Guiding Principals

As postsecondary Career Technical Education (PS CTE) curricula are developed, the following list outlines the guiding principles that the Research and Curriculum Unit and the writing teams will use in leading and facilitating the curriculum writing process.

- All curriculum frameworks will include a 1-year certificate option when appropriate. If not appropriate, language explaining the rationale will be added in the framework under a section titled: Program Exceptions.

- All program options will be written to nationally recognized, industry-based certifications when appropriate. If not appropriate, language explaining the rationale will be included in the framework under a section titled: Program Exceptions.

- All program options will include a suggested modular/stackable delivery option when appropriate. If not appropriate, language explaining the rationale will be included in the framework under a section titled: Program Exceptions.

- The goal is for students to earn a “credential of value” during their time at a community college. That “credential of value” should be an Associate of Applied Science degree, a certificate, a diploma, or license/certification recognized by business and industry. The credential should be a step on a career pathway offering students ongoing opportunities to increase their earning potential in the job market.

Curriculum and Assessment Development Process (Overview and Guiding Processes)

New and Revised/Updated Programs

I. Curriculum Development
   a. Writing team work will take place in an online environment which will be open to all instructors or other CC personnel interested in participating.
   b. Workforce instructors should be included on the writing teams to support development of modular delivery. This may not be necessary when it has been deemed there is no appropriate modular workforce delivery option.
   c. Participation from industry partners is essential and every effort will be made to encourage participation.
   d. When at all possible, the “Core” will be aligned to industry certification(s).
   e. All curriculum frameworks will include a 1-year certificate option when appropriate. Industry certification assessments are the preferred method of credentialing. However, a MS-CPAS2 assessment will be developed for 1-year and 2-year certificates or the AAS degree unless noted by a program exception. All alternative assessment options that are aligned with the framework will be noted in the Assessment section of the framework.
When appropriate, the suggested module delivery will be outlined based on the preferred credentialing method for modular courses where each module aligns with an industry-based certification assessment for credentialing.

II. Assessment Development

a. MS-CPAS2 Development for new or revised test banks must have a minimum of five participants of which at least two should be instructors (a combination of instructors, administrators, related CTE content area experts from other CC/JC, and industry members, advisory member(s), or local high school instructors).

b. Between annual assessment cycles, the RCU will conduct regular statistical review and item analysis. It may be necessary to bring instructors to the RCU between cycles to “clean-up” some of the item banks. For this process, there is no minimum or maximum number of participants specified.

c. Assessment development meetings will be open to all interested instructors. Participation from as many instructors as possible will be encouraged.

d. Any alternative assessment other than those originally approved by the writing team and listed in the curriculum framework will need approval by MCCB. Colleges may request approval for alternative assessments by submitting the request in the format outlined in the Alternative Assessment Request procedures. The request must include a crosswalk demonstrating that the core course competencies are aligned for the alternative assessment request to be processed by MCCB.

e. The RCU will attempt to schedule postsecondary MS-CPAS2 testing dates at some time other than the secondary testing dates.

f. As curriculum frameworks are revised, the MS-CPAS2 assessment for newly approved program options will go “live” for first administration of 1-year certificate options in November following required adoption date of the program. Year- two assessments for a new program logically will go live the following year.
a. **Vocational Certificate**: The term “vocational certificate” will change to “career certificate” in all frameworks approved during and after 2011. MCCB board policy will be reviewed and revised to reflect this change in terminology. After MCCB board policy is revised, all remaining PS CTE frameworks that reference the wording “vocational certificate” will be changed to reflect the appropriate wording “career certificate.”

b. **Module**: A module is a subset of competencies offered independently of coursework within any given program. A defined sequence of modules will result in a credential. Some credentials will include all of the technical skills required to take a nationally recognized exam leading to the awarding of a “nationally recognized credential.” However, in some cases, more than one “credential” may be required to qualify the individual to take a “nationally recognized credential.” The “Credential” becomes a stackable credential when the individual enrolls in the aligned Career or Technical certificate program and the student awarded credit by examination for the “Credential”.
   i. A “credential” marks the completion of a module identified within the curriculum frameworks as being less than a Career or Technical Certificate option.
   ii. Enrollments in module options do not count toward FTE funding. Only students enrolled in Career or Technical Certificate options count toward FTE funding. Based on best recognized best practice, each module will lead to a student taking a nationally recognized assessment that results in a “credential,” preferably a “nationally recognized credential”. In some cases, accumulated multiple modules are required to prep a student for a nationally recognized credential. The purpose for developing modules is to provide opportunities for students to have multiple options (stackable credentials with the modules built into the curriculum framework) whereby a college may award credit (by examination or other means described in their local policy) toward a career and or technical certificate and/or degree.

c. **A Career Certificate** is defined as:
   i. A certificate based on the attaining of skills required for manual activities related to a trade primarily involving non-academic skills.
   ii. A certificate that is less academically rigorous than a technical certificate and is in an approved CTE program for FTE funding purposes.
   iii. Each college establishes its own entry requirements for PS CTE Programs. MCCB Policy 9.2.6 that outlines the minimum criteria for admissions into career certificate programs needs to be changed to reflect the wording “Career Certificate” programs for FTE funding purposes to read: “Students admitted to Career Certificate programs must at a minimum meet one of the following requirements:
      a) The completion of at least one unit less than the minimum acceptable high school units as prescribed by law, i.e., if the state requires 21 high school units to graduate, a student can be admitted into a community/junior college with 20 high school units; or,
      b) A General Educational Development (GED) certificate; or,
      c) A high school diploma or enrolled in the college dual enrollment program; or,
      d) Mississippi Occupational Diploma; or,
e) An official transcript from an accredited college or university; or,
f) The completion of a federally approved ability-to-benefit test.

d. **A Technical Certificate is defined as:**
   i. A certificate program based on the attainment of technical skills which emphasize understanding and practical application of science and mathematics.
   ii. Technical Certificate options form portions of an AAS degree but do not require all of the 15 core academic requirements.

e. **AAS Degree is defined as:**
   i. Associate Degree options are based upon SACS accreditation requirements.