

MISSISSIPPI WORKFORCE ADVANTAGE  
*ALL TRAINING COUNTS*



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The primary purpose of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Workforce Education (WE) is to prepare present and future workers for high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand occupations in current or emerging professions. Additionally, CTE and WE programs aim to offer Mississippians opportunities that correspond to labor-market demands with multiple entrance and exit requirements that result in portable and stackable credentials for industry, certification-based training and coursework. A **stackable credential** is a career or college certificate program that builds, or “stacks,” with other certificate programs with the purpose of reengaging adults in school in order to prepare them for college and “next step”-level employment.

Through this collaborative initiative, CTE and WE curricula are developed in credit-bearing course hours and in WE modules to provide statewide standards for awarding college credit for technical, industry-recognized certificates. The designated WE curriculum module’s content articulates a specific number of college credits and aligns to all credit-bearing course competencies.

A secondary goal of MS Workforce Advantage is to increase student and participant enrollment, participation, and completion of credit-bearing programs. Strategies to promote transition to and success within the credit-bearing program are essential to the goal of helping students earn credentials, certificates, and degrees. Ongoing professional development for all stakeholders will be offered to ensure success.

## **DEFINITION OF CREDIT BY EXAMINATION**

Credit by Examination (CBE) incorporates multiple national certification exams and state-level exams. CBE is designed to help students demonstrate competence attained through workforce training and/or on the job experience. MS Community College students may attempt to earn CTE credit-by-examination in certain courses. A student may complete a nationally recognized industry certification or a state-level CBE exam as a substitute for completing the usual requirements of a course.

CBE programs provide multiple entrance and exit points for WE participants. CBE programs provide participants with a nonduplicative sequence of technical-skill-proficiency training opportunities that are aligned to a nationally recognized, credit-bearing credential. CBE programs also provide participants a career path into a credit-bearing, postsecondary CTE program and an industry-recognized credential, certificate, diploma, or degree.

CBE supports CTE and WE collaboration by including the following:

- Competency-based, nationally portable and customized education and training for Mississippi's workforce
- Technology-infused, more industry-recognized education
- Increased access to postsecondary certificates, diplomas, and degrees, and industry-recognized credentials
- Clear career pathways aligned to competency-based education and certification programs

In a statewide-approved CBE program, faculty members from CTE and WE programs must develop integrated program outcomes, jointly plan the curricula, and agree on the national certification that will assess student learning and skill development. Additionally, the CBE program must be supported by industry demand in the local area.

### **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATIONS**

A skilled, educated workforce is perceived as the single most critical element of success and the hardest to acquire. The difficulty of finding high-quality talent is a major barrier due to the lack of skilled workers at both the professional and basic skill levels. Business and industry-recognized certifications:

- Are portable credentials that benchmark multiple skill levels for specific industries through standardized assessments of critical workplace traits and occupational skills needed to operate in a workforce driven by productivity and flexibility
- Assess knowledge and skill level using traditional and performance-based assessment methodologies
- Are meaningful to all sectors of Mississippi's business and industry and usually correlate to increased employee wages.

Some national assessments may require a fee for the exam. Managing the cost of the assessment will be a local-college decision.

### **STATE LEVEL CBE ASSESSMENTS**

To meet the need for business and industry-recognized, stackable, portable credentials, the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) and local colleges will use current resources to implement state-level CBE assessments. These state-level CBE assessments will:

- Provide local control of on-demand assessments using the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) Blackboard and/or Desire2Learn Course Management System

- Allow for grant transferability of CBE credit with all 15 community and junior colleges throughout the state
- Increase the acquisition of recognized credentials

## **GUIDELINES FOR CREDIT BY EXAMINATION CREDIT**

### **MISSISSIPPI WORKFORCE ADVANTAGE: ALL TRAINING COUNTS CORE VALUES**

#### **1. Jump-starting the skilled workforce pipeline**

MS Workforce Advantage will produce faster results for employees because participants will have the opportunity to complete flexible WE training.

#### **2. Collaborative effort among employers and community colleges**

The MS Workforce Advantage curricula will be developed and delivered by CTE and WE departments and between community college districts to address specific skilled-workforce needs identified by local industry professionals.

#### **3. All training counts**

MS Workforce Advantage provides the opportunity to earn college credit for CTE coursework delivered across all institutions and systems. A series of technical certificates will “stack” on top of one another, building to a 2-year degree.

#### **4. Build career pathways**

MS Workforce Advantage will provide adults with an education road map to higher paid and higher skilled occupations.

#### **5. Contextualized, integrated academics**

MS Workforce Advantage will integrate basic academic-skills instruction into the curricula to academically prepare adults to succeed in higher education while learning workplace skills.

#### **6. Competency-based education**

MS Workforce Advantage will require a mastery of technical competencies, and clock-hour requirements will be eliminated upon the completion of CBE-approved industry certifications.

#### **7. Industry recognized**

MS Workforce Advantage provides opportunities for adults to obtain core competencies needed by employers for in-demand, skilled jobs by aligning curricula to portable, national credentials.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

- Participants who have attended the noncredit training and want to matriculate into a credit-bearing program without being required to repeat training
- Participants who have gained valuable work experience and want to obtain college credit for the skills they have mastered
- Participants who are underemployed and desire complete modules to gain college credit for a pay increase
- Participants who currently have a national certification and want to gain credit for mastering technical skills in credit-bearing programs
- Participants who are current CTE students

## **CURRICULUM**

Postsecondary CTE and WE development guidelines were approved by the Chief Career-Technical Officers and Deans Association (CCTODA). All CTE courses aligned to industry certification standards will be developed in modules and be aligned to national certification. Local colleges are encouraged to articulate up to 15 scheduled semester hours; however, this is a local-college decision.

## **PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY**

In order for CBE participants to gain college credit, they must meet college-admission standards for the career or technical program in which they are entering.

## **PROCEDURES FOR GAINING CBE CREDIT**

Participants who complete the national credential must:

1. Provide documented proof that they possess the valid and current aligned national certification or credential
2. Meet all of the college and program entrance requirements
3. Enroll in the articulated program at the college and request the articulated credit

Participants who complete the MS CBE must:

1. Complete the related MS CBE Workforce Education module and CBE exam or complete the CBE exam. Participants will be able to take the exam without completing the module only one time. If unsuccessful, they will have to complete the module and then retake the CBE exam. Participants must demonstrate at least 80% competency to pass each module.

2. Upon the successful completion of the articulated course's related modules, participants may receive CBE credit upon enrolling in a college and meeting all of the college and program entrance requirements.

### **TRANSCRIPTING CBE CREDIT**

Each participant will enroll in the modules using the designated online-event-management system provided by the MCCB. CBE credit will be transcribed immediately to the online event-management system upon the successful completion of all modules aligned to course requirements.

The participant will present the online-event-management-system transcript to the college so that the credit can be transcribed when he or she enrolls in the college-credit program.

Each student is responsible for presenting his or her verification of national certification or licensure or the MS CBE assessment.

### **TIME LIMIT FOR CBE CREDIT**

If a student is articulating credit by examination via the national certification or license, the student must possess a current, valid national license at the point of articulation.

If a student chooses to articulate credit via the MS CBE assessment, the student's scores will be accepted to demonstrate competencies for up to **18 months** on the statewide CBE assessment.

### **COST**

- Amount of credit awarded is a local college decision based upon program requirements.
- If any fees related to CBE incur, the cost of college credit is a ***local-college decision***.
- Participants who choose to complete the industry certification will incur the cost of the certification. Participants who choose to complete the state-level CBE exam will not incur cost for the exam.

### **IMPACT ON LOCAL CBE AGREEMENTS**

Statewide CBE credits are supplemental to any local CBE agreements established between a college's CTE and WE entities. Statewide CBE agreements provide additional avenues for students to obtain articulated credit. Existing local CBE agreements may be utilized in lieu of any state CBE agreement.

**Sample Statewide CBE Articulation Table**

CBE agreements are subject to change as postsecondary curricula revisions occur. All articulations listed in this document are effective as of October 1, 2011, unless otherwise noted.

Program Name:	Welding		
Program CIP Code:	12.123456		
Industry Partner(s):	NCCER Web site:  AWS Web site:		
CTE Course	NCCER Standards	American Welding Society Standards	MS CBE
WLV 1116 (This is just an example, the actual cost of certifications depends upon the module)	Module 1: name (\$20.00)	AWS Module 1: name (\$20.00)	CBE Module 1: name
	Module 2: name (\$20.00)	AWS Module 2: name (\$20.00)	CBE Module 2: name
	Module 3: name (\$20.00)		CBE Module 3: name

## **APPENDIX A: ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Mike Blankenship  
Director of Workforce Development  
Holmes Community College

Matthew Calhoun  
Registrar  
Southwest MS Community College

Denise Gillespie  
Workforce Director  
Itawamba Community College

Dexter Holloway  
Director of Workforce Education  
Mississippi Community College Board

Julie Jordan  
Director  
Research and Curriculum Unit

LaNell Kellum  
Director of Career and Technical  
Education  
Mississippi Community College Board

Wayne Kuntz  
Director of Workforce Development  
MS Gulf Coast Community College

Shawn Mackey  
Associate Executive Director for  
Workforce, Career and Technical  
Education  
Mississippi Community College Board

Sean Owen  
Assessment Manager  
Research and Curriculum Unit

Robin Parker  
Curriculum and Assessment Manager  
Research and Curriculum Unit

Betsey Smith  
Curriculum Manager  
Research and Curriculum Unit

Tony Tice  
Dean, Career and Technical Education  
Itawamba Community College

Candace Weaver  
Dean, Career and Technical Education  
Jones County Junior College

Roger Whitlock  
Dean of Workforce Education and  
Development  
East Central Community College

## APPENDIX B: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Why Use Credit-By-Examination Programs?

There are a number of reasons why people take exams for credit, but the three major reasons are as follows:

- **Time.** Most adult students have job and family responsibilities that preclude taking more than one or two courses per term. Trying to get any college degree at that rate seems like it would take forever! Using exams to gain as many as 15 -credits towards a degree would considerably shorten the time required to finish a degree program.
- **Money.** Credit-by-examination programs are very economical. The cost of the national certification and the college Transcribing fee is still lower than most community colleges tuition fees.
- **Confidence.** Many adults who think about returning to school may lack the confidence in their ability to do college-level work. Taking examinations for credit can help students determine whether or not they are ready to start a degree program.

### 2. How will programs with training that is not online-friendly and that may be performed strictly in person, such as in welding, have their participants enrolled in the Blackboard or Desire2Learn (D2L) system?

All participants will be enrolled in the correct online course-management system (Blackboard or D2L) when the participants sign up for training using the online event-management system (GoSignMeUp).

### 3. If instructors need to enter that data into the Blackboard system, how will schools that use other online systems, such as D2L, input their trainees into the system?

The online event-management system (GoSignMeUp) will automatically enroll trainees into the Blackboard and D2L systems.

### 4. Will everyone need to be enrolled via GoSignMeUp?

Yes, this is the database that is capturing the data for this initiative and is the method of documentation for the registrars. This could be a better system for nSPARC to use for data collection and could make reporting workforce participation easier on local colleges.

5. Who will be responsible for keeping up with modules that students complete if the course is strictly in person?

All participants will be enrolled using the GoSignMeUp system; therefore, the online database will track this information for students. The students will be responsible for showing the transcript during the enrollment process to gain credit by examination.

Local colleges will decide how the successful completion of national certifications or MS CBE will be processed in GoSignMeUp.

6. How will CBE affect my full-time equivalent data?

The system is developed so that the college will not lose any FTE numbers, but they will gain FTEs because CBE students will be credit bearing once they enroll in CTE programs. Ultimately, this will increase FTE numbers. Additionally, this system maintains the integrity of MS's Community College funding system because it will not allow "double dipping."

7. Who will give the assessment and how will he or she be paid?

It is a local college decision as to who will assess participants.

8. What if the colleges do not want to use Blackboard or D2L as an assessment?

They can use the national certification and input the participant completion information into GoSignMeUp in order for the student to gain CBE.

9. Does the MCCB recommend only awarding national certifications instead of state certifications?

Ultimately, the MCCB is moving toward national certifications in the curriculum-development process. At this point, however, no funding source is available; therefore, state assessments are a valid alternative.