

Proposed List of Industry-based Certifications For Inclusion in State Accountability System

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Why are industry-based certifications being included in the new accountability system?

- House Bill 2804 (84th Texas Legislature, 2015) requires the state to include the percentage of students who earn an industry certification in Domain IV (College and Career Readiness). In 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§74.14 \(e\) \(2\)](#), this certification is defined as
 - ... an industry validated credential that complies with knowledge and skills standards promulgated by a nationally or internationally recognized business, industry, professional, or government entity representing a particular profession or occupation that is issued by or endorsed by:
 - (A) a national or international business, industry, or professional organization;
 - (B) a state agency or other government entity; or
 - (C) a state-based industry association.
- In addition to the statutory requirement for inclusion, recommendations from the 2016 tri-agency report ([Prosperity Requires Being Bold: Integrating Education and the Workforce for a Bright Texas Future](#)) emphasize the importance of assisting students to become “career and college ready in areas that address both current and future workforce needs.” Recognizing valuable credentials with the aim of reducing coursework duplication and time to subsequent degrees is an important aspect of this work. (

2. When were districts given the opportunity to provide information about the certifications currently offered in their districts?

- In addition to the certifications listed in the Perkins Program Effectiveness Report (PER) list, a “To the Administrator Addressed” letter was sent to districts in September of 2016, requesting that information about the certifications offered on local campuses be submitted to TEA for consideration of inclusion in the state’s new accountability system. Districts were given approximately one month to respond to the request and 139 districts responded to the request.

3. What criteria are being used to determine which certifications would be included in the final list?

- The base criteria used to determine inclusion within the accountability system (as required by statute) concerns recognition by industry groups, as defined by the certification being:
 - i. **Nationally- or internationally-recognized:** Certifications that are nationally or internationally recognized through a national or international business, industry, or professional organization.
 - ii. **State-recognized:** Texas-certified industry certifications are those that are recognized and valued by either a state agency or government entity, or a state-based industry association.
- Additional criteria is representative of extensive feedback from stakeholders, other agency partners and best practices found in other states who have done similar work in identifying industry-based certifications of value. The tri-agency report recommendations were also instrumental in highlighting key components of high quality certifications as the commissioners made recommendations around better student preparation of the marketable skills necessary to succeed in business and industry's in-demand and high-demand fields. The additional criteria includes:
 - i. **End of Program (High School):** In order for certifications to be recognized in the state's accountability system, they must represent a culmination of knowledge and skills achievement through completion of a program of study in a high school Career and Technical Education program. While valuable certifications exist that serve as "building blocks" in attaining a targeted skill set, only certifications that are deemed as "end of program" will be considered for inclusion within the accountability system.
 - ii. **Stackable (direct transference to postsecondary work or additional industry certifications and opportunities):** Certifications must either be accepted for credit or hours at an institution of higher education, or they must include additional opportunities for workplace advancement, whether through additional certifications or other industry-validated pathways.
 - iii. **Industry Valued:** Industry certifications must be valued by respective career cluster industry groups and councils across the state in order to determine that the certifications are valid entry points for higher wage jobs. Industry-valued certifications may reflect either regional or statewide demand for employment, as determined by industry groups.

4. What process was used by TEA to review the list of certifications submitted by districts?

- The original compiled list from districts and the PER included over 830 entries, not all of which were actual certifications. The list was reviewed and analyzed through multiple rounds of review (by TEA staff, other agencies, and industry partners) to eliminate duplicate certifications, determine those not meeting base

criteria (state, national or international recognition), and identify those not meeting other criteria (end of high school program and/or transference to postsecondary work or additional certifications). The many round of analysis reduced the list to the current 67 certifications.

5. Why aren't all of the PER list of certifications included in the final list?

- Based on the criteria, not all of the certifications on the PER list were eligible for inclusion. For example, they may have included certifications issued by vendors or those that did not meet the other criteria.

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

- Beginning in the 2017-18 academic year, districts will enter information about industry-based certifications in PEIMS through the addition of a new PEIMS code.

7. Will districts be penalized for offering certifications to students that are not included in this list?

- No, districts will not be penalized for offering additional certifications not included on this list.

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

- It is at the discretion of the district to make decisions about which industry-based certifications will be offered on each campus. The final list will provide clarity about the certification offerings that will earn acknowledgement through the state's accountability system. TEA understands that district programs might choose to offer certifications that serve as important building blocks for students, yet do not necessarily meet the criteria for the accountability system. It is important to note that the inclusion of recognized certifications in the accountability system represents one small component in how districts may obtain acknowledgement through Domain IV of the accountability system.

9. How will TEA consider certifications that students may earn after completion of a high school program of study (those that are based on high school student preparation, but certified during a 2-year or 4-year post-secondary program of study)?

- The recognition of industry-based certifications earned in high school is only one method for districts to receive acknowledgment of college and career readiness within Domain IV of the accountability system. TEA recognizes that schools and districts develop multiple pathways for students that lead to post-secondary certifications after high school graduation. TEA will identify coherent sequences of study that lead to post-secondary programs of study and certifications that may be included for recognition within Domain IV as a separate indicator.

10. How will TEA account for changes in certifications and industry needs?

- TEA understands that new developments in program and industry occur regularly. Therefore, TEA will engage in an annual review of the list of certifications to ensure that the list reflects the most current industry needs.

11. How will business and industry provide input into which certifications are valuable to them?

- The agency will solicit feedback from regional industry clusters and organizations about the value of each certification included in the final list. Certifications do not have to be valued statewide by industry, as TEA will solicit feedback from regions about local demand.