

# Selecting a Credential



Career and technical education (CTE) provides individuals with opportunities to acquire real-world academic, employability, entrepreneurial, and technical skills essential to careers in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand fields. How do you accurately and efficiently measure a student's comprehension and application of these critical skills?

The quick answer is through an assessment — but not just any assessment. The 2006 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act indicates that a technical assessment must be valid and reliable, based on industry standards, and incorporate measurement of technical skill attainment.

Recently the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) released a list of nine questions that State Boards of Education ([www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org)) are urged to ask before selecting a state academic assessment. Most of these high-level questions are also applicable when selecting a CTE credential. But, what about the detailed questions? What is appropriate to ask?

**NOCTI has created a list of questions that use these nine questions as a basis for selecting a CTE credential and association.**

## Alignment

- How well does the assessment align to the standards in the program of study?
- Are there additional types of testing available other than just a basic multiple-choice assessment? (e.g., hands-on)
- What options are available for customizing an assessment to better measure the standards in the program of study?
- What is the purpose of the test?

## Development

- Is the assessment developed based on a process adhering to reputable industry testing standards?
- Is the assessment based on industry-recognized technical standards?
- Do the assessments include items that demonstrate a range of thinking skills?
- Is the assessment national in scope and include input from secondary, post-secondary, and industry?

## Data

- Do the score reports provide more than just a pass/fail designation?
- Are score reports easy to interpret?
- Are individual score reports included?
- Is normative data provided?
- What options are available for customizing the score report?
- How quickly are tests scored and reports available?

## Administration

- Are both online and paper/pencil delivery options available?
- What is the time commitment for the test administration?
- What type of accommodations are available for test takers?
- What types of value-adds are included in the assessment purchase? (e.g., college credit, digital badges, individual score reports)

## Costs

- Does the cost of the assessment include user training, supplemental administration materials, score reports, and technical support?
- Are there site license, administration, or membership/subscription fees in addition to the cost of the assessment?
- In order to use the assessment, does the school, staff, facilities, and/or equipment need to be certified or endorsed by the testing organization?

NOCTI is a national provider of quality industry-based credentials offering over 100 credentials covering the broad scope of careers offered within CTE. As a provider of assessments to nearly every state in the nation, we are often asked these questions as states make the important decision of which assessments to use.

**To view a full report of NOCTI's responses to these questions, please visit [www.nocti.org](http://www.nocti.org).**

