

# ACTE's Online Learning Network, CTE Learn, Offers an Innovative Solution for Statewide Adoption to Enable Skills-Based Hiring at Scale

## PRINCIPLE 4

### Without Limits

## Each Learner's Skills Are Counted, Valued and Portable

Capture and value all learning that occurs, wherever and whenever it occurs.

Build and leverage trusted systems to translate competencies and credentials into portable credit.

Expand skills-based hiring practices that value competencies.

A Shared Vision for the Future of Career and Technical Education ~ Advance CTE

## Expanding Skills-Based Hiring Requires Commitment from All Key Stakeholders

To enable skills-based hiring at scale, all key stakeholders in the labor market must commit to making **verifiable** skills the new currency of the labor market. This shift is necessary because, according to [McKinsey research](#), validating skills and sourcing job seekers with the right skills are the main obstacles to skills-based hiring. What can the key stakeholders do to advance skills-based hiring practices?

**Educators:** Educators play a crucial role in making skills-based hiring a reality by capturing students' skills and using authentic evidence to track their skill attainment, not just course completion and grades. With this approach, educators can help drive the adoption of skills-based hiring by equipping students with a diverse range of evidence that effectively showcases their applied skills. This diverse range of evidence empowers students to demonstrate their skills to employers and provides the proof of skill necessary to inform skills-based hiring decisions.

**Skilled Talent:** Skilled talent includes students, job seekers and working adults alike. Although many people have valuable skills, these skills often remain invisible because people struggle to identify, articulate, and effectively signal their skills to employers. In a skills-based economy, success won't be based on the formal qualifications a person has, but rather the skills they possess and can prove. This underscores the need for talent to make their skills visible and verifiable with authentic evidence they can show employers, even if they don't possess traditional credentials.

**Employers:** According to a [Harvard Business School](#) report, employers who prioritize hiring based on verifiable skills over traditional factors like education and work history can get more qualified candidates, achieve more equitable hiring, and improve performance and retention. However, to source candidates and evaluate their skills more effectively, employers need to access recruitment platforms that allow them to search for specific, verifiable skills. The business case for skills-based hiring is clear. That's why employers should actively participate in helping talent develop and improve the way they present and demonstrate their skills to the labor market, rather than leaving this task solely to educators.

# How CTE Learn's CareerPrepped Platform Is Helping Advance a Career Preparation Ecosystem Focused on Verifiable Skills

## 1. Connecting the Ecosystem to Scale Collaboration

The CTE Learn CareerPrepped platform connects skilled talent, educators, and employers to make skills visible and verifiable through ecosystem-wide collaboration. The platform enables students to inventory their skills gained from formal and informal learning. Once captured, they can prove each skill with authentic portfolio artifacts, endorsements, and testimonials from people who've seen their skills in action. Users can seek feedback from all members of the community, including educators and employers, to understand which of their skills are perceived to be well proven and which need stronger evidence. The feedback system allows users to continuously improve their skill evidence and feedback ratings to better signal their skills to employers, making their skills more tangible and verifiable. Educators can use the platform to track students' skill attainment and gain a holistic, skills-based view of career-readiness. Employers can participate as industry mentors to connect with potential hires in a meaningful way.



## 2. Engaging Employers as Industry Mentors to Evaluate Skill Evidence

Industry mentors on CareerPrepped can be any working or retired industry professional experienced in evaluating skill claims. They evaluate, rate, and offer constructive feedback on how well they feel community members are proving and signaling their claimed skills. CareerPrepped has integrated the [National Career Clusters® Framework](#), allowing users to indicate their career interests aligned to the framework. When users request feedback from industry mentors, their career interests are among the variables the system uses to match them to industry mentors for evaluation of specific skill claims.

Mentors can set the quantity and frequency of their feedback requests, and institutions have full control over who they invite to their community as industry mentors. This system offers a virtual and ongoing opportunity for employers to actively participate in helping talent improve the way they present and demonstrate their skills to the labor market. It also allows employers to evaluate claimed skills and establish connections with potential hires.

## 3. Prioritizing Development and Demonstration of Essential Workforce Skills

Essential workforce skills, often referred to as employability or soft skills, are the set of skills needed to succeed in any career and empower people to achieve lifelong career success. [Research](#) shows that these skills, such as teamwork, problem solving, and communication skills, are in growing demand across all industries especially because they can't be replaced by robots and artificial intelligence.

For decades, employers have reported that they have difficulty finding candidates with soft skills. While job seekers must prioritize developing these skills that are in short supply, they must also clearly demonstrate and signal them to employers if they want them to be recognized. CareerPrepped offers a unique badging process supported with a wide range of skill builders to help users continuously build their soft skills and prove them with authentic portfolio artifacts and 360° feedback.

CareerPrepped's innovative approach to soft skills development and demonstration has been formally acknowledged by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), and the platform has been adopted to support ACCSC's [Essential Workforce Skills Programmatic Certification](#).

## 4. Maximizing Work-Based Learning Outcomes

Work-based learning (WBL) experiences help individuals make more informed career choices, build social capital with potential employers, and attain skills applicable to future job opportunities. However, for students and employers to gain real benefits from WBL, students must be prepared to exhibit essential work-readiness attitudes and skills before beginning a WBL experience. This is especially necessary for participation in structured internships and apprenticeship programs. Additionally, to achieve successful outcomes, structured WBL programs require mentorship from both educators and employers, and they need to track and record students' skill attainment.

CareerPrepped helps educators provide equitable opportunities for all students to develop and showcase the essential skills required to succeed in WBL experiences. Additionally, CareerPrepped helps students capture the skills they gain in their WBL experiences, while providing educators and employers with a collaborative environment in which to track skill attainment and provide constructive feedback on students' claimed skills. Using CareerPrepped to support WBL programs is a popular use case for the platform.



## 5. Bridging the Education and Employment Divide with Integrated Technologies

CareerPrepped has partnered with [Textkernel](#) to integrate data-driven professions and skills taxonomies extracted from millions of job postings and resumes on the marketplace. This helps CareerPrepped standardize its skills and professions data using a language derived from labor market information, kept current with continuous updates, and directly aligned to industry. Additionally, Textkernel's artificial intelligence technologies have been integrated into the CareerPrepped platform. These are the same proven technologies deployed in leading Applicant Tracking Systems and Human Resources Information Systems, connecting people and jobs.

The platform also provides a repository of curated resources for community members, one of which is the open registry of credentials, powered by the [Credential Engine](#). The registry provides detailed information about all types of credentials in the marketplace and the skills they represent. This resource helps users understand what credentials are available to them in their lifelong learning journey and how they can translate them into skills and competencies when seeking jobs.

CareerPrepped has adopted the inclusive design principles for Learning and Employment Records (LERs) outlined by [Digital Promise](#) to set the stage for future integration of the platform with emerging LER systems. Meanwhile, CareerPrepped has integrated [Open Badges](#) technology to process users' claimed skill badges on the platform, representing concretely defined employability skills.

## 6. Matching Talent to Live Jobs That Fit Their Skills

CareerPrepped provides a comprehensive suite of tools to assist users in translating their skills into career opportunities. Users can showcase their experiences, skills, and achievements through their own personal career site, backed by multimedia evidence of their skills stored in their career portfolio.

The platform's job match tool analyzes live job, internship, and apprenticeship listings across the entire internet and offers personalized job matches that align with each user's skills and preferences. Additionally, the platform features a job tracker to help users track their job search progress, a resume builder for generating personalized resumes, and a library of interview prep videos to enhance users' interviewing skills and help them land the jobs they want.

## 7. Empowering CTE-Trained Talent to Achieve Career Success

CareerPrepped is a strong advocate of [CTE Without Limits](#) and shares the vision of closing equity gaps in educational outcomes and workforce readiness, and in leveraging CTE as a catalyst for ensuring that each learner can reach success in the career of their choice. CareerPrepped aligns with all five principles of this bold vision and aims to have a significant role in supporting the development of a cohesive, flexible, and responsive career preparation ecosystem.

Given CTE's focus on skill attainment and workforce readiness, our sector of education has a prominent opportunity to help people achieve career success in a skills-based economy. While CareerPrepped is free for individual students and educators, a statewide adoption of CareerPrepped provides access to administrative features and implementation support resources to make skill demonstration and employer engagement a central part of the state's CTE programs, enabling skills-based hiring at scale.

Employers can join CareerPrepped for free as industry mentors to provide feedback on users' skill evidence and to connect with potential hires. And soon they'll be able to recruit CareerPrepped talent through a skills-based and AI-driven candidate matching tool.

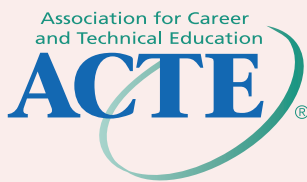
By engaging the entire talent supply chain in the skill demonstration process and providing a range of skills-based tools and services, CareerPrepped aims to enable true skills-based hiring at scale.

"CareerPrepped is destined to become a critical part of preparing the nation's learners for the world of work, with a rich set of workforce readiness tools and an environment that allows learners and employers to connect."

**Michael Connet | ACTE**

"With CareerPrepped, we're able to understand if students can identify, articulate and prove their skills with evidence. CareerPrepped allows employers to base hiring decisions on who actually has skills."

**Douglas J. Bush | GIRESD Michigan**



To learn more about CTE Learn CareerPrepped, please visit:

[www.ctelearn.org/careerprepped](http://www.ctelearn.org/careerprepped)

To request a demo of CTE Learn CareerPrepped or inquire about statewide adoption, please email our partnership liaison at MaxKnowledge:

Robert Starks [[roberts@maxknowledge.com](mailto:roberts@maxknowledge.com)]