

CTE & Career Pathways Program Planning Tool

New Program Development Made Easy

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Name / Title:	_____
Proposed Program Area / CIP Code:	_____
Institution / Department:	_____
Planning Team Lead:	_____
Planning Committee Members:	_____
Planning Start Date:	_____
Target Launch Date:	_____
Current Planning Phase:	_____

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist guides planning teams through nine sequential phases of new program development from initial needs assessment through launch readiness. For each task, assign an Owner, set a Due Date, and track Status; we recommend four stages of terms including “Not Started,” “In Progress,” “Complete,” and “Deferred.”

Complete phases in order. It may be tempting to complete tasks within multiple phases concurrently, however, we strongly suggest that you make sure to focus on as many tasks within a phase as possible to guarantee you are making steady progress in phase completion.

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PHASE 1: Needs Assessment & Feasibility

Confirm there is a real, sustainable need for the program before investing further.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Conduct a local and regional labor market analysis to confirm demand for graduates			☐	
2. Review Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and state workforce data for occupational projections			☐	
3. Survey local employers to assess hiring needs, skill gaps, and willingness to hire graduates			☐	
4. Identify and document the target student population and their access needs			☐	
5. Analyze related programs at peer institutions for best practices to the extent possible			☐	
6. Assess potential student enrollment interest through surveys or focus groups			☐	
7. Review state and federal CTE or workforce development priorities for alignment			☐	
8. Determine whether the program is eligible for Perkins V or other targeted state or federal funding			☐	
9. Assess institutional capacity to support the program (faculty, facilities, budget)			☐	
10. Document findings in a formal Needs Assessment or Feasibility Study report			☐	

Phase 1 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 2: Stakeholder Engagement & Advisory Input

Build the employer and community relationships that will sustain the program and lead to student success.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Form a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) with industry representatives (established Advisory Committees may not have the expertise to support success with this new program)			☐	
2. Hold an initial PAC meeting to validate program concept, scope, and outcomes			☐	
3. Establish a regular cadence of PAC mtgs			☐	
3. Gather input from current students or community members about program design			☐	
4. Engage academic partners (high schools, community college) if articulation or Dual Enrollment is planned			☐	
5. Identify any potential transfer pathways if articulation to a baccalaureate program connection is of interest			☐	
6. Identify potential employer partners for internships, externships, or apprenticeships			☐	
7. Identify advisory committee members willing to serve as guest speakers or mentors			☐	
8. Document all stakeholder input and how it shaped program design decisions			☐	

Phase 2 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 3: Curriculum Design & Learning Outcomes

Build a curriculum grounded in real skills, measurable outcomes, and sound pedagogy.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Define program-level learning outcomes aligned to industry competencies			☐	
2. Map each learning outcome to specific courses or instructional units			☐	
3. Develop a Program of Study (course sequence) that scaffolds skills logically			☐	
4. Identify industry-recognized credentials or certifications to embed in the program			☐	
5. Design course syllabi including objectives, content, assessments, and grading criteria			☐	
6. Integrate both technical skills and employability/soft skills into each daily lesson			☐	
7. Build in work-based learning components (internships, clinical hours, job shadows)			☐	
8. Incorporate project-based learning, simulations, or lab-based instruction where appropriate			☐	
9. Ensure curriculum is accessible and designed with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles			☐	
10. Have PAC members review and validate the curriculum prior to submission			☐	
11. Identify required textbooks, software, tools, and other instructional resources			☐	
12. Establish a plan for keeping curriculum current (annual review process)			☐	

Phase 3 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 4: Staffing & Instructor Readiness

Ensure the program has qualified, supported instructors before launch.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Define instructor qualifications, credentials held, and minimum experience requirements			☐	
2. Determine whether existing faculty can teach program, or if you need to hire FT or PT colleagues to support it			☐	
3. Post positions and recruit as needed			☐	
4. Verify all instructor credentials, licenses, and industry certifications for prospective colleagues			☐	
5. Develop a faculty onboarding and orientation plan for the new program			☐	
6. Identify professional development needs for assigned instructors – both relative to the curriculum and technical content they will be facilitating, as well as instructional methods			☐	
7. Schedule on-going professional development sessions for all faculty, covering both technical content as well as instructional and classroom management content			☐	
8. Assign an experienced mentor or coach to support new program instructors			☐	
9. Connect instructors with industry partners for workplace externship opportunities to maintain their industry knowledge			☐	
10. Establish instructor workload expectations and compensation in alignment with Act 93 or applicable agreements			☐	

Phase 4 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 5: Facilities, Equipment & Resources

Secure the physical and technological infrastructure the program requires.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Assess current classroom condition and determine renovation or modification needs			☐	
2. Assess current lab or shop condition and determine renovation or modification needs			☐	
3. Develop an equipment list based on sector/industry standards and curriculum requirements			☐	
4. Obtain cost estimates for all equipment, tools, and technology			☐	
5. Identify grant, Perkins, or capital funding sources for equipment and facilities			☐	
6. Establish equipment maintenance, inspection, and replacement schedules			☐	
7. Ensure all facilities meet safety codes, ADA accessibility requirements, and licensing standards			☐	
8. Procure necessary software licenses, subscriptions, and digital tools			☐	
9. Establish supply and consumables budget for the first year of operation			☐	
10. Develop preventative maintenance, repair and equipment replacement budgets and plans			☐	

Phase 5 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 6: Budget & Financial Planning

Build a realistic, sustainable financial model before committing to launch.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Develop a detailed program startup budget (Year 1 costs)			☐	
2. Project ongoing annual operating costs (personnel, supplies, maintenance, marketing)			☐	
3. Estimate any tuition and fees revenue from projected enrollment			☐	
4. Identify all available funding sources (Perkins, grants, institutional budget, partnerships)			☐	
5. Complete a cost-per-student analysis to assess financial viability			☐	
6. Develop a 3-year financial sustainability projection			☐	
7. Identify any required institutional subsidies and obtain budget approval			☐	
8. Align program financial reporting and budget monitoring procedures with your larger institution or system practices			☐	
9. Determine student financial aid eligibility, if applicable			☐	
10. Document all budget assumptions and obtain administrative sign-off			☐	

Phase 6 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 7: Approval, Accreditation & Compliance

Navigate all internal and external approvals required before enrollment opens.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Complete internal curriculum committee review and approval process			☐	
2. Submit program proposal to institutional or district academic governance			☐	
3. Identify any state approval or licensure requirements for the program			☐	
4. Submit program to state education department for approval			☐	
5. Determine if specialized accreditation is required or desired (e.g., ACEN, ABET, CAAHEP)			☐	
6. Assign a CIP or other code to the program, as needed			☐	
7. Ensure the program is listed in the institution's list of offerings and student information system			☐	
8. Verify compliance with all applicable federal, state, and accreditor requirements			☐	
9. Obtain formal oversight approvals as required			☐	
10. Establish articulation agreements with feeder high schools or receiving four-year institutions			☐	

Phase 7 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 8: Marketing, Recruitment & Student Services

Attract the right students and ensure support systems are ready at launch.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Develop a program name, brand identity, and marketing messaging			☐	
2. Create program materials, fact sheet and web page, as appropriate			☐	
3. Develop a targeted recruitment plan(s) for traditional and nontraditional student populations			☐	
4. Coordinate with marketing, admissions and enrollment management colleagues to develop recruitment activities			☐	
5. Establish prerequisite or admissions criteria and document consistently			☐	
6. Create materials addressing common student questions about jobs, wages, and career paths			☐	
7. Develop a student orientation plan specific to the program			☐	
8. Coordinate advising support so advisors can guide students in the program			☐	
9. Establish career services touchpoints throughout the program			☐	
10. Set enrollment targets for the first two years and develop contingency plans if targets are missed			☐	

Phase 8 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE 9: Launch Readiness & Continuous Improvement Plan

Confirm all systems are go and build in the structure to improve from day one.

Task / Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status	Notes
1. Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to track program success			☐	
2. Set up data collection systems for enrollment, retention, completion, and employment outcomes			☐	
3. Confirm all necessary approvals are in place before accepting enrollment			☐	
4. Verify that all required equipment is installed, tested, and operational			☐	
5. Confirm all courses are scheduled, sections are open, and faculty are assigned			☐	
6. Schedule the first formal program review (typically at end of Year 1)			☐	
7. Plan the first annual PAC meeting after launch to gather employer feedback			☐	
8. Establish a student feedback mechanism (mid-term and end-of-term surveys)			☐	
9. Conduct a pre-launch readiness review with all key stakeholders			☐	
10. Develop a written Year 1 improvement plan with assigned responsibilities and timelines			☐	

Phase 9 Notes, Decisions & Open Items:

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PHASE GATE SUMMARY — GO / NO-GO TRACKER

Phase	Key Milestone / Deliverable	Completed?	Approved By	Date
Phase 1	Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study approved	☐		
Phase 2	Advisory Committee formed; stakeholder input documented	☐		
Phase 3	Curriculum and Program of Study validated by PAC	☐		
Phase 4	Instructors hired/assigned and credentials verified	☐		
Phase 5	Facilities and equipment secured and operational	☐		
Phase 6	Budget approved and funding sources confirmed	☐		
Phase 7	All internal and external approvals obtained	☐		
Phase 8	Marketing launched; student services ready	☐		
Phase 9	Pre-launch readiness review complete — LAUNCH	☐		

Risks & Mitigation Strategies:

APPROVALS & SIGN-OFF

Planning Team Lead Name (please print)		Dean / Administrator Name (please print)
Planning Team Lead Signature & Date		Dean / Administrator Approval Signature & Date

Retain this checklist as part of the official program development record.

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