

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

1. What are industry-based certifications?

A certification is a validation that an individual possesses certain industry specific skills. Industry-based certifications (IBCs) are related to a career cluster or occupation and measured against a set of accepted standards. An occupation may have multiple certifications with varying levels of expertise. An individual earns a certification by successfully completing an assessment. Certifications are validated through a certifying entity, usually an organization such as a trade association or industry-approved testing entity, not a secondary school or institute of higher education (IHE). Certifications are often time-limited credentials, for which individuals need to meet ongoing professional training and/or testing requirements to maintain the certification (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2018). For additional background see - [Understanding Credentials in Texas: Certificates & Certifications](#).

2. How is a certificate different from a certification, as defined above?

A certificate is a formal award granted by an institution of higher education certifying the satisfactory completion of a higher education program. Upon completion, a certificate is valid without further action on the individual's part. Certificates 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 certificate program.

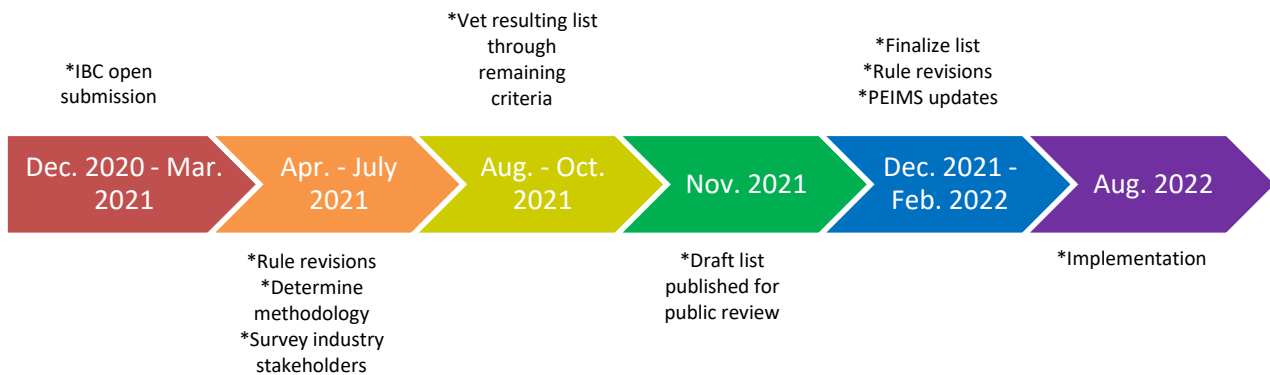
- Level I certificate: awarded for completing a program consisting of at least 15 and no more than 42 semester credit hours
- Level II certificate: awarded for completing a program of at least 30 but not more than 51 semester credit hours
- Advanced Technical Certificate: 16-50 hours and a previously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

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

House Bill 22 (85th Texas Legislature, 2017) requires the Texas Education Agency 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 unique certifications are earned by public school students, the public school accountability system measures success in preparing students for in-demand careers, whether students enter the workforce directly or enroll in postsecondary education. IBCs represent industry-valued skills and learning that lead to employment 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 the TEA revise the current list of industry-based certifications and what is the timeline for publishing the new list for the accountability system?

New developments in industry occur regularly; therefore, the TEA will engage in a bi-annual review of the list of certifications. Please see the timeline below for more details regarding the IBC evaluation process and dates for publishing the new list for accountability.



5. What criteria are used to determine the IBCs that will be included in the accountability system?

The following criteria are used to determine whether an IBC is included:

- **Industry recognized and valued:** national or international businesses, industries, professional organizations, state agencies, government entities, or state-based industry associations are familiar with the certification and 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.

- **Attainable by high school students:** all eligibility requirements, such as age and experience, can be met and the certification is awarded before or within the summer after a student's high school graduation.
- **Portable:** the certification can (a) transfer seamlessly to postsecondary work through acceptance for credit or hours in core program courses at an institution of higher education; (b) count toward hours in an aligned apprenticeship program; (c) be part of a prescribed coherent sequence of industry-recognized credentials to show progressive skills development; or (d) support employment in more than one region of the state.
- **Certifying entity:** 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 or end-of-program:** the certification is offered at the conclusion of (a) a course aligned to the career cluster associated with the certification that covers at least 50% of the applicable essential knowledge and skills; or (b) a program of study in a secondary career and technical education program that covers at least 50% of the applicable knowledge and skills within aligned courses.

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

The TEA accepted submissions of recommended IBCs for inclusion in the 2022-2023 Industry-Based Certifications List for Public School Accountability from December 1, 2020 - January 15, 2021 and March 22 - 29, 2021. Nearly 900 unique certifications were recommended by stakeholders to be included in the IBC review process.

An industry-based certification employer-recognized and valued survey was sent to a large sampling of industry personnel in July and remains open for one month. For the survey, industry personnel use the following criteria to determine industry value and recognition:

- (a) The IBC is included in job postings as required or highly recommended;
- (b) The IBC is used as a factor in selecting candidates for an interview and/or hire; and/or
- (c) The IBC is used as the basis for offering higher pay for those who possess the certification.

Upon receipt of the results, the TEA staff will evaluate the industry valued and recognized certifications with the remaining four criteria: attainable by a high school student, portable,

provided through a third-party certification entity, and capstone or end-of-program. A draft list will be published for public review. At that time, applicants may submit clarifying documentation or documentation that demonstrates alignment to the criteria before the final list is released. The resulting list of IBCs for Texas high school accountability will be published in the spring of 2022 and take effect the 2022 – 2023 school year.

7. How will districts provide the TEA with information regarding student attainment of industry-based certifications for high school accountability?

Districts enter information about IBCs students earned in PEIMS. IBCs earned between September 1 and May 31 are reported in the PEIMS summer submission. IBCs earned between June 1 and August 31 are reported in the PEIMS fall submission. Districts may enter up to three IBCs per student. However, only one earned IBC is necessary to meet College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR). Districts may apply for reimbursement for one passed certification examination per student during their high school career (ninth grade through graduation).

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

The methodology for the calculation of 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. One point is given for each annual graduate who accomplishes one of the CCMR indicators. For more information, consult the [2021 Accountability Manual](#).

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

There is not a specific relationship between the IBC accountability list and performance acknowledgments. It is the responsibility of the district to apply the definition adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in determining what qualifies as a certification for performance acknowledgments.

10. 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 they offer are aligned with programs of study that reflect the labor market data in their local workforce area while meeting the academic needs of their students. While hundreds of unique certifications are earned by public school students, the public-school accountability system measures success in preparing students for high-wage, in-demand careers. It is also important to note that IBCs are not the only way to demonstrate

CCMR. Students can meet college and career readiness measures in any of the other areas within Domain One of Accountability.

11. How will the 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?

The TEA understands that new developments in industry occur regularly and will engage in a bi-annual review of the list of certifications. The TEA solicits feedback from industry councils and employers to identify certifications that are industry valued and recognized. Please note that due to shutdowns caused by COVID-19, the 2020 evaluation and resulting list were postponed until 2021 and 2022, respectively.

12. Why are all programs of study not represented on the final list of IBCs for public high school accountability?

Some career clusters include occupations that require a postsecondary degree for entry level positions into a particular industry, such as a master's degree. Therefore, some career clusters may contain fewer industry-based certifications since they are not attainable by high school students. The TEA will continue to work to identify industry-based certifications that are aligned with industry demand within as many career clusters as possible.

Links/Resources:

Texas Education Agency 2021 Accountability Manual

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2021-accountability-manual-chapters-1-11.pdf>

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