

**Industry-Based Certifications
For Public School Accountability
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

1. What are industry-based certifications?

A certification is a validation that an individual possesses certain industry specific skills. Industry-based certifications (IBCs) are related to a career cluster or occupation and measured against a set of accepted standards. An occupation may have multiple certifications with varying levels of expertise. An individual earns a certification by successfully completing an assessment. Certifications are validated through a certifying entity, usually an organization such as a trade association or industry-approved testing entity, not a secondary school or institution of higher education (IHE). Certifications are often time-limited credentials, for which individuals need to meet ongoing professional training and/or testing requirements to maintain the certification (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2018). For additional background see - [Understanding Credentials in Texas: Certificates & Certifications](#).

2. How is a certificate different from a certification, as defined above?

A certificate is a formal award granted by an IHE certifying the satisfactory completion of a higher education program. Upon completion, a certificate is valid without further action on the individual's part. Certificates are usually awarded in workforce education areas by public and private two-year institutions. In Texas, certificates can have different levels, often based on the number of hours required by the certificate program.

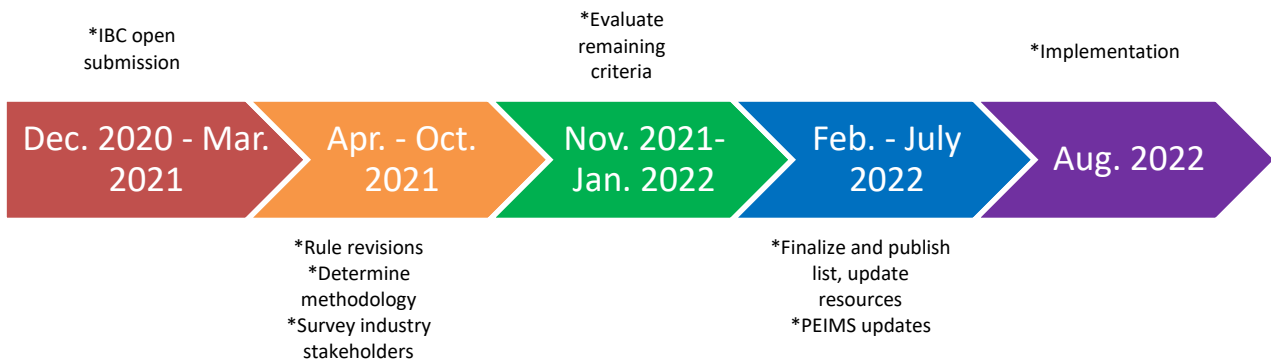
- Level I certificate: awarded for completing a program consisting of at least 15 and no more than 42 semester credit hours
- Level II certificate: awarded for completing a program of at least 30 but not more than 51 semester credit hours
- Advanced Technical Certificate: 16-50 hours and a previously awarded associate degree, a previously awarded bachelor's degree, or junior status toward a baccalaureate, depending on the program
- Enhanced Skills and Occupational Skills Certificates: generally 9- 15 hours

3. Why were Industry-Based Certifications (IBCs) included in the accountability system?

House Bill 22 (85th Texas Legislature, 2017) requires the Texas Education Agency to account for high school students who earn an industry-based certification as one indicator within the Student Achievement domain of the state’s public-school accountability system. While hundreds of unique certifications are earned by public school students, the public-school accountability system measures success in preparing students for in-demand careers, whether students enter the workforce directly or enroll in postsecondary education. IBCs represent industry-valued skills and learning that lead to employment and act as a springboard for higher levels of achievement to ensure students’ independence and success in life beyond high school; hence, industry-based certifications are one of the measures to demonstrate college and career readiness.

4. Will the TEA revise the current list of industry-based certifications and what is the timeline for publishing the new list for the accountability system?

New developments in industry occur regularly; therefore, the TEA will engage in a bi-annual review of the list of certifications. Please see the timeline below for more details regarding the IBC evaluation process and dates for publishing the new list for accountability.



5. What criteria are used to determine the IBCs that will be included in the accountability system?

The following criteria are used to determine whether an IBC is included:

- **Certification:** a certification is defined as a validation or license that an individual possesses certain industry specific skills that meets two or more of the following: (a) related to the performance requirements of a career or occupation, measured against a set of industry accepted standards, and not dependent upon a particular curriculum or program; (b) earned by successfully completing an assessment that demonstrates the individual’s proficiency of the prescribed standards; or (c) time-limited credential, for which an individual needs to meet ongoing professional training and/or testing requirements to maintain the certification.

- **Industry recognized and valued:** a certification must be industry recognized and valued.
 - (A) A certification is industry recognized and valued if the certification is:
 - (i) referred to the Texas Education Agency (TEA):
 - (I) by the Texas Workforce Commission as part of the inventory of industry-recognized credentials approved by the industry-based certification advisory council authorized by Texas Labor Code, §312.002; or
 - (II) directly using a process identified and implemented by TEA and published on the TEA website if the certification is not referred to TEA by the TWC under (2)(A)(i)(I) of this section; and
 - (ii) determined to be valued by a representative sample of employers, as demonstrated in at least one of the following ways:
 - (I) inclusion of the certification in job postings as required or highly recommended;
 - (II) use of the certification as a factor in selecting candidates for an interview or for hire; or
 - (III) offer of higher pay for individuals who possess the certification.
 - (B) If a determination that value has been demonstrated under subparagraph (A)(ii) is not made prior to referral under subparagraph (A)(i)(I), TEA may use a third-party organization with expertise in gathering information from employers related to the value of industry-based certifications to directly contact groups of employers and report to TEA regarding whether the standards under subparagraph (A)(ii) have been met.

- **Attainable by high school students:** all eligibility requirements, such as age and experience, can be met and the certification is awarded before or within the summer after a student’s high school graduation.

- **Portable:** the certification can (a) transfer seamlessly to postsecondary work through acceptance for credit or hours in core program courses at an institution of higher education; (b) count toward hours in an aligned apprenticeship program; (c) be part of a prescribed coherent sequence of industry-recognized credentials to show progressive skills development; or (d) support employment in more than one region of the state.

- **Certifying entity:** the assessment of the knowledge and skills required to obtain the certification is provided by or determined by an independent, third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies.

- **Capstone or end-of-program:** a certification assessment is taken at the culmination of a single high school course or multiple related courses within a secondary program of study. There must be at least 50% overlap between the certification assessment

standards and: (a) the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for a secondary course aligned to the career cluster associated with the certification assessment; or (b) the applicable TEKS for a set of courses within a program of study in a secondary career and technical education program.

6. What process was used by the TEA to receive input from school districts, business, and industry about the list of certifications?

The TEA accepted submissions of recommended IBCs for inclusion on the 2022-2023 Industry-Based Certifications List for Public School Accountability from December 1, 2020 - January 15, 2021 and March 22 - 29, 2021. Nearly 900 unique certifications were recommended by stakeholders to be included in the IBC review process.

An industry-based certification employer-recognized and valued survey was sent to a large sampling of industry personnel in July and remained open for one month. For the survey, industry personnel used the following criteria to determine industry value and recognition:

- (a) The IBC is included in job postings as required or highly recommended;
- (b) The IBC is used as a factor in selecting candidates for an interview and/or hire; and/or
- (c) The IBC is used as the basis for offering higher pay for those who possess the certification.

Upon receipt of the results, the TEA staff will evaluate the industry valued and recognized certifications against the remaining five criteria: certification, attainable by a high school student, portable, certifying entity, and capstone or end-of-program. The resulting list of IBCs that meet all six criteria will be published in the spring of 2022 and take effect in the 2022 – 2023 school year.

7. How will districts provide the TEA with information regarding student attainment of industry-based certifications for high school accountability?

Districts enter information about IBCs students earned in PEIMS. IBCs earned between September 1 and May 31 are reported in the PEIMS summer submission. IBCs earned between June 1 and August 31 are reported in the PEIMS fall submission. An earned IBC will meet College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR). Districts may apply for reimbursement for one passed certification examination per student during their high school career (ninth grade through graduation).

8. How will the list of industry certifications be calculated within the accountability system?

The methodology for the calculation of CCMR for accountability purposes will be included in the state accountability manual, which is adopted in administrative rule under 19 TAC

§97.1001, Accountability Rating System. For more information, consult the [2021 Accountability Manual](#).

9. How does the IBC accountability list impact the industry certifications eligible for student performance acknowledgments in the Foundation High School Program?

There is not a specific relationship between the IBC accountability list and performance acknowledgments. It is the responsibility of the district to apply the definition adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in determining what qualifies as a certification for performance acknowledgments.

10. If our district has invested in certifications that are not included in the final updated list, what should we do?

Districts should ensure that the IBCs they offer are aligned with programs of study that reflect the labor market data in their local workforce area while meeting the academic needs of their students. While hundreds of unique certifications are earned by public school students, the public-school accountability system measures success in preparing students for high-wage, in-demand careers. It is also important to note that IBCs are not the only way to demonstrate CCMR. Students can meet college and career readiness measures in any of the other areas within Domain One of Accountability.

11. How will the TEA account for changes in certifications and industry needs, including allowing business and industry to provide input into which credentials qualify as industry-based certifications?

The TEA understands that new developments in industry occur regularly and will engage in a bi-annual review of the list of certifications. The TEA solicits feedback from industry councils and employers to identify certifications that are industry valued and recognized. Please note that due to shutdowns caused by COVID-19, the 2020 evaluation and resulting list were postponed until 2021 and 2022, respectively.

12. Why are all programs of study not represented on the final list of IBCs for public high school accountability?

Some programs of study include occupations that require a postsecondary degree for entry level positions into a particular industry, such as a master's degree. Therefore, some programs of study may have fewer industry-based certifications since they are not attainable by high school students. The TEA will continue to work to identify industry-based certifications that are aligned with industry demand related to as many programs of study as possible.

Links/Resources:

Texas Education Agency 2021 Accountability Manual

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2021-accountability-manual-chapters-1-11.pdf>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2018 (Understanding Credentials in Texas: Certificates & Certifications)

<https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/reports/data/understanding-credentials-in-texas-certificates-certifications/>

Texas Workforce Investment Council, 2015 (Tracking Industry-Based Certifications: Promising Practices in Capturing Data on the Workforce Supply of Industry-Certified Workers)

https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/Tracking_Industry-Based_Certifications_Summary.pdf