



Colorado Early College Graduation Guidelines Addendum: Postsecondary Credential Definition

Early College Definition

An Early College, as defined by C.R.S. 22-35-103(10)(a), is a secondary school that provides only a curriculum that requires each student to enroll in and complete secondary and postsecondary courses while enrolled in the four years of high school such that, upon successful completion of the curriculum, the student will have completed the requirements of a high school diploma and an associate's degree or other postsecondary credential or at least sixty credits toward the completion of a postsecondary credential. The curriculum must be designed to be completed within four years.

What is a Postsecondary Credential?

A Postsecondary Credential is defined as a credential consisting of:

- An associate or baccalaureate degree
- An industry-recognized certificate or certification: An industry recognized third-party or governing board administered assessment, examination or licensure that measures occupational competency and validates a knowledge base and skills that shows mastery in a particular industry
- Postsecondary Certificate: A higher education recognized certificate that is awarded for completing the coursework outlined in an approved academic program.
- A certificate of completion of a registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship
- A license recognized by the State involved or Federal government

According to the Colorado Department of Labor, a recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. These technical or industry/occupational skills generally are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations.

Certificates awarded by workforce development boards (WDBs) and work readiness certificates are not included in this definition because neither type of certificate is recognized industry wide, nor documents the measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advancement within an occupation. Likewise, such certificates must recognize technical or industry/occupational skills for the specific industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., even if such general skills certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment.

Example credentials that DO NOT count:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10 Hour Course that provides awareness of job-related common safety and health hazards
- Work/Career Readiness certificates
- ServSafe Food Handler or Food Allergens Certificate
- CPR and AED certification (or other first aid certification)

For all other certificates not under the list above, please consult the Director of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness on eligibility.

Organizations and institutions that award recognized postsecondary credentials include*:

- State educational agency or a State agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a State; such as CCCS and Career and Technical Education
- An institution of higher education (including community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs)
- An institution of higher education that is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes
- A professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc., Machining Level I credential) or product manufacturer or developer (e.g., recognized Microsoft Information Technology certificates, such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP), Certified Novell Engineer, a Sun Certified Java Programmer, etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities;
- The US Department of Labor Education and Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized State Apprenticeship Agency
- A public regulatory agency, which awards a credential upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., Federal Aviation Administration aviation mechanic license, or a State-licensed asbestos inspector)
- Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry skills standards and certification requirements.

**Not all credentials by these entities meet the definition of a recognized postsecondary credential.*

Note: Students who have earned a qualifying certificate or post-secondary credential outside of CEC (such as through work, a program paid out of pocket completed on their own, or who have transferred in with a credential) also qualify to have met our graduation requirements. In this case, students will need to provide a copy of the certificate issued by the credentialing agency to the registrar, who will transcribe this on the student's transcript.