Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS (KBOR)
AO-K Handbook
2023

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Contents

4

I.   Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

ABE: Adult Basic Education, also called Adult Education and Literacy (AEL), non-credit courses for adults to build skills and knowledge

AEFLA: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and one of the six core programs authorized by WIOA

AEL: Adult Education and Literacy, designed to enable adults to acquire the basic skills necessary to function in today's society so that they can benefit from the completion of secondary school, enhanced family life, attaining citizenship and participating in job training and retraining programs

AESIS: Adult Education Student Information System, the information management system for Adult Education in Kansas

AO-K: Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas, a partnership between the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and the Kansas Department of Commerce to deliver career and technical education at the same time as adult basic skills instruction within a career pathways framework

AO-K Proviso: A tuition reimbursement program (similar to Excel in CTE) funded by legislative appropriations to encourage institutions to work with those without a high school diploma or equivalent. Must be an approved AO-K college to participate. Pays the full composite rate for tiered courses in approved AO-K pathways.

AY: Academic Year, defined as consecutive SUMMER + FALL + SPRING terms (Summer '20 + Fall '20 + Spring '21) = AY21

CCRS: College and Career Readiness Standards, a set of English language/literacy and mathematics standards that reflect the content most relevant to preparing adult students for success in colleges, technical training programs, work, and citizenship

CIP code: Classification of Instructional Programs, a taxonomy of academic programs development by the U.S. Department of Education

CTE: Career and Technical Education, designed to help all students acquire challenging academic and technical skills and be prepared for high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations in the 21st century global economy

DAEL: Division of Adult Education and Literacy, the division of OCTAE responsible for enabling adults to acquire the basic skills necessary to function in today's society so that they can benefit from the completion of secondary school, enhanced family life, attaining citizenship and participating in job training and retraining programs

EFL: Educational Functioning Level, the skill level of adult learners as defined by the National Reporting System (NRS) and measured with a standardized assessment such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE®); there are six levels for Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and another six levels for English as a Second Language (ESL) students

ESL: English as a Second Language, programs or courses designed to assist English Language Learners (ELLs), often interchanged with the term "English for Speakers of Other Languages" (ESOL) to encompass students who may be learning English as a third, fourth, or other language

ELL: English Language Learner, an individual learning English as a non-native language

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the form to apply for federal student aid

FY: Fiscal Year, a 12-month period used for budget and accounting purposes. The state fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year and is named for the calendar year in which it ends (e.g., July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, is state Fiscal Year 2022).

GED®: General Educational Development, covering four subjects: Math, Science, Social Studies, and Reasoning Through Language Arts

HSE: High School Equivalency, a secondary-school credential equivalent to a high-school diploma. In Kansas, adults have two methods of obtaining a Kansas State High School Diploma, either by passing the GED® Test or by completing the requirements of the Kansas Pathway to Career.

I-BEST: Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training, an IET model developed by the state of Washington that has been used as the basic for many other IET programs across the nation

IET: Integrated Education and Training, a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement

KBOR: Kansas Board of Regents, the governing board of the state's six universities and the statewide coordinating board for the state's 32 public higher education institutions (six state universities, one municipal university, nineteen community colleges, and six technical colleges). In addition, the Board administers the state's student financial aid, adult education, high school equivalency, and career and technical education programs.

KHEDS: Kansas Higher Education Data System, the information management system for higher education in Kansas

MSG: Measurable Skill Gain, a reportable attainment of skills for Adult Education participants. MSGs can be attained in a number of ways, detailed in the Measurable Skill Gain section.

NRS: National Reporting System, the accountability system for federally funded Adult Education programs

OCTAE: Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, the office of the U.S. Department of Education that administers and coordinates programs that are related to adult education and literacy, career and technical education, and community colleges.

Pell: A Pell Grant is a federal subsidy awarded to students for post-secondary education. Pell Grants are awarded on the basis of financial need and, unlike student loans, do not have to be repaid except in rare instances.

Perkins V (Strengthening CTE for the 21st Century Act): A federal law authorizing grant funds dedicated to increasing learner access to high-quality career technical education (CTE) programs of study. The purpose is to develop, coordinate, implement, or improve CTE programs.

Special Collection: This optional data collection will help institutions prepare for the academic year collection. The academic year collection will be used to calculate funding eligibility on student credit hour production and other indicators for the Excel in CTE, AO-K Proviso (2021 Kansas Session Laws, Ch. 116, Sec. 47(a) and Sec. 48(c)), AO-K TANF, and calculate incentive funds under the GED Accelerator (K.S.A. 7432,434).

TABE®: Test of Adult Basic Education, the assessment system used to measure skills and knowledge of adult learners in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs

TABE CLAS-E®: Comprehensive Language Assessment System – English, the assessment system used to measure English language proficiency among English Language Learners (ELLs) in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs

WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, signed into law on July 22, 2014, and designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers

Introduction

Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas (AO-K) is an integrated education and training (IET) model delivered in partnership between adult education and career technical education (CTE) programs. AO-K is designed to help students complete career pathways, earn industry-recognized credentials, and begin their careers. Career pathways are approved career technical education programs at Kansas's public community and technical colleges in which:

- Courses are team-taught with a basic skills instructor
- AO-K pathways are a minimum of 12 credit hours in a high-demand and high-wage occupation
- Institutions provide wraparound support services, including, but not limited to, advising, transition coaching, and assistance in connecting to community resources
- Supplemental instruction is provided

Nationally, IET programs such as AO-K have been proven to help students earn more credit hours, complete programs, and succeed where they may have otherwise struggled.

This handbook serves as a guide for institutions and practitioners in Kansas who wish to implement the AO-K model on their campuses and support their students working toward earning CTE credentials and degrees.

II.   Student Qualifications

Qualifications

AO-K is designed to support low-skilled students as each student pursues a chosen career pathway. To determine student eligibility, institutions must use the following criteria:

A) The student qualifies for adult education*; *and*
B) The student is adequately prepared to succeed in an AO-K pathway. KBOR recommends students only be placed into an AO-K pathway if they score above a 500 in reading, 495 in math, or 510 in language on a TABE 11&12 Form M, D, or A, or CLAS-E Form 2, 3, or 4. Programs may place lower-scoring students into an AO-K pathway based on the assessment of the adult education program, but this should be done only with the approval and documentation of the adult education director.

*A student qualifies for adult education if
1) The student does not have a high-school diploma, *or*
2) The student is an English language learner, *or*
3) The student tests into the adult education range using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11&12 or the TABE Complete Language Assessment System – English (CLAS-E).

Note: While the AO-K model is designed to help underprepared students succeed, AO-K students do not require their own course sections. KBOR encourages the implementation of the AO-K model into all classes, where appropriate, regardless of the presence of students who do not qualify for adult education. Although present in the classroom, these students would not be entered as adult education students in the Adult Education Student Information System (AESIS).

Requirements

Students enrolled in an AO-K pathway must maintain concurrent enrollment in supplemental adult education courses, as applicable. This may include enrollment in distance education and other adult education resources provided by local programs.

III. AO-K Pathways

AO-K pathways must be a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours. With the exception of Healthcare (which is a grouping of courses), all pathways must be a currently approved exit point for an existing CTE program at the institution. Healthcare pathway courses must be updated and submitted to the Kansas Board of Regents annually.

Career Pathway Requirements

Institutions seeking AO-K pathway approval must submit a pathway application, providing additional information on the co-taught courses, adult education activities, workforce preparation activities, and occupational training provided to pathway participants. A minimum of 25% of the entire pathway, based on credit hours, must be co-taught. Co-teaching more than 25% is encouraged. (Note: This is a minimum of 25% of the *pathway*, not of each class. Co-teaching should occur at the points most beneficial to students.) Pathways should be reviewed every four years and an updated application submitted, unless a program change necessitates a review earlier. An example career pathway application can be found in Appendix A.

IV. AO-K Instruction

Curriculum Requirements

To properly implement the AO-K instructional model, CTE and adult education instructors must work together to develop a common set of learning objectives for co-taught courses within each AO-K pathway. These objectives should describe the integration of adult education content into the CTE classroom and how team teaching will deliver the content to students.

Pathway applications will include course syllabi and will also answer the following four questions:
1) What specific adult education and literacy content is taught during the program?
2) What specific workforce preparation activities are included in the AO-K program?
3) What occupational training is included in the AO-K program?
4) Who are the team teachers (CTE and adult education) for this pathway? Which team-teaching model(s) will be used?

For more detail, please refer to the AO-K career pathway application in Appendix A.

Team-Teaching Models

Team teaching is a system in which two or more teachers work together to plan, conduct, and evaluate the integrated outcomes, curriculum, learning activities, and assessments for the same group of learners. Based on information by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), Kansas promotes the use of any of the six research-based team-teaching models listed. Links to example videos from SBCTC are included below.

> Traditional Team Teaching – Teachers actively share instruction of all students.
> Collaborative Teaching – Teachers exchange and discuss ideas and theories in front of learners.
> Complementary/Supportive Team Teaching – One teacher teaches the content; the other provides follow-up activities.
> Parallel Instruction – Teachers teach the same material to different groups.
> Differentiated Split Class – Each teacher teaches a group based on their learning needs.
> Monitoring Teacher – One teacher instructs while the other monitors student understanding.

The team-teaching model used when implementing the AO-K model may vary based on class, content, or student variables. More information on different team-teaching models and their implementation can be found on the Washington SBCTC website or during the periodic team-teacher trainings hosted by KBOR staff.

As noted under Student Qualifications, students who do not qualify for adult education may be in the same classroom as AO-K students. Both the CTE instructor and the adult education instructor are free to assist all students in the classroom, regardless of enrollment in the adult education program.

V. Career Navigation

Career navigation is an important aspect of the AO-K model. Career navigation services provide additional support to students outside of the classroom to help remove barriers to participation and completion. State standards for Career Navigators can be found on the KBOR Adult Education Resources webpage.

VI. High School Equivalency (HSE)

Some AO-K students may already have a high-school diploma. Those that do not should work toward earning the HSE while enrolled in the AO-K pathway. In Kansas, adult students have two options for earning the HSE: the GED® and the Kansas Pathway to Career. Those options are detailed below.

GED®
The primary option for students in Kansas to earn the HSE is through the GED®. The GED® consists of four tests that a student must pass, after which a Kansas State High School Diploma will be issued. More GED® information can be found on the KBOR website GED Information webpage.

Kansas Pathway to Career (SB199)
The Kansas Pathway to Career is a new HSE option that uses completion of an AO-K pathway as part of the HSE criteria. For a list of participating institutions and qualifying AO-K pathways, please refer to the most recent Approved Credentials and Pathways list on the Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas webpage.

In addition to completing a designated AO-K pathway, students must meet the criteria outlined on the High School Equivalency Credential Requirements checklist on the Pathway to Career webpage. Once the student has completed all the established criteria, the adult education program must submit a completed checklist, supporting documentation, and a $25 payment to the designated Kansas Board of Regents staff member. Upon receipt of the required documentation, KBOR will verify and approve the student's application, and a Kansas State High School Diploma and transcript will be issued to the student by the Board of Regents' chosen vendor.

More information about these options is available through the local adult education program.

VII. Funding

This section provides an overview of the funding available for both students and institutions. The first part, Student Funding, focuses on the funding available to students to pay for the college courses in their selected AO-K pathway. The second section, State-Funded Tuition Reimbursement, provides information on tuition reimbursement programs that reimburse institutions for students who take qualifying courses. The third part, Institutional Funding, focuses on the funding available to individual institutions to pay the additional instructional costs incurred when implementing the AO-K model.

Student Funding
> Federal Financial Aid
Students who already have a high-school diploma, but still qualify for adult education, may use federal financial aid to pay for the courses in their selected AO-K pathway, where applicable. These students should follow the

normal financial aid process at the institution, with the support of adult education or other Career Navigator resources.

> Ability to Benefit

Institutions may grant an ability-to-benefit exception to AO-K students without a high-school diploma who are otherwise Pell-eligible. The ability-to-benefit process allows qualifying students to use their Pell grant for tiered or non-tiered courses, as well as other expenses in their selected AO-K pathway. The ability-to-benefit process may vary by institution, and local programs should discuss options with their financial aid offices to determine how to best access this funding stream.

State-Funded Tuition Reimbursement

> AO-K Proviso

The AO-K Proviso is a funding stream that funds tiered courses for AO-K students who do not have a high-school diploma. Tuition for these courses is waived by the institution, which then submits for reimbursement during the KHEDS special collection process.

The AO-K Proviso will pay tuition for students up through the end of the semester in which the student passes the GED® or obtains high-school equivalency, after which students are eligible for federal financial aid and other scholarships. If an AO-K student continues postsecondary courses after finishing the high-school equivalency process, institutions should assist the student with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or applying for scholarships so the student can use other funding to complete courses.

Example 1: A student who completes the high-school equivalency in September will have tuition paid through the end of that semester (generally ending in December).

Example 2: A student who completes the high-school equivalency in March will have tuition paid through the end of that semester (generally ending in May).

For additional information regarding financial aid and scholarships, contact the local postsecondary institution.

Institutional Funding

> Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Grant

Implementing the AO-K model requires adding a second instructor to team teach selected CTE courses, increasing instructional costs. While there are often competing priorities for instructor time, team teaching in an IET program that is an allowable and encouraged activity for adult education instructors. Institutions and their adult education programs should carefully assess the benefits provided to students using the AO-K model and determine how current resources can be reorganized to allow current instructional staff to fill the needs of the AO-K team teacher.

> GED Accelerator

GED Accelerator provides institutional incentive funding for adult education participants without a high-school diploma who are concurrently enrolled in a CTE program. This incentive applies not only to AO-K students, but to any adult education student enrolled in a CTE program at a public Kansas community or technical college. The incentives available under the GED Accelerator are:
- $1,000 to the institution for the first industry-recognized credential earned by qualifying participants
- $500 to the adult education program when a qualifying participant *passes* all four GED® test modules
- $170 to the adult education program when a qualifying participant *takes* all four GED® test modules (This incentive funding can be used to cover the fees for retaking any GED® tests.)

VIII. Data

Adult Education Student Information System (AESIS)

AESIS is the student information system that contains all student demographic, attendance, testing, and outcome data for each Kansas adult education participant. AESIS was developed to facilitate federal reporting and accurately track student participant data. As all AO-K students qualify for adult education, their information must be entered in AESIS based on the guidelines in the AESIS Manual. However, careful attention must be paid to the additional data requirements of AO-K as defined below.

Student Data

Student demographic, testing, attendance, and outcome data for all qualified AO-K students must be entered in AESIS. In addition to the general adult education data, programs must mark the student as "AO-K" in the **Student Info** tab and fill out the appropriate information under the **AO-K** tab. More detailed information can be found in the AESIS Manual on the KBOR website on the [Adult Education Resources webpage](#).

Hours of attendance

Hours of attendance must be recorded and entered in AESIS for all qualified AO-K students. Students may demonstrate attendance in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

1) CTE class time in which the adult education instructor is present
2) Out-of-class tutoring
3) Supplemental adult education classes
4) Distance education including clock time from distance-learning software approved by KBOR, or proxy hours using Learner Mastery or Teacher Verification (please see the Assessment Policy in the Kansas Adult Education Policy Manual on the [Adult Education Resources webpage](#))

Measurable Skill Gain (MSG)

There are multiple ways by which an AO-K student might demonstrate an MSG. There is no preference as to how a student earns an MSG.

Exit from Adult Education and Subsequent Postsecondary Enrollment

An MSG is recorded once a current AO-K student officially exits adult education but continues enrollment in postsecondary education. The MSG only counts if the subsequent postsecondary enrollment occurs within the same fiscal year as the exit from adult education.

Obtaining High School Equivalency

For AO-K students without a high-school diploma, an MSG is recorded for students when they obtain their high school equivalency.

Post-testing

AO-K students may be post-tested using the TABE assessment when they have accumulated the number of attendance hours required by the Assessment Policy in the Kansas Adult Education Policy Manual on the [Adult Education Resources webpage](#). An increase of at least one Educational Functioning Level (EFL) on the post-test from the pretest will demonstrate an MSG.

Progress on Transcript

Students enrolled in an Integrated Education and Training (IET) program can demonstrate an MSG by exhibiting progress on a secondary or postsecondary transcript. A paper or electronic copy of the transcript would be needed to document the skill gain.

Passing a Technical Exam

Students enrolled in an Integrated Education and Training (IET) program can demonstrate an MSG by passing a technical or occupational knowledge-based exam.

Kansas Higher Education Data System (KHEDS)

KHEDS is the portal through which public postsecondary institutions in Kansas submit student data, business training and enrichment information, program inventory, course inventory, and courses within programs. Information entered in KHEDS supports informed decision-making and funding determinations through the collection, analysis, and reporting of Kansas postsecondary education data.

Special Collection

For detailed information on the KHEDS special collection, please refer to the KHEDS manual (must log in to KHEDS to access). The purpose of this section is to provide information about the data verification process between AESIS and KHEDS when submitting for AO-K Proviso, AO-K TANF, and GED Accelerator funding.

Social Security Number (SSN)

The most important aspect when submitting for funding through the AO-K Proviso, AO-K TANF, or the GED Accelerator is that students' Social Security Numbers match in both AESIS and KHEDS. The SSN match is the basis for all data verification checks, and if the numbers do not match, no funding will be awarded.

For students who have provided a Social Security Number, institutions should check to ensure that no data-entry or typographical errors have occurred in either system.

For students who do not provide a Social Security Number, adult education programs will assign a proxy SSN that begins with the letter A (A**-**-****). Edits are in place that will allow the postsecondary institution to submit the same number in the special collection documents, allowing for the match process between the two data systems to successfully run.

Fiscal Year/Academic Year

Given the special collection and academic year collection cycles, it is possible that a student who was enrolled in AO-K would appear in one fiscal year in AESIS but be reported in the KHEDS special collection during the subsequent fiscal year. This typically occurs when a student enrolls in summer courses that are not reported until the AY collection in October.

In these cases, adult education programs should roll the AO-K student from one fiscal year to the next with an entry date of 07/01 of the current fiscal year. The student must be given zero (0) hours of attendance and does not need to have test scores entered. This will allow the verification between AESIS and KHEDS to run successfully and for funding to be awarded.

Appendix A: AO-K Career Pathway Application Example

A separate AO-K application form should be completed and approved for each AO-K pathway.

Please direct questions to:

Laura Leite, Associate Director for Adult & CTE, lleite@ksbor.org, (785) 430-4278 *or*
Hector Martinez, Director for Adult Education, hmartinez@ksbor.org, (785) 430-4283 *or*
April White, Director for Workforce Development, awhite@ksbor.org, (785) 430-4276

The application form is available on the KBOR Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas webpage. An example is below.

1. Institutional Information	
College Name:	Castle Black Institute of Technology
Adult Education Center Name:	Castle Black Adult Education Center
AO-K Coordinator (Name, Title, Phone, Email)	Jon Snow, Lord Commander (555) 462-7649 lrdcmdr998@cbit.edu

2. New AO-K Program Information	
Pathway Name:	Industrial Welding
If this program has been previously approved under other names, please include:	Welding
Start Date:	01/01/2022
Pathway CIP Code*:	48.0508
KHEDS Program Code*:	WELDA
Award Level/Credit Hours**:	Cert A
Industry-recognized credential(s) obtained through this pathway:	AWS 1F SMAW, 1F GMAW, 1F GTAW; OSHA 30
Using the Kansas Labor Information Center, find the KS labor data for each occupation and include below.	
Occupation Title:	welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers
Median Wage:	$40,780
Is the occupation high-demand in Kansas?	yes
Where is the occupation identified in the Local Needs Assessment? (Please attach page.)	Page 33 (attached)

*If you are unsure of the CIP code or KHEDS program code, please contact the person responsible for data at the institution or email kbor_aok@ksbor.org
**Award Levels: SAPP 1-15 credit hours, Cert A 16-29 credit hours, Cert B 30-44 credit hours, Cert C 45-59 credit hours, AAS 60-68 credit hours

3. Pathway Entrance Criteria	
Minimum National Reporting System (NRS) Skill Level required for this pathway:	3
Minimum TABE Math Assessment score for this pathway:	495
Minimum TABE Reading Assessment score for this pathway:	500
Minimum TABE Language Assessment score for this pathway:	510
Must meet minimum scores on which assessment(s)?	One - Any

4. Identify All Pathway Courses

Course ID	Course Title	Credit Hours
WELD0100	Welding Safety/OSHA 30	2
WELD0105	Welding Blueprints	3
WELD110	Cutting Processes	3
WELD0120	SMAW	3
WELD0130	GMAW	3
WELD0140	GTAW	3
WELD201	OXY Fuel Welding	1
BUSN0250	Obtaining Employment	1
	Total:	19

5. Identify Co-taught Pathway Courses

Course ID	Course Title	Credit Hours	Adult Education Content (use CCR Standards)
WELD0100	Welding Safety/OSHA30	2	*Reading CCR 4, Reading CCR 7, Language CCR 4*
WELD0105	Welding Blueprints	3	*MP.1, MP.4, MP.6*
BUSN0250	Obtaining Employment	1	*Reading CCR 10, Speaking and Listening CCR 1, Language CCR 1*

6. Learning Objectives

Attach course syllabi and a common set of learning objectives for the co-taught courses in the pathway.

The common set of learning objectives should answer the following four questions:

1) **What specific adult education and literacy content is taught during the program?**

   The co-instruction provided in the AO-K Welding Cert A program at the Castle Black Institute of Technology focuses on building student reading, writing, communication, and basic math skills. Those skills specifically align with the standards listed in table 5 above.

2) **What specific workforce preparation activities* are included in the AO-K program?**
   *Workforce preparation activities: Activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

   The AO-K Welding Cert A program includes sections on researching, applying, and obtaining employment. Additionally, the program includes integrated academic content focused on reading, writing, communication, and math skills needed to obtain employment and succeed as a welder.

3) **What occupational training** is included in the AO-K program?**

   **Occupational training: An organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Local areas must give priority consideration to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area. Such training must:
   1) *Be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy;*
   2) *Be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal; and*
   3) *Lead to the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.*

   The AO-K Welding Cert A provides students with the welding, safety, and occupational skills necessary to obtain entry-level employment as a welder with proficiency in basic welding position and types.

4) **Who are the team teachers (CTE and adult education) for this pathway? Which team-teaching model(s) will be used?**

   Welding instructor Jane Steel and Adult Education instructor John Copper will blend traditional team teaching and collaborative teaching for the Obtaining Employment and Welding Safety courses. For the Welding Blueprints course, the instructors will provide complementary or supportive team teaching, giving learners opportunities to practice with follow-up activities.