

# Perkins IV Technical Skill Attainment

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Q: What is the definition of a concentrator?

**A: Secondary:** A student who has earned three or more sequential credits in any state-approved CTE program grades 9-12. Sequential credits can consist of courses that crossover into different program areas. (Note: It is a local decision to determine the sequence; therefore, it is a local decision to determine when a student becomes a concentrator and completes a program).

**Postsecondary:** A student who has earned a minimum of 12 or more CTE credits in any DESE-approved CTE program area.

**Adult:** An adult student who has earned a minimum of 500 clock hours in any DESE-approved CTE program area.

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### Q: What is program completion?

**A: Secondary:** 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.

**Postsecondary:** A student who has earned a degree, one or two year program certificate, or industry recognized credential in a DESE approved CTE program. (Note: An industry recognized credential must require a minimum of 12 credits and must be approved by the Department.)

**Adult:** An adult student who has earned a one or two year program certificate with a minimum of 500 clock hours.

**Q: What if our school has no concentrators?**

**A:** This is 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.

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**Q: 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?**

**A:** The technical skill assessment will be administered by the institution 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.

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**Q: Who will pay for the technical skill assessment?**

**A:** Technical Skill Attainment is a Perkins IV federal requirement. Therefore, Perkins funds can be used to purchase skill assessments for the purpose of meeting this requirement. At this point, there are no additional federal funds available to pay for skill assessments. Fiscal Agents are responsible for the allocation of Perkins funds within a consortium. It is a local decision to determine how this allocation will be distributed among its' members.

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**Q: Who should take a technical skill assessment and when should it be given?**

**A:** A technical skill assessment should be given to students who are concentrators and have completed an approved CTE program. It is not intended to be taken after every course.

**Secondary:** Due to the new concentrator definition, it is anticipated that most students taking the skill assessment will be seniors who have completed a program (or those anticipated to complete a program at the end of the enrolled course) and are scheduled to graduate in the reporting year. However, skill assessments can be administered at any grade level 9-12 as long the student meets the criteria of CTE concentrator and program completion. The LEA should report the test results in MOSIS during the June cycle submission the year the test was taken, but the results will not be reported until the student leaves the secondary institution (graduated, dropped out, deceased, or expelled).

It is recommended that meetings are conducted between the Guidance Counselor(s) and the CTE instructors to discuss students' personal plans of study that indicate a desire to pursue a career in a CTE program area. Communication between the Guidance Counselors and CTE instructors on courses a student intends to pursue will help determine when to report the student as a

concentrator, and what courses he/she will need to take to complete a program and take a technical skill assessment.

**Postsecondary:** For postsecondary institutions, students who have earned (or anticipate to earn at the end of the enrolled course) a one or two year certificate, degree, or industry recognized credential will need to take a technical skill assessment. When possible, these assessments should be given prior to the student exiting from the institution. If the student is required to graduate before he/she can take the assessment, a follow-up process will need to be established to attempt to retrieve the pass/fail information. Postsecondary institutions will be required to report TSA information in the June cycle submission.

**Adult:** Adult students who have earned (or anticipated to earn at the end of the enrolled course) a one or two year program certificate with a minimum of 500 clock hours will need to take a technical skill assessment. The institution where the adult student is enrolled (typically an area career center) will be required to report TSA information in the June cycle submission.

Eventually, all concentrators who complete a program will be expected to take a technical skill assessment. This process will be phased-in over the next three to four years. The chart below demonstrates how this process will be implemented.

#### Secondary

2008-2009 School Year	25% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment*
2009-2010 School Year	50% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment *
2010-2011 School Year	75% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment *
2011-2012 School Year	75% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment * ( <i>Amended 2012</i> )
2012-and beyond	100% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment ( <i>Amended 2012</i> )

#### Postsecondary/Adult

2008-2009 School Year	33% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment
2009-2010 School Year	66% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment
2010-2011 School Year	100% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment
2011-2012	75% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment ( <i>Amended 2012</i> )
2012-and beyond	100% of concentrators who complete a program will take a technical skill assessment ( <i>Amended 2012</i> )

\* The percentage of students taking the technical skill assessment will be cumulative of all the student concentrators completing a program within a consortium. If an institution is a stand-alone, not part of a consortium, the percentage will only reflect the students within that institution.

**Q: Could a secondary student take a technical skill assessment their sophomore or junior year?**

**A:** Yes, if a student is a concentrator and completes a program prior to their 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 will not compile from MOSIS until the student leaves the secondary institution (graduated, dropped out, deceased, or expelled).

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**Q: Does the student need to graduate from the postsecondary institution before taking a technical skill assessment?**

**A:** No. In some circumstances with postsecondary institutions, a student might earn a certificate and opt not to complete the other required courses to graduate. Since the student has completed a program and earned a program certificate, he/she would qualify to take the technical skill assessment. In some cases, the same assessment given to earn the program certificate could also qualify as the assessment for technical skill attainment.

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**Q: What assessments qualify as third-party, industry-recognized?**

**A:** The Office of College and Career Readiness recognizes that there are many assessments presently available, as well as new ones being developed, that would meet the Perkins IV guidelines for technical skill attainment. To assist in determining if an assessment meets the Perkins IV criteria, a list of assessments that have been approved is located on the Department's [Technical Skills Attainment & Industry Recognized Credential](#) webpage. The list will continually be monitored and new assessments will be considered as they become available and if appropriate.

Districts currently using an assessment believed to qualify as an industry-aligned assessment, but not administered by a national organization, should contact their Program Director in the Office of College and Career Readiness for guidance.

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**Q: How do you determine if the student passes or fails the assessments?**

**A:** There are four ways to determine if a student has passed or failed their technical skill assessment.

1. Industry provides a pass/fail cut score.
2. 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.

3. Bundle (average to determine cut score). Some programs have to bundle several assessments in order to get a true end of program assessment. This becomes an issue because only one score can be entered into MOSIS. Previously, when schools bundled the assessment, they would use 65% as the cut score. Now, if the assessments have individual pass scores, the school should average the pass score together to determine their new cut score. For example, NA3SA has 5 areas that students are tested in. Each has a pass score: 55%, 50%, 50% 52%. The average of the pass scores is 52%. 52% is the new cut score.

However, if the vendor does not provide a cut score for each assessment, the cut score will remain at 65%.

4. 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.
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**Q. Can post-secondary institutions use a portfolio assessment as a TSA?**

**A:** Yes. Post-secondary institutions must have their portfolio content and assessment protocols approved and on file with DESE.

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**Q: What is the Perkins IV performance level for Technical Skill Attainment?**

**A: Secondary**

2008-2009: 25% test; 61.60% pass

2009-2010: 50% test; 61.60% pass

2010-2011: 75% test; 62.00% pass

2011-2012: 75% test; 62.50% pass (*Amended 2012*)

2012-2013: 100% test; 63.00% pass (*Amended 2012*)

2013-2014: 100% test; 68.75% pass

2014-2015: 100% test; 71% pass

2015-2016: 100% test; 73% pass

2016-2017: 100% test; 74% pass

2017-2018: 100% test; 75% pass

2018-2019: 100% test; 75.5% pass

**B: Postsecondary/Adult**

2008-2009: 33% test; 71.00% pass

2009-2010: 66% test; 71.25% pass

2010-2011: 100% test; 71.50% pass  
2011-2012: 75% test; 72.00% pass (*Amended 2012*)  
2012-2013: 100% test; 72.50% pass (*Amended 2012*)  
2013-2014: 100% test; 82.5% pass  
2014-2015: 100% test; 83% pass  
2015-2016: 100% test; 85.6% pass  
2016-2017: 100% test; 86.58 pass  
2017-2018: 100% test; 87% pass  
2018-2019: 100% test; 87.5% pass

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**Q: What will happen if an institution does not meet the required performance level?**

**A:** More guidance will be given at a later time for those institutions that do not meet the TSA performance standard. It is anticipated that institutions not meeting 90% of the performance level will be required to submit an improvement plan.

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**Q: How will the TSA be reported?**

**A:** TSA will be reported in the student's core file in the MOSIS *June cycle* submission. When a student becomes a concentrator (*no matter what grade-level*), the MOSIS system will require the LEA to report the student's TSA status (see TSA code-sets chart). If the LEA does not report one of six code-sets for students that are concentrators, then the institution will receive an error and the MOSIS file will not be certified. It is important to note that only one skill assessment per student can be submitted in MOSIS. If a student completed several CTE programs, and has taken multiple assessments, it will be a local decision to report which assessment most accurately reflects the pathway of the student.

As previously mentioned, the results of the assessment will be compiled only when the student is reported as leaving a secondary institution (graduated, dropped out, deceased, or expelled) or exiting a postsecondary institution (one or two year program certificate, degree, or industry recognized credential). The following page contains the TSA code sets that are available:

TSA Code-Set	Description		Example
<b>PT</b>	Passed Test	Student passed the technical skills assessment	The student is a concentrator, completed a program, took the assessment, and passed.
<b>FT</b>	Failed Test	Student failed to pass the technical skills assessment	The student is a concentrator, completed a program, took the assessment, and failed.
<b>NT</b>	Not Tested	Student was eligible to take the technical skills assessment and the assessment was available, but the student did not take the assessment	The student is a concentrator, completed a program, is supposed to take the assessment, but didn't (i.e. sick the day of testing, met required % of students testing and choose not to test or report student test score).
<b>NA</b>	Not Available	Student was eligible to take the technical skills assessment, but an assessment was not made available for the student	The student is a concentrator, completed a program, but no assessment is available for the specified program area.
<b>NE</b>	Not Eligible	Student was not eligible to take a career education technical skills assessment	The student is a concentrator, but has not completed all the required coursework for the program area (i.e. coursework required to complete the program is greater than 3 credits; Example: A welding program might be a two year program requiring 6 credits for program completion).
<b>PR</b>	Pending Results	Student has taken the technical skills assessment, however, the results are not yet known	The student is a concentrator, completed a program, took the assessments, but the results for the assessment were not back in time to report in the June MOSIS submission. LEA will report the information in MOSIS as soon as they are available.

\*NOTE: Any student who is a concentrator will need to have one of the six TSA code-sets marked in MOSIS in order for the file to be certified and submitted in the June cycle without errors.

**Example:** ABC High School has an Agricultural Education program. Ms. Thompson is the agriculture instructor and has 10 students who are seniors in her Agribusiness Sales and Marketing class. Five of the seniors in the class are concentrators (completed three sequential credits) and, after this course, will be completing the Agricultural program. Three other seniors in the Agribusiness Sales and Marketing class are concentrators as well, but they are not completing the Agriculture program. Rather, they are completing a program in Business Marketing and chose to take the Agribusiness Sales and Marketing as part of their sequence of courses for Business. The remaining two seniors in the agriculture class are not concentrators.

For the Agricultural Education program, Ms. Thompson will only need to report on the 5 seniors who are concentrators and will be completing the program.

Ms. Thompson chose to give the NOCTI skill assessment. Only 4 of the 5 seniors took the assessment. Of the four, only three passed. Mr. Thompson would report 3 as PT (Passed), 1 as FT (Failed) and 1 as NT (Not Tested).

Ms. Thompson would not have to report TSA information for the 5 remaining students. For the three students who are completing the Business Marketing program, the Business teacher would be responsible for reporting their TSA. For the remaining two students, since they are not concentrators, no TSA information would need to be completed in their student core file.