



## Program of Study Justification Process

The division of college, career and technical education's programs of study in career and technical education (CTE) are designed to be reflective of statewide labor, economic, and postsecondary opportunities that provide students with viable career paths. This statewide focus gives districts the ability to offer high school students coursework that provides sequential and progressive learning and allows for students to transition seamlessly into industry and postsecondary.

In order to ensure that students have relevant options for a career path in the state, the office of CTE undertakes an annual review of its programs of study and courses using labor and economic development data and a review of postsecondary program and certificate offerings from Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), community colleges, and four-year universities to determine which programs of study should be promoted. **As a result of this annual process, referred to as "program of study justifications," the office of CTE makes adjustments to programs of study and the corresponding courses to continue the vertical alignment between secondary education, postsecondary, and the statewide labor market.** This can result in the creation of new courses to fill a gap for growing occupations or the retirement of courses and programs of study which may have become obsolete or which no longer represent areas of growth within the statewide labor market.

The process of program of study justification should be repeated at the district level to verify that the programs offered in schools are leading to postsecondary and employment in the region so that students have the ability to continue their education and career path after high school graduation. CTE directors should use the data to decide which programs of study provide students with career paths within their region. This will assist in determining which programs of study to open in order to address a growing workforce area or close due to lack of opportunities for students within the occupation.

The office of CTE is releasing program of study justifications to provide districts with easier access to statewide data. These justifications will be on the corresponding [career cluster webpages](#).

Learn more about this process and how to apply economic and community development and labor data by reading an [article from ACTE Techniques](#) written by Candi Norwood and Heather Justice.