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CTE™

CCTC
Common Career Technical Core

Brought to you by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc)

Setting a New Standard for Career Technical Education: Common Career Technical Core

The Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) is a state-led initiative to establish a set of rigorous, high-quality standards for Career Technical Education (CTE) that states can adopt voluntarily. The standards have been informed by state and industry standards and developed by a diverse group of teachers, business and industry experts, administrators and researchers.

The CCTC includes a set of standards for each of the 16 Career Clusters™ and their corresponding Career Pathways that define what students should know and be able to do after completing instruction in a program of study. The CCTC also includes an overarching set of Career Ready Practices that apply to all programs of study. The Career Ready Practices include 12 statements that address the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are important to becoming career ready.

The initiative is being coordinated by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), which represents the state and territory heads of secondary, postsecondary and adult CTE across the nation. Forty-two states, the District of Columbia and Palau participated in the development stage of the CCTC.

Why do we need a set of common state standards for CTE?

As the economy has changed in the past decade, many CTE programs transitioned from helping students prepare for an entry-level job to helping students prepare for a career. As part of that transition, national organizations, like NASDCTEc, individual states, and even industry-based organizations, created different sets of standards for student learning in CTE programs. The result was a hodgepodge of standards that vary in quality and specificity from one state to the next, putting some students at a distinct disadvantage for competing in the ever-changing global economy.

Recognizing the need for more consistency in today's global marketplace, in the spring of 2010 CTE State Directors united around a vision to develop a shared set of standards that meet a quality benchmark for students in CTE programs, regardless of where they live or which delivery system they use.

How were the standards developed?

The development of the CCTC was a multi-step process that incorporated input from approximately 3,500 individuals representing K-12 education, business and industry and higher education from across the nation.

The process for developing the CCTC was informed by:

- High-quality state and industry standards;
- Input and guidance from educators, business and industry and state leaders; and
- Feedback from the public.

The CCTC was developed to align with other college- and career-ready standards efforts, such as the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, while also articulating industry expectations for each of the 16 Career Clusters™. The final standards--approved by the 42 supporting states, DC, Palau and the NASDCTEc Board of Directors-- represent the most rigorous, high-quality, program-level standards for CTE.

How will states adopt the CCTC?

Over the course of the next year, NASDCTEc will launch an initiative to coordinate a comprehensive gap analysis to compare each state's current course-level standards against the CCTC program-level standards to determine alignment. The gap analysis will be conducted by a team of third-party experts to ensure quality and consistency across the states. Based on the gap analysis, each state will decide whether or not to adopt the CCTC and identify a plan for aligning current state expectations to the CCTC.

States have the option to adopt some or all of the Career Clusters™ that comprise the CCTC. For example, a state may choose to adopt standards for 10 of the 16 Career Clusters™. States must adopt each set of Career Cluster™ standards in its entirety. States choosing to adopt any of the Career Clusters™ must also adopt the Career Ready Practices.

To learn more about the Common Career Technical Core, please visit the Web site at:
www.careertech.org/career-technical-education/cctc/.