



**Wyoming Adult Education  
SEA: Wyoming Community College Commission**

**Policy # 09302020: Credential Attainment**

**Date: September 30, 2020**

**Section I: Federal Mandates and Guidance**

Credential attainment is one of the six primary indicators of performance for AEFLA funded programs; as such OCTAE has provided guidance on this indicator in two Program Memorandums: 17-2 and 19-2.

**OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2** defines credential attainment as:

*“The percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.”*

The credential measures attainment of two types of credentials: either a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

**Definition of a Recognized Postsecondary Credential:**

A recognized postsecondary credential is defined as a credential consisting of an industry recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree, as well as graduate degrees for purposes of the VR program as required by section 103(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA. 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 advance within an occupation. 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. A variety of different public and private entities issue recognized postsecondary credentials. Below is a list of the types of organizations and institutions that award recognized postsecondary credentials (not all credentials by these entities meet the definition of recognized postsecondary credential).

- A State educational agency or a State agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a State;
- An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. §1002) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by title IV of that Act. This includes 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, Sun Certified Java Programmer, etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual’s knowledge, skills and abilities;

- ETA’s Office of Apprenticeship or a 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);
- A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons;
- Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry skills standards and certification requirements; or

**Definition of a Secondary School Diploma or Recognized Equivalent:**

For purposes of the credential attainment performance indicator, a secondary school diploma (or alternate diploma) (commonly referred to as high school diploma) is one that is recognized by a State and that is included for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A secondary school equivalency certification signifies that a student has completed the requirements for a high school education. The types of recognized equivalents, for those not covered under ESEA, that would satisfy this performance indicator are those recognized by a State.

Examples of secondary school diplomas, alternate diplomas, and recognized equivalents recognized by individual States include:

- Obtaining certification of attaining passing scores on a State-recognized high school equivalency test.
- Earning a secondary school diploma or State-recognized equivalent through a credit bearing secondary education program sanctioned by State law, code, or regulation.
- Obtaining certification of passing a State recognized competency-based assessment.
- Completion of a specified number of college credits.

**Types of Acceptable Credentials:** The following are acceptable types of credentials that count toward the credential attainment indicator:

- Secondary School diploma or recognized equivalent
- Associate’s degree
- Bachelor’s degree
- Occupational licensure
- Occupational certificate, including Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Education educational certificates
- Occupational certification
- Other recognized certificates of industry/occupational skills completion sufficient to qualify for entry-level or advancement in employment.

**Note:** WIOA sec. 3(52) defines a recognized postsecondary credential as a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree. Graduate degrees are not included in the definition of a recognized postsecondary credential. Therefore, graduate degrees do not count towards credential attainment, except for the title IV VR programs, which are permitted to include graduate degrees as a type of recognized credential because of statutory and regulatory requirements specific to that program.

**Who is included in the Calculation of the Credential Attainment Indicator?**

Participants who exit and are in a postsecondary education or training program, or who are in a secondary education program (at or above the 9th grade level) without a secondary school diploma or equivalent, are included in the credential attainment indicator, subject to the “Special Rule” below. However, participants enrolled in work-based OJT or customized training are excluded from this indicator because such training does not typically lead to a credential.

### **Special Rule Relating to Secondary School Diplomas and Recognized Equivalents in the Calculation of the Credential Attainment Indicator:**

As required in WIOA section 116(b)(2)(A)(iii), participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent must also meet an additional condition before they are counted as a successful outcome and included in the numerator of the credential attainment indicator. These participants must be employed, or enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year following exit. For Adult Education programs, a description of who is considered to be enrolled in an “education or training program,” and thus included in the credential attainment indicator, follows:

Title II AEFLA: The following AEFLA program participants are included in this measure:

- For the secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent: Participants without a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent who enrolled in a secondary education program at or above the 9th grade level.
- For the recognized postsecondary credential: Participants who co-enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program.

In August 2019, OCTAE published **Program Memorandum 19-2** to clarify the circumstances in which AEFLA funds could be used to pay for occupational certificates and/or credentials in an Integrated Education and training (IET) program.

AEFLA defines IET as “a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.”

#### *The Use of AEFLA Funds to Pay for Certificates/Credentials in an IET Program*

States and eligible providers may use AEFLA funds to pay for occupational certificates and/or credentials within an AEFLA-funded IET program, consistent with the requirements of the AEFLA program regulations at 34 C.F.R. §463.36. Generally, the certificates and credentials must be necessary to achieve the purposes of the IET program as described in 34 C.F.R. §§463.36-463.38.

#### *Acceptable Occupational Certificates and/or Credentials for an IET Program*

There are generally two categories of occupational certificates and/or credentials that are acceptable to achieve the purpose of an IET program a recognized postsecondary credential or other types of credentials, as described below.

First, occupational credentials meeting the definition of “recognized postsecondary credential,” defined in section 3(52) of WIOA to include a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, or a license recognized by the State or Federal government, are appropriate to achieve the purpose of an IET program.

A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual’s attainment of measurable technical, industry, or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or to advance within an industry or occupation. These technical, industry, or occupational skills generally are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations. Consistent with OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2, 2 recognized postsecondary credentials earned through an IET program may be counted towards credential attainment in the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS).

Second, other types of credentials or certificates may be appropriate to achieve the purpose of an IET program, if such certificates document the attainment of general skills that are required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment and are a part of a career pathway. These certificates may include skills related to safety, hygiene, and other general skills. As noted in Program Memorandum 17-2,3 general skill certificates are not countable towards the credential attainment measure in the NRS.

#### *Unallowable Certificate/Credentials for An IET Program*

AEFLA funds may not be used for the cost of certificates awarded by Local or State Workforce Development Boards or for work readiness certificates. These certificates are not consistent with the purposes of an IET program because integrated education and training (as defined in section 203(11) of WIOA and in the AEFLA program regulations at 34 C.F.R. §463.35),

requires workforce training to be for a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Such certificates generally are not recognized industry-wide, do not document the measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advancement within an occupation, and do not document the attainment of general skills that are required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in a specific occupational cluster.

## Section II: State Mandates and Guidance

The State Educational Agency for Adult Education, in alignment with federal requirements associated with *Credential Attainment* provides further clarification of the types of credentials that are permissible for Wyoming Adult Education programs.

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) defines ‘credential’ as shown in Figure 1 below. The State recognizes these definitions, with modifications in the examples, for credential attainment in Wyoming.

Figure 1: What is a Credential? (ACTE, 2015)

	CERTIFICATE	CERTIFICATION	DEGREE	LICENSE
Awarded by....	Education Institution	Business, trade associations, industry	Education Institution	Government Agency
Results from....	Course of Study	Assessment	Course of Study	Meeting Requirements
Indicates.....	Education	Skill Mastery	Education	Legal Permission
Completed in...	<2 years	Variable	2+ years	Variable
Maintained by..	N/A	Skill practice, re-assessment	N/A	Re-application, continuing education
Examples for Wyoming would include:	Asbestos Abatement, Carpentry, Diesel Technology, Horseshoeing, Esthetics, Medical Coding & Billing, Wilderness EMT	Certified Welder (CW), Certified Logistics Technician (CLT), Certified International Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Registered Apprenticeships	Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or Master’s degrees.	Tractor Trailer Driver, Barbering, C.N.A., Cosmetology, Nail Tech., Real Estate Broker

### Part I: Postsecondary/Training Credentials

The credential attainment indicator of performance can be met by various means. Acceptable credentials include those earned from:

- 1) **An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. §1002) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by title IV of that Act. This includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs;**
- 2) **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.**

Programs of study that have been accredited by one of the agencies shown below for credit-based courses along an identified career track are approved for the credential attainment outcome measure for Adult Education programs in Wyoming.

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC) on: <https://www.hlcommission.org/>
  - Serving: Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virgin, and Wyoming.
- Middle States Association of Colleges & Universities, Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) on: <http://www.msche.org>
  - Serving: Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rick, the U.S. Virgin Island, and several locations abroad.

- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NECHE) on: <https://www.neche.org/>.
    - Serving: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and American/international schools in more than sixty nations.
  - Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) at <http://www.nwccu.org>
    - Serving: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.
  - Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) at: <http://www.sacscoc.org>.
    - Serving: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.
  - Western Association of Colleges & Schools, Accrediting Commission for Schools (WASC) at: <http://www.acswasc.org>.
    - Serving: California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and East Asia.
- 3) **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, Sun Certified Java Programmer, etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities;**

Credit bearing or non-credit programs of study of less than two years which lead to an industry recognized certificate along an identified career track are approved for the credential attainment outcome measure for Adult Education programs in Wyoming. Examples would include credentials earned in:

Career Pathways Track: Arts

- Photographic & Digital Preservation Specialist
- Photographic Imaging
- Music Technology
- Audio Technician
- Web Design

Career Pathways Track: Business, Management, & Technology

- Accounting/Bookkeeping
- Office Management
- Supervision & Leadership
- Electronics Technology
- CIS Microsoft Systems & Networks/Network Technicians/Computer Applications/Computer Support Specialist/Cybersecurity/Robotics
- Geographical Information Systems
- Retail Management/Entrepreneurship/Administrative Assistant
- Public Management

Career Pathways Track: Health Science

- Addiction
- Nursing Assistant/Patient Care
- Mammography
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- Phlebotomy
- Massage Therapy
- Emergency Medical Service
- Medical/Dental Assistant
- Kinesiology

Career Pathways Track: Human Services

- Corrections/Paralegal/Police/Fire Safety
- Early Childhood Education
- Personal Trainer
- Coaching
- Hair/Nail Technician/Cosmetology/Barber Stylist-Technician
- Teaching Certificate: English as a Second Language
- Cognitive Retraining
- Archaeology Technician

Career Pathways Track: Industrial & Engineering Technology

- Automotive & Diesel Technology
- Alternative Fuel Vehicle Technology
- Power Sports Technology
- Mechanical Graphics & Design
- Machine & Maintenance Tool Technology
- Welding & Joining Technology
- Maintenance Mechanic
- Engineering Technology & Design
- Architectural Graphics & Design/Drafting/Construction/Carpentry/Plumbing Tech.
- Industrial & Electrical Technology
- Utility Locator
- Mine Maintenance/Mine Safety & Health Administration
- Gas & Oil Production/Power Plant Maintenance
- Heavy Equipment Operator/Certified Truck Driver's License (CDL)/Forklift Operator
- Fiber Optics Training
- HVAC
- HAZWOPER

Career Pathways Track: Natural Resources Agriculture

- Agriculture-Beef Production
- Equine Certifications
- Farrier Science
- Horseshoeing
- Meat Service/Meat Packing Production

**4) ETA's Office of Apprenticeship or a State Apprenticeship Agency**

Credentials earned through approved (Pre) Apprenticeships for Wyoming as identified at:

<http://buildourwyoming.org/apprenticeship> OR through a nationally recognized apprenticeship program (RAP) as outlined at: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-finder> are approved for the Adult Education credential attainment outcome measure in Wyoming.

**5) 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);**

Credentials earned through a State Licensing Board for Wyoming as defined at: <https://ai.wyo.gov/divisions/directors-office/licensing> are approved for the Adult Education credential attainment outcome measure in Wyoming. These include:

- Board of Acupuncture
- Board of Architects & Landscape Architects
- Board of Athletic Training
- Board of Chiropractic Examiners
- Board of Dental Examiners
- Dietetics Licensing Board
- Board of Funeral Service Practitioners
- Board of Hearing Aid Specialists
- Mental Health Professions Licensing Board
- Board of Midwifery

- Board of Nursing Home Administrators
- Board of Occupational Therapy
- Board of Optometry
- Board of Physical Therapy
- Board of Psychology
- Board of Radiologic Technologists
- Board of Registration in Podiatry
- Board for Respiratory Care
- Board of Speech Pathology & Audiology
- Board of Veterinary Medicine

Credentials earned through a **National Licensing** board are approved for the Adult Education credential attainment outcome measure in Wyoming. Examples include:

- National Council of State Boards of Nursing
- National Society of Professional Engineers
- National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Board
- National Board of Chiropractic
- Association of Marital & Family Therapy Regulatory Board

**6) A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons**

Credentials earned through the Wyoming Veterans Commission for education and training programs for veterans are approved for the credential attainment outcome measure in Wyoming. Information may be obtained at:

<https://www.wyomilitary.wyo.gov/veterans/commission/>.

**7) Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry skills standards and certification requirements**

Programs of study completed through a Job Corps program which issues an industry recognize credential along an identified career track are approved for the Adult Education credential attainment outcome measure in Wyoming. In Wyoming, the Job Corps program in Riverton has partnered with Central Wyoming Community College to offer programs of study in the following Trades:

- Accounting
- Building Construction Technology
- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Heavy Equipment Mechanic
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Heavy Truck Driving
- Office Administration
- Petroleum Technician
- Welding

**Wyoming Workforce Development Council's Approved List of Eligible Training Providers for the State**

**The Eligible Training Provider (ETP)** list from the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services also provides a list of recognized credentials that have been approved through the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, Wyoming's only Workforce Board. This list may be found at: <http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/businesses/employment/etpl>.

However, there are several programs of study on this list that are **not** approved for Credential Attainment for Adult Education programs in Wyoming. These include the following:

- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe Photoshop
- Industrial Safety Certificate
- Office Applications Specialist Certificate

*Note: The programs of study approved by Wyoming's Workforce Board may be updated without notice and listings may not always be approved by OCTAE.*

**Part II: Secondary School Equivalent or its Recognized Equivalent**

The credential indicator for Secondary School Equivalent or its Recognized Equivalent has two types of credentials:

- 1) Receipt of a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent during participation or within one year after exiting from the program. This applies to both Table 4 measureable skill gains and to Table 5 outcome measures if the participants also enters postsecondary education or training, or employment within one year after exit.

In Wyoming this can include the following:

- a) Students who earn a **high school equivalency certificate** through assessment (HiSET or GED)
- b) Students who enroll in an AE program, exit, and earn a **High school diploma** within one year of exiting the Adult Education program.