

The CTECS WRS Assessment® Development History and Benefits

Development History

The Virginia Department of Career and Technical Education is a charter member of the Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS), a non-profit organization that for over 40 years has provided its members with industry-based resources and services for the improvement of CTE and workforce development instruction, assessment, certification, and delivery. In 2009, through a Virginia Department of Education initiative, CTECS was invited to contribute, along with research from the Weldon Cooper Center and Virginia's CTE Resource Center writers, to the revision of the Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) list, which was published in 2010. Subsequently, CTECS was asked to build an assessment customized to the new WRS, and after working intimately with Virginia experts and following CTECS' *Technical Assessment System Design Model*, performed a pilot and launched the first version of the CTECS WRS Assessment® in spring 2011. Since then, nearly 300,000 WRS assessments have been provided within the CTECS consortium.

The CTECS WRS Assessment® represents a convergence between Virginia research, industry input, standards, and curriculum and is now used as an important credentialing option in Virginia's pathway to industry certification. The exam outcome is an indicator to secondary students receiving the WRS credential, secondary and postsecondary educators, and business and industry that the emerging workforce is prepared for the next step in terms of understanding universal workplace behaviors and expectations. Further, the CTECS WRS Assessment® is successfully administered in similar initiatives by other member states, including Nevada, Maine, and Idaho.

The CTECS WRS Assessment® features

- web-based (online) delivery through a proctored E-SESS system (no software to install) 100-questions, multiple-choice with pre/post/retake forms
- one-hour window for completion (extended time awarded for students with disabilities and for students with limited English proficiency)
- a passing score of 75 percent or higher (validated by using the Modified-Angoff Cut-Score methodology) earns the test taker an official certificate
- instant access to results for test site administrators upon completion
- free, web-based curriculum resources correlated to the WRS standards (or skill set) that formed the basis for the assessment.

Benefits to Your State—Schools and the Workforce

1. There is no better or more proven “soft-skills” assessment available for universal career pathways, making it perfectly suited for secondary schools.
2. Students are better prepared as part of the emerging workforce.
3. The WRS certificate of completion (now also a digital badge) provides proof of the accomplishment to earners (students) and consumers (postsecondary educators and employers) of the credential.
4. Accountability. Perkins legislation requires emphasis of employability skills, and the CTECS Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment® is the best indicator as to whether those skills are being taught in the classroom, and to what degree the students are mastering the skills.
5. WRS standards clearly define what teachers have been teaching for years as part of CTE programs but now in a concentrated, heavily researched, precise form validated by employer input. The WRS standards make it easier to deliver career education and the assessment provides a measurement of that delivery.