

Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) Program

Background

The Tennessee Department of Education's goal for every student is to graduate high school prepared to be successful in the workforce or in aligned postsecondary programs. To accomplish this task, students with an elective focus in career and technical education (CTE) programs of study should culminate in the achievement of a state-recognized industry certification, a robust work-based learning experience, and/or attainment of postsecondary credit hours through early postsecondary opportunities. Students obtaining industry certifications should have a good understanding of how these certifications will benefit them in the workforce and how to translate into credit or hours toward postsecondary training.

The Division of College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) established the Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) Key Partners advisory council that includes industry, governmental, professional, and educational partners to serve as key leaders who are instrumental in driving industry advancement. The TSIC Key Partners in conjunction with the department identified key industry, secondary, and postsecondary leaders with industry employment knowledge to recommend and develop the TSIC exams.

The TSIC program, content areas, learning outcomes or objectives, were approved by the department and the TSIC Key Partners with a pilot program starting with Animal Science for the 2016-17 academic school year and expanded the content area to include Dietetics and Nutrition, Horticulture Science, and Human and Social Sciences in the 2017-18 academic school year. The course content and certification exam are aligned to postsecondary standards and provide the opportunity to earn both industry credentialing and postsecondary credit. TSIC workgroup members representing Tennessee's postsecondary, secondary, and industry organizations developed learning outcomes or objectives and a capstone certification exam. Students who meet or exceed the established cut score set for the exam earn credits that can be applied to any public postsecondary institution in Tennessee and will be awarded a TSIC credential from Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. Students are eligible to sit for the TSIC capstone certification exam once completing the aligned programs of study coursework for Levels 1-4 in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources and Levels 1-3 in Human Services.

Goals

The goal of the department, in collaboration with key partners, is to develop Tennessee Specific Industry Certifications (TSICs) aligned to the courses in programs of study with the most need of industry certification. The TSIC developed process once implemented should:

- Ensure consistency in the development of industry supported TSIC for secondary CTE students in Tennessee within the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource (AFNR) and Human Services career clusters.
- Increase the number of student certifications to meet Tennessee’s diverse industry needs.
 - Develop certification exams in the area of most need
 - Increase the number of industry certified skill workers
- Increase the transferability of TSIC to postsecondary opportunities.
 - Increase postsecondary completion rates
 - Increase credit and/or hours earned in post-secondary programs

Definitions

Certification Exam: All students completing all courses as outlined in the aligned program of study are the only students eligible to take the capstone certification exam to determine subject mastery. If a student meets or exceeds the established cut score (70 points), he/she will earn three credits which can be applied at any public postsecondary institution in the state and an industry certification credential. The certification exams are administered online using the Tennessee Department of Education testing platform.

Tennessee Public Postsecondary Institutions: The Tennessee Board of Regents four-year institutions, community colleges, and colleges of applied technology and the University of Tennessee institutions.

Commitment of Tennessee Specific Industry Certification Schools

- Appoint two school-based staff members per participating school to act as the building level TSIC testing coordinator/proctor for the 2023-24 school year. This staff member cannot be a content career cluster teacher but will be the point of contact for the department with regard to the TSIC program.

- Ensure teacher(s) assigned to the aligned program of study courses have the content knowledge and ability to guide their students to success in mastering the course learning outcomes. Teachers should also be knowledgeable about how their students can benefit from industry certification and early postsecondary opportunities.
- Ensure each TSIC pilot **teacher completes the required professional development**. This professional development will cover the alignment and expectation of secondary and postsecondary learning objectives, as well as certification examination administration policies and procedures. **Teacher training is required for the first three years for the content teacher offering a TSIC Exam**. Training after three years is optional but may be required if significant changes are made to the exam. The Tennessee Department of Education will notify all teachers when changes and additional training will be required.
- Administer the statewide TSIC exam:
 - Only students that have completed the required courses as outlined in the background information above are eligible to sit for the exam. All students eligible should sit for the exam at the end of the final aligned course in the program of study to maximize subject mastery.
 - There is no cost to students, parents, schools, or districts for TSIC certification exam.
 - Students who are not enrolled in their final level of coursework in the aligned program of study during the current school year are not permitted to take the certification exam.
 - Students may take the TSIC certification exam on the first attempt for postsecondary credit and industry certification. Scores from any subsequent attempts will count toward industry certification only and not eligible for postsecondary credit.
 - TSIC approved schools will work with state and district technology staff to ensure smooth administration of the testing program during the TSIC testing windows.
- Ensure certification exam procedures and guidelines are followed and report any irregularities that occur during the certification exam to the appropriate testing official.
- Ensure that all requested student information is correctly uploaded into the testing administration platform on or before the certification exam registration deadline for every student eligible to take the exam. This information will be demographic in nature and will ensure that earned credits are transferred from the Early Postsecondary database to the appropriate postsecondary institution upon student matriculation. The handling of all data will adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as required.
- Disseminate promotional materials and other information about the TSIC exams to interested stakeholders, including but not limited to students, parents, educators, and community members.
- Participate in surveys or other data collection efforts intended to improve the TSIC

structure by the department.

Commitment of Tennessee Department of Education

- The Tennessee Department of Education's Division of College, Career and Technical Education will oversee the TSIC program and provide technical assistance and resources to approved TSIC schools.
- Maintain communications with TSIC teachers and other schools and district-level stakeholders to share policies, procedures, and deadlines.
- Coordinate the registration and certification examination administration process with teachers and testing coordinators.
- Ensure that the certification exam results are accurately reported on the early postsecondary opportunities database for the sole purpose of awarding credit at postsecondary institutions.
- Develop and distribute TSIC pilot promotional materials to pilot schools for distribution among students, parents, educators, and community members informing all stakeholders of the benefits and requirements of participation.