
Perkins/TSA FAQ

1. **What is a TSA?**

A TSA, Technical Skills Attainment, is an exam that is given to a student after he/she earns three credits in a sequence that lead to a career path. If the student plans to take more credits in his/her sequence of courses, postpone the administration of the exam until no further credits in that sequence will be earned. *Example*, a student is a concentrator, has earned three credits in the finance cluster, he plans to take IB Economics his senior year, do NOT test him his junior year. He should be tested his senior year after the course is complete. If you know for a fact that a student will not take another course that aligns with his/her sequence of courses, he/she may be tested his junior year.

2. **What is the definition of a concentrator?**

A student who has earned three or more sequential credits in any state-approved CTE program grades 9-12.

3. **What is the definition of a completer?**

In relation to Perkins, a completer is a concentrator that graduates or earns a GED during the reporting year.

4. **Who should take a technical skill assessment and when should it be given?**

A technical skill assessment should be given to students who are concentrators and will complete (graduate or earn GED) the approved CTE program. It is not intended to be taken after every course.

5. **What is program completion?**

Program completion is defined locally, but should consist of a combined sequence of courses totaling three or more units of credit. Courses can crossover into different program areas. For example, a sequence of courses for a Business Marketing program could include a textiles course from Family and Consumer Science, or a sales and marketing course from Agriculture. Ultimately, the student would be taking the Business Marketing skills assessment because that is his/her area of interest or personal plan of study.

6. **What if our school has no concentrators?**

This will be handled case-by-case with each school district. DESE staff will follow-up with each district not submitting any concentrators and try to determine, along with the school and Fiscal Agent, the reason for the lack of concentrators.

7. **If a secondary institution sends its students to a career center or postsecondary institution for a CTE program, who is responsible for giving the student a skills assessment?**

The institution will administer the technical skill assessment where the secondary student completes the CTE program (i.e. secondary school, area career center, or postsecondary institution). The institution will report back to the sending school the result of the assessment, and it is the responsibility of the sending school to report that information in MOSIS.

8. **Could a secondary student take a technical skill assessment their sophomore or junior year?**

Yes, if a student is a concentrator and completes a program prior to his/her senior year, he/she can take the technical skill assessment and the school will report the results of the assessment in MOSIS June cycle submission. However, the results from MOSIS will not be compiled until the student leaves the secondary institution (graduated, dropped out, deceased, or expelled).

9. **How do you determine if the student passes or fails the assessments?**

There are three ways to determine if a student has passed or failed their technical skill assessment. Industry provides a pass/fail cut score. Industry does not provide a cut score, but has a national norm. Students who meet or exceed the national norm are considered as passing the assessment. Those who are below the national norm are considered as failing the assessment. If the industry does not provide a cut score or national norm, the cut score is 65%. Those students meeting or exceeding 65% pass the assessment, those who don't, fail.

10. **Why do concentrators have to take a TSA assessment?**

A TSA demonstrates knowledge and skill of the student(s), improves transition from secondary to post-secondary programs of study and conveys proof of mastery to potential employers. It is required of all states that receive Federal Perkins dollars.

11. **I have a student who is a concentrator in more than one area, which TSA or IRC exam does he/she take?**

You should always refer to the student's personal plan of study in determining which exam he/she will take. They do not need to test in both areas. The choice is ultimately the school district's decision.

12. **Where can I view the total number of concentrators reported in my program?**

(Clusters: #4 Business, Management and Administration, #6 Finance, #11 IT, #14 Marketing) You can view statewide data at <http://mcids.dese.mo.gov/guidedinquiry/Perkins/Secondary/Secondary%20Concentrator%20Career%20Clusters.aspx>

13. **What are credits in a sequence?**

A sequence is defined as a series of courses that build upon each other, show a relationship, and assist students in developing knowledge and skills leading to postsecondary education or employment.

14. **Do the three credits earned to be classified as a concentrator have to be in the same cluster?**
The three credits needed to become a concentrator do not have to be in the same cluster; however, a TSA or IRC exam will best align with the student's coursework when the three credits earned by the student are within the cluster. Remember that the courses must build upon each other, show a relationship and assist students in developing knowledge and skills leading to postsecondary education or employment.
15. **Is there a help document on the administration of the Perkins grant?**
Yes, you can find it at <http://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/career-education/perkins-act/help-documents>.
16. **Does Personal Finance count as a credit in the sequence?**
Yes, it does.
17. **Does a student have to take a TSA exam to be deemed a concentrator?**
No, a student is deemed a concentrator when they have earned 3 sequential credits in a program area.
18. **Why do my district's Perkins funds go to the area career center?** The Perkins Act requires two conditions to be met in order for a secondary LEA to directly access Federal career education (Carl D. Perkins) funds. The first condition requires the LEA to have a minimum allocation of \$15,000; and the second requires the LEA's secondary career education program offerings to be of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective. The Department's definition of sufficient size, scope, and quality is as follows: Sufficient Size, Scope, and Quality - A full range of Department-approved career and technical education programs, services, and activities provided by an eligible recipient that would provide training opportunities in four of the seven career education program areas; and supportive services that include student assessment, guidance, placement, and remedial academic support for all students, including members of special populations who are enrolled in career education provided by the eligible recipient.