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**Issue Date:** January 2024

## Industry-Recognized Credentials in Vermont

### Purpose

An Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) is a certificate or certification awarded to show the attainment of a skills standard. Industry-based skill standards and associated certifications promote consistency in quality and rigor and provide career entry and clear transitions to postsecondary education and training.

For state approved Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, IRCs hold a specific role in determining program quality and rigor and must align with state and federal funding requirements.

In High Schools, there are no requirements around IRC attainment. Some IRCs can be helpful in high school Work-Based Learning and Flexible Pathways efforts as students work to prepare themselves for lives after high school.

### Types of IRCs

There are specific criteria for IRCs for Career Technical Education centers based on state regulation and federal Perkins funding. To create transparency for CTE centers, updated IRC lists and definitions were created in spring of 2023. For CTE, IRCs are divided into two groups:

- Safety and Foundation Credentials (Tier 1)
- Post-Secondary Industry-Recognized Credentials (Tier 2)

### Safety and Foundation Credentials (Tier 1)

In CTE, all students need a thorough capacity to navigate hazardous or technical environments without harm to themselves or others. All CTE centers must have a program of safety for every CTE program (SBR 2378.1). The AOE list of Safety and Foundation Credentials includes the program area and the related safety credentials that are required or optional.

For High Schools doing career development and Work-Based Learning, there aren't required credentials. However, the Safety and Foundation Credentials (Tier 1) list could be a good reference of options to look into for students to have an Industry-Recognized credential that is relevant in various fields.

The Safety and Foundation Credentials (Tier 1) list is posted on the AOE website here: [Vermont CTE Programs Approved Safety/Foundation Credentials Tier 1 2023-24](#)



## Post-Secondary Industry-Recognized Credentials (Tier 2)

CTE programs are required by State Board Rule and Perkins V to offer post-secondary IRCs and/or dual enrollment credit specifically related to the CTE program of study. To qualify as an approved Post-Secondary IRC for Vermont CTE the credential must meet all four criteria relevant to the Advance CTE Career Cluster of that CTE program:

1. Valued and preferred by employers in industry.
2. Stackable: Skills learned may lead to opportunities for continuous or advanced training and education.
3. Specialized: Specific to career field. Leads to higher wages, career advancement, and/or increased job security. *This means it is NOT: just for high school students or only general safety.*
4. Third Party Review: Exams or certification must be evaluated by a third party (the program instructor is not the one issuing grades).

### POST-SECONDARY INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL CRITERIA VT



State approved CTE programs can apply to have new Post-Secondary IRCs added to the approved list. After review, new Post-Secondary IRCs are added to the approved list and posted on the AOE website. Updated lists are posted to the AOE website once a year.

Post-Secondary IRCs are mainly relevant to CTE centers and not to High Schools. Post-Secondary IRCs are tied to CTE Programs. If you are a high school WBL or Flexible Pathways Coordinator (or similar position) and are interested in having students pursue a Post-Secondary IRC as part of their High School learning pathway, please

reach out to the CTE Team at the AOE to confirm there is not duplication of programs of study already offered by CTE centers.<sup>1</sup>

The [Post-Secondary Industry-Recognized Credentials \(Tier 2\) list](#) can be found on the AOE website.

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<sup>1</sup> Act 189 from 2018 states that “The Agency of Education shall offer technical assistance to local education agencies to ensure that each high school student has the opportunity to experience meaningful work-based learning when included in the student’s personalized learning plan, and that high schools coordinate effectively with regional CTE centers to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs of student placements and study already provided by the centers.” Full text can be found on the Vermont Legislature website: [ACT189 - An act relating to workforce development](#)