

**Virginia Department of Education  
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Credential Graduation Requirement**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1Q: What is required for the Standard Diploma graduation requirement for the CTE credential, and when does this requirement become effective?**

**1A:** In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, 8VAC20-131-50, students shall earn a career and technical education credential approved by the Board of Education, except when a career and technical education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the Standard Diploma requirements. The career and technical education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth Assessment.

Beginning in 2013-2014, first-time ninth-grade students (graduating class of 2017) are required to earn a Board-approved career and technical education credential to graduate with a Standard Diploma.

**2Q: Are there waivers for transfer students during their senior year?**

**2A:** In accordance with the regulations, there are no waivers; however, the following recommendations are viable options for transfer students coming from in-state home-schooled instruction and private schools, and out-of-state schools:

- a) If the student transfers into a Virginia school midyear of his/her senior year (i.e., December or January) and enrolls in an 18-week CTE course, at the end of the school year and after the student has attempted and failed the industry certification test (one or two times), the teacher may use the Student Competency Record to evaluate the student's proficiency of skills attained for the course competencies to satisfy the Standard Diploma requirements. NOTE: In this situation, the student may take either the related technical skills certification test or the [Workplace Readiness Skills \(WRS\) Assessment](#).
- b) If the student transfers into a Virginia school midyear of his/her senior year (i.e., December or January) and enrolls in an Economics and Personal Finance (EPF) course, at the end of the school year and after the student has attempted and failed the industry certification test, *Financial Literacy Test—Working in Support of Education (W!SE)* (up to three times), the teacher may use the Student Competency Record to evaluate the student's proficiency of skills attained for the course competencies to satisfy the Standard Diploma requirements.
- c) If the student transfers into a Virginia school between February and April of his/her senior year and enrolls in a CTE course or an Economics and Personal Finance (EPF) course, at the end of the school year (May or June) and after the student has attempted and failed the

industry certification test (up to two times for the WRS Assessment **or** up to three times for the W!SE test), the teacher may use the Student Competency Record to evaluate the student's proficiency of skills attained for the course competencies to satisfy the Standard Diploma requirements.

- d) If the student transfers into a Virginia school towards the end of the school year (i.e., May or June) and he/she is unable to meet the industry credential graduation requirement— if possible, the school/school division may arrange for the student to receive his/her high school diploma from the previous school.

NOTE: Competency-based instruction and the use of the competency-based rubric evaluation have been requirements for all students in CTE for many years. Currently, school divisions report this information annually to VDOE through the End-of-Year Master Schedule Collection; therefore, no further action is required. Any documentation or records pertaining to this provision must be maintained by the school division in accordance with the Library of Virginia Records Retention and Disposition policies.

**3Q: For students with disabilities, the Standards of Learning testing accommodations allow for locally awarded verified credits. Are there measures in place to locally award an industry credential to a student with a disability?**

**3A:** For students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan and are pursuing a Standard Diploma, their program of study, including the appropriate industry certification assessment(s), is determined by the IEP team.

The IEP team should determine, before placing the student in the CTE class, whether the credentialing assessment is or is not appropriate in accordance with the student's IEP or 504 Plan. If it is determined that the credentialing assessment is not appropriate, the teacher may use the Student Competency Record to evaluate the student's proficiency of skills attained for the course competencies to satisfy the Standard Diploma requirements.

**4Q: Can we use competency-based instruction and evaluation in the CTE subject area to satisfy the industry credential Standard Diploma requirements for students identified as English language learners?**

**4A:** No, if the lack of English language skills is the only criteria. (See eligibility criteria above for transfers and disability status.)

**5Q: Are there any CTE courses that do not have a related credentialing assessment? If so, is a list available?**

**5A:** On an annual basis, the Virginia Board of Education reviews and approves industry, professional, or trade association certification examinations, state licensure examinations, and occupational competency assessments will meet graduation requirements. The Board-approved list is published annually and includes the name of the credential and the issuing organization by broad CTE program areas. The [2016-2017 list](#) of student credentials is available on the VDOE

website. For more specific information about the credential and a list of possible preparatory CTE courses, **click** on the credential's name that links to the CTE Resource Center's Virginia Educational Resource System Online (VERSO).

All students, regardless of the diploma option, must earn one standard unit of credit in Economics and Personal Finance (EPF) (i.e., course code 6120). The W!SE credentialing exam is closely aligned to EPF. Upon successful completion of the EPF course and passing the W!SE exam, the student will satisfy two graduation requirements (earned one standard unit of credit in EPF and earned the CTE credential required for the Standard Diploma). A student who is currently enrolled in EPF or previously enrolled may take the W!SE exam up to three times during the fall semester and up to three times during the spring semester. For more details, refer to [Superintendent's Memo 274-16](#).

All CTE courses include the WRS for the Commonwealth. Therefore, if a student enrolls and completes a CTE course and passes the WRS Assessment, he/she will meet the CTE credential graduation requirement for the Standard Diploma. A student may take the WRS assessment two times per school year regardless of whether he/she is currently enrolled or was previously enrolled. For more details, refer to [CTE Director's Memo 096-16](#).

**6Q: If a student completed and passed the Welding I and Welding II courses and also passed the Board-approved National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) Welding Assessment, will the one passed credentialing assessment count for a student-selected verified credit or substitute as a verified credit for an SOL history and social science test toward the Standard Diploma graduation requirements?**

**6A:** Yes, and the credential also would count toward the CTE industry credential requirement.

**7Q: Would it make a difference if the one credentialing test passed was the WRS Assessment?**

**7A:** In accordance with the regulations, the WRS certification meets the requirement. However, the intent of the regulation is to provide students an opportunity to earn more than one certification – the WRS (employability skills) in addition to the technical skills credential(s) that is/are aligned to the student's career concentration (CTE program completion).