

# Industry Certificate Guidebook

Industry Certificate Work Group, January 2015

*The information for industry certifications was created by the Graduation Guidelines Industry Certificate Work Group. For a list of the members of the work group or for a copy of [Industry Certification: Implementation Recommendations, Resources, and Tools](#), please click [here](#).*

## Introduction and Definitions

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**Industry Certification in Graduation Guidelines:** The Graduation Guidelines afford schools and districts the **option** to use industry certification to make student postsecondary and workforce readiness determinations for English, math, science and social studies. To assist district and school practitioners that choose to include industry certifications in their local graduation guidelines, the Colorado Department of Education convened a statewide working group, charged with developing recommendations, resources, and tools for the implementation of industry certifications in graduation guidelines.

This guide is designed for Colorado’s educators to inform the design, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of their district and/or school use of industry certifications to demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness.

**What is an Industry Certification?** An industry recognized third-party or governing board administered assessment, examination or licensure that measures occupational competency and validates a knowledge base and skills that shows mastery in a particular industry. Some examples include:

- Completing an industry certification program and passing the industry recognized certification exam/license
- Passing an examination that enables the award of an industry certification
- Obtaining a state-issued professional license

**Benefits of Industry Certifications:** Industry certifications are a way for students to show they have specific, industry-needed skills and abilities, which increases their opportunities beyond high school.

- **For the student** - Industry certifications are a mechanism that allows students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and/or skills. They can increase job prospects, marketability to employers, and employability, as well as options for post-secondary education.
- **For districts** - Certifications provide additional options for students by offering districts the opportunity to tailor graduation requirements to the unique needs of students and the local community, and promote increased student engagement.
- **For employers/industry** - Industry certifications demonstrate evidence of workers’ competencies, thus supporting hiring practices and filling specific employer-demanded knowledge, skills and abilities.
- **For Colorado/local community** – Industry certifications connect skill sets of the workforce to workforce demand. This intentional connection addresses the skills gap while increasing an individual’s earning potential.

## Considerations & Challenges

- Changing landscape of CTE, career pathways, industry partnerships
- Alignment with standards

## Definitions and Abbreviations:

The table below includes frequently used terms and abbreviations used in the guide.

Term	Definition
Career Clusters	A framework for studying traditional academics and learning the skills specific to a career, and provide schools with a structure for organizing or restructuring curriculum offerings and focusing class make-up by a common career pathway <a href="http://www.coloradostateplan.com/clusters/careerclustermodel.pdf">http://www.coloradostateplan.com/clusters/careerclustermodel.pdf</a>
Career Pathway	A series of connected education and training programs, work experiences, and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in a demand industry or occupation. <a href="http://www.dol.gov/NationalDialogue/ColoradoCareerPathwaysGuide.pdf">http://www.dol.gov/NationalDialogue/ColoradoCareerPathwaysGuide.pdf</a>
Concurrent Enrollment	The simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary courses, including academic or career and technical education courses, at an institution of higher education. <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment">http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment</a>
CTE (Career & Technical Education)	Organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. (Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, Public Law 105-332) <a href="http://www.coloradostateplan.com/toolbox.htm">http://www.coloradostateplan.com/toolbox.htm</a>
Community/ Technical College Certificate*	A higher education recognized certificate that is awarded for completing the coursework outlined in an approved academic program.
Industry Recognized Certification*	An industry recognized third-party or governing board administered assessment, examination or licensure that measures occupational competency and validates a knowledge base and skills that shows mastery in a particular industry
PWR	<b>Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.</b> The knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential to high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and compete in the global economy including content knowledge, learning and behavior skills.
Sector Partnerships	Industry specific regional partnerships, led by business in partnership with economic development, education, and workforce development. <a href="http://www.sectorssummit.com/sector-partnerships/career-pathways-sector-partnerships-colorado/">http://www.sectorssummit.com/sector-partnerships/career-pathways-sector-partnerships-colorado/</a>
Stackable Credentials	A credential that is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs. <a href="http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/2014-03-21-Stackable-Credentials-Paper-FINAL.pdf">http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/2014-03-21-Stackable-Credentials-Paper-FINAL.pdf</a>
Plans of Study	A progression of coursework that leads to an industry recognized certificate/certification. <a href="http://www.coloradostateplan.com/default_cluster.htm">http://www.coloradostateplan.com/default_cluster.htm</a>
SOC Code	Standard Occupational Classification system is used by Federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, or disseminating data

\*Note: A community/technical college certificate signifies completion of a series of courses and is not the same as an industry recognized certification. Completion of a community/technical college series of courses can prepare a student to take the assessment to earn an industry recognized certification.