

# Principles of Tech Prep

*A statement of the*  
**Vocational Technical Education Providers**  
*Endorsed by the*  
**Alaska Workforce Investment Board**  
**December 2003**

Background: Tech Prep originated in the 1980s as an attempt both to improve the quality of career and technical education (CTE) and to facilitate the transition of students to postsecondary education. It emphasizes integrating academics and technical education, linking secondary and postsecondary programs, and achieving a smooth transition from secondary to postsecondary in CTE career fields. The 1990 Carl Perkins Act incorporated Tech Prep and continues to fund it through the current Perkins III legislation.

Purpose: The purpose of Tech Prep is to provide a smooth transition between secondary and postsecondary education/training programs by linking secondary and postsecondary programs into a coherent sequence of nonduplicative courses that lead to an industry recognized credential, certificate, degree or apprenticeship. A second purpose of Tech Prep is to improve the quality of Career Technical Education through:

- integrating academic and technical studies designed to prepare students for postsecondary studies;
- offering courses that are part of a coherent sequence in a career field;
- offering standards based courses; and
- providing contextual and integrated learning that allows students to see how their education is applied in the world of work.

Tools:

1. Consortia

Tech Prep programs ideally operate under a Consortium comprised of the partnership institutions and the businesses or industries of the program's career fields. The Consortium develops an agreement concerning the relationship of its members and the oversight of the program. Industry participation ensures maintaining up to date standards in the coursework, provides opportunities for Work Based Learning experiences, and strengthens community support for the program.

2. Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements are written agreements between secondary and postsecondary education/training providers that delineate a program's nonduplicative and coherent sequential course of study that lead a student to a credential, certificate, degree, and/or apprenticeship. Agreed upon outcomes and assessments assure legitimacy of the agreement. They also delineate the conditions and terms for the awarding of concurrent and/or transfer credits.

3. Concurrent Credit

When a secondary and postsecondary course meet the same standards, the nonduplicative imperative of Tech Prep encourages offering a student concurrent credit for the course. Offering concurrent credit requires a written agreement between the two institutions and the periodic joint review of the standards being met. Concurrent credit ideally should be awarded upon successful course completion indicating that the standards have been achieved; it is less desirable to make it conditional upon subsequent actions or achievements.