

Chapter Three: Workforce Education Program Elements

A. Workforce Education Programs: Overview

In keeping with the U.S. Department of Education's [16 Career Clusters](#), the Texas Education Agency's [AchieveTexas](#) career pathways initiative, and the Coordinating Board's [Texas Career Clusters](#) project, a workforce education program consists of a coherent sequence of courses designed to prepare students for employment in a career field. A workforce education program is developed by an institution in close cooperation with business and industry to satisfy a need for timely and effective workforce education. Additionally, many workforce education programs are articulated with secondary schools through dual credit and with four-year college programs to provide students the opportunity for a seamless transition to the next level of education.

Business and industry experts should provide substantial input into the curriculum design of a workforce education program, including profession-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities and general skills as appropriate, such as oral and written communication, mathematics, computer literacy, and industry-related workplace practices.

A workforce education program may lead to a single award (degree or certificate) or offer multiple awards/exit options (degree and/or certificates). Generally, it is recommended that the number and type of awards in a program not exceed the following:

1. one AAS or AAA degree, 60 semester credit hours (SCH);
2. two level one certificates, each between 15-42 SCH;
3. one level two certificate between 30-51 SCH;

In addition, colleges may incorporate enhanced skills certificates (6-12 SCH), continuing education certificates (360-779 contact hours), and advanced technical certificates (16-45 SCH) in a program based on workforce demand. (Awards are described in more detail later in this chapter.)

In some disciplines, a broader array of awards may be warranted. The type and number of awards should provide the building blocks for students to move from basic to more advanced workplace competencies. Ideally, each award should enable students to build toward the associate degree.

A program is usually identified by a four-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code while an award is identified by a six-digit CIP code. Generally, as more digits are added to a CIP code, the classification becomes more specific. A two-digit CIP code refers to a broad career field. A four-digit CIP code refers to a career pathway or similar levels of training but possibly in differing occupations. A six-digit CIP code refers to a specific occupation or job title.

For example:	CIP code 50	Visual and Performing Arts
	CIP code 50.04	Design and Applied Arts
	CIP code 50.0402	Commercial and Advertising Art