Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CTE Committee Meeting

Industry Recognized Credentials

January 30, 2025

PRESENTED BY

Office of College and Career Pathways

Objectives

- Review MSDE's implementation process for Industry-Recognized Credentials

- Preview IRC Application Data from Cycle 1

- Introduce decisions and business rules

- Examine recommendations for Cycle 2 beginning August 1, 2025

- Provide implementation next steps

Overview

- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that the GWDB CTE Committee design a policy outlining **a new statewide definition** for industry-recognized credentials.

- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that the GWDB CTE Committee define which industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) count toward **the 45% goal**.

- According to CTE Committee Policy "Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Community Colleges, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and other organizations in Maryland must **submit applications each year** for industry-recognized credentials (IRC) that are not on the approved list from October 2024 to be considered."

Overview

To be approved by the GWDB CTE Committee as an IRC within the CTE Committee's definition, an IRC must meet the following seven core criteria and two optional criteria:

1. Aligns with In-Demand Occupations
2. Provides Documented Outcomes
3. Validated by Industry
4. Assessment-Based
5. Standards-Driven
6. Attainable and Accessible
7. Portable
8. Stackable (preferred, but not required for approval)
9. Renewable (preferred, but not required for approval)

Important Dates

Date	Description
August	Online application for new industry-recognized credentials to be assessed opens.
October 31	Online application for new industry-recognized credentials to be assessed closes.
November	MSDE reviews each submission for completeness and follows up with requesting entities to gather any additional information needed to make a recommendation to approve or not approve.
December	MSDE prepares submission packages for each industry-recognized credential application meeting foundational application requirements, including a recommendation to approve or not approve the IRC. All packets and recommendations will be sent to CTE Committee staff by December 31st for review by the full CTE Committee.
January	The CTE Committee will formally vote to approve or not approve each IRC package provided to them by MSDE. Once a formal determination is made, MSDE will notify the requesting entity of the status via email. Each approved IRC will be added to the state-approved list for use in the upcoming school year.
February	MSDE and the CTE Committee will publish the annual State-Approved Industry-Recognized Credential list for use in the upcoming school year.
July 1	The State-Approved Industry-Recognized Credential list goes into effect for the upcoming school year.

GWDB CTE Committee Industry Recognized Credential Policy

MSDE Implementation Process

- The AIB approved the CTE Committee's Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) Policy on August 1, 2024. MSDE launched a new webpage and opened the application link on August 26, 2024.

- To support applicants, a sample application and ongoing technical assistance were made publicly available from August 26 to October 31, 2024.

- In November and December, MSDE's IRC Committee reviewed submitted applications:

  - Coordinator, Industry Recognized Credentials – MSDE
  - Coordinator, Apprenticeships –MSDE
  - Program Manager, Apprenticeship and Training – MDOL
  - Senior Policy Advisory, CTE Committee – Governor's Workforce Development Board
  - Coordinator, School Support (Secondary Programs) – MSDE
  - Specialist, Secondary Transition Performance –MSDE
  - Coordinator, Comprehensive Arts Education – MSDE
  - Coordinator, Postsecondary Credit and P-Tech – MSDE
  - Executive Director - Maryland Future Farmers of America (Special Consultation)

MSDE Technical Assistance

- All applications flagged as incomplete, were **promptly contacted with clear instructions** to resolve the issues along with **an invitation to meet virtually**.

- Each email communication acknowledged the submission, thanked the applicant, and **provided detailed guidance on criteria, qualifications, and requirements**, along with links to resources **and sample artifacts**. Applicants were encouraged to review these resources and reach out for support as needed.

- MSDE maintained detailed records of all communications, including emails and meetings, to **ensure transparency and accountability,** and that helped shape the data that the committee has available to them on their report on pages 2-5.

Application Outcomes

By Submission Type

Submission Type	Number of Applications
Local Education Agency	66
Government Agency	2
For-Profit Organization	9
Non-Profit Organization	10
Other	4
Total Applications	91
Total New and Non-Duplicative IRC Applications	68

Application Outcomes

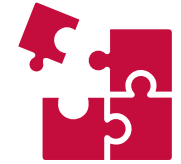## By Decision

Decision Outcome	Number of Applications
Recommend	19

Applications in this category demonstrated excellence in **meeting all seven required core criteria**. These submissions included **high-quality artifacts** supported by **strong evidence from a variety of stakeholders** and resources. They clearly showed potential for **gainful employment** and significant value to Maryland's workforce system, as well as alignment with broader economic and workforce needs beyond the state. These programs exemplify the standards necessary for inclusion in the state's approved Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) list.

Year One Application Trends

Areas of Strength

- All seven core criteria were met **with additional non-vendor third-party endorsements from local and state partners**.

- All seven core criteria were met **with an effective demonstration of postsecondary articulation agreements**.

- All seven core criteria were met **and specific hiring preferences for the IRC are identified in a job description**.

Application Outcomes

By Submission Type

Decision Outcome	Number of Applications
Do Not Recommend	31

Applications in this category failed to meet the core criteria for approval. Common reasons included **incomplete submissions**, duplication of programs already on the approved list, or **missing key artifacts** necessary for evaluation. These deficiencies prevented MSDE from determining the program's alignment with the state's workforce needs or its value to Maryland's workforce system.

- Applications that did not meet 7 core criteria: 25

- Applications classified as entrance exams or skills assessment: 4

- Applications already on the approved list: 2

Year One Application Trends

Areas of Growth

- Ensure applications are **complete**.

- Check that applications are not duplicates of those IRCs **already on the approved list**, as IRCs on the existing list retain their active status and do not require reapproval.

- Focus on **industry-grade credentials**, as applications presented as curriculum or entrance exams are misaligned with CTE Committee policy and the core criteria.

- Provide **clearer hiring preferences** to strengthen external validation and industry demand.

- Make certain that **artifacts align with the skills measured** in the IRC **and with the job descriptions** attached to the application to avoid discrepancies between the skills requested for the job and those addressed by the certification.

Year One Application Trends

Areas of Growth

- Confirm Labor Market Information (LMI) provides **specific county or state-level insights** over a reliance on broad, national data.

- **Avoid vendor-provided case-making** materials.

- **Provide employer testimonials or industry-recognized validations** as blogs and news articles are not considered verifiable endorsements and are deemed to fall short of meeting the core criteria.