



CCTC Alignment Study FAQs

I. COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

HOW WILL THE RESULTS OF THE ALIGNMENT STUDY BE SHARED WITH STATES/TERRITORIES?

Each State CTE Director will receive a copy of his/her state report and Microsoft Excel files with the full alignment results on a flash drive in October 2013. This flash drive will also contain a copy of the database described below.

WILL THE RESULTS BE SHARED PUBLICLY? WHO WILL RECEIVE MY STATE'S RESULTS?

Only the State CTE Director (or his/her proxy) will receive the state's alignment results. NASDCTEc will not publish any state-specific information or share it publicly. The only information being shared publicly are the aggregate, cross-state results of the alignment results in a national report also to be released in October 2013.

All State CTE Directors will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement to receive the database, which does include all state-specific alignment results, to protect such results from the public.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THE RESULTS OF THE ALIGNMENT STUDY?

The results belong to State CTE Directors and they can share and use the alignment results as they see fit. Some ways the alignment results might be used include:

- Building awareness about the CCTC: The state alignment results provide a wealth of information that provide a jumping-off point for engaging K-12 and postsecondary educators, administrators, business/industry representatives and policymakers around the state's current CTE expectations and where the CCTC may fit into that framework moving forward.
- Providing the baseline for state discussions around CCTC alignment: The alignment study results represent one specific approach to comparing the CCTC to state standards, and they can be used to jumpstart discussions among advisory committee(s), subject matter experts and/or other key stakeholders to reaffirm or modify judgments therein.
- Preparing for adoption: For those states already committed to adopting the CCTC, the alignment study results can be shared with State Boards of Education, State Superintendents/Commissioners of Education, legislatures, governors' offices, higher education executives and other key policymakers to help make the case for adoption and explain what adoption will mean for the state.



- Mapping out an implementation and transition strategy: The CCTC are a set of end-of-program of study standards that serve as anchor standards for CTE pathways. As such, the alignment study results demonstrate where state's standards already are supporting students' learning within programs of study (POS) and where gaps still exist and need to be addressed. All of this information can be a tool as states revise, update and/or replace their existing CTE standards to bring them into alignment with the CCTC, be it through formal adoption of the CCTC, revising current standards to fully align to the CCTC, updating program approval requirements, moving towards a statewide POS model, or other actions that support the transition to the CCTC.
- Benchmarking the current policy infrastructure: The alignment study results and policy analysis can be used to help identify what policies need to be addressed to support the implementation of the CCTC in particular, state policies around programs of study, standards alignment, program approval and evaluation, dual enrollment/credit transfer agreements, and teacher supports like professional development and instructional materials and tools.

It is important to remember that the results represent simply a "point in time" and that one shouldn't rush to negative judgment based on them. The alignment study was not conducted to grade or rank states or state standards. Rather, it was conducted to establish a baseline to better understand how states organize their CTE standards and have embraced the POS model.

II. METHODOLOGY

MY STATE HAS CROSSWALKED OUR STANDARDS TO THE CCTC BUT THE RESULTS ARE DIFFERENT. WHY IS THIS?

The CCTC Alignment Study aimed to determine how states' CTE standards align to the CCTC. "Crosswalking" and alignment are conceptually distinct activities. Crosswalking involves determining what state standards cover the content in the CCTC; it is therefore more focused on content or discipline area. Alignment studies take a closer look at the language and expectations of the standards.

For example, examine these two standards:

- CCTC STANDARD: Develop a business plan in Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources (AFNR).
- STATE STANDARD: Understand the elements of a business plan.

This determination in a "crosswalk" would likely match due to similarity. However, in this third-party alignment study a more conservative and systematic approach was taken to determine alignment between two sets of standards. In this case the *verb* for the CCTC is "develop" and the *verb* for the state is "understand," thus the state standard is at a lower level of proficiency than the CCTC standard. Next, the business plan is the *object*, in which they are aligned. Lastly, the *modifier* in the CCTC standard is in the



AFNR context. In the state standard this is not specified. If the state standard were for AFNR students, then this portion of the standard would also align; if this standard were not in the AFNR Career Cluster[®], but in Business Management & Administration Career Cluster, then this would not align. Therefore, due to the difference in levels of proficiency expected, the state standards would be "partially aligned" to the CCTC standard "Develop a business plan in AFNR."

More broadly, due to the difference in methodology between a crosswalk and an alignment study, one would expect a difference in results as well.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "ALIGNED" AND "PARTIALLY ALIGNED"?

See the description above as an example. "Partially aligned" means that the state standards partially address the expectation in the CCTC standard, but the state standards do not fully address the object/modifier and/or the verb (proficiency level) in the CCTC standard. Multiple state standards, collectively, were used to lead to a judgment of aligned or partially aligned, although each state standard was considered individually to the degree it met relevant CCTC standards. For example:

| CCTC STANDARD | State Standards | Judgment |
|--|--|-------------------|
| Safely use and maintain appropriate tools, machinery, equipment, and resources to accomplish construction project goals. | Utilize tools and equipment safely | Aligned |
| | Demonstrate the safe use of power tools when working with electricity | |
| | Identify safe practices for electric power tools when working with electricity | |
| | Demonstrate the safe use of hand tools when working with electricity (CF) | |
| | Report unsafe personal, environmental, and equipment safety hazards | |
| Comply with regulations and applicable codes to establish and manage a legal and safe workplace/jobsite. | Explore supervisory and management roles in an organization | Partially Aligned |
| | Recognize safety issues | |
| | (identify) Federal, state and local governing agency regulations related to HVACR (i.e., EPA, DOT, OSHA) | |
| | (explain) Safety precautions for use of controls in HVACR | |
| | • (review) EPA regulations as refers to evacuation | |



MY STATE DOES NOT USE THE NATIONAL CAREER CLUSTERS FRAMEWORK. HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE RESULTS?

The CCTC Alignment Study uses the CCTC standards, which are organized using The National Career Clusters Framework as the unit of analysis and reference point. As such, the results are presented through the 16 Career Cluster lens, which has been adopted in some form by the majority of states and therefore was deemed an appropriate unit of analysis. If your state uses an alternative model for organizing Career Clusters and Career Pathways, judgments were made by the researchers as to which Career Cluster (or Career Clusters) the state CTE standards were compared.

MY STATE'S STANDARDS DON'T ALIGN AS MUCH TO THE CCTC AS I THOUGHT THEY WOULD. WHY IS THIS?

As described above, the CCTC Alignment Study went beyond a crosswalk and is conservative by design. Further, it is important to consider the CCTC standards as the comparison and unit of analysis. They are intended to be end-of-program of study standards, which means after some level of postsecondary learning. With this in mind, standards meant for students at the secondary level often do not fully align to the CCTC standards.

Simply put – the standards many states currently have adopted are a different level or type of standards when compared to the CCTC. The organization and intent of the CCTC standards is very different from most of the existing CTE state-developed or industry-developed standards. The CCTC are benchmark standards that define what a student needs to know and be able to do at the end of a program of study, while many existing state standards are course-level standards at the occupational or job-specific level. The difference in intent and organization is often the reason for a lack of alignment.

I BELIEVE MY STATE HAS CTE STANDARDS BUT I DID NOT RECEIVE ANY ALIGNMENT RESULTS. DOES THIS MEAN TO SAY MY STATE DOES NOT HAVE CTE STANDARDS?

No, this does not necessarily mean your state does not have standards. It may mean that your state has standards that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the CCTC alignment study. These criteria include:

- Clearly defined and consistent expectations of what students should know and be able to do (i.e., verb + object statements related to a Career Cluster, Career Pathway or Career Ready Practice)
 across all CTE areas
- Publicly available or provided by the State CTE Director/Staff
- Acknowledged by the State CTE Director during the interview
- Approved/adopted by state to be used statewide at the secondary and/or postsecondary level
- Not reproductions of standards that are present elsewhere (e.g., industry/national standards)



WHY WERE THE RESULTS BASED ON THE CCTC AND NOT MY OWN STATE'S STANDARDS?

The research study aimed to determine whether or not state standards align to the CCTC. In this case, the CCTC is the unit of analysis, or the common lens through which each set of state standards were analyzed. For this reason the results are presented uniformly across state reports using the CCTC as the reference point. In other words, the CCTC were used as a common benchmark, to which all state CTE standards were able to be compared.

WHY WEREN'T MY STATE'S CURRICULA EVALUATED FOR ALIGNMENT TO THE CCTC?

The CCTC is a set of standards for CTE Career Clusters and Career Pathways. As such, each state's standards (if applicable) were compared to the CCTC. While some aspects of the CCTC may be embedded in state or local curricula/instruction, these materials would not be considered statewide CTE standards for analysis in the present study.

ONLY SOME PARTS OF MY STATE'S CTE STANDARDS WERE USED IN THE ALIGNMENT STUDY. WHY IS THIS?

Once your state standards were identified, the research team convened to determine the key elements of your state standards appropriate for alignment to the CCTC. This is termed "extraction" because the relevant state standards needed to be extracted from the source document into a database.

The level of extraction required an initial analysis of the state standards structure. Some standards have multiple levels. For example:

Competency

Descriptors

[Optional Descriptors]

In most cases the highest level of the standard, **Competency** in the example above, would be selected for alignment to the CCTC because these broad competencies were most likely to align to the CCTC statements that are also broad in nature. For some state standards the **Competency** level was not consistent throughout Career Clusters or even Career Pathways. For example, one Career Cluster may display the **Competency** level as a sentence (e.g., *The student will be able to demonstrate positive work behaviors and personal qualities*), which would be used for the alignment study (i.e., this statement meets our definition of a standard). However, others may simply state a competency as a subject area (e.g., *Performing Arts*) or a noun (e.g., *Technology*). When subject areas or nouns are presented as standards, this does not meet the definition of a standard. That is, there is no description of what a student should be able to do using a verb and a description of what a student should know using a clear object and modifier (if applicable).



In cases of standards inconsistency across and within Career Clusters, the next level of the standard would be incorporated, such as the *Descriptors* in the example provided above. In all cases, *Optional Descriptors*, or other **suggested or elective** standards, benchmarks or competencies were **not** used for alignment to the CCTC, as they are not consistent and accurate reflections of what the state expects CTE students to know and be able to do at the end of a POS or course.

III. DATABASE

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE DATABASE?

The CCTC, the state standards, alignment determinations and policy information are housed in a Microsoft Access database developed by Ohio State University's Center for Education & Training for Employment (CETE). The database includes pre-set queries that were developed and defined during the course of the study based on the needs of NASDCTEc and its membership. Defining queries in advance will allow the user to simply click on the report they wish to see. Specifically, states can create reports by state, Career Cluster and Career Pathway, type of standards, degree of alignment to the CCTC and learner level. States can also review the alignment study results from the lens of CCTC-to-state standards alignment or State Standards-to-CCTC matches. States can also review and compare policy-level information across states on key standards-related issues.

The database also allows for the flexibility to generate reports and other queries based on user needs. Users are able to access this file and download it to their computers, allowing the user to customize the data to suit his/her preferences or run pre-set queries. Written guidance in the form of a user's guide from CETE staff has been provided on the functions of the database so that even inexperienced database users can create their own queries and reports.

To report errors or ask questions about the results, you may contact info@careertech.org. To report technical difficulties or ask questions about the functionality of the database, you may contact keck.60@osu.edu.

WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE DATABASE?

Initially, State CTE Directors and their designated staff will have access to the database by receiving the Microsoft Access file. NASDCTEc hopes that the database eventually will have an online, password-protected interface that will allow for updating and provide access for all platforms (e.g., Mac users).

All State CTE Directors will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement before receiving the Microsoft Access database, as it contains all states' alignment results.