ACTE's *Quality CTE Program of Study Framework* Self-evaluation: A Tool for the Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

Assessing CTE programs for quality, access and equity is key to serving students and developing the future workforce. It is also required for the comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) introduced in the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, which amended the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and is commonly known as "Perkins V." The CLNA must be completed at least every two years.

ACTE's *Quality CTE Program of Study Framework* and its companion self-evaluation instrument can help local CTE leaders comprehensively evaluate their programs across the breadth of activities that impact program scope, delivery, implementation and quality to determine strengths and areas for improvement and to complete key portions of the CLNA.

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

Each state has created its own templates and resources to help local recipients conduct the CLNA and its own timeline for when CLNAs must be completed, but all state templates should include the following components identified in the legislation:

1. Student performance on federal accountability indicators, disaggregated	**2. How programs are aligned to labor market needs**	**3. Whether programs are of sufficient size, scope and quality to meet all students' needs**
4. Progress toward implementing programs and programs of study	**5. Efforts to improve recruitment, retention and training of faculty and staff**	**6. Progress toward improving access and equity**

ACTE's Framework offers an evidence-based set of standards that local CTE leaders, with the input of key stakeholders, can use to evaluate program implementation across the six requirements outlined above and particularly for requirements 3-6, which ask CTE practitioners to assess how CTE program delivery ensures quality, access and equity.

ACTE's Quality CTE Program of Study Framework

ACTE's evidence-based *Quality CTE Program of Study Framework* and self-evaluation tool can serve as the foundation of an assessment of program quality, access and equity as part of the CLNA or for other continuous improvement activities. With more than 90 criteria organized under 12 elements, the Framework captures the full range of activities across a CTE program of study:

- Standards-aligned and Integrated Curriculum
- Sequencing and Articulation
- Student Assessment
- Prepared and Effective Program Staff
- Engaging Instruction
- Access and Equity

- Facilities, Equipment, Technology and Materials
- Business and Community Partnerships
- Student Career Development
- Career and Technical Student Organizations
- Work-based Learning
- Data and Program Improvement

The self-evaluation uses a simple 0-3 rating scale – from "not at all achieved" to "substantially achieved" – to evaluate progress on each criterion. After completing the self-evaluation online, the user will be taken to a webpage showing their overall score and scores for each of the 12 elements. The score report will also be emailed to the user as a CSV file. In addition, the self-evaluation can be completed in hard copy, which may be easier when filling out the self-evaluation as part of a collaborative process (described below). These responses can then be transferred to the online platform.

Educators using the online platform can also fill out an optional data release that permits their data to be emailed to a third party (such as a CTE director or dean). And, if requested, ACTE staff can compile an aggregate score report with responses across multiple programs of study to share with CTE administrators.

Since its launch in 2018, the online Framework self-evaluation has been completed more than 3,300 times.

Using ACTE's Framework for the CLNA

To support the CLNA, practitioners can use the Framework holistically to answer general questions about program implementation included in a state's CLNA template or to respond to specific questions in the template that align to particular elements or criteria within the Framework.

The Framework self-evaluation generates numerous data points about a program that can be supplemented by information collected from other stakeholders through strategies such as focus groups, interviews and guided discussions to help identify root causes and potential solutions for gaps in program quality, access or equity.

CTE educators can also track progress over time by completing the self-evaluation every two years, as part of the CLNA, or more frequently. These longitudinal results and related stakeholder engagement can form the basis of a continuous improvement process.

To maximize the use of the Framework for the CLNA, we recommend that CTE practitioners use the follow three-step process.

BEFORE: Determine research questions and collect materials

Prior to conducting the self-evaluation for the CLNA, CTE administrators can check the latest CLNA template in their state to determine the specific topics and questions to address. CTE educators who have already completed the self-evaluation in the past can also pull prior results to help evaluate progress in areas identified earlier as needing improvement.

Next, CTE educators should gather materials to inform the self-evaluation and the CLNA more broadly. Relevant materials may include:

- Student participation and performance data
- Curriculum standards
- Lesson plans
- Technical skill assessments
- Course sequences and pathways
- Credit transfer agreements
- Dual/concurrent enrollment policies
- Educator and administrator professional development opportunities
- Career guidance standards and activities
- Promotion and recruitment materials
- Processes for providing accommodations, modifications and supportive services
- Partnership recruitment materials
- Advisory board meeting minutes
- Requirements or guidance for work-based learning
- CTSO standards and activities
- Program improvement processes
- Findings from surveys or focus groups previously conducted with stakeholders like employer partners, students and, if applicable, parents

DURING: Complete the self-evaluation

The self-evaluation is most robust when completed as a collaborative exercise with the same stakeholders already engaged for the CLNA and continuing consultation under Perkins V. Of particular value in this process will be secondary and postsecondary CTE administrators, teachers, faculty and staff; career guidance and advisement professionals; learners, families and representatives of special populations; and business and industry partners.

Local leaders can convene a dedicated in-person or virtual meeting to discuss and evaluate CTE programs against the Framework, or they may choose to discuss particular elements or criteria as part of other CLNA stakeholder engagement activities such as industry advisory board meetings or focus groups with students, parents and community members.

When completing the self-evaluation as a collaborative activity, meeting hosts should designate a representative to fill in the rubric and another individual to record insights gleaned from conversations with stakeholders. Programs do not need to submit their evidence base or meeting notes to ACTE as part of the self-evaluation; however, these materials can be used to guide and inform the self-evaluation process and the CLNA more generally.

Another option for integrating the Framework into CLNA activities is to ask instructors and other program staff to complete the self-evaluation individually. Local CTE leaders can then review strengths and areas for improvement within each program of study and across program areas at an institution or school district to help inform the CLNA.

AFTER: Apply Framework self-evaluation results to the CLNA

CTE educators leading the CLNA can merge what they learn from completing the self-evaluation and related stakeholder engagement with other findings from the CLNA process. Results from the full self-evaluation may be particularly useful when responding to questions in a state's CLNA template about program size, scope and quality and about implementation of programs and programs of study. Scores on specific elements of the Framework can apply to additional sections of the CLNA; for instance, responses to criteria in the Prepared and Effective Program Staff element can inform the section on recruitment, retention and training of faculty and staff while responses to criteria in the Access and Equity element can apply to questions on improving progress in those areas.

Reviewing the highest- and lowest-scoring elements on the self-evaluation can serve as the basis for a discussion with stakeholders that celebrates strengths and addresses areas for improvement; explores how gaps in program quality, equity or access can be addressed; and leads to the development of an action plan, including deciding which programs and activities to prioritize for funding in annual budgets.

Access the Framework and Learn More

Access the Framework and self-evaluation instrument at the following links:
- ACTE *Quality CTE Program of Study Framework*
- ACTE *Quality CTE Program of Study Framework Self-evaluation* (online and hard copy)

Explore additional guidance on conducting a rigorous CLNA that prioritizes quality, equity and access:
- *A Guide for Local Leaders: Maximizing Perkins V's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment & Local Application to Drive CTE Program Quality and Equity* (ACTE, March 2019)
- *A Guide for State Leaders: Maximizing Perkins V's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment & Local Application to Drive CTE Program Quality and Equity* (Advance CTE, March 2019)
- *Driving Quality & Equity in CTE: A State Guide to Developing the Perkins V CLNA Template* (Advance CTE, June 2019)
- *Promoting a Regional Approach to the Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment* (Advance CTE, August 2019)
- *Investing in Quality: Funding the Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment* (Advance CTE, August 2019)