Students MUST possess the workplace skills employers need. Postsecondary institutions can award college credit to students who demonstrate the 21st-century skills needed for success, using a nationally recognized credential that measures foundational, work-ready skills.

A Nationally Recognized Credential

The ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®) is an evidence-based credential demonstrating the essential problem-solving and critical thinking skills needed for workplace success.

More than 5 million WorkKeys NCRCs have been awarded at four levels:

- Bronze NCRC
- Silver NCRC
- Gold NCRC
- Platinum NCRC

ACE Credit

In 2022, the American Council on Education (ACE) recommended that colleges and universities in the lower-divisional baccalaureate/associate degree category, award 3 semester hours in Technical Mathematics and Introduction to Information Literacy (6 semester hours total) to students who earn a Platinum NCRC, and 2 semester hours in each (4 semester hours total) to students who earn a Gold NCRC; in the vocational category, award 1 semester hour in Technical Mathematics and Introduction to Information Literacy (2 semester hours total) to students who earn a Silver NCRC.

Silver NCRC Recipients
- toward technical certification or technical degree

Gold or Platinum NCRC Recipients
- toward associate’s or bachelor’s degrees

Why technical mathematics and information literacy? Let’s define them:

- Technical Mathematics
  - Introductory level topics including measurement, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, graphs, and finance with an emphasis on application

- Introduction to Information Literacy
  - Locating, evaluating, and communicating information effectively to achieve goals

NOTE: Both of these skills are interdisciplinary subjects, taught across curricula. Each institution should determine how best to implement technical mathematics and information literacy in their curricular offerings and how to award the credit achieved through a high-level WorkKeys NCRC.
Skills demonstrated by receiving higher-level WorkKeys NCRCs include:

- Solving technical problems
- Identifying data trends
- Inferring word meaning from context
- Applying instructions to new situations
- Identifying implied details
- Sorting through materials to find critical information
- Making decisions based on detailed information

All of these abilities are contained within the definitions of technical mathematics and information literacy.

In 2007, the Association of American Colleges and Universities identified these two skills as essential postsecondary learning outcomes and necessary skills for the 21st-century economy.

**Conclusions**

- Institutions must produce graduates with skills that employers want, as measured by the WorkKeys NCRC.
- Credits awarded for WorkKeys NCRC attainment should align with an institution’s mission, curricular offerings, and student learning goals.
- At-risk students would stand to benefit from a skills-based educational system.
- Awarding college credit for attaining a WorkKeys NCRC sends a positive message to students, offers faster progress to postsecondary degrees and credentials, and builds confidence.