

An Ideal Combination

Programs of Study and Technical Assessments

The nation's Career and Technical Education (CTE) system recognizes the power of state collaboration in relation to technical Programs of Study (POS). Valid and reliable industry-based credentials measure student attainment of technical skills and assist states in meeting regulatory requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Act.

According to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006, a **POS** is "... a comprehensive, structured approach for delivering academic and technical education to prepare a student for post-secondary education and career success."

Perkins requires that local schools implement one POS that ...

- Aligns secondary and post-secondary curriculum
- Provides a non-duplicative sequence of courses
- Offers an opportunity for secondary students to acquire post-secondary skills
- Leads to an industry credential

NOCTI provides ...

- Assessment Blueprints to assist in aligning program content to national standards as well as aligning secondary and post-secondary curriculum through the identification of common competencies.
- Assessment results that can be used when awarding post-secondary credit to students through statewide articulation agreements.
- Certification assessments for a number of industry associations.
- Assessments which can assist in preparing students for industry certification exams.

According to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006, a **Technical Assessment** "... must provide ongoing information on the extent to which students are attaining necessary knowledge and skills for entry into post-secondary education and a career in their chosen POS."

Perkins requires that technical assessments must ...

- Measure progress at multiple points
- Employ assessments ... based on industry standards
- Incorporate measurement of technical skill (performance-based) attainment

NOCTI provides ...

- Industry-based credentials that can be used in a pre-test/post-test administration format as well as study guides to provide an objective measure of competence at multiple points.
- Industry-based credentials that are developed utilizing subject matter experts representing secondary/post-secondary education and industry from around the nation.
- Industry-based performance credentials to allow students to "show what they know."

NOCTI, a national provider of quality industry-based credentials, prepared this practical guide to help educators in selecting technical skill assessments. See other side for "A Practical Guide for Selecting Technical Assessments" which lists key questions educators should consider when selecting an assessment provider.



A Practical Guide for Selecting Technical Assessments

Program of Study (POS) Alignment	YES	NO
• Do the majority of the assessment standards and competencies align with the technical components of the POS?		
• Is a performance component available to assess hands-on skills taught in the POS?		
• Are customized assessment options available to meet the needs of the POS?		
Instruction and Program Improvement Reports and Data	YES	NO
• In addition to a total score, do the score reports provide detailed information (more than a pass/fail designation) to be used as a basis for instructional improvement?		
• Do the score reports provide easily identifiable individual and group strengths as well as areas needing improvement?		
• Are individual score reports available for inclusion in a student's portfolio?		
• Are specialized score report options available? (e.g., alignment to national academic standards, pre-/post-test score comparisons, competency level reporting)		
• Are customized summary report options available? (e.g., student performance summaries disaggregated by specific subgroups, year-to-year comparisons)		
• Do the score reports provide normative data for comparison purposes? (e.g., criterion-referenced and/or norm-referenced scores)		
• Are there professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn how to interpret and use data for program improvement?		
Accommodating the School Environment	YES	NO
• Are both online and paper/pencil delivery options available?		
• Is multiple-session test administration available to accommodate varied school schedules?		
• Are accommodations for individuals with disabilities available? (e.g., online text-to-speech, multiple-testing sessions, large print versions, extended time)		
• Will score reports be available prior to the end of the school year?		
• Is personalized technical support and customer service readily available before, during and after test administration?		
Costs	YES	NO
• Does the cost of the assessment include user training, supplemental administration materials, score reports, and technical support?		
• Are there site license, administration or membership/subscription fees in addition to the cost of the assessment?		
• In order to use the assessment, does the school/staff need to be certified or endorsed by the testing organization? Is there a cost involved?		
Helpful Tools	YES	NO
• Is pre-testing available?		
• Are test preparation tools available? (e.g., competency lists, study guides, practice questions)		
• Does the test taker have the opportunity to earn college credit for doing well on the assessment?		
• Are assessment-related professional learning opportunities available for teachers and administrators?		
Assessment Development	YES	NO
• Is the assessment development process based on reputable industry testing standards? (e.g., Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing)		
• Is the assessment based on industry-recognized technical standards?		
Organization Reputation/Security	YES	NO
• Is the organization that developed the assessment reputable and recognized within the CTE community?		
• Does the organization protect individual school and state assessment information?		
• Is assessment data encrypted when sending and receiving across the internet?		