## Frequently Asked Questions on WIOA Certification

### What is WIOA certification?

The acknowledgement that a participant earns an industry-recognized credential upon successful completion of the training.

### Can a training be listed on the ETPL without being WIOA-certified?

Yes.

### Can a training be WIOA-certified without being listed on the ETPL?

No. A training must be listed on the ETPL to be eligible for WIOA certification.

### If my institution is listed on the ETPL, does that make my trainings automatically WIOA-certified?

No. A training must be listed on the ETPL to be eligible for WIOA certification, but Minnesota also lists trainings on the ETPL that are not WIOA-certified. Some of those trainings are not WIOA-certified because WIOA certification was never requested, and some are not WIOA-certified because the training would not be eligible for WIOA certification.

This point is also the reason that WIOA certification occurs on the training level, not the institution level, because many institutions offer some trainings that would be eligible for WIOA certification as well as some trainings that would not be eligible.

### And just what makes a training eligible for WIOA certification?

1. The institution must be licensed, registered, or legally exempt by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (with a few exceptions based on specific occupations).
2. The training provider must request listing, by creating an account on the Training Provider Portal and providing all required data.
3. The training must result in an industry-recognized credential upon successful completion of the training.

### What is an industry-recognized credential?

A “credential” is defined as the formal recognition of an individual’s attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are generally based on standards developed or endorsed by employers. Educational credentials are commonly termed “diploma”, “certificate”, and “degree”.

The range of different types of credentials includes:

* Educational degrees, certificates, and diplomas;
* Registered Apprenticeship certificates;
* Occupational licenses (typically awarded by state government agencies);
* Industry-recognized or professional association certifications; and
* Other occupational skills certificates.

A variety of different public and private entities, such as educational institutions, industries, or occupational certifying organizations have the authority to issue a credential. These entities may include:

* A state educational agency or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state;
* An institution of higher education described in section 102 of the Higher Education programs authorized by Title IV of that Act (20 USC 1002). This includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in federal student financial aid programs;
* A professional, industry, or employer organization, or a product manufacturer or developer, using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual’s knowledge, skills, and abilities;
* A Registered Apprenticeship sponsor;
* A public regulatory agency, upon an individual’s fulfillment of educational work experience, or skills requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession;
* A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons;
* Job Corps centers that issue certificates; and
* An institution of higher education which is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned, or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes.

If the training’s credential is not widely known, DEED recommends providing as much information as possible to explain the credential and how it is acknowledged in employment decisions.

### Does a training need to be WIOA-certified for WIOA funds to pay for the training?

No. A counselor may use WIOA funds for trainings that are not WIOA-certified.

### So why does WIOA certification matter?

When a WIOA participant earns a credential from a WIOA-certified training, the counselor can claim a credential in performance reporting.

### My training is excellent, but doesn’t result in an industry-recognized credential. Can it still be WIOA-certified?

No. Please note that WIOA certification isn’t an evaluation of the quality or effectiveness of your institution. It simply marks whether or not a training results in an industry-recognized credential. Minnesota training providers offer many training options that may not result in an industry-recognized credential.

### My training program/course prepares students to take a test that provides a credential. Can my program/course be WIOA-certified?

Trainings must include an industry-recognized credential upon successful completion to be WIOA-certified. Some credentials require the successful passage of an exam.

If passing an exam is necessary to receive the credential, and the exam is part of the training program, the program can be WIOA-certified.

If passing an exam is necessary to receive the credential, and the exam is NOT part of the training program, but rather taken independently by the student after the training is completed, then the program cannot be WIOA-certified. WIOA program providers may still pay for the training; it will be entered as “non-credentialed training” in Workforce One (case management system), as the student will not receive the credential as part of the training.

If passing an exam is not necessary to receive the credential, the training can be WIOA-certified, as long as the student receives an industry-recognized credential upon successful completion of the training.

### Can exams alone be WIOA-certified?

Exams on their own will not be WIOA-certified, even if they result in a credential. WIOA certification is for courses or programs that provide training, above and beyond self-study materials. Dislocated Worker program providers may still pay for exams and collect any credentials earned afterwards. To do so, they will enter “credential earned without training” in Workforce One (case management system). For more information, see DEED’s Credentials and Training policy.

### Can Adult Basic Education, GED, or ESL programs be WIOA-certified?

No. Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED, and ESL trainings are considered “General Education” and are not eligible for WIOA certification. A training institution that primarily provides ABE may, however, offer trainings that are eligible for WIOA certification if they meet the requirements in this handbook and WIOA Certification policy.

### Why does Minnesota list trainings on the ETPL that aren’t WIOA-certified? Some other states don’t.

DEED sees the ETPL as a resource that can provide information about all sorts of training options available in Minnesota, not just trainings that result in an industry-recognized credential.

### What if a training I’m interested in is only offered in another state?

This situation sometimes happens, particularly for training institutions located in states near Minnesota’s borders. Minnesota observes a kind of reciprocity; if a training is WIOA-certified by the state in which it’s located, Minnesota will consider it WIOA-certified. But Minnesota does not list nor WIOA-certify any trainings that are located outside of Minnesota, except Registered Apprenticeships.

### How can I find out if a training located in another state is WIOA-certified?

Click on the state on the map at this link ([America's Service Locator](https://www.servicelocator.org/program_search.asp?prgcat=1&officeType_1=0)) to find that state’s ETPL.

### I’m confused and I want to talk it through with a human being.

No problem. Please feel free to contact the ETPL Administrator at ETPL.deed@state.mn.us.