

Industry Valued Credential Submission and Review Process Manual

New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Career Readiness

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Introduction

This manual outlines the procedures for school districts to submit industry credentials or certifications for review. It details the approval process for Industry Valued Credentials (IVC), enabling school districts to gain approval for a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program of Study (POS) in compliance with Perkins V legislation.

The Office of Career Readiness (OCR) manages the proposed IVC submission process. Applicants should email inquiries regarding credentials, certifications, or the process described in this manual to CTE-IVC@doe.nj.gov. For general CTE inquiries, applicants should email the OCR at CTE@doe.nj.gov.

N.J.A.C. 34:1A-1.10, established in the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOLE), the Credentials Review Board (CRB) to direct the technical credentialing process for the workforce investment system and approve such credentials as it deems appropriate for issuance to individuals in connection with employment and training programs. OCR submitted this process to the CRB, and the CRB reviewed and approved it for use in identifying and approving IVC for the pursuit of secondary-level CTE POS.

Submissions

District staff will submit credential proposals, and all required attachments through the [NJ Homeroom](#) submission process. School district data administrators can assign logins and passwords if login credentials are needed.

Initial Review

Upon submission receipt, OCR will review the documentation for each of the following criteria:

- A submission was received from a school district, and data was reported in NJ SMART on an approved CTE POS. The district must have submitted data in the most recent reportable period in NJ SMART.
- The submission demonstrates that the credential aligns with a [NJDOE-approved Classification of Instructional Programing \(CIP\) code](#).
- The credential must align with applicable [Career and Technical Education standards](#).
- The credential aligns to no more than two Career Clusters®.
- The credential is obtainable through a high school CTE POS.

If a submission fails any of the above points, OCR will not process the submission.

Evidence-Based System Details

OCR designed this submission process to create an evidence-based review system for evaluating and approving credentials suitable for secondary-level learning environments.

This process enables districts to submit credentials valued by employers and industry stakeholders.

Evidence of a Credential's Value

OCR will submit a credential for approval to the CRB if the applicant provides evidence demonstrating that the credential holds significant value to employers, extending beyond mere recognition and acceptance within the industry.

Submitted evidence must demonstrate that employers actively seek bearers of the credential in the hiring process because they possess proficiency in skills that are in high demand within the industry and can lead to better job prospects, higher wages, and career advancement.

Accepted Evidence

NJDOE will accept the following types of documents as evidence through this process:

- Industry reports
- White papers
- Research papers
- Case studies
- Letters of support

This list of accepted evidence is exclusive to all other types of evidence.

Letters of support must originate from personnel with the authority and capacity to speak on behalf of the company or agency, and sources must provide them on company letterhead. Applicants must submit letters generated during the current calendar year. NJDOE will verify authority and capacity during the review process.

Applicants may only submit documents as PDF files. Applicants will not be able to submit other file types.

Evidence must explicitly communicate how bearers of the credential have improved job prospects, earn higher wages, or can improve their chances for career advancement.

Evidence Source Groups

OCR will accept evidence from multiple sources. This allows employers and stakeholders to contribute evidence of a credential's value.

OCR accepts evidence from the following:

- New Jersey (NJ) Employers based on the number of people the company employs in NJ, as reported to NJDOL, whose primary business function aligns with an approved CIP code.
- Non-NJ Employers and industry-related stakeholders with evident expertise in the Career Cluster.
- Large-scale United States-based businesses that appear on specifically named stock indices whose major business functions align with an approved CIP code.

Organizations with a direct link to a credential cannot provide evidence.

Example: Amazon cannot provide evidence speaking to the value of Amazon Web Service credentials. Evidence would have to come from companies that utilize it or industry associations.

Evidence Quantity Requirements

Three classes of evidence represent the organization's authority and ability to represent the industry based on various factors.

Submission will require the quantity of evidence as follows to demonstrate a credential's value:

- Two pieces of evidence from different Class A sources, or
- Four pieces of evidence from different Class B sources, or
- Six pieces of evidence from different Class C sources.

A source can only provide one piece of evidence for each credential submission.

Applicants may use higher-class sources to complete a submission if an applicant cannot find a sufficient number of lower-class sources.

For example, a submission with one Class A source and three Class B sources would demonstrate the necessary evidence, as would two Class B and four Class C sources.

Acceptable NJ Employer Sources

Employers with sizeable operations in NJ will be eligible sources of evidence for credentials if they meet the following criteria:

- NJDOL must have reported employment data on the company to NJDOE.
- The company's core business function must align with the CTE Career Cluster, where the proposed CIP code resides.
- The company's employee total must be at the 80th percentile or higher within the Career Cluster.

When using these criteria, the number of NJ employees reported, and the company's standing in the state employment ranking within its respective industry will determine a source's class.

- Companies that employ at the 95th percentile will be Class A sources.
- Companies that employ at the 90th percentile will be Class B sources.
- Companies that employ at the 80th percentile will be Class C sources.

See Appendix A at the end of this document for a breakdown of the employee count thresholds for each Career Cluster.

Source Accommodations by Career Cluster

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Career Cluster

Applicants may use evidence from the following organizations in addition to employers that meet the stated employment thresholds and align to this Career Cluster. Applicants may submit evidence from these organizations as a Class A source for credentials in this Career Cluster:

- Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey
- New Jersey Agricultural Society
- New Jersey Aquaculture Association
- New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts
- New Jersey Beekeepers Association
- New Jersey Department of Agriculture
- New Jersey Food Processors Association
- New Jersey Forestry Association
- New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association
- New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association
- New Jersey Soybean Board
- New Jersey State Horticultural Society
- New Jersey Turfgrass Association
- New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey
- Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey

Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster

OCR was not able to establish thresholds because of how employers report data for this Career Cluster. Applicants must submit evidence from the following organizations. OCR classified the following organizations as Class A sources:

- American Correctional Association
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Justice
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers
- National Association of Legal Assistants
- National Fire Protection Association
- New Jersey Office of Administrative Law
- New Jersey Board of Bar Examiners
- New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety
- New Jersey State Fire Chiefs Association
- New Jersey Fire Prevention and Protection Association
- New Jersey State Firemen's Association
- New Jersey State Police
- Paralegal Association of New Jersey
- U.S. Fire Administration
- United States Attorney General's Office

Business Management & Administration and Marketing Career Clusters

Given the limited number of distinct employers identified in these Career Clusters and the nature of all businesses inherently employing individuals with these skill sets, all New Jersey employers operating in each Career Cluster can support credentials in these Career Clusters.

Employers used as evidence sources for the Business Management & Administration and Marketing Career Clusters will carry the same class as their native Career Cluster based on their reported employee count.

Government & Public Administration Career Cluster

OCR requires only one piece of evidence from the organizations listed below. Government & Public Administration Career Cluster is the only Career Cluster that does not follow the 2/4/6 structure for required quantities of evidence.

Applicants must submit evidence from the following organizations for this Career Cluster. The following organizations are Class A sources of evidence:

- Department of Defense
- United States Army
- United States Navy
- United States Air Force
- United States Marines
- Office of the Secretary of Defense

Non-NJ Employer Submissions

Employers lacking a sizeable presence in NJ and organizations with an explicit stake in an industry may provide evidence of a credential's value. Organizations must meet the following criteria elements:

- **Expertise and Experience:** The agency should have a team of experts with deep knowledge and experience in the submission's associated industry. These experts should understand the industry's trends, challenges, and skill requirements.
- **Independence and Objectivity:** Agencies should operate independently without any conflicts of interest.
- **Networking and Industry Connections:** Agencies should have strong connections, including partnerships with employers, professional associations, and educational institutions.
- **Continuous Learning:** The agency should be committed to staying updated with industry changes and evolving skill requirements. Continuous learning ensures that their opinions remain relevant and informed.
- **Research Capabilities:** The agency should have strong research capabilities to analyze industry data, labor market trends, and employer needs.
- **Publications and Reports:** The agency should publish its findings in well-documented reports or publications. These reports should be accessible to the public and include detailed information about their assessments, methodologies, and conclusions.

Evidence of meeting the criteria should be readily apparent based on the reputation and public knowledge of the organization to expedite the review and evaluation of credential submissions. In instances where such expertise is in question, NJDOE will investigate the source agency, which may delay the submission evaluation.

OCR classifies organizations as follows:

- Class A: Organization meeting all six criteria elements.
- Class B: Organization meeting five of six criteria elements.
- Class C: Organization meeting four of six criteria elements.

Index Based Sources

Districts may use companies found on the following stock indices as Class A sources of evidence:

- Dow Jones Industrial Average
- Nasdaq 100
- S&P 500
- Russell 1000

This enables industry-leading companies that lack a sizeable employment presence to provide evidence. The organization's business function and the proposed Career Cluster must align together.

Summary of Review Process

OCR will screen submissions to determine if the submission meets the initial criteria. If a submission fails any of the initial criteria, OCR will reject the submission and notify the submitter.

NJDOE will review and evaluate the evidence to ensure the credential's value and the sources' expertise.

The Career Cluster lead, OCR Manager, and Director will review the credentials and evidence submitted. If initially approved by the OCR, it will then be submitted to the CRB for final approval. All credentials are subject to final approval from the CRB. The CRB is the final authority for all credential approval.

The CRB approves credentials as POS pathways on a CIP-level basis. This means that while a credential may be valuable for one CIP code, it does not guarantee it is valuable for others. Evidence submitted must explicitly address each desired CIP code.

IVC Timeline

The IVC application process will follow the following schedule:

Date	Process Step
April 1	Application window opens
September 30	Application window closes
October 1 – December 31	OCR processes applications
January	CRB meets to review applications
February	OCR updates associated resources
March	OCR communicates changes to the field

Credential Sunsetting

Credentials will sunset when the credentialing agency retires a credential. If the credentialing agency names a credential as a successor, OCR will add the replacement to the approved IVC list, assuming it is still obtainable through a secondary POS.

Career Cluster Leads will monitor the list of approved IVCs for outdated credentials. Career Cluster leads will review the credential list two years before the Career Cluster's scheduled CTE Program Reapproval cycle for outdated credentials.

If a Career Cluster lead presumes an IVC is outdated, they will contact the original evidence suppliers to renew their support. If the source does not renew support, OCR will propose that the credential be removed as a pathway for POS status to the CRB.

All IVCs are subject to annual review by the CRB.

District Use of Sunsetted IVCs

When the CRB approves the removal of an IVC from the approved list, districts may continue to use it to prepare students to obtain a recognized postsecondary credential until the Career Cluster undergoes reapproval.

If a credential is no longer available or the district is unable to offer it to students, the district is responsible for maintaining its POS status and Perkins eligibility for the program by establishing an articulation agreement, providing an alternative approved IVC, if available, or utilizing a registered apprenticeship.

Failure to adhere to the required components of Perkins V may subject the district to monitoring.

Appendix A: Employee Count Thresholds

Career Cluster	Class A Employee Count Threshold	Class B Employee Count Threshold	Class C Employee Count Threshold
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources*	63	36	18
Architecture & Construction	32	18	10
Arts, A/V Technology & Communication	100	41	20
Business Management & Administration*	235	77	20
Education & Training	78	39	18
Finance	50	21	9
Government & Public Administration*	n/a	n/a	n/a
Health Science	102	45	22
Hospitality & Tourism	54	33	19
Human Services	17	11.4	8
Information Technology	41	19	8
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security*	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing	108	57	26
Marketing*	25	14	7
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	53	28	15
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	73	40	17

*Please see pages 6–7 for specific accommodations for using employment data as the source class criteria for these Career Clusters.