

Quick Reference: Career Clusters Critical Components & Benchmarks for LOCAL/SCHOOL Implementation

On the LOCAL level, in order to successfully implement the Career Clusters framework and meet the Career Cluster goals for learners, the following critical components need to be met.

Critical Components	Benchmark
Administrative Support	The college or school administrators and school board members support the concept of the career emphasis/focus (cluster) process and components. They provide scheduled chunks of time for the cluster team (administration, teaching faculty, industry and education partners, and career counseling staff) to meet together, offer professional development opportunities for the cluster team, and encourage learner participation and parent and community support.
Shared Planning	The entire Cluster Curriculum Team has regularly scheduled time for program planning and curriculum design. They have the equivalent of at least one full day each month to work together and compare learner progress and curriculum effectiveness.
Career Development	Each learner in the Career Cluster has a scheduled meeting with a career counselor, teacher advisor, or faculty advisor on at least two occasions each school year to develop and revise as necessary an individual career education plan (plan of study). Parents are included in the career planning sessions. Learners base their career plans on a number of career awareness and exploration experiences.
Professional Development	The entire Cluster Team jointly participates in professional development activities that help build their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the selected Career Cluster and the application to teaching methodology.
Standards-Based Curriculum	Curriculum is designed to include both the Career Cluster Foundation and Pathway Knowledge and Skills, industry standards, and appropriate academic standards. Curriculum enhances and reinforces academic content and, as a result, improves both Career Cluster and academic achievement.
Parent and Community Support	Parents and/or guardians/mentors are informed of the program content, participate in the career decision-making process, and support the program in various settings. Community groups offer program support through sponsorships and marketing. They assist with identifying workplace learning sites and building industry partnerships.
Education Partnerships	Elementary school, middle school, high school, career technical school, college, university, and adult skill center faculty are included in the Career Cluster team, as appropriate, to assure a learning continuum. Partnerships are formalized -- interdisciplinary and sequential -- across levels of education.
Business and Industry Partnerships	Partners are fully engaged as Cluster Team members. They are representative of the entire Career Cluster. The representatives participate in planning and development as well as assist in classroom and workplace implementation and support.

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On the LOCAL level, in order to successfully implement the Career Clusters framework and meet the Career Cluster goals for learners, the following critical components need to be met.

Critical Components	Benchmark
Multi-Measure Assessment	Assessment includes both cumulative (projects, research papers, portfolios, workplace learning or community service) and on-demand (multiple choice, presentation, demonstration, scenario response) measures and meets the criteria for several disciplines.
Interdisciplinary Teams	The Cluster Teams work collaboratively to offer the curriculum in an interdisciplinary approach. The content is typically designed around a common theme or project with a culminating activity, product, or service as a result of the instruction.
Flexible Schedules	School schedules are flexible and allow for interdisciplinary team managed blocks of time as needed for projects, labs, and other action-based activities.
Integrated Curriculum	The curriculum is developed and taught by the Cluster Team. The content is multidisciplinary and based on academic and Career Clusters Foundation Knowledge and Skills and taught within the context of the selected Career Cluster industry. Career Cluster content is strengthened by the integration of academic concepts.
Creative and Innovative Teaching Strategies	Team-building, critical-thinking, and problem-solving activities are incorporated into the program. All content is reinforced through application and practice.
Workplace Learning	All learners participate in workplace learning experiences consistent with their career goals. The workplace learning is directly related to and consistent with the classroom instruction.
Student-Centered Learning	Learners are involved in the design and development of their coursework based on their interests, career goals and consistency with the standard(s) to be met.

Quick Reference: Career Clusters Critical Components & Benchmarks for STATE/SYSTEM Implementation

On the STATE or SYSTEM level, in order to successfully implement the Career Clusters framework and meet the Career Cluster goals for learners, the following critical components need to be met:

Critical Components	Benchmark
State Plan/ Administrative Support	State CTE, field staff and industry/education partners develop and adopt a statewide vision, mission, goals, and strategies for Career Clusters implementation. State CTE staff and statewide administrators are informed of the Career Clusters process and components.
Shared Planning	State CTE staff, statewide administrators, counselors and teachers/faculty <i>jointly</i> participate in professional development activities that help build their knowledge and skills in the Career Cluster area and strengthen teaching strategies.
Career Development	Statewide career education plan templates are available for each of the 16 Career Clusters. Each learner (statewide) in a Career Cluster has a scheduled meeting with a career counselor, teacher advisor or faculty advisor at least on two occasions each school year to develop or revise his/her career education plan (plan of study).
Professional Development	State CTE staff, statewide administrators, counselors and teachers/faculty <i>jointly</i> participate in professional development activities that help build their knowledge and skills in the Career Cluster area and strengthen teaching strategies.
Standards-Based Curriculum	Curriculum is designed to address both the Career Cluster Foundation/Pathway Knowledge and Skills, industry standards, and appropriate academic standards. Curriculum expands, enhances and reinforces academic content and, as a result, improves Cluster Knowledge and Skills as well as academic achievement.
Parent and Community Support	Parents/guardians/mentors and community groups are informed of the Career Clusters process and components.
Education Partnerships	Elementary school, middle school, high school, career technical school, and college/university faculty are included in the Career Clusters learning continuum. Statewide career technical school, community college, and university articulation agreements are negotiated and in place. When appropriate, shared faculty and labs are utilized.
Business and Industry Partnerships/ Economic Development Involvement/Workforce Preparation	A statewide business/industry partner advisory committee representing all 16 Career Clusters is in place to provide input into the system. Statewide economic development and workforce preparation groups/agencies are informed of the Career Clusters process and components and are involved in the implementation of the system.

***Quick Reference: Career Clusters Critical Components & Benchmarks
for STATE/SYSTEM Implementation***

On the STATE or SYSTEM level, in order to successfully implement the Career Clusters framework and meet the Career Cluster goals for learners, the following critical components need to be met:

Critical Components	Benchmark
Multi-Measure Assessments/ Industry-Based Credentials or Certifications	Statewide assessment includes both cumulative (projects, research papers, portfolios, workplace learning or community service) and on-demand (multiple choice, presentation, demonstration, scenario response) measures. Certifications and/or credentials are industry-based and transferable.
Interdisciplinary Teams	Elementary school, middle school, high school, career technical school, and college/university faculty are included in the Career Clusters learning continuum. Career technical school, community college, and university articulation agreements are negotiated and in place. When appropriate, shared faculty and labs are utilized.
Flexible Schedules	State level policies encourage flexible school schedules and promote interdisciplinary team managed blocks of time as needed for projects, labs, and other action-based activities.
Integrated Curriculum	Curriculum is designed to address both the Career Clusters Foundation/Pathway Knowledge and Skills and appropriate academic standards. Curriculum expands, enhances, and reinforces academic content and, as a result, improves Cluster Knowledge and Skills as well as academic achievement.
Creative and Innovative Teaching Strategies	State CTE staff, statewide administrators, counselors, and teachers/faculty <i>jointly</i> participate in professional development activities that build their knowledge and skills in the Career Cluster area and strengthen their teaching strategies.
Workplace Learning	Statewide economic development and workforce preparation groups/agencies are informed of the Career Clusters process and components and are involved in the implementation of the system.
Student-Centered Learning	State policies encourage the involvement of learners in the design and development of their own coursework based on their interests, their career goals, and consistency with the standard(s) to be met.