Innovative community colleges across the country have begun to deliver education and training in a fluid and flexible format that enable students to “stack” various types of education and training into a certificate or degree program that leads to a recognized credential of value. This type of innovation requires a culture change—evolving from the focus of traditional delivery systems to a comprehensive focus on offering a flexible workforce education and training that meet the diverse needs of every student. One way to achieve this goal is to remove the silos between noncredit and credit workforce education instruction. Curriculum modularization and Credit by Examination (CBE) will not replace the existing workforce and education offerings and delivery systems, but will give colleges the opportunity to increase the options currently available to nontraditional students. Colleges will have the opportunity to deliver education and training that provides a seamless career pathway that includes stackable credentials and are aligned to industry certifications. Although some colleges currently offer CBE, there is no formal statewide structure allowing students to transfer credit across district lines. Mississippi’s Workforce Advantage simplifies the process of awarding college credit for noncredit workforce training. The best practices outlined in MS Workforce Advantage promotes a seamless transition between education and training through career pathways resulting in stackable credential(s) of value, a concept that is rapidly being adopted by other states.

**Stackable Credential**
A stackable credential results from certain types of education or training; individuals earn credential(s) of value that may be applied to certificate and/or degree programs within the occupational pathway. A primary purpose of the stackable credential is to reengage adults in education or training to prepare them for college and “next-step” employment.

**Curriculum Modularization**
Modularization establishes modules or subsets of competencies in a course (called “chunking”) that may be completed independent of the actual coursework within a given program. A defined sequence of modules may result in students’ attaining industry-recognized credentials.

**Credit by Examination**
Credit by Examination allows individuals to receive college credit by demonstrating mastery of concepts attained through workforce training, industry experience, or industry-recognized certifications and/or credentials.

**Target Audience**
- Participants who have attended noncredit training and want to matriculate into a credit-bearing program without being required to repeat coursework of skills they have mastered
- 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
How will it work?
• The CTE statewide curriculum courses will be aligned to national industry certification standards and broken down into modules. The modules will provide flexibility in instructional delivery by incorporating online learning.
• State assessments will also be developed and aligned with each module, giving colleges two options through which to assess student competencies and award credit: a state assessment and an industry-recognized certification.
• With curriculum and assessments in place, any member of the target audience listed above may enroll in the modules and take assessments to demonstrate competency. Alternately, the participants may elect to only complete the assessment to determine knowledge and skill proficiency to gain Credit by Examination.

Benefits of MS Workforce Advantage
• All statewide curricula are being aligned to national certifications (where certifications exist).
• Curricula will have modules that allow open entry and open exit.
• Program allows for and encourages more online instruction
• Provides Credit by Examination for incumbent, dislocated, and under-employed workers
• Provides articulation between noncredit (WF) training and credit training (CTE)
• Offers a defined career pathway through multiple stackable credentials, culminating in a degree
• Accelerates the process of earning a credential of value for capable students who are willing to fill the skills gap in Mississippi’s economy
Participant applies for college program, meet entrance requirements, and college credit is awarded for aligned content.