



The ACT WorkKeys assessment system measures job skills that are valuable for any occupation—skilled or professional—at any level and in any industry.



The ACT National Career Readiness Certificate® is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies achievement of foundational skills essential for workplace success.

KEY FACTS

The ACT National Career Readiness Certificate® and ACT WorkKeys®: Making a Difference in Outcomes for Workers and Employers

The ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRC) is a nationally recognized, portable, assessment-based credential that certifies foundational workplace skills. More than 3.6 million ACT NCRC certificates have been issued since 2006.

The ACT NCRC is based on three ACT WorkKeys assessments: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. The skills measured by these three assessments are the foundational cognitive skills most broadly relevant across industries and occupations. Taken in combination, the assessments provide a robust measure of the skills most commonly associated with workplace success and demonstrate promising labor market, employer, and education outcomes.

Labor Market Outcomes

The following highlights labor market outcomes from studies involving workforce case management systems in two states. The study results demonstrate the wage and employment impacts for individuals earning an ACT NCRC certification (gold, silver, or bronze):¹

- Total annual estimated increase in potential earnings of \$7,476, compared to \$2,916 for those with an associate's degree²
- Increased likelihood of attaining employment
- Increased likelihood of staying in a job
- Increased average earnings across all levels of education for those with higher ACT NCRC certifications:

¹ LeFebvre, M. (2016). *A summary of ACT WorkKeys validation research*. Iowa City, IA: ACT.

² Partners for a Competitive Workforce. (2012). *Work readiness collaborative*. Retrieved from www.competitiveworkforce.com/Work-Readiness.html.

Among those with less than a high school diploma—

- A 24% increase in average earnings for workers with a silver ACT NCRC® compared to a bronze ACT NCRC
- A 14% increase in average earnings for workers with a gold ACT NCRC compared to a silver ACT NCRC

Among high school graduates—

- A 13% increase in average earnings for workers with a silver ACT NCRC compared to a bronze ACT NCRC
- A 14% increase in average earnings for workers with a gold ACT NCRC compared to a silver ACT NCRC

Among associate's degree holders—

- A 12% increase in average earnings for workers with a gold ACT NCRC compared to a silver ACT NCRC

Among bachelor's degree holders—

- A 15% increase in average earnings for workers with a gold ACT NCRC compared to a silver ACT NCRC³

Employer Outcomes

The ACT NCRC enables prospective workers to show employers what they can do and enables employers to find the right people for the job. Research on ACT WorkKeys® and the NCRC shows additional benefits, for both workers and employers, from using the system. Following are results from two employment outcome studies involving a number of employers who implemented the ACT WorkKeys system: ⁴

- Positive relationship between ACT WorkKeys scores and overall job performance
- Negative relationship between ACT WorkKeys scores and number of disciplinary actions
- A 23% increase in employee productivity in task performance
- A 22% increase in output due to increased employee safety
- An 19% reduction in hiring needs due to increased performance
- A 19% reduction in hiring needs due to increased employee safety⁵
- A 25–75% reduction in turnover

³ Workforce Investment Board of Southwest Missouri (WIBSM). (2013). *Average earnings, employment, & retention by national career readiness certificate & education levels*. Joplin, MO: WIBSM.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ ACT. (2011). *E. & J. Gallo: WorkKeys—uncorking an employee's potential*. Unpublished report, Iowa City, IA: ACT.

- A 50–70% reduction in time-to-hire
- A 70% reduction in cost-to-hire
- A 50% reduction in training time⁶

Education and Employment Outcomes

Research on each ACT WorkKeys® assessment has demonstrated relationships between WorkKeys assessment performance and various education and employment outcomes,⁷ as shown below:

| ACT WorkKeys Assessment | Assessment Performance Has A Positive Relationship with: | Assessment Performance Has A Negative Relationship with: |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Applied Mathematics</i> | Postsecondary grade point average (GPA) Postsecondary course grades Postsecondary persistence Supervisor ratings of overall job performance | |
| <i>Reading for Information</i> | Postsecondary grade point average (GPA) Postsecondary course grades Postsecondary persistence Supervisor ratings of overall job performance | Number of safety incidents Customer complaints |
| <i>Locating Information</i> | Postsecondary course grades Supervisor ratings of overall job performance | Number of safety incidents Customer complaints Absenteeism Turnover |

For additional information about the evidence base for the ACT NCRC® and the validity of ACT WorkKeys, please see the Summary of WorkKeys Validation Research report.⁸ We also encourage you to visit www.act.org to learn more about how the ACT NCRC can help you improve your workforce.

⁶ Mayo, M. J. (2012). *Evaluation metrics, New Options New Mexico, 2011–2012*. Unpublished manuscript, Albuquerque, NM.

⁷ LeFebvre, M. (2016).

⁸ LeFebvre, M. (2016).