

Glossary of Terms Pertaining to Career Pathways, Career and Technical Education, Stackable Credentials, and Related Educational Approaches

Apprenticeship-related instruction (ARI): Course instruction that meets the classroom training requirements of registered apprenticeship programs. Depending on the program or education institution, ARI can also count as academic credit toward degrees or certificates.

Bridge programs: Designed for individuals who require training or skill enhancement to meet minimum requirements for participation in degree or certificate programs. Bridge programs allow learners to start from their current skill levels and work toward enrollment in training programs they ultimately seek to complete.

Career and technical education (CTE): As defined in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. § 2302(5)), the term “career and technical education” means organized educational activities that (A) offer a sequence of courses that— (i) provides individuals with rigorous academic content and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions, which may include high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, which shall be, at the secondary level, aligned with the challenging State academic standards adopted by a State under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; (ii) provides technical skill proficiency or a recognized postsecondary credential, which may include an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or an associate degree; and (iii) may include prerequisite courses (other than a remedial course) that meet the requirements of this subparagraph; (B) include competency-based, work-based, or other applied learning that supports the development of academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills, and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship, of an individual; (C) to the extent practicable, coordinate between secondary and postsecondary education programs through programs of study, which may include coordination through articulation agreements, early college high school programs, dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities, or other credit transfer agreements that provide postsecondary credit or advanced standing; and (D) may include career exploration at the high school level or as early as the middle grades (as such term is defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

Career pathway: As defined in the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)* (29 U.S.C. § 3102(7)), the term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that: (A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved; (B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeships; (C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals; (D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; (E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable; (F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and (G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Certificate: Formal recognition of the completion of a course of study intended to teach specific skills usually associated with a professional field or set of related occupations

Competency-based education: A program of study based on the mastery of specific information and skills tied to application in the workforce. Competency-based programs award credentials based on demonstrated ability rather than participation in course instruction.

Credit for prior learning: See Prior learning assessment

Dual-credit programs: Allow high school students to enroll in community or technical college courses, receiving both high school and college credit at the same time—credit that can also be transferred to other colleges and universities.

Industry-recognized credentials: An industry-recognized credential is one that either is developed and offered by or is endorsed by a nationally recognized industry association or organization representing a sizeable portion of the industry sector, or a credential that is sought or accepted by companies within the industry sector for purposes of hiring or recruitment, which may include credentials from product vendors.

Industry skill standards: The knowledge and skills required for employment in specific industries. Employers or industry boards usually identify and define these skills.

Prior learning assessment: An assessment process that enables students to earn college credit for learning acquired on the job, through professional or military training, online, or through other education programs. Prior learning assessment (PLA) comprises skill tests, written examinations, work portfolio assessments, or some combination and can accelerate credential earning and degree acquisition, especially for nontraditional college students. May also be referred to as Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).

Program of study: As defined in *Perkins V* (20 U.S.C. § 2302(41)), the term “program of study” means a coordinated, nonduplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that— (A) incorporates challenging State academic standards; (B) addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills, including employability skills; (C) is aligned with the needs of industries in the economy of the State, region, Tribal community, or local area; (D) progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to more occupation-specific instruction); (E) has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and (F) culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

Registered apprenticeship programs: Earn-and-learn programs that offer classroom instruction and on-the-job training linked to employment. Employers hosting apprentices are integral to the process and typically hire apprentices who earn their credentials. Apprenticeships can be registered at the state or federal level (or both) and have specific requirements for the number of hours apprentices must participate in classroom and on-the-job training.

Stackable credential: A credential is considered stackable when it is part of a sequence of industry-informed credentials that can be accumulated over time to expand an individual’s competencies, help him or her advance within a career pathway, and earn family-sustaining wages.

Student support services: Services designed to facilitate student success in educational programs. These may include career planning and development, case management, mentoring, coaching and tutoring, work-friendly scheduling, federal and state need-based financial aid, job search skills training, job placement assistance, and referral to providers of other supportive services (e.g., transportation, childcare, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): The 2014 Federal statute that establishes federal policy direction and appropriates federal funds for employment and training programs. These programs include training for disadvantaged youths, adults, and dislocated workers; adult education and literacy; employment services and labor market information; and rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. Compared to previous legislation, *WIOA* encourages a system-level view of education and training, encouraging blended investments and strong partnerships between programs and agencies serving people who seek to learn, work, or advance in their careers.