

What is CTE?

Career technical education (CTE) provides students and adults with the academic and technical skills, knowledge and training necessary to succeed in future careers and develop skills they will use throughout their careers. CTE programs have been organized into 16 career clusters, or similar occupational groupings, that identify the knowledge and skills students need as they follow a pathway to their goals. CTE prepares students for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies, and makes academic content accessible to students by providing it in a hands-on context.

CTE programs can be found in comprehensive high schools with career technical education programs, as well as high schools solely devoted to career technical education. Community colleges, technical institutes, and skill centers also offer career technical education at the post-secondary level.

Programs of Study

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-270), which funds CTE programs, requires states to develop programs of study to guide students when choosing courses. These programs of study include career and technical areas that:

- Incorporate both secondary and post-secondary education elements
- Include rigorous content, challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative series of courses that align secondary and post-secondary education
- May allow high school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or otherwise acquire post-secondary credit
- Result in an industry-recognized credential or certificate, or associate or baccalaureate degree

Tech Prep

Tech Prep is a program in the Perkins Act that links a minimum of two years of secondary school and two years of post-secondary school or an apprenticeship program, resulting in an associate degree or certificate. Tech Prep allows students to begin a sequence of classes in a career pathway while still in high school. Students enroll in both academic and career and technical classes in the career field of their choosing in order to develop the technical skills necessary for future employment.

What are the benefits of CTE?

Academic

- Students enrolled in CTE programs are held to the same rigorous academic standards as all students
- CTE provides a strong foundation for those pursuing a traditional four-year degree
- CTE students are more interested and motivated in their coursework because of its connection to the real world, and have lower dropout rates than traditional students

Economic

- Many sectors of the economy that require skilled workers report a shortage of qualified applicants to fill these positions. CTE programs prepare individuals for skilled professions that are essential to our nation's economic recovery.
- CTE programs prepare students, adults, and displaced workers for entry into high skill, high wage, and high demand careers in every industry sector.