

Career and Technical Education: New Program Approval Process

Chapters 4 and 339 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code govern the career and technical education program approval process. This document highlights important aspects of Chapters 4 and 339 related to program approval. This document is not intended to be an exhaustive list but is intended to serve as a guide for school entities including school districts, charter schools, and career and technical centers that are interested in seeking new career and technical education program approval.

Local Advisory Committee/Occupational Advisory Committee/Workforce Data

- If one does not already exist, the school entity must form a Local Advisory Committee (LAC). The role of the LAC is to provide advice regarding the delivery of career and technical education that is most important to the economic development of the local area. (22 Pa. Code § 4.33)
- Prior to seeking new program approval, the school entity must provide evidence of a need for the program. Need should be based on workforce data. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.33 and 339.4)
 - Information related to workforce data is obtained by working with the local Workforce Development Board (WDB), which is located in each of Pennsylvania's Local Workforce Investment Areas. Local WDBs are responsible to assist the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry in developing statewide employment statistics and promote the participation of business in the statewide workforce investment system.
 - Workforce data are also obtained by working with the school entity's LAC. The Pennsylvania Department of Education produces guidelines to assist schools in establishing and working with LACs. The guidelines provide suggestions on how LACs can be organized and maintained to function effectively.
 - Workforce data should also be obtained from an Occupational Advisory Committee (OAC). The Pennsylvania Department of Education produces guidelines to assist schools in establishing and working with OACs. The guidelines provide suggestions on how OACs can be organized and maintained to function effectively. (22 Pa. Code § 4.33)

Process for Seeking Program Approval

- The Professional Advisory Committee should discuss the feasibility of jointly offering the new program. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.33 and 339.4)
- The Joint Operating Committee should approve the development and offering of any new career and technical education program. (22 Pa. Code § 339.4)
- Once it is determined that there is a need for the program and support exists (e.g., finances, staffing) for the new program, the school entity needs to conduct an occupational analysis. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.31, 339.4, and 339.22)
- The occupational analysis captures the major duties and related tasks included in an occupation, as well as the necessary knowledge, skills, and traits. The first step of the analysis is to capture the essential skills required for a competent employee and then a validation of the identified skills. Once the skills have been identified, learning objectives and performance measures are developed. The next step is to develop a curriculum guide, lesson plans and course assessments. (22 Pa. Code §§ 339.4 and 339.22)
- Safety practices must be part of the curriculum and lesson plans, and safety must be practiced in the classroom as well as the laboratory. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.31 and 339.23)
- The final curriculum and lesson plans must be aligned to industry standards and provide students with the opportunity to sit for industry certification examinations. (22 Pa. Code § 339.22)
- The school entity must also assess a student's occupational competency when the student completes the approved CTE program. School entities are required to use a PDE-approved assessment (i.e., NOCTI and NIMS). (22 Pa. Code § 4.31)
- The school entity must develop a program of study where the CTE courses are planned and progressively sequenced, and must meet the minimum technical instructional hours. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.31, 339.4, and 339.22)
- School personnel – in conjunction with the OAC – must identify equipment that is necessary to deliver the program. The equipment must be purchased and operational when the program becomes operational. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.33, 339.4, and 339.53)
- The school entity must develop a planned curriculum, instructional strategies and administrative procedures, which link the secondary CTE program with an aligned CTE postsecondary education program. The articulation ensures secondary students graduate with the ability to transition from secondary school to a postsecondary institution without experiencing delays in or duplication of learning. (22 Pa. Code § 339.4)

- School personnel must identify how support services will be provided to students with special needs. A means for implementing the delivery of the support services must be in place prior to the opening of the program. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.31 and 339.4)
- The school entity must also develop an admissions policy to ensure student enrollment in the approved CTE program is not discriminatory. (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.31 and 339.21)
- The school entity must hire individuals who meet the certification and professional standards and requirements for CTE administrators and teachers. (22 Pa. Code § 339.41)
- School personnel must decide which Career and Technical Student Organization will be aligned to the program and ensure that curriculum and lessons are developed for the required content. (22 Pa. Code §§ 339.4 and 339.30)
- School personnel must provide guidance services that ensure that all students are assisted in selecting vocational programs and developing career plans. Students must be provided with an occupational and education information needed for career planning. School personnel will maintain student records and supports student placement. School entities must conduct follow up studies to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. (22 Pa. Code §§ 339.4, 339.31, and 339.32)
- The school entity must be prepared to analyze required accountability measures to bring about increased performance for each program and on each defined indicator. (22 Pa. Code § 339.4)