

What are Career Clusters?

Illinois has adopted the Career Cluster model developed by the States' Career Clusters Initiative (SCCI). Career Clusters are groupings of occupations/career specialties used as an organizing tool for curriculum design and instruction. Occupations/career specialties are now grouped into the 16 Career Clusters based on the fact that they require a set of common knowledge and skills for career success. The knowledge and skills represented by Career Clusters prepare learners for a full range of occupations/career specialties focusing on the holistic, polished blend of technical, academic, and employability knowledge and skills.

What are Career Pathways?

Career Pathways are systematic sub-groupings of occupations/career specialties used as an organizing tool for curriculum design and instruction. While the Career Clusters identify the broad knowledge and skills needed for success in a wide array of potential careers (defined by each Cluster), the Career Pathways offer a higher, more developed level of specificity. There are a total of 81 Pathways, each formally linked to one of the 16 Career Clusters.

What is a CTE Program of Study?

A CTE Program of Study is a sequence of instruction based on recommended standards and knowledge and skills (as identified in the Career Pathways Model) consisting of secondary and postsecondary academic and CTE coursework, co-curricular activities, work-based learning, service learning, and other learning experiences offered in an aligned and coordinated manner that prepares students for a specific career. This is a flexible resource for students and is designed to change in concert with the interests and needs of the learner. Effective Programs of Study should start no later than the ninth grade and continue through at least two years of postsecondary education. Programs of Study include opportunities to earn college credit (dual credit) in high school, an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the secondary/postsecondary level, and an associate or baccalaureate degree.