
OVERVIEW OF THE IBC ADVISORY COUNCIL PROCESS

Introduction

[Texas Labor Code Chapter 312](#) established the Industry-Based Certification (IBC) Advisory Council (Council). The Council is composed of members who represent industry, career and technical education (CTE) within public schools, and postsecondary education within public junior and state colleges and public technical institutes. Per statute, the Council's responsibilities include the following:

- Advising the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) regarding the alignment of public high school CTE programs with current and future state and regional workforce needs.
- Developing an Inventory of industry-recognized credentials and certificates that public high school students may earn through a CTE program that:
 - aligns with state and regional workforce needs and
 - serves as an entry point to middle- and high-wage jobs.
- Establishing a process to develop the Inventory, including defining the criteria that determine whether a certificate or other credential may be included in the Inventory.
- Conducting annual reviews of the Inventory and revising it as needed.

Each credential listed in the Inventory must include:

- the associated career cluster;
- the awarding entity;
- the level of education required and any additional requirements to obtain the credential or certificate;
- any fees for obtaining the credential or certificate; and
- the average wage or salary for jobs that require or prefer the credential or certificate.

Guiding Principles

While organizing as a Council, members developed a list of guiding principles¹.

The Inventory of Industry-Recognized Credentials must:

- include credentials for critical skill sets such as entrepreneurship and safety and for soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork;
- include certifications, licenses, and other credentials that, although not aligned with high-demand and/or high-wage occupations, enable students to engage in new experiences, explore career opportunities, and become part of professional networks;

¹ Council members did not unanimously agree on all principles. A survey was used to determine majority consensus.

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- align with high school and postsecondary education programs; and
- reflect regional labor market needs such as those documented in [target occupations](#) lists² Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) develop and maintain.

Council members adhered to the guiding principles to establish the process described below.

In addition, the Council adopted a common nomenclature for identification and discussion of the various credentials. The terms are listed in [Appendix A](#).

Process

1. TWC staff compiles an Inventory of credentials available through programs listed on the current Statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).³
 - a. The ETPL reflects state and local programs that provide training in response to labor market needs.
 - b. In cases where credentials are not attainable by high school students, staff identifies a series of credentials in which one or some of the credentials may be attained by high school students.
2. Staff researches and assigns the following information to each credential:
 - a. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code
 - b. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) program of study
 - c. The certifying entity
 - d. Stackability
 - e. Prerequisites (if any)
3. Staff reviews the Inventory based on the evaluation criteria and scope defined by the Council.
4. Staff sends the Inventory and supporting labor market information to the Council for review.
5. Council members provide feedback to staff.
6. Staff revises the Inventory based on feedback.

² Boards determine target occupations based on economic indicators and local wisdom. Target occupations lists reflect current and future workforce needs and are used to guide workforce customers into aptitude-appropriate and economically relevant occupational training.

³ [The Statewide Eligible Training Providers List](#) (ETPL) is publicly accessible and includes programs that TWC has approved for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA)–funded training services. The Inventory also includes US Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs).

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7. Council reviews revisions to the Inventory.
8. Once approved by the Council, staff posts the Inventory for public comment.
9. Council members review comments received and may revise the Inventory based on public feedback.
10. The final Inventory of Industry-Recognized Credentials and other supporting documents, if appropriate, are distributed to the Texas Education Agency and to each school district and public institution of higher education that offers a career and technology education program to public high school students.

Other Considerations

- Council members continue to prioritize building a collaborative relationship across the Tri-Agencies with the goal of creating one comprehensive Inventory for the State of Texas. In addition, Council members would like for the Tri-Agencies and other stakeholders to continue working toward consistent use of a common credential nomenclature such as the terms listed in [Appendix A](#). Use of the nomenclature ensures clarity in discussions, publications, and other communications.
- The Inventory should be treated as a living document and reviewed at regular intervals by employers, educators, and industry representatives to ensure regional and statewide workforce needs are met. This review may lead to the addition of credentials that have not completed the TEA qualification process but are necessary for emerging, high wage, high demand occupations.
- The Council supports the addition of foundational credentials⁴ to the Inventory with the understanding that these credentials may be attained while students work towards capstone credentials.
- The Council supports the inclusion of micro- and stackable credentials in the Inventory, thereby creating a series of credentials that articulate to a higher-level credential.

⁴ Foundational credentials are certificates or licenses required for employment in specific industries or occupations. For example, Texas requires that many food service employees complete an accredited food handler training course within 30 days of employment.

Appendix A

Credential Nomenclature

1) **Credential**—The all-encompassing umbrella term used to describe any type of traditional and nontraditional award within the context of education, training, workforce, and employment development.

Credentials are awarded by institutions that have relevant authority to issue such credentials, after individuals demonstrate proficiency or competency in a specific program, occupation, or field.

Credentials may be earned from a various sources, including, but not limited to, educational institutions, industry associations, and government agencies.

Characteristics: Overarching term that includes all degrees, certificates, badges, micro-credentials, licenses, apprenticeships, and industry-based certifications.

2) **Certificate**—A certificate may be awarded by either an educational institution or independent education and training provider.

Educational and training programs teach students skills related to specific occupations, whereas certificate programs are generally created, taught, and assessed directly by the program provider.

Students are awarded certificates after successfully completing instruction and demonstrating proficiency through provider-administered exams. Obtaining a certificate generally signifies the end of the instructional program.

Characteristics: Non-uniform, provider-assessed, many types

3) **License**—A license is a type of nontraditional credential that is generally awarded by a government-regulated agency. This award may be granted by a federal entity but usually comes from the state level.

Obtaining a license indicates that an individual has completed or achieved certain standards and is required before the individual may work in specific professions. Plumbers, electricians, real estate brokers, and nurses are examples of occupations that require an individual to have a valid license.

Characteristics: Highly regulated, restrictive, occupational requirement

4) **Apprenticeship Certificate**—Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) are training programs that produce highly skilled workers in occupations ranging from trades (for example, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians) to other industries, such as health care, energy, and information technology.

As a type of postsecondary training that teaches industry-based skills and standards, RAPs offer a sequence of classroom instruction and on-the-job training where workers learn both academic and practical aspects of an occupation. Successful completion of an apprenticeship results in a certificate of apprenticeship.

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Characteristics: Full-time, paid employment, wage progression

5) **Industry-Based Certification**—An industry-based certification is a nontraditional award that demonstrates proficiency and knowledge, through examination, in a specific occupation, skill, industry or trade.

Obtaining an industry-based certification is not dependent on any actual education or training program. Instead, evaluating candidates for certification relies on independent, third-party professional and industry-based groups.

These national organizations develop and maintain relevant proficiency standards that are assessed and sanctioned by industry-approved examination facilities, independent of any educational institution or training program.

Characteristics: Uniform, third-party assessed, nationally recognized, portable, independent of education or training provider.