

A

Accreditation

Certification that a college, university or specific program meets a set of criteria established by their accrediting agency. Colleges usually must be accredited for students to receive federal financial aid. The type of accreditation can impact the transfer of credits. (See Transfer Credit.)

Achievement Gap

Disparity in academic performance between members of demographic groups as reported in grades, standardized test scores, dropout rates, and postsecondary enrollment, and other success measures.

Apprenticeship

An employer's formal training program combining on-the-job learning with technical instruction for a specific trade. Registered apprenticeship for all Minnesotans age 16 or older and administers from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

Articulation Agreement

Formal agreements between two or more colleges and universities to accept credits in transfer toward a specific academic program. Can include agreements between high schools and colleges.

Assessment

See Career Assessment.

Associate Degree

A degree granted by technical, community, and some private career colleges that typically requires at least two years of study (60+ hours) beyond high school.

B

Bachelor's Degree

An academic award that usually requires four years (120 hours) beyond high school at an accredited college or university.

Blue Collar

Reference to a type of job that requires workers to wear work clothes or protective clothing, usually manual labor positions that earn an hourly wage. (See White Collar.)

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

A division of the U.S. Department of Labor that is the main fact-finding agency for the federal government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics.

C

Career

A person's consecutive, often progressive achievement or experience in professional or business life that expresses commitment to a career cluster or pathway. It includes education, training, past jobs, community involvement, and hobbies that demonstrate self-development.

Career Assessment

Tests or decision-making tools used to identify skills, abilities, and interests in order to make education or career decisions. Employers can use assessments for pre-employment testing to maximize chances for getting the right fit between jobs and employees. Educators use different types of assessments to analyze students' knowledge or progression in a program.

Career Clusters

Groupings of occupations needing the same knowledge and skills. Each of the 16 career clusters can include hundreds of different careers.

Career Development

Broad term referring to the ongoing process of exploring, choosing, and acting on educational, occupational, and other options related to one's work life.

Career Fields

Six broad groupings of occupations that can be subdivided into 16 career clusters and numerous career pathways.

Career Ladder or Career Lattice

A series of related jobs with progressively more responsibility and prestige. Career ladders display only vertical movement between jobs. Career lattices contain both vertical and lateral movement between jobs, more closely reflecting today's career paths. Employers can create career ladders/lattices to show job progression within a specific company or industry. However, workers sometimes move up their career ladder/lattices by obtaining a higher position at a different company.

Career Management

Decisions and actions taken to maintain or increase one's employability or job satisfaction. Can include proactive choices to seek employment, promotions, special projects, or training to increase one's salary or prestige, or changing one's career goals. Also includes decisions and reactions to unforeseen transitions, such as a layoff, company restructuring, or an unsolicited job offer. Implies an individual, not one's employer, is aware and has control of one's career development.

Career Pathways

Small groups of occupations within a career cluster. Occupations within a pathway share common skills, knowledge, and interests.

Career Technical Education

High school and college programs that teach industry-specific skills, including math, writing, reading, science, and foundational knowledge and skills used in a career. CTE programs are directed and funded by the Perkins IV Law. (See Perkins.)

Certification

See Occupational Certification.

College

A postsecondary educational institution that offers undergraduate programs, but usually no graduate degree programs. Undergraduate programs awards include certificates, associates' and bachelor's degrees.

College Admission Tests

A type of standardized exam used by most four-year colleges and universities to determine a prospective student's readiness for college-level study. A good test score can help a student enter their school of choice, obtain scholarships, and receive advanced placement or college credit.

College Certificate

A type of academic or training award given to students by a college, university, or professional school upon satisfactory completion of an organized program of study.

Common Core State Standards

Criteria for consistent, clear understanding of what secondary students are expected to learn. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers.

Community College

A type of college that offers one- or two-year degree programs. Full-time students can graduate in two years or less with a certificate, diploma, or degree in a career area. Or students can earn an associate degree and then transfer to a four-year college or university to finish a bachelor's degree.

Community Education

A program that provides educational, recreational, cultural, health, or community courses and events. Most courses are taken for personal development and do not offer credit that can be applied to a degree or certifying program.

Core Competencies

Areas of personal capability that enable an individual to successfully perform standard tasks or prove understanding of a subject area. Competencies can be knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, or personal characteristics deemed necessary in that subject matter or career cluster.

Corporate Culture

The official and unofficial beliefs, expectations, and values that affect the work environment and the way a company conducts its business. Behaviors and attitudes accepted and expected of most employees within a department or whole organization.

Course

One of a series of lessons or class meetings as that may be part of an education program.

Credentials

Evidence of one's education, training or knowledge, including degrees, licensing, occupational certification, and accreditation information.

Curricula Vitae (CV)

A detailed statement of professional qualifications that is used instead of a resume when seeking employment in higher education, science, or medical arenas in the United States, or when job seeking in foreign countries. A longer, more detailed document than a resume that can include earned degrees, teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, and other activities related to a career pathway.

Customized Employment

A process that allows a job seeker and potential employer to individualize a job description so that the job seeker's strengths would be utilized while the employer's needs would be met.

D

Dislocated Worker

A worker who has recently been or is about to be laid off from a job.
(See layoff.)

E

Employability

The skills, attitudes, and personality traits needed to increase a job seeker's chances of being positively perceived by employers. Includes basic skills, such as reading comprehension and basic math skills; soft skills; technical skills; and workplace competencies needed to relate to and communicate with customers and coworkers.

Essential Functions

Essential functions are the fundamental job duties that you must be able to perform on your own or with the help of a reasonable accommodation.

Experiential Learning

See Work-Based Learning.

F

Field of Study

A major or academic discipline. Examples include Biology or Automotive Repair. It is a more general term than "program," since a program is a specific offering at a specific institution. (See Program of Study.)

Financial Aid Package

An estimate from a school of the total amount of financial aid a student is to receive. It can include grants, scholarships, work study, and loans from a various sources.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

This application is the first step in the financial aid process. Most schools use the FAFSA to determine students' financial aid. The FAFSA determines the amount of money a student and/or family is expected to contribute toward the price of attending a postsecondary institution.

G

General Education Development (GED)

A diploma awarded to individuals who pass a test based on the Common Core State Standards. It is an alternative to a high school diploma for those who did not complete the standard high school curriculum. Passing all parts of the GED test is seen as equal to a high school diploma by most colleges and employers.

H

Headhunter

Recruiters, employment agencies, or executive search firms that companies pay to find qualified job candidates for specific positions. Often specialize in an industry or geographic region.

High-Demand Occupations, Industries, or Skills

Occupations, industries, or skills sets identified by employers and economists as being more employable than others. Criteria can be based on a combination of growth rate, total job openings, pay, local and global economic trends, and workplace trends. State data is derived from Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's occupations in demand.

Higher Education

Postsecondary education at colleges, universities, junior or community colleges, professional schools, technical institutes, and teacher-training schools.

High-Growth Occupations or Industries

Occupations or industries projected to have more total openings than the average occupation, and represent at least 0.1% of total employment in the base year. |

In-Demand

See High-demand Occupations, Industries or Skills.

Individual Service Strategies (ISS)

An individual plan for a participant in a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program which includes an employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives and the appropriate combination of services for the participant based on the objective assessment. The ISS is used as

the basic instrument for the local area to document appropriateness of decisions made about the mix and combination of services, including referrals to other programs for specified activities.

Individual Work Plan (IWP)

A formal agreement between an individual in the Ticket to Work program and an employment service provider that describes how services will help the person to achieve an employment goal.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Educational plan for elementary and secondary students receiving special education services. Includes information on the student's current performance, goals and evaluation, and on what specific services and accommodations the student need.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

A framework that contains a person's, usually a middle or high school student, plans to align school work with out-of-classroom activities, post-secondary plans, work experiences, and career aspirations. ILPs are consistently updated with relevant career development activities at various stages of a person's life. Because an ILP is a tangible document or portfolio, and a series of activities, it is both a document and a process. Also known as Individualized Plans or Personal Career Plans.

Industry

A specific type of business, or branch of a particular field, that employs personnel and uses and generates capital. Often named after its principal product or service.

Internship

A short-term experience where an individual works under supervision in a workplace to gain practical skills and experience in a career pathway and to increase work-readiness skills. A common type of work-based learning for high school 11th and 12th grade students and college students. Can be either paid or unpaid. Might offer school credit.

J

Job

A paid position with specific duties and responsibilities at a particular organization.

Job Shadowing

A type of experiential or work-based learning where a student or job seeker observes the daily routine of an employee at a worksite. The observer is expected to gain information about the employee's education, job training, and experience as well as information about the industry and similar occupations. Can last a few hours or several days.

K

Knowledge and Foundation Skills

Basic or a core set of skills needed to be ready for work and college.

L

Layoff

Temporary or permanent termination of one or more employees, usually part of a company's efforts to reduce costs, production, or end operations. Employees are sometimes called dislocated workers and are often eligible for unemployment and other benefits.

Licensure

Regulations and permission granted by a competent authority to engage in a business or specific types of occupations, many dealing with public health and safety. The most restrictive form of professional and occupational regulation, overseen by the states or federal government. Licensure requirements vary by state. If a license to participate in a certain occupation is required by the state, unlicensed practice of an occupation is a criminal offense.

M

Mentor

A person with professional or personal experience who counsels and guides a younger or less-experienced person. Can be an informal

relationship or part of a formal mentoring program administered by a company, school program, or community group. Mentoring relationship can focus on specific topic or goals, such as personal growth, career development, lifestyle changes, spiritual fulfillment, or other areas mutually agreed-upon areas.

N

Naviance

A college and career readiness platform requiring a paid license for access that helps high school students and counselors connect academic achievement to postsecondary goals.

Networking

The exchange of information or resources to cultivate productive relationships for employment or business activities.

Non-Traditional Career

An occupation or pathway that is not commonly pursued by a specific gender or cultural group. Often refers to occupations in which less than 25 percent of the workforce is of one group.

O

Occupation

A set of pre-determined work activities, skills, knowledge, and other criteria that is performed for pay or profit on an ongoing basis, as classified by the Standard Occupational Classification System (SOC). Similar occupations are grouped in career pathways.

Occupational Certification

A pre-determined standard that verifies a worker's expertise within an occupation and allows the worker to perform job duties using a specific occupation title ("right to title"). Non-certified individuals may perform the same duties, but may not use the title.

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)

A U.S. Department of Labor-sponsored no-fee web-based resource for comprehensive information on job requirements and worker competencies. The nation's primary source of occupational information. It replaced the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*.

Online Learning

An education method where teacher and students who are physically separated use the Internet and related technologies to communicate rather than all being located in a traditional in-person classroom. Various public and private educational institutions, including K-12 (Kindergarten through 12th grade), colleges and universities, and adult continuing education can administer courses. K-12 online learning requires parental permission for students age 17 and younger.

On-the-Job Training

Hands-on-instruction given to new employees to learn the basic duties of an occupation. Implies that little or no formal technical training is required of applicants.

Open Enrollment

Educational programs or courses that allow students to register or start classes at any time throughout the year instead of all students starting a new term on the same date.

P

Performance Measure

A description of how attainment of a learning objective will be measured. Examples include standardized tests, surveys, and assessments.

Performance Standards

The minimum acceptable level of achievement for each learning objective.

Placement Test

An exam used to test a student's academic ability so that he or she may be placed in the appropriate courses in that field. In some cases, a student may be given academic credit based on the results of a placement test.

Portfolio or Career Portfolio

A selection of a person's work compiled over a period of time. Used to demonstrate overall performance or progress in a particular area. Can be a display of professional or student work showcasing creative, education, career, and personal achievements. Can be online or a hard copy.

Postsecondary Education

A formal instructional program which curriculum is designed primarily for students who have earned a high school diploma or the equivalent. Includes two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities as well as academic, vocational, and continuing professional education programs. Also called higher education.

Private Career School

Higher education schools that provide short-term programs (three years or less) to prepare for specific careers. Owned, administered, and primarily supported by a non-governmental agency or company. Can be for-profit or non-profit.

Private College or University

Higher education schools owned, administered, and primarily supported by a non-governmental agency or company. Can be for-profit or non-profit. Some are religiously affiliated.

Professional

A person who chooses to be employed in a particular profession on a long-term or ongoing basis, or possesses the skills, knowledge and ethical standards of a particular career pathway. Often refers individuals in career pathways that require formal education, implying a higher status than other pathways. Also refers to an attitude of courteous, conscientious and generally businesslike behavior for any individual.

Professional Degree

An academic award, also known as First Professional Degree, requiring two or more years beyond a bachelor's degree at an accredited university that is the minimum requirement for certain occupations. Examples include lawyer and pharmacist.

Programs of Study

High school and postsecondary educational programs developed around a career pathway that helps learners prepare for a career. Curriculum is sequential and based on regional industry expectations and skill standards. (See Field of Study.)

Public or State College or University

A higher education school that receives funding mainly from the state government.

Q

R

Reasonable Accommodation

An adjustment or modification to a job or workplace that enables an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. In education, a reasonable accommodation is a modification that allows a student with a disability to successfully participate in an activity, class, test, or other aspect of school.

Reciprocity

An agreement that allows students to attend participating public universities and colleges in a neighboring state at reduced tuition prices.

Replacement Openings

An estimate of the need for new workforce entrants to replace workers who will die, retire, or otherwise permanently leave the occupation.

S

Skills Gap

Differences between the skills job applicants have and the skills deemed necessary for the job.

Soft Skills

Personality traits, aptitudes, and attitudes that direct how a person interacts and works with others on the job. Can include interpersonal

communications, cultural awareness, appearance and ability to dress appropriately, and manners. Does not refer to the technical skills (or hard skills) which are unique to each career pathway. Also known as employability skills. See Employability.

Stackable Credential

Part of a sequence of postsecondary or industry-recognized degrees and training that can be accumulated over time to increase an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to potentially higher-paying jobs.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System

The U.S. government's system of classifying all occupations, allowing government agencies and private industry to produce comparable data. (See O*NET.)

State College or University

See Public or State Colleges and Universities.

STEM

Reference to the career cluster or skills of Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

T

Technical College

A higher education school that offers employment courses and programs that teach specific knowledge and skills leading to specific jobs.

Programs are usually 10-23 months, and eligible for credit transfer to a four-year program.

Technical or Vocational Education

Programs and courses that teach skills which are directly related to a specific job or profession, as opposed to academic education which looks at a subject in a more abstract way.

Ticket to Work Program

Initiative for people with disabilities to achieve greater independence by providing choices in employment services and access to meaningful work. Administered by the Social Security Administration.

Transfer Credit

Course credit that is accepted by another high school, college or university and applied to meet program requirements.

Transferable Skills

Abilities, technical skills, and personal qualities a worker can use in more than one occupation. Can be acquired from past jobs, education, work-based learning, volunteering, hobbies, participating in sports, or other activities.

TRiO

A federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide college services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Offered to eligible students in high schools, and in colleges and universities.

U

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

A federal government agency that fosters and promotes the welfare of U.S. job seekers, wage earners, and retirees. The agency is responsible for occupational safety, wage and hour standards, unemployment insurance benefits, re-employment services, and some economic statistics. Most states have comparable labor departments that work with and report to the federal agency.

Undergraduate Program

Higher education program that leads to an associate or bachelor's degree, but not to a graduate or professional degree. Students who are freshman, sophomores, juniors, or seniors at a college or university are called undergraduates.

University

A higher education school that offers both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

V

Veterans Employment Services

Federal and state programs providing veterans and transitioning service members with local and national resources and services related to job searching, employment and reemployment rights, and meeting labor-market demands.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

State agency which helps people with disabilities prepare for work, find and keep a job, and live as independently as possible.

W

White Collar

Reference to a type of job with salaried, professional workers in office settings who typically wear business attire as opposed to the protective clothing of blue collar jobs.

Work Readiness

Refers to the skills, aptitudes, and attitudes employers expect job seekers to have in preparation for the culture and demands of the workplace. Can be obtained through education or job training programs, employer-sponsored events, work-based learning, and other activities that increase transferable skills.

Work Study

On- or off-campus job offered as part of a student's financial aid package. Student is employed by the school. The position is funded by the federal or state government.

Work-Based Learning

Educational opportunities that allow students to gain career skills and knowledge through real-life work activities, and connect what they learn in school to workplace expectations and competencies. Examples include internships, job shadowing, work-site visits, and informational interviews.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

A federally funded program that gives workers the chance to learn the skills and information needed to compete in the new economy.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program

Federally funded program that provides work-readiness skills to low-income and at-risk youth in each workforce service area.