



**Rhode Island Career and Technical Education**

**Program Review and Approval**

**Guidance**



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## Review and Approval of Career Preparation Programs

The purpose of the 2012 Rhode Island Regulations Governing Career and Technical Education ([2012 CTE Regulations](#)) is to establish, improve, and maintain high quality CTE programs. The RIDE-managed review and approval of career preparation programs is grounded in the Rhode Island Career Preparation Program Standards. The goal of the program review and approval process is to promote program quality and continuous improvement.

The description of the process and the requirements detailed below are intended to guide the review and approval process.

### Overview of the Program Review and Approval Process

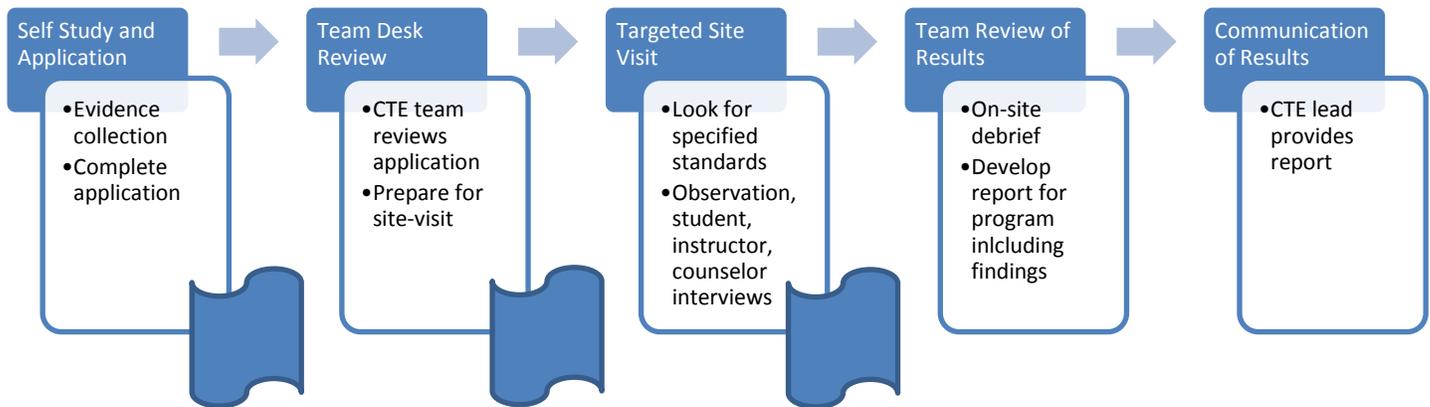
The program approval process is comprised of a self-study and subsequent completion of a RIDE-developed application based on the Rhode Island CTE Career Preparation Program Standards, the review of key student outcome data and a targeted site visit. All RIDE approved programs will be required to provide student outcome data, but will not be held accountable for meeting the established accountability metrics until the accountability system is fully developed. The review process will result in new or continued program approval and may include findings or recommendations with the expectation that programs with findings will work with RIDE to establish and adhere to an approvable corrective action plan.

The LEA will complete the application based on the type of program: new programs that have been in operation for a minimum time period and have not held an approval status by RIDE or existing programs that are currently in operation and are part of the RIDE-approved or provisionally-approved list.



## Program Review & Approval Process

This is a dynamic process that is subject to change and is intended to be a learning experience. Input and evaluation from participants and reviewers will inform any necessary adjustments or changes to ensure program approval is driving CTE program quality and positive student outcomes.



### CTE Team Lead

Each program participating in the process will be assigned a RIDE CTE Team Leader. The CTE lead will oversee a review team comprised of three members and will act as the liaison between RIDE and the program to answer any questions during the application and/or site-visit period. The CTE Lead will also: monitor the application and verify that it is complete; notify the team of the individual review window; organize the review teams' group review; coordinate the site visit; provide the final review and approval status report to the program; and work with the applicant on next steps to address any findings or recommendations resulting from the review process.

### 1. Standards Based Self-Study and PDF Application

The Career Preparation Program Standards are informed by the federally-recognized framework for programs of study and reflect national research and best practice. There are seven areas that the program standards address: (1) policies and procedures, (2) partnerships, (3) program operations, (4) staffing, certification, and professional development, (5) curriculum, instruction and technical skill assessment, (6) supplemental and support services, and (7) secondary to postsecondary transition. Within each standard, there are anywhere from 2-7 sub-standards. The complete career preparation program standards can be found in the appendix of the [2012 CTE Regulations](#). The program standards are also included in Appendix 2 and contain the numbering system used to identify each standard in the application.

All applicants are required to provide evidence that best demonstrates how the program meets the career preparation program standards. Each program is strongly encouraged to conduct a self-study before beginning the application process. The application will be completed through an online application.

### Fluid Review Application

There are many areas and sub-standards that overlap and the application is designed to minimize redundancy for the applicant. Each section of the application clearly describes and delineates which standards need to be addressed, but it is up to the program to determine how to best demonstrate meeting each standard.

The application will allow programs to provide descriptions, explanations and evidence for the program. The narrative for each section of the application should be concise and explicitly address how the corresponding evidence demonstrates the standard. The application and corresponding Standards and [Evidence Matrix](#)

contain examples of possible evidence for each standard. However, programs may use any piece of evidence that applicants believe most strongly demonstrates the program standard.

It is important for applicants to note that the review team is not looking for quantity of evidence. Rather, programs should **only submit high quality evidence and the best examples** of how the program meets the standards. The RIDE team lead will ask the program to pare down any applications or application sections that contain evidence that is deemed unrelated or unnecessarily onerous.

### **The application and evidence submission for the RIDE Program and Approval Process will make use of an online application – Fluid Review.**

1. Go to: <http://ridecteprogramapproval.fluidreview.com>
2. Sign in and set your password as prompted.
3. **The current Access Code will be emailed to you.**
4. Start your application
  - a. NAMING convention: [SCHOOL NAME] [NAME OF PROGRAM] 2016S
  - b. *Be sure to include your school name with your program name for example "RIDE Office Program 2016S."*
  - c. Once you sign in, you can add as many users to the application as you need (look to the left on the page). Be sure to let your program team know the password you are using so make it easy and use only for this site.

**Important: Be sure to go to the bottom of each section as you work and choose "save and continue editing". You will be timed out after about an hour of inactivity. Any unsaved changes will be lost.**

5. If you get stuck or have questions, please see attached Guidance Document or go to CTE Review and Approval Materials and Processes located [here](#). For technical assistance, please contact Joyce Anderle at [Joyce.Anderle@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Joyce.Anderle@ride.ri.gov) or by telephone at 222-8451.

### **Submission of Evidence**

Each program will receive access to Fluid Review. The Fluid Review application is organized into the following sections: program information, application type; program of study narrative, standards evidence and signatures. Applicants should organize the evidence accordingly to ensure reviewers can easily determine which evidence corresponds to the appropriate section of the application narrative. Within the narrative for each standard, the applicant must list the file names of all evidence that correspond to each section along with a brief narrative explanation of how each piece of evidence demonstrates the standards. Evidence must be submitted as a PDF or Word Document. Do not submit excel files or image files (.jpeg, .png, .tif). Hardcopy evidence should be scanned and saved as PDF. **Reminder, the evidence needs only to be a sample or part of a larger document that exemplifies the best demonstration of the standard. It is recommended that no more than 3 pieces of evidence be included for each section of the application.**

## **2. Team Desk Review**

Once the CTE team leader verifies that the application is completed in full, members of the review team will review the application and associated evidence. The CTE team lead will convene the team to develop a draft overall determination of the application using the Evaluation Rubric and evidence provided by the program in the application.

## Review Rubric

The [Evaluation Rubric](#) that the review team will use is the same rubric that the applicant should use to assist when gathering evidence for developing the application. The rubric is organized by standard and has combined standards where the standards and corresponding evidence overlap. The rubric and the application sections align to each other.

### 3. Targeted Site Visit

The site visit will be targeted to those specific standards that can be supplemented through interviews and observations and may not be able to be fully demonstrated through paper or electronic evidence. However, **the site visit will not compensate for weaknesses in other areas of the application.**

The standards targeted in the site visit are noted in the rubric and the standards and evidence matrix. The site visit will consist of student, instructor, and school counselor interviews and classroom observations. The review team may also request interviews with the program or school leader as necessary.

The basic site visit schedule is outlined below. It is up to the program to ensure that the required interviews and observations can be accomplished during visit. The review team will also require a secure area from about one half hour before the beginning of the visit to set up to about 90 minutes after completing the site visit observations and interviews for the team to debrief. Please see Appendix 4 for a site visit checklist.

#### Site Visit Schedule Outline (sample)

**Total Time: 3.5 – 4.5 hours.** The CTE team lead will work with the applicant to schedule the site visit accordingly.

- Arrival 30 Minutes prior to start of introduction
  - Room set up and to complete any preparations for observations and interviews
  
- Introductions 15 Minutes
  - Introductions with Director/Principals/Administrators and review team
  
- Interviews 90 – 120 Minutes
  - Members of the review team will conduct interviews
  - Student, instructor and counselor interviews
  - Student interviews will be in small groups of 3-7 students
  - Instructor interviews will be conducted individually with at least two of the program instructors (as possible)
  - The counselor interview will be with the Director or counselor that works directly with the program
  
- Classroom Observations 90 – 120 Minutes
  - Depending on the number of classrooms and class schedule
  - The observations should be of at least two different classes in the program (as possible)
  - Members of the review team will observe
  - Observations will be conducted at the same time as student interviews as possible
  
- Review Team Debrief 60 – 90 Minutes
  - The review team will meet on site and discuss the observation and interview evidence. The team will review the evidence of the specified standards against the rubric.
  
- Wrap Up 15 Minutes

- Review next steps with the Director/Administrator/Principal.

#### 4. Review Results

Upon completing the desk review and the Site Visit, the review team will come together to discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of the application and make a final overall determination. Subsequently, the CTE team lead will issue an initial draft report including any findings or recommendations related to the team review.

#### 5. Communication of Results

RIDE will provide results in a timely manner upon completion of the site visit. LEAs will have 30 days to respond to the initial draft report findings or recommendations. RIDE staff will then make modifications as appropriate and will issue a final written report.

Any program that is granted RIDE approval with findings will have 30 days from the date of issuance of the initial RIDE written report to submit an improvement plan with implementation timelines, that fully addresses the findings identified by the review process. Programs may also choose to address the recommendations included in the report. The improvement plan will be reviewed and if acceptable, will be approved by RIDE no more than 30 business days from receipt.

The CTE team lead will be regularly corresponding with the LEA during this period to ensure that a comprehensive and approvable improvement plan is provided. Upon approval of the improvement plan, RIDE staff will monitor the programs' progress toward implementing the improvement plan.

#### Approval Term

Approval length is dependent on the nature and scope of the review and approval process. Currently, fully approved programs will be granted a maximum five-year approval pending RIDE annual review of student outcome data (accountability metrics).

## Appendix 1

### Glossary of Terms Pertaining to the Program Review Process

As used in the pilot program review documentation including the guidance and application, the following words and terms have the following meaning, unless the context indicates another of different meaning or intent:

1. **Accountability System:** A set of student outcome metrics collected annually for all full or provisionally approved programs. The metrics will form the basis of the system that is still under development and will involve annual targets that programs are expected to meet.
2. **Advanced Standing in an Apprenticeship or Training Program:** Through a school or program-guided agreement, a student qualifies for credit toward a registered apprenticeship while enrolled in the program of study, thereby reducing the amount of time or hours required to complete an apprenticeship. After graduating, students may elect to utilize the credit by pursuing the specified apprenticeship within the trade.
3. **Apprenticeship:** a relationship between an employer and an employee during which the worker or apprentice learns an occupation in a structured program sponsored jointly by employers and labor unions or operated by employers and employee associations.
4. **Approval Term:** The length of time a program is granted full or provisional approval after going through the program review process.
5. **Articulation Agreement:** A formal agreement acknowledging, authorizing and conferring specific academic credit, advanced standing and/or status for education or work.
6. **Career Preparation Program Standards:** Regents-adopted RIDE-published standards that provide the basis for the quality assurance process and clearly articulate the requirements for the quality, scope, and breadth of LEA-administered career preparation programs.
7. **Career Programs of Study:** one of two forms of RIDE-approved career preparation programs offered through the CTE System at the secondary level. A career program of study provides structured, sequenced academic and technical courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential, where available or appropriate, or a nationally-recognized certificate that validates skill attainment.
8. **Completer:** A student who completes the required courses as outlined in the course sequence for the program of study. The course(s) with the highest number in sequence will be used to determine if a student completes the program.
9. **Concentrator:** A student who completes at least two courses or parts in the required sequence of a program of study. Typically, programs of study are a sequence of 3 or 4 full-year courses, and a student would become a concentrator after taking the second course. In some programs, the required sequence is 4 or more courses and the student would still be a concentrator after completing the second full course.
10. **Course Sequence:** The specific order of courses required for the student to complete the program of study. Programs may require more than three courses for completion or provide multiple courses for students to choose from to meet the program of study requirements.
11. **Credential:** A specialized subset of certificates, credentials provide portable, meaningful documentation that a student has mastered an industry-established and validated range of skills, met necessary training and education requirements, and demonstrated readiness to enter a specific industry.

12. **CTE Team Lead:** The CTE lead will oversee a review team and will act as the liaison between RIDE and the program to answer any questions during the application and/or site-visit period, coordinate the review team and site visit, provide the written report and work with the program on follow up steps. Each program participating in the pilot process will be assigned a RIDE CTE Team Leader.
13. **Evidence:** The documentation of proof for the actions, policies, program information, outcomes, etc., described in the program application.
14. **Existing Programs:** Programs that are currently in operation and are part of the RIDE provisionally-approved list.
15. **Findings:** May result from the pilot program review process and signify specific corrective actions or changes a program must take after receiving the final written report from RIDE.
16. **Full Approval:** Career preparation programs that have satisfied all components of the review and approval process. Programs in the pilot are only eligible for provisional approval and have the opportunity to gain full approval if the program meets the accountability targets when those targets are implemented.
17. **New Programs:** Programs that have been in operation for a limited period and do not hold an approval status from RIDE.
18. **Postsecondary Benefit:** Signifies the outcome where a CTE student earns a recognized credential and/or postsecondary credit and/or advanced standing in an apprenticeship or training program.
19. **Postsecondary Credit:** A credit that a CTE student earned through district-, school- or program-guided agreements including: dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, AP and/or IB credit.
20. **Provisional Approval:** Conditional or temporary approval requiring programs to meet improvement targets and/or complete action steps to achieve full approval.
21. **Recommendations:** May result from the pilot program review process and signify specific corrective actions or changes a program may or may not take after receiving the final written report from RIDE.
22. **Rubric:** The review tool that will be used to evaluate programs against the program standards during the review process.
23. **Self-Study:** Before completing the application, programs should undertake an internal evaluation of their performance against the career preparation program standards.
24. **Student Outcome Data:** Student-level metrics associated with program quality and will be used in the accountability system. They include but are not limited to: credential and/or postsecondary credit and/or advanced standing-earning rates; program completion rates; and enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education and technical training programs.
25. **Training Program:** The definition of a training program is under development. It may include a formal training program sponsored by an employer and specifically geared to its needs, where participants must adequately complete a series of tasks, assignments over a specified period of time before being hired as a full-time employee.

## Appendix 2

### Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Career Preparation Program Standards

#### 1. Policies and Procedures

Administrative policies and procedures promote Career and Technical Education preparation program development and implementation. Local Education Agency (LEA) policies will:

- a. Include formal procedures for the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of career preparation programs.
- b. Clearly describe admissions, policies and procedures, selection criteria, enrollment conditions, and appeals processes.
- c. Ensure that all students have opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in training programs or jobs.
- d. Ensure the review and evaluation of student outcome data including achievement gaps.

#### 2. Partnerships

Ongoing relationships among secondary and postsecondary education, business, families, special populations and other community stakeholders are central to career preparation programs. Collaborative partnerships will:

- a. Include formal and/or informal relationships as necessary for supporting quality programs.
- b. Reflect the community and be representative of key stakeholders.

#### 3. Program Operations

Career preparation programs shall operate with appropriate supports and resources necessary to meet or exceed OSHA and program-specific standards and quality. Career preparation programs will:

- a. Ensure the health and safety of students at all school and technical facilities used for instruction and training.
- b. Provide access for students to adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment, and supplies.
- c. Ensure that facilities and equipment used for instructional or training purposes are current with business and industry standards.
- d. Provide all students with access to up to date technology.

#### 4. Staffing, Certification, and Professional Development

Career preparation programs ensure students have access to sufficient instructional staff qualified in the knowledge and skills necessary to provide rigorous academic and technical instruction. High quality preparation programs ensure:

- a. Teacher certifications will meet RIDE Educator Certification regulations.
- b. Staffing levels are consistent with program requirements and/or business and industry standards and sufficient to meet the needs of students.
- c. Teachers or instructors are trained in the academic and technical knowledge and skills aligned to industry standards in areas to which they are assigned.
- d. Teachers and instructors remain current in academic and technical skills through participation in regular professional development activities.

#### 5. Curriculum, Instruction and Technical Skill Assessment

Innovative and creative approaches to secondary curriculum, instruction, and assessment facilitate students' successful completion of career preparation programs and transitions to postsecondary education and training careers.

**5A. A comprehensive and rigorous career preparation program curriculum will:**

1. Align to state adopted academic standards and skills.
2. Include experiences and instruction necessary for all students to attain work-readiness and fundamental technical knowledge and skills
3. Ensure a minimum of three non-duplicative courses, or the equivalent, that result in opportunities for earning industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in training programs or jobs.

**5B. Effective instruction and learning strategies will:**

1. Integrate academic, technical, and industry standards, knowledge, and skills.
2. Employ contextualized work-based, project-based, and problem-based learning approaches.

**5C. Well-developed technical skills assessments will include:**

1. Multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate technical skill proficiency.
2. National and/or industry-approved technical skills assessments offering opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program.

**6. Supplemental and Support Services**

Comprehensive supplemental services enable all students to access academic, personal/social, and career supports to maximize their potential for success. Supplemental support service systems will ensure:

- a. Students have access to the system of supports and services described in state statutes and regulations.
- b. Students have the opportunity to engage in a goal setting and planning process that supports their academic, career, and personal/social goals and individual needs.
- c. Students have access to the services provided through a Comprehensive School Counseling program.

**7. Secondary to Postsecondary Transition**

Effective programs ensure that students graduate college- and career-ready and are prepared to transition to postsecondary education and training and careers. To prepare students for postsecondary success, effective programs:

- a. Align curriculum with applied learning and career readiness skills, state adopted and nationally recognized academic standards, and industry-recognized technical standards.
- b. Provide student access to career-based and work-site learning experiences.
- c. Provide students with embedded credit earning opportunities that integrate academic and technical skill development opportunities.
- d. Maintain formal articulation agreements with higher education and business partners that earn students early college access and/or access to postsecondary training programs or job placement.

## Appendix 3 Site Visit Checklist

### **Before the site visit:**

- Communicate to instructors and students regarding the visit, interviews and observations
- Provide CTE team lead with names of potential students for interviews
- Provide CTE team lead with names of instructors and school counselor for interviews

### **Needed during the visit:**

- At least two rooms that will remain secure for the duration of the visit: RIDE team set up and interviews
- Internet access in the team work room
- Access to at least two classrooms for observations
- Reserve time for review team meeting with director and/or other appropriate personnel at the start and finish of the visit.