

Career-Technical Education Credit Flexibility (CTE Credit Flex) Guidance

Overview

In compliance with Senate Bill 311 (Ohio Core legislation), Ohio career-technical educators are assisting their districts in drafting and implementing credit flexibility plans. In order to assist with this endeavor, the Ohio Department of Education Office of CTE has developed this guidance document.

The guidance provided for CTE credit flex is consistent with the authority, responsibility, accountability and funding of the Career-Technical Planning District (CTPD) as defined in Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Rule. Credit flex is not intended to change or circumvent the parameters of state CTE statutes, state administrative rules, state CTE funding eligibility or federal CTE grant requirements. Likewise, guidance is consistent with S.B. 311 which expects that students should have the advantage of credit flex opportunity in CTE content areas.

It is recommended that the CTE credit flex policies of all districts within a Career-Technical Planning District (CTPD) be compatible to ensure ease of implementation for the student.

This is an evolving document and will be updated as needed. Please note that the Office of CTE has attempted to group like questions and answers together for ease of reference. However, a reader should carefully review the entire document before making a decision regarding how to implement CTE credit flexibility. Other information on Ohio credit flexibility can be obtained by going to www.education.ohio.gov and using the keywords: credit flexibility.

General – Applies to all CTE programs and courses.

Q1. Does a district have to have a state-approved CTE program/course in order to develop a CTE credit flex plan for a student?

A1. Yes. Credit flex plans that cover CTE content must be based upon a state-approved program/course in the school district or community school in which the student is enrolled.

Q2. What criteria should be used to determine the content to be learned via a credit flex plan for CTE credit?

A2. CTE credit flex plans should always be based on an existing state-approved career-technical program. There is a set of state-approved content standards that define what knowledge and skills are to be attained within a program that is a state-approved CTE program. The standards will inform “what should be learned” in the flex plan.

Q3. What is the Joint Vocational School District (JVSD) role in granting credit for credit flex plans?

A3. The JVSD role in the granting of credit for credit flex plans is the same as its role in granting credit for Carnegie-unit-based programs/courses.

Q4. Could online CTE coursework be considered in a credit flex plan?

A4. Online methodology may be used within a CTE credit flex plan if appropriate for the plan's defined learning outcomes.

Q5. Does credit flex cover situations where whole classes are re-configured or re-designed?

A5. Yes, under certain conditions. Credit flex plans are intended to meet the individual needs of students. If multiple students have individual credit flex plans that identify similar education opportunities, the school may group students to facilitate implementation. Examples include those identified in OAC 3301-35-01 and 3301-35-06 as educational options (e.g., distance learning, educational travel, independent study, internship and community service). Learning outcomes must match those of the Carnegie-unit-based program/course being flexed and learning outcome attainment must be documented for each student.

Q6. Could a student attending one school district enroll in a CTE program in another school district via a CTE credit flex plan?

A6. A student may enroll in another school district in the Career-Technical Planning District (CTPD) for a CTE program, such as a JVSD or a contract district; or in another school district per that district's policies (e.g., open enrollment, tuition-paying). The school district providing the CTE programming may enter into a credit flex agreement with the student.

Community Schools

Q7. Could community schools provide CTE credit flex opportunities for community school students?

A7. A community school may provide CTE credit flex opportunities for community school students provided that the school has a state-approved CTE program/course in the student's area of interest.

Q8. If a community school does not have a state-approved CTE program/course in the student's area of interest, are other options available to the student?

A8. A community school student has the right to enroll in a state-approved CTE program/course through the student's resident school district – at either the resident district or a JVSD that serves the student's resident district. The resident district or the JVSD providing the CTE program may enter into a credit flex agreement with the student.

Workforce Development Programs/Courses

Q9. State-approved Workforce Development (WFD) programs must operate for a minimum of 450 hours of instruction. Do CTE credit flex plans also need to meet the 450-hour requirement?

A9. No, the nature of credit flex allows students to master the content included in the plan regardless of the time needed for the student to sufficiently demonstrate the outcomes identified in the plan. Carnegie-unit-based programs will continue to be approved only if they include a minimum of 450 hours of instruction.

Q10. If a credit flex plan is based on a WFD program that is regulated by an external agency (e.g., ASE accreditation, Board of Nursing, etc.), how does this affect the credit flex plan?

A10. All requirements of the external agency must be included in the credit flex plan.

Q11. Are students who use the credit flex option held to the same learning outcomes as those enrolled in the Carnegie-based WFD program?

A11. A WFD program is designed as an in-depth study of knowledge and skills that business/industry has identified as necessary for success upon entering the career area. Thus, the flex plan should specify how the depth and scope of standards will be addressed.

Q12. If a student uses the credit flex option, must the student flex the entire WFD program?

A12. No. A WFD flex plan may include all or part of the competencies or learning outcomes in the program. However, WFD credits are not designed to be stand-alone electives, but rather to be part of a comprehensive, multi-credit program in preparation for employment in a career area. If only a proportion of competencies are to be attained through a credit flex plan, and therefore only partial credit is being flexed, the plan should state how the remaining learning outcomes will be accomplished by the student to complete the entire state-approved program.

Assessments and “Testing-Out”

Q13. How should learning outcomes identified in a credit flex plan be assessed?

A13. The attainment of learning outcomes via a credit flex plan should be assessed using methods appropriate for the breadth and rigor of the content identified in the plan.

Q14. Are credit flex students required to take state-developed or industry-based assessments that are required of students in a Carnegie-based program/course?

A14. If a state-developed assessment and/or industry-based assessment is required for state and/or federal accountability for the WFD program being flexed, the flex plan should include the administration of this assessment. Assessment results must be reported in EMIS. This assessment

may or may not also be the method identified in the plan for documenting the learning outcomes and qualifying the student for credit.

Q15. Could passage of an industry or credentialing assessment be considered a “test out” for CTE credit?

A15. An industry or credentialing assessment may be used for a “test out” credit flex plan if it is appropriate for the defined learning outcomes in the plan. Because industry or credentialing assessments often address a narrow set of occupational learning outcomes within a broader-based CTE program, using them for testing out may mean that credit for only a portion of the CTE program will be warranted based on these assessments. If a student is flexing the entire CTE program/course, the industry or credentialing assessment may need to be augmented by other assessment tools due to gaps between the broad learning outcomes of state-approved CTE standards and the specificity of standards addressed by an industry or credentialing exam.

Q16. Could passage of a State CTE Technical Assessment be considered a “test out” for CTE credit?

A16. A State CTE Technical Assessment may be used for a “test out” credit flex plan if it is appropriate for measuring the defined learning outcomes in the plan.

Job Training Coordinating (JTC)

Q17. Could students develop a credit flex plan for Job Training Coordinating (JTC) credit?

A17. Students may earn credit for Job Training Coordinating (JTC) under a credit flex plan providing the student qualifies for JTC as identified in the *Job Training Coordinating (JTC) Program Manual* (Chapter 2). Click [here](#), select “Job Training Program Manual.”

Career-Based Intervention (CBI)

Q18. Could students develop a credit flex plan for Career-Based Intervention (CBI) credit?

A18. Students may earn credit for Career-Based Intervention (CBI) under a credit flex plan providing the student qualifies for CBI as identified in the *CBI Manual of Operations* (section V, Student Selection). Click [here](#), select “CBI Manual of Operations.”

Teacher

Q19. Who should be the teacher of record or provide oversight for CTE credit flex plans?

A19. A person holding valid credentials to teach the program/course being flexed should be the teacher of record and should design/select instruction and assessment for a credit flex plan in that content area. If this is not possible, a counselor or administrator appropriately credentialed for high school age students could oversee the plan in consultation with a subject matter expert.

Q20. If a non-credentialed person is working with a student in the delivery of the credit flex plan, are there any requirements for that person?

A20. In all cases, the school district must meet all state operating standards regarding screenings required for working with and/or overseeing work with K-12 students.

CTE Funding

Q21. How does credit flex impact state CTE funding?

A21. In FY11, credit flex plans should not impact CTE funding for traditional school districts (City, Local, Exempted Village and Joint Vocational School Districts). The FY2010-FY2011 state biennium budget specifies that in FY11, a school district will receive 100.75% of the funding it received for CTE funding in FY10.

For FY12, guidance on funding will be forthcoming once CTE funding in the FY2012-2013 biennium has been determined.

Q22. Could state and federal CTE funds be used for credit flex plans?

Q22. State CTE funds and federal Perkins funds may be used for activities associated with credit flex, provided that the credit flex plan is based on a state-approved CTE program and the activities relate to the uses described in OAC 3301-61-16 or the Perkins Act of 2006 respectively. Any supplanting questions should be addressed through the use of local legal and fiscal advisors.

Guidance for other fees associated with credit flex is available on the ODE Web. Click [here](#), select "Credit Flexibility Fee Flowchart."

CTE Accountability

Q23. How will credit flex arrangements be factored into federal and state reporting and accountability?

A23. Students under a credit flex plan should be reported into EMIS as enrolled in the Carnegie-unit-based CTE program/course being flexed. Districts are held accountable for students on a credit flex plan, as these students are included in CTE enrollment counts and performance calculations in the CTE Carnegie-unit-based program/course being flexed.

Q.24. How will WFD students under credit flex plans be reported as CTE participants and/or concentrators?

In state-approved Workforce Development (WFD) programs, these students are counted as CTE participants and concentrators as though enrolled in a comparable CTE Carnegie-unit-based program/course. Additional guidance on determining the CTE concentrator status of students on a CTE credit flex plan is forthcoming.

Districts are held accountable for students on a credit flex plan, as these students are included in CTE enrollment counts and performance calculations in the CTE Carnegie-unit-based program/course being flexed.

Academic Credit**Q25. Could a credit flex arrangement be made to issue academic credit for work done in a CTE program?**

A25. Credit flex can be used to offer a student credit for academic content within a CTE program/course if it is appropriate given the plan's defined learning outcomes.

Career-Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)**Q26. Could Career-Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) be used for credit flex?**

A26. CTSOs may be used as a learning methodology under a credit flex plan if appropriate for the plan's defined learning outcomes and/or the required documentation of the plan's learning outcomes.

Q27. Are students participating in a CTE program through a credit flex plan required to be members of a Career-Technical Student Organization?

A27. It is recommended that all students participating in a CTE program/course be members of the appropriate CTSO regardless of whether they are participating in a Carnegie-unit-based program/course or a credit flex plan.

Articulation Agreements**Q28. How will credit flex factor into Career-Technical Credit Transfer (CT²)?**

A28. To receive CT² credit for learning under a credit flex plan, all requirements of the CT² statewide agreement (other than implied seat time) must be met through the credit flex plan.

Q29. How will credit flex factor into local articulation agreements?

A29. To receive articulated credit for learning under a credit flex plan, all requirements of the secondary/postsecondary articulation agreement (other than implied seat time) must be met through the credit flex plan.

Credit-Flex and EMIS

Q30. How does credit flex interface with EMIS?

A30. Guidance on how to report all credit flex data, including CTE credit flex data, will be forthcoming.