

# CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND COURSES

## Descriptions and Requirements

The definitions, descriptions and requirements presented in this question/answer paper on Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and courses are intended to serve two purposes: 1) to guide local educational agency (LEA) efforts to improve and expand their CTE programs, and where possible, qualify the improved and expanded programs for assistance with allocated Perkins Act funds; and 2) to ensure that LEA programs currently being assisted with allocated funds are compliant with the requirements and, are indeed preparing students for the high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations and careers for which the Perkins funds are intended. Each of provided responses was extracted or excerpted from the Perkins legislation, regulations developed by the U.S. Office of Education for administering this legislation, and California State Board of Education policies provided in the 2008-2012 CA State Plan for Career Technical Education.

- What is CTE?

CTE is the component of a LEA's instructional program that has as its primary purpose the preparation of students for gainful employment in high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations or careers that are consistent with their personal interests and aptitudes. CTE includes competency-based applied learning that contributes to the academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, occupational-specific skills and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship, of an individual.

- What is a CTE program?

A CTE program is a planned sequence of coherent courses that is expressly designed to provide students with the technical and academic knowledge and skills required to gain immediate employment in a targeted career pathway occupation upon graduation from high school and to transition to the postsecondary level instruction needed to prepare for advanced careers or professions in the career pathway.

- What are the requirements of CTE programs assisted with the LEA's allocated Perkins funds?

Each CTE program assisted with Section 131 or 132 funds must incorporate the nine requirements established in Section 135(b) of the 2006 Perkins Act. In addition, the programs must be able to demonstrate compliance with the planning, organization, and instructional elements presented in Chapter Five of the 2008-2012 CA State Plan for CTE:

### Perkins IV, Section 135(b) Requirements

- ✓ strengthen the academic, and career and technical skills of students participating in career and technical education programs by strengthening the academic, and career and technical components of such programs through the integration of academics with career and technical education programs through a coherent sequence of courses, such as career and technical programs of study in section 122(c)(1)(A), to ensure learning in;
  - the core academic subjects (as defined in Section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965); and
  - career and technical education subjects;

- ✓ link career and technical education at the secondary level and career and technical education at the postsecondary, including by offering the relevant elements of not less than 1 career and technical program of study described in section 122(c)1)(A);
- ✓ provide students with strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of an industry, which may include work-based learning experiences;
- ✓ develop, improve, or expand the use of technology in vocational and technical education, which may include—
  - training of career and technical education teachers, faculty, and administrators to use technology, which may include distance learning;
  - providing career and technical education students with the academic, and career and technical skills (including the mathematics and science knowledge that provides a strong basis for such skills) that lead to entry into the technology fields; or
  - encouraging schools to collaborate with technology industries to offer voluntary internships and mentoring programs, including programs that improve the mathematics and science knowledge of students;
- ✓ provide professional development programs that are consistent with section 122 to secondary and postsecondary teachers, faculty, administrators, and career guidance and academic counselors who are involved in integrated career and technical education programs, including—
  - in-service and preservice training on—
    - ✚ effective integration and use of challenging academic and career and technical education provided jointly with academic teachers to the extent practicable;
    - ✚ effective teaching skills based on research that includes promising practices;
    - ✚ effective practices to improve parental and community involvement; and
    - ✚ effective use of scientifically based research and data to improve instruction;
  - support of education programs for teachers of career and technical education in public schools and other public school personnel who are involved in the direct delivery of educational services to career and technical education students, to ensure that such teachers and personnel stay current with all aspects of an industry;
  - internship programs that provide relevant business experience; and
  - programs designed to train teachers specifically in the effective use and application of technology to improve instruction;
- ✓ develop and implement evaluations of the career and technical education programs carried out with funds under this title, including an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met;
- ✓ initiate, improve, expand, and modernize quality career and technical education programs, including relevant technology;
- ✓ provide services and activities that are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective; and
- ✓ provide activities to prepare special populations, including single parents and displaced homemakers who are enrolled in career and technical education programs, for high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations that will lead to self-sufficiency.

## 2008-2012 CA State Plan for CTE Requirements

- ✓ be staffed by qualified CTE teachers, meaning teachers who 1) possess a standard secondary, single-subject or designated-subject credential which authorizes the teaching of the CTE course(s) to which assigned, and 2) can document employment experience, outside of education, in the career pathway addressed by the program or other evidence of equivalent proficiency. The minimum qualifications for community college CTE teachers are established in Title 5 of the CA Administrative Code;
- ✓ focus on current or emerging high skill, high wage or high demand occupations;
- ✓ be aligned with the state's CTE Model Curriculum Standards and Framework;
- ✓ have extensive business and industry involvement, as evidenced by not less than one annual business and industry advisory committee meeting and planned business and industry involvement in program activities as described in the Guidelines for the CA 2008–2012 Local Plan for Career Technical Education and instructions for the annual application for funds;
- ✓ provide for certification of students who achieve industry-recognized skill and knowledge requirements;
- ✓ be aligned with applicable feeder and advanced-level instruction in the same career pathway;
- ✓ integrate the development of CTE and academic skills in order to prepare students for immediate employment upon graduation and for further education or training;
- ✓ provide practical applications and experiences through actual or simulated work-based learning assignments;
- ✓ provide for equitable access and needed support services of all students, including special populations and those preparing for nontraditional occupations;
- ✓ include planned career awareness and exploration experiences;
- ✓ provide for the development of student leadership skills through an established career technical student organization or an alternate strategy that incorporates this instruction in all of the courses that make up the sequence;
- ✓ use annual evaluation results, including achieved core indicator performance levels, to determine needed program improvements, modifications, and professional development activities for staff; and
- ✓ have a systematic plan for promoting the program to all concerned groups, including, but not limited to, students, parents, counselors, site and district administrators, and postsecondary educational agencies.

CTE programs (sequences of courses) assisted with Perkins funds must also:

- ✓ consist of not less than two full-year CTE courses that have a combined duration of not less than 300 hours. Approvable alternatives include single, multiple-hour courses that provide sequential units of CTE instruction and have a duration of not less than 300; and CTE programs such as Certified Nurses Assistants and CISCO that provide students with state- or industry-recognized licenses or certificates and have a duration of not less than 150 hours;
  - ✓ be coherent, meaning that the sequence may only include those CTE courses with objectives and content that have a clear and direct relationship to the occupation(s) or career targeted by the program; and
  - ✓ Include sufficient introductory and concentration CTE courses to provide students with the instruction needed to develop the knowledge and skill levels required for employment and postsecondary education and training.
- What are the requirements of CTE Courses assisted with the LEAs allocated Perkins funds?

Each CTE course must:

- ✓ be coherent in content and objectives and integral to an approvable CTE program, or sequence of courses;
  - ✓ be explicitly designed to prepare students with career-related skills required to obtain gainful employment in the targeted career pathway at the completion of high school, and to transition to the postsecondary education and training required for higher level occupations or careers in the pathway;
  - ✓ have no less than 50 percent of its course curriculum and content directly related to the development of career knowledge and skills. (The CA CTE Model Curriculum Standards and Framework can be useful tools in ensuring and validating that there is sufficient CTE content embedded in the curriculum);
  - ✓ have extensive and ongoing business and industry involvement in the development of the curriculum and in the operation of the course; and
  - ✓ be taught by a teacher who meets the CTE teacher credential and occupational experience qualifications cited above in the requirements for CTE programs assisted with the Perkins funds.
- May LEAs conduct career-related courses that do not meet the program and course requirements for assistance with the allocated Perkins funds?

Yes. The only requirement of courses taught in the middle schools and high schools is the teacher's possession of a credential that authorizes him or her to teach the course. However, LEAs should understand 1) that Perkins funds may not be used to assist these courses; 2) that credentialed teachers with years of actual occupational experience in the targeted field are much more able and likely to link the subject matter to the meaningful, real-life experiences recommended by the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing; and 3) courses and programs that effectively address the planning, organization, and instructional elements required for assistance with the Perkins funds have an excellent track record of getting students engaged in the program and in the school, for preparing them for immediate employment upon graduation,

and for transitioning to postsecondary preparation for advanced-level employment in career pathways.