

*Tennessee Specific Industry Certification  
for Horticulture Science Pilot*  
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
2019-20**

Tennessee Department of Education

and

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Name of School

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Name of School District

**Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources  
Cluster**

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Tennessee Department of Education  
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## Background

The Tennessee Department of Education's goal for every student is to graduate high school prepared to be successful in the workforce or in aligned postsecondary programs. To accomplish this task, students with an elective focus in career and technical education (CTE) programs of study should culminate in the achievement of a state recognized industry certification, a robust work-based learning experience, and/or attainment of postsecondary credit hours through early postsecondary opportunities. Students obtaining industry certifications should have a good understanding of how these certifications will benefit them in the workforce and how to translate into credit or hours toward postsecondary training.

The Office of Career and Technical Education within the Division of College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) established the Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) Key Partners advisory council that includes industry, governmental, professional, and educational partners to serve as key leaders who are instrumental in driving industry advancement. The TSIC Key Partners in conjunction with the department identified key industry, secondary, and postsecondary leaders with industry employment knowledge to recommend and develop the TSIC exam.

## Goals:

The goal of the department, in collaboration with key partners, is to develop Tennessee Specific Industry Certifications (TSICs) aligned to the courses in the Horticulture Science program of study. The TSIC developed process once implemented should:

- Ensure consistency in development of industry supported TSIC for secondary CTE students in Tennessee within the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource (AFNR) career cluster.
- Increase the number of student certifications to meet Tennessee's diverse industry needs.
  - Develop certification exams in the area of most need
  - Increase the number of industry certified skilled workers
- Increase the transferability of TSIC to postsecondary opportunities.
  - Increase postsecondary completion rates
  - Increase credit and/or hours earned in post-secondary programs

## Tennessee Specific Industry Certification - Horticulture Science

The TSIC for Horticulture Science program, content areas, learning outcomes or objectives, were approved by the department and the TSIC Key Partners with a pilot program starting with the 2017-18 academic school year. The course content and certification exam are aligned to postsecondary standards and provide the opportunity to earn both industry credentialing and postsecondary credit. TSIC work group members representing Tennessee's postsecondary, secondary, and industry organizations developed learning outcomes or objectives and a capstone certification exam. Students who meet or exceed the established cut score set for the exam earn credits that can be applied to any public postsecondary institution in Tennessee and will be awarded a TSIC Horticulture credential from Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. Students completing all four course levels of the Horticulture Science program of study are eligible to sit for the TSIC capstone certification exam.

### Definitions

**Certification Exam:** All students completing **all four** courses as outlined in the Horticulture Science program of study are the only students eligible to take the capstone certification exam to determine subject mastery. If a student meets or exceeds the established cut score, he/she will earn three credits which can be applied at any public postsecondary institution in the state and an industry certification credential. The certification exams are administered online using the Tennessee Department of Education testing platform.

**Tennessee Public Postsecondary Institutions:** The Tennessee Board of Regents four-year institutions, community colleges, and colleges of applied technology and the University of Tennessee institutions.

### Commitment of Tennessee Specific Industry Certification Schools

1. Appoint one school-based staff member per participating school to act as the TSIC testing coordinator for the 2019-20 school year. This staff member cannot be an agriculture teacher, but will be the point of contact for the department with regard to the TSIC program.

2. Ensure teacher(s) assigned to the horticulture science courses have the content knowledge and ability to guide their students to success in mastering the course learning outcomes. Teachers should also be knowledgeable about how their students can benefit from industry certification and early postsecondary opportunities.
3. Ensure each TSIC pilot teacher completes the required professional development. This professional development will cover the alignment and expectation of secondary and postsecondary learning objectives, as well as certification examination administration policies and procedures.
4. Administer the statewide TSIC exam:
  - a. **Only** students that have completed three levels and enrolled in the fourth level course are eligible to sit for the exam. All students eligible to sit for the exam are **required** to take the certification exam at the end of the fourth course in the program of study to determine subject mastery.
  - b. There is no cost to students, parents, schools, or districts for TSIC certification exam participation during the 2019-20 academic year.
  - c. Students who are not enrolled in their fourth level of course work in the horticulture science program of study during the 2019-20 school year are not permitted to take the certification exam.
  - d. Students may only take the TSIC for Horticulture Science certification exam **one** time for postsecondary credit. Scores from any subsequent attempts will count toward certification only and not eligible for postsecondary credit.
  - e. TSIC approved schools will work with state and district technology staff to ensure smooth administration of the testing program during the TSIC for Horticulture Science testing windows.
5. Ensure certification exam procedures and guidelines are followed and report any irregularities that occur during the certification exam to the appropriate testing official.
6. Ensure that all requested student information is correctly uploaded into the testing administration platform on or before the certification exam registration deadline for every student eligible to take the exam. This information will be demographic in nature, and will ensure that earned credits are transferred from the Early Postsecondary database to the appropriate postsecondary institution upon

student matriculation. The handling of all data will adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as required.

7. Disseminate promotional materials and other information about the 2019-20 TSIC for Horticulture Science to interested stakeholders, including but not limited to students, parents, educators, and community members.
8. Participate in surveys or other data collection efforts intended to improve the TSIC structure by the department.

## Commitment of Tennessee Department of Education

1. The TDOE's Office of Career and Technical Education will oversee the 2019-20 TSIC program and provide technical assistance and resources to approved TSIC schools.
2. Maintain communications with TSIC for Horticulture Science teachers and other school- and district-level stakeholders to share policies, procedures, and deadlines.
3. Coordinate the registration and certification examination administration process with teachers, technology and testing coordinators, and data system managers.
4. Ensure that the certification exam results are accurately reported on the early postsecondary opportunities database for the sole purpose of awarding credit at postsecondary institutions.
5. Develop and distribute TSIC pilot promotional materials to pilot schools for distribution among students, parents, educators, and community members informing all stakeholders of the benefits and requirements of participation.

## Tennessee Specific Industry Certification School Information

School  
District:

School  
Phone:

School Name:

School Fax:

School  
Address:

Street

City

Zip Code

### Contact Information

CTE  
Director

Phone  
Name

Position

Email

TSIC Pilot  
Coordinator

Phone  
Name

Position

Email

TSIC Testing  
Proctor

Phone  
Name

Position

Email

TSIC  
Teacher  
(Hort.

Science)

Phone  
Name

Position

Email

Additional  
Contact

Phone  
Name

Position

Email



**The undersigned have reviewed this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and accept it as the basis for working together toward a common purpose through the 2019-20 Tennessee Specific Industry Certification for Horticulture Science program.**

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CTE Director

Date

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TSIC Pilot Coordinator

Date

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TSIC Testing Proctor

Date

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Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Teacher

Date

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Principal

Date

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Director of Schools

Date

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Commissioner of Education

Date

Please retain a copy of this document for your records and mail an original copy\* to:

Steven Gass, Program Manager  
Tennessee Department Education  
Office of Career and Technical Education  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37243-0383

**\*Mailed MOU hardcopy must be received by May 31, 2019.**