capturing Data on the Workforce Supply of Industry-Certified Workers)

https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/Tracking_Industry-Based_Certifications_Summary.pdf