



Criteria for Approval of Noncredit Workforce Development Courses

Act 46 of 2005 requires PDE to annually publish guidelines listing criteria and establishing the approval process for programs and courses eligible for approval for the Economic Development Stipend. The criteria for approval of noncredit occupational course to be eligible as Noncredit Workforce Development Courses for the 2014-2015 fiscal year are listed below.

Criteria:

Each Noncredit Workforce Development course must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The course must be in compliance with Pennsylvania statutes, regulations and policies relating to community colleges.
2. The course has the specific purpose of providing opportunities for students and incumbent workers to develop or upgrade skills necessary for high priority occupations and is identified with an accepted occupation and SOC code.
3. Upon successful completion, the course leads to a formal recognition that has established credibility with businesses and other hiring agencies.
4. Each course must be identified with an occupational objective and prepare students for a High Priority Occupation identified by the Department of Labor and Industry on the annual High Priority Occupation list or be approved by the Department of Education through the PDE Regional Workforce Application.
5. The length of the course must encompass a minimum of 30 clock hours and be consistent with occupational industry standards and occupational objectives of the course. Noncredit courses are not intended to be an avenue for avoidance of the approval process or substitution for programs leading to a formal college award. Therefore, no single course may require more than 15 equated credits to be eligible as a Noncredit Workforce Development Course. Courses that meet published industry standards, but exceed the acceptable length, will be considered on a course-by-course basis. A copy of the relevant industry standards must accompany the application. (Note: Each 15 hours of classroom work and each 30 hours of laboratory work shall be equated to one semester credit – 22 Pa. Code § 35.61(c))

The following noncredit courses are excluded from consideration for Noncredit Workforce Development course eligibility:

- Adult basic education or adult literacy courses, including English as a Second Language.
- Occupational skills courses that do not meet the criteria as a Noncredit Workforce Development Course.

- Academic courses.
- Continuing professional education courses.

Definitions:

Clock Hours—A measure of time comprising 50 minutes of instruction during any 60 minute period of time.

Equated Credits—Each 15 clock hours of classroom work and each 30 clock hours of laboratory work shall be calculated to equal one equated credit. [22 Pa Code §35.61(C)]

High Priority Occupations—Occupations annually identified by the Department of Labor and Industry through a three step process involving industry cluster analysis, occupational data analysis and expert input and regional factors to identify emerging occupations. Additional occupations may be added based on differences and dynamics in regional and local labor markets.

Noncredit Workforce Development Courses—Noncredit courses approved by the Department of Education to qualify for an Economic Development Stipend and having the specific purpose of providing opportunities for students and incumbent workers to develop or upgrade skills necessary in high priority occupations.

Occupation—Occupational title assigned under the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system for the given occupational code. In some instances, this may be abbreviated or changed slightly from the official SOC title in order to better reflect nuances in occupational demand.

SOC Code—Six-digit numerical code assigned to the occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. The SOC system classifies all occupations found in the economy, including private, public, and military, and allows data to be compared across all governmental agencies. Information on the 2010 SOC system can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/soc/>.