

Career and Technical Instruction 7-12 Program Framework Guidelines

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Introduction

The fundamental purpose of an educator preparation program (EPP) approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education is to admit, prepare, and support candidates for the profession who, upon graduation, have the knowledge and skills to enable PK-12 students in Pennsylvania to achieve academic success. Approved Pennsylvania EPP providers design and deliver **Career and Technical Instruction (7-12)** to prepare candidates as specified in [Certification and Staffing Policy Guidelines \(CSPG\) 66 - Career and Technical Experience-Based and Instructional Certificates](#) and to support educators as they transition from a trade experience in their respective occupation to becoming certified instructional leaders for students in grades 7-12.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students in grades 7-12 with opportunities to develop the academic, technical, and employability skills necessary for success in future careers and post-secondary pathways (Lindsay, et al., 2024). Historically perceived as a vocational track designed primarily for students entering the workforce directly after high school, CTE has evolved into a comprehensive educational approach that prepares students for both college and career success and exposes students to a broad range of career pathways (Perkins Collaborative Resource Network, 2023). This transformation has expanded CTE beyond occupation-specific training to include career exploration, industry partnerships, work-based learning experiences, and opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials across a wide range of career clusters (Lindsay et al, 2024). As a result, CTE programs increasingly emphasize the development of both technical expertise and transferable skills that support lifelong learning and career adaptability. Research suggests that participation in CTE is associated with improved academic achievement, higher graduation rates, greater employability, and stronger college and career readiness outcomes (Dougherty et al., 2018 Lindsay et al., 2024; Shoemaker, 2025). Therefore, through well-designed CTE educator preparation programs, teachers are equipped to provide engaging, career-connected learning experiences that prepare students to navigate and contribute meaningfully to a rapidly evolving workforce and economy.

Combined with the rigorous requirements of an Occupational Competency Assessment (OCA), and the completion of approved programs in general education and professional education, these guidelines were designed to ensure that EPP providers deliver a preparation program to develop technical instructors that possess the pedagogical tools necessary for student success. Additionally, these guidelines have been established to ensure the EPP provider delivers a high-quality program aligned with the needs of a modern workforce.

To develop a Career and Technical Instruction Preparation Program, EPPs should utilize the material contained in this document and consult these existing guidelines:

- [The Program Framework Guidelines for Secondary Grades 7-12;](#)
- [Accommodations and Adaptations and ELL Program Framework Guidelines;](#)
- [Common Ground Framework Guidelines;](#)

- [Professional Ethics \(PE\) Program Framework Guidelines](#)
- [Field Experience Guidelines: Stage 1 -4](#)

Program Design and Delivery

Program design and delivery focuses on the practical application of technical knowledge within a safe, inclusive, and modern educational setting. The design of the curriculum must be rooted in a Program Competency Task List and related industry-recognized credentials, ensuring that what is taught in the classroom remains relevant to current industry standards. Delivery is characterized by a balance of theory and hands-on instruction, utilizing professional-grade technology and materials that facilitate authentic learning for a diverse student body. Furthermore, the program structure prioritizes workplace norms, such as OSHA compliance, safety protocols, and the influence of Occupational Advisory Committees, to prepare students for a seamless transition into their chosen career pathways.

These guidelines highlight the skills and practices embedded in the credit hours that all prospective candidates in a Career and Technical Instruction Certification preparation program must complete. These include the 18 credit hours required for candidates to attain a Level I Certification and the additional 42 credit hours required to attain a Level II Certification. The candidate must also adhere to and follow all other requirements detailed by the PA Department of Education. The guidelines established by this document include the seven Domains of Career and Technical Educator Success. These areas progress from foundational industry alignment and standards to the complexities of instructional planning. Additional emphasis is placed on safety in the learning environment, the appropriate use of technical pedagogy, adolescent behavior management, and a commitment to ethical conduct and program advocacy.

Candidate Competencies

This section outlines the competencies required for certification by Chapter 354 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code: “The preparing institution shall ensure that candidates complete a well-planned sequence of professional educator courses and field experiences to develop an understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, facts, methods of inquiry and application of technology related to each academic discipline the candidates plan to teach” (22 Pa. Code § 354.25(b)(3)).

The candidate for certification must complete the academic coursework and field experiences sufficient in depth and breadth to achieve the knowledge and skills stipulated in the seven Domains of Career and Technical Educator Success.

Domains of Career and Technical Educator Success

The Domains of Career and Technical Educator Success serve as a comprehensive framework for transitioning industry experts into high-performing classroom instructors. Beyond technical expertise, the domains require educators to master Instructional Planning and Differentiation to

meet the needs of a diverse student body, while prioritizing the Learning Environment and Safety through OSHA compliance and workplace norms. By integrating Technical Pedagogy with Classroom Management tailored to adolescent psychology, the framework moves students from theoretical knowledge to professional application. Ultimately, the domains define the educator's role as a bridge to the community, emphasizing Professional/Ethical Conduct and active advocacy to help students successfully navigate the gap between the classroom and their future careers.

I. CTE Education

II. Subject Matter Knowledge/Industry Alignment and Standards

III. Technical Pedagogy and Instructional Delivery of Standards-Based Instruction

IV. Classroom Environment and Safety

V. Instructional Planning and Differentiation

VI. Professional/Ethical Conduct and Community Engagement

VII. Field Experiences

The domains above are demonstrated in the levels of CTE certification below:

- Level I Certification – The Foundational 18 Credits
 - Coursework Examples
 - Introduction to CTE Education
 - Reading (Literacy/Literature)
 - Math
 - Special Education/ESL Combined
 - Classroom Management/Safety
 - Methods
- Level II Certification – The Advanced 42 Credits
 - Coursework Examples
 - Career or Cooperative Education
 - Research in CTE
 - Composition
 - Math
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - Adolescent Psychology or Child Development
 - Families and Community Communication/ESL/Speech
 - Special Education (Classroom Management/Positive Behavior Supports)
 - Special Education
 - Digital Technology
 - Assessment
 - Cooperative Education
 - School Law/Professional Ethics
 - School Leadership

Level I Certification - The Foundational 18 Credits

The first **18 credits** that candidates complete are the foundational core. This core should ensure candidates are prepared with the foundations of classroom instruction and management. Additionally, within these first 18 credits, a priority should be placed on student safety and legal ethics while keeping the curriculum industry relevant for all students.

I. Domain 1: CTE Education

- A. Understand the organizational structure of CTE education.
- B. Identify the philosophical, historical, and social foundations of education, including the development of the high school, the diverse needs of students in grades 7-12, and the particularities of the need for active citizens and community members, as well as the labor market.
- C. Understand adolescent development and its concepts, principles, and theories, which will support the teacher in ensuring the healthy social, intellectual, sexual, emotional, and moral development of all students.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational I - Secondary Education of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. An example of a course that meets this domain might be Introduction to CTE Education or another similar course.

II. Domain 2: Subject Matter Knowledge/Industry Alignment

While subject matter knowledge is demonstrated through the OCA/credentialing process, that knowledge should be demonstrated through evidence of industry alignment.

- A. Recognize and understand the Program Competency Task List for the career-technical area of knowledge, as well as related industry-recognized credentials and assessments, such as end-of-program assessment and specialized trade certifications
- B. Identify appropriate and applicable Pennsylvania and national academic standards for the specific technical skill being mastered.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. An example of a course that might meet this domain is Introduction to CTE Education or a similar course.

III. Domain 3: Technical Pedagogy and Instructional Delivery of Standards-Based Education

- A. Integrate literacy-based instruction into the development of classroom tasks and safety protocols that model academic and industry-specific vocabulary and practices by integrating PA Core English-Language Arts Standards into the use of technical vocabulary and occupational communication.

- B. Use content-specific numeracy strategies to access learning goals by integrating PA Core Mathematics Standards into technical instruction by identifying, teaching, and modeling the mathematical concepts and practices within trade-related tasks.
- C. Coordinate lessons to effectively integrate theoretical concepts with practical, hands-on learning.
 - 1. Design instructional plans that promote student intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and perseverance.
 - 2. Create an inclusive and equitable learning environment utilizing their knowledge of adolescent psychological development, individual student differences, and exceptionalities.
 - 3. Deliver clear, well-planned instruction.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. Below are examples of courses that might include these competencies:

- Reading or literacy course that includes awareness of the Language Arts Standards (i.e. Analytical Reading and Writing) and fulfills the requirements of 22 Pa. Code § 354.25.
- Math course that includes awareness of the Math Standards and includes and fulfills the requirements of 22 Pa. Code § 354.25.
- Combined Special Education/ESL course that also includes and fulfills Chapter 49 Special Education and Cultural Awareness Competencies.

IV. Domain 4: Classroom Environment/Safety

- A. Ensure the physical layout of instructional spaces is maximized for safety and utilizes clear, universal visual cues for equipment and hazard zones.
 - 1. Design an instructional space that ensures all learners adhere to safety and industry standards.
 - 2. Develop methods for teaching and certifying students on specific equipment hazards and PPE usage.
- B. Design instructional spaces that are accessible to all students and foster a positive, inclusive environment.
- C. Apply knowledge of adolescent psychology and the physical, emotional, and intellectual characteristics of youth and special populations to instructional decisions.
 - 1. Use knowledge of adolescent development, learning differences, and student needs to guide instruction and decisions.
 - 2. Apply learning and cognitive theories to teach technical, hands-on, and procedural skills in CTE settings.

3. Understand neurodiversity and executive functioning to effectively manage active, multi-tasking learning environments.
- D. Apply evidence-based classroom management strategies that meet the diverse needs of all learners.
1. Use clear routines, visual supports, and consistent transition cues to help students understand expectations and move smoothly between tasks.
 2. Use strategies that ensure all learners are engaged in learning and permit multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding.
 3. Facilitate a learning environment that leverages intentional, positive reinforcement to activate desired student behaviors and ensure all students feel seen and valued.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. Below are examples of courses that might include these competencies:

- Classroom Management and Safety/OSHA
- Intro to CTE/Education or similar course
- Combined Special Education/ESL course that also includes and fulfills Chapter 49 Special Education and Cultural Awareness Competencies.

V. Domain 5: Instructional Planning and Differentiation

- A. Utilize a variety of assessment methods, including performance-based rubrics and industry certification criteria, to evaluate student progress and adjust instruction.
1. Construct daily lesson plans that include learning goals and performance measures.
 2. Develop and apply a range of descriptive feedback strategies (verbal and written) to help students improve their learning.
 3. Develop an introductory use of assessments (benchmark, diagnostic, formative, and summative) to measure student understanding of content and adjust instruction to address areas of misunderstanding.
- B. Design competency-based instruction to support the specific needs of all students, ensuring all learners, including those with language or learning differences, can safely and effectively maximize their access to high-quality learning.
1. Adapt instructional materials and modes to meet the needs of all learners.
 2. Understand and apply federal and state legislation to instructional planning for all learners.
 3. Implement Specially Designed Instruction within the educational setting.

- C. Foster student engagement by designing competency-based instruction that shows how their career interests are relevant to the real world.
 - 1. Actively collaborate with school colleagues and the business community to improve programs and student exposure to career opportunities.
 - 2. Develop a professional understanding of the history, philosophy, and current trends in Career and Technical Education to inform pedagogical practice.
- D. Demonstrate understanding of Program Competency Task List
 - 1. Conduct a crosswalk of current industry task lists with daily lesson plans.
 - 2. Design a curriculum that reflects and supports the diverse backgrounds of special student populations.
- E. Align instruction and assessment to the Program Competency Task List and related industry-recognized credentials and assessments.
- F. Integrate end-of-program assessment and specialized trade certification requirements into classroom instruction and assessment.
- G. Use appropriate and applicable Pennsylvania and national academic standards for the specific technical skill being mastered.
 - 1. Identify and integrate PA/national academic standards within instruction.
 - 2. Competence in translating technical standards and task lists into plain language and visual checklists for English Learners and students with disabilities.
 - 3. Utilize methods for identifying and encouraging student use of technical vocabulary.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational III. Assessment of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. A Methods Course that includes assessment and lesson planning might be where these competencies are embedded.

VI. Domain 6: Professional/Ethical Conduct and Community Engagement

- A. Demonstrate the skills expected in the industry, such as punctuality, professional communication, and workplace etiquette.
 - 1. Utilize the consistent demonstration of interpersonal and industry-standard skills.
 - 2. Understanding of mandatory reporting and school district liability policies.
- B. Adhere to the PA Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators and comply with all state and school regulations.
 - 1. Comprehensive knowledge of the PA Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators, including ethical conduct, confidentiality, and professional boundaries.

2. Demonstrate ethical conduct and adhere to PA School Code policy and local regulations.
3. Maintain an active certification and commit to continued learning in the profession.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational IV: Professionalism of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. An example of a course that might include these competencies is Introduction to CTE or similar course that also includes and fulfills Chapter 49 Professional Ethics Competencies.

VII. Domain 7: Field Experiences

- A. Incorporates knowledge gained from all six domains over the course of the program. Completion of the PDE 430 is required for Stage 4 experience.
- B. Meets regulatory and statutory requirements for CTE (22 Pa. Code § 49.141-49.143, 22 Pa. Code § 49.151, and 24 P.S. § 1204.2B) and Experience-Based Certificates (24 P.S. § 12-1207.1(c)(2)) and (22 Pa. Code § 49.91(d))

This domain meets the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. Field experiences are often imbedded in other courses.

Level II Certification - The Advanced 42 Credits

These additional **42-credits** transform the instructor into a pedagogical expert capable of producing high-achieving students ready to excel in their local industry-education ecosystem.

I. Domain 1-2: CTE Education/Subject Matter Knowledge/Industry Alignment

- A. Incorporate the operational significance and role of Occupational Advisory Committees (OACs) and community stakeholders as active resource partners in curriculum development.
- B. Use strategies for leveraging OACs, industry partnerships, and postsecondary affiliations to validate curriculum.
- C. Evaluate the efficacy of the current curriculum by analyzing student performance on NOCTI/industry assessments and current instructional sequences.
- D. Understand student learning needs to guide the selection and utilization of appropriate instructional materials aligned with learning goals.
- E. Analyze the validity of teacher-created performance rubrics compared to National Industry Certification standards.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines. Examples of courses in which this domain might be covered are a Career or Cooperative Education and Research in CTE course.

II. Domain 3: Technical Pedagogy and Instructional Delivery

- A. Facilitate classroom communication that promotes student-led exploration of tools, materials, or methods and peer-to-peer collaboration to give students opportunities to use industry-standard terminology.
- B. Promote high-level inquiry through open-ended questioning and challenges that require critical thinking, troubleshooting, and diagnostic reasoning.
 - 1. Guide students in applying critical thinking to authentic and advanced technical tasks.
 - 2. Use questioning strategies that promote critical thinking and technical reasoning.
 - 3. Builds technical knowledge by moving from basic concepts to more advanced, complex applications while supporting prerequisite skills.
 - 4. Differentiate instruction during a lesson to support both beginner and advanced learners.
 - 5. Apply learning taxonomies and instructional teaching strategies.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines.

Below are examples of courses that might include these competencies:

- Composition which fulfills the requirements of 22 Pa. Code § 354.25.
- Probability and Stats (or other industry specific math course) which fulfills the requirements of 22 Pa. Code § 354.25.
- Curriculum and Instruction

III. Domain 4: Classroom Environment and Safety

- A. Model trauma-informed and conflict-resolution practices to promote positive student interactions through active listening and constructive problem-solving.
 - 1. Foster positive student relationships that support emotional and psychological safety.
 - 2. Implement a trauma-informed approach that fosters emotional safety, strengthens relationships, and supports students' regulation so that all learners can engage and succeed.
- B. Design and use routines in learning spaces to maximize instructional time and manage multiple simultaneous learning tasks.
- C. Use differentiated instructional strategies to manage and support student groups working on multiple task-specific assignments.
- D. Apply evidence-based classroom management strategies that meet the diverse needs of all learners.

1. Apply consistent, fair, and evidence-informed behavior management strategies aligned with school policy.
 2. Anticipate and mitigate behavioral challenges through proactive planning and environmental design.
 3. Maintain high levels of student engagement through structured, purposeful, and differentiated instructional practices.
 4. Continuously adapt management strategies based on student needs, context, and reflective practice.
- E. Implement routines and procedures that reflect workplace norms, such as safety protocols, tools and materials organization, and professional collaboration standards.
1. Develop routines that mirror industry and professional standards.
 2. Identify and utilize assistive technology or modified tools for students with special needs.
 3. Design spaces with color-coded, icon-based, and multilingual safety cues to ensure all students can identify hazards.
- F. Cultivate a mindset where students value craftsmanship and quality of professional skills that reinforce the connection between effort, practice, and mastery while encouraging them to reflect on their work to improve quality and performance.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines.

Below are examples of courses that might include these competencies:

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Adolescent Psychology or Child Development which fulfills Chapter 49 – Trauma-Aware Mental Health Awareness Competencies
- Special Education: Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Support courses which fulfills Chapter 49 – Special Education requirements.

IV. Domain 5: Instructional Planning and Differentiation

- A. Design comprehensive, competency-based curricula aligned to PDE and industry standards.
- B. Analyze assessment data to identify student learning gaps, provide targeted instruction based on student learning needs, and refine instructional practice.
1. Modify technical tasks for special populations of students without compromising safety.
 2. Use a range of assessments (including, but not limited to, rubrics, written tests, demonstrations, and projects) to accurately determine students' understanding of content and development of technical skills.

3. Use student performance data to pivot instruction.
 4. Select instructional strategies, materials, and resources that foster student ownership of their learning.
 5. Use language appropriate to the students' English proficiency needs and apply language supports.
 6. Use universal design principles to support student-led goal setting and self-advocacy.
 7. Use knowledge of adolescent development, learning differences, and student needs to guide instruction and decisions.
 8. Design authentic assessments that determine the knowledge and performance of students in industry-based learning.
- C. Motivate student participation and effectively use Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) as an inter-curricular component of the classroom.
- D. Update families and stakeholders on a student's technical skill development, workplace readiness, and progress toward career goals, using accessible communication methods.
1. Utilize effective strategies for communicating with all families, including families that are non-English speakers, regarding the technical progress and career pathways of their students.
 2. Engage with families to assist their students in career planning.
- E. Model trauma-informed and conflict-resolution practices to promote positive student interactions through active listening and constructive problem-solving.
1. Foster positive student relationships that support emotional and psychological safety.
 2. Implement a trauma-informed approach that fosters emotional safety, strengthens relationships, and supports students' regulation so that all learners can engage and succeed.
- F. Design and use routines in learning spaces to maximize instructional time and manage multiple simultaneous learning tasks.
- G. Use differentiated instructional strategies to manage and support student groups working on multiple task-specific assignments.
- H. Apply evidence-based classroom management strategies that meet the diverse needs of all learners.
1. Apply consistent, fair, and evidence-informed behavior management strategies aligned with school policy.
 2. Anticipate and mitigate behavioral challenges through proactive planning and environmental design.

3. Maintain high levels of student engagement through structured, purposeful, and differentiated instructional practices.
4. Continuously adapt management strategies based on student needs, context, and reflective practice.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational III. Assessment of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines.

Below are examples of courses that might include these competencies:

- Special Education which fulfills Chapter 49 competencies
- Digital Technology which includes and fulfills Chapter 49 Technological and Virtual Literacies Competencies
- Families and Community Communication/Speech,
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Assessment - Educational Psychology

V. Domain 6: Professional/Ethical Conduct and Community Engagement

- A. Enhance content knowledge by staying current with changing industry trends, technology, machinery, and service practices.
 1. Design and manage work-based learning programs aligned to PDE expectations.
 2. Use labor market data to inform curriculum, program, and facility design decisions.
 3. Use a variety of research-based strategies to solve problems in the educational environment.
- B. Advocate for student work-based learning opportunities and professional networking.
 1. Use active partnerships with industry to modify outdated program elements and maintain an up-to-date curriculum.
 2. Engage in partnerships with local employers and community organizations to advocate for CTE programs.
 3. Demonstrate reliability, integrity, and accountability in all professional responsibilities, including workplace learning experiences and student placements.

This domain meets Professional Core Rational IV: Professionalism of the Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines.

Below are examples of courses that might include these competencies:

- Cooperative Education
- School Law/Ethics
- Leadership courses

Field Experiences for CTE Instructional I

Effective field experiences provide candidates with increasing exposure to learning situations and CTE settings under the guidance of program faculty and trained mentors throughout the preparation program. CTE experiences are embedded in the coursework of the CTE program. For these experiences, the EPP is advised of the following:

- If the CTE candidate is on an emergency permit, a student teaching experience of a minimum of 12 weeks (as per Chapter 354) must be completed. The CTE candidate must be observed and evaluated by the EPP supervisor or another approved alternative during student teaching a minimum of four times, with two of those observations being completed on a PDE 430. The minimum 12 weeks does not have to be completed consecutively or in one course only.
- If the CTE candidate is on an Experienced-Based Certificate (EBC), the candidate must be observed once a month during the first year of the EBC. The CTE EBC candidate should then be observed during their student teaching experience for a minimum of 12 weeks (as per Chapter 354) and observed and evaluated by the EPP supervisor or another EPP approved alternative during student teaching a minimum of four times, with two of those observations being completed on a PDE 430. The minimum 12 weeks does not have to be completed consecutively or in one course only.

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