



Responses to Common Questions about the Proposed Oregon Definition of College and Career Readiness

Why develop a comprehensive definition? (“Are college and career readiness really the same?”)

Although it may initially seem counterintuitive to include both career readiness and college readiness in the same framework, this approach helps to break down the “silos” in which these sectors often operate. In addition, significant research has shown that although the knowledge, skills, and applications of learning required for success in particular fields and programs of study vary, the overarching skills and strategies required for students of all ages entering colleges and careers are consistent.

What working principles will be important to consider in reviewing the definition?

The common definition of college and career readiness should:

- Reflect Oregon secondary completion requirements which prepare students for postsecondary pursuits
- Reflect postsecondary expectations for students of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, and identities
- Articulate a foundation for readiness which is common across postsecondary programs and career paths
- Ensure equitable opportunities for every student
- Guide the policies and actions of agencies and stakeholders

What are some of the ways in which a CCR definition can have an impact on education from birth to college and career?

- Strategic planning at local, regional, and state levels to address achievement gaps and increase college readiness
- Communications planning
- Student, family, and community awareness and engagement
- Cross-sector vertical and horizontal educational alignment
- High school reform and 12th grade redesign
- Grades 11-14 model
- Postsecondary placement and developmental education reform
- Assessment
- Data collection and analysis

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Why is the focus on College and Career Readiness important to the Early Learning stage of a child's life?

Getting students off to a good start in preschool and the elementary grades is vitally important for several reasons:

- Learning takes time
- Learning is cumulative
- Student interests often develop at an early age
- Empirical evidence shows the difficulty of catching students up in middle and high school

The Key Elements of the Oregon Definition Framework for College and Career Readiness build on the components of a strong preschool and elementary school education.

Why is a common statewide definition of college and career readiness (CCR) important?

It is the responsibility of each state to structure the educational experience in a way that allows every completer of secondary education, no matter their age and route (HS diploma and GED), to have the knowledge and skills required to successfully enter a postsecondary education and to be prepared to succeed in a family-supporting career—in other words, to ensure that each Oregonian is “college and career ready.”

A college and career readiness definition gives us a strong shared understanding of the necessary outcomes of the P-12 system that mark the starting point for individuals of all ages entering postsecondary education programs and career training paths. The CCR definition can serve as a unifying framework for the multitude of strategies and actions that are designed to lead to better outcomes as students become highly skilled individuals, leading to improved quality of life and long-term economic prosperity and resiliency of our communities and our state as represented in the 40-40-20 goal.

Perhaps the most promising reason for creating a CCR definition is to establish a framework upon which Oregon can ensure individuals' more seamless transition into the labor market or postsecondary education and support their increasing prosperity. This can serve Oregonians of all ages, be they recent high school graduates or returning adults, as they prepare to enter the educational programs and workforce training which are necessary to reach their educational and professional goals.

Why do this now?

The shifting state education and workforce structures, implementation of the Common Core State Standards, new assessments aligned to the standards, and new accountability systems combined with increasing attention to clarifying postsecondary learning outcomes and improving postsecondary degree and certificate completion hold promise for propelling educational attainment forward toward 40-40-20. These changes can improve the systems for the benefit of all Oregonians seeking to acquire new skills and advance in their educational level. Providing a framework for understanding the key components of college and career readiness will serve to coordinate our efforts.