



COMMONWEALTH TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Launches Institution-Wide Initiative to Close Skills Gap and Improve Student Career Readiness



PROBLEM

Pennsylvania employers echo national sentiment that lack of “soft skills” is their biggest challenge to hiring quality talent.



SOLUTION

Launch institution-wide initiative to comprehensively embed “soft skills” into the DNA of the school’s culture.



APPROACH

Comprehensive
Competency-based
Intentional
Student-centric
Meaningful
Scalable



PLATFORM

CareerPrepped

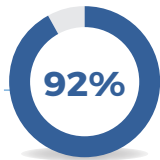


EWS PILOT CERTIFICATION

Provide a signal to students, graduates and employers that CTI has identified, mapped and embedded specific essential workforce skills in CTI’s certified programs, and demonstrated that the institution has a process to assess students’ skill development.

BACKGROUND

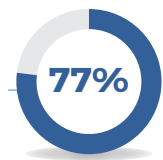
Commonwealth Technical Institute (CTI) at the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) observed that their employer partners frequently cited lack of “soft skills” as their biggest challenge to hiring quality talent. This observation matched national employer sentiment evidenced through many published research findings such as the following:



of executives say soft skills are equal to or more important than hard skills – *Wall Street Journal*



of talent professionals said bad hires typically lack soft skills – *LinkedIn*



of global CEOs say underdeveloped soft skills are biggest threat to business – *PwC*



A Comprehensive Solution

CTI consulted with their Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members, comprised of industry stakeholders, to identify specific “soft skills” lacking in the labor market. CTI recognized that addressing the problem through curriculum alone was insufficient as this traditional approach has historically been taken by many education institutions, yet the soft skills gap persists. So, they sought to implement an institution-wide initiative to bake “soft skills” into the DNA of the school’s culture.



CareerPrepped fit nicely into what we wanted to address. It enabled us to transfer ‘soft skill’ development and demonstration into the entire school – instituting it schoolwide in all programs and even in counseling departments, student support, etc.

Joy Berezansky
Commonwealth Technical Institute

ACCSC EWS Pilot Program

CTI chose to participate in a programmatic certification program in pilot phase from the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) called the Essential Workforce Skills (EWS) Programmatic Certification. The EWS pilot supported CTI in the development of a roadmap to implement an outcomes-based initiative to close the gap between skill development and skill demonstration.



CTI's Implementation Highlights

- Redesigned curriculum introducing “soft skills” to all students prior to entering core programs
- Expanded introductory “soft skills” course to three courses (Career Prepped: Self Awareness and Career Goals; Career Prepped: Soft Skills, Teamwork and Leadership; Career Prepped: Employment Readiness)
- Mapped “soft skills” course competencies to EWS competencies
- Revised assignments in courses to align with EWS competencies
- Adopted digital portfolios for students to evidence their skills
- Implemented work-ready rubrics aligned to EWS competencies that are completed at time of student progress reports
- Required completion of an electronic portfolio before graduation

About Commonwealth Technical Institute



A division of Pennsylvania's Department of Labor & Industry, Commonwealth Technical Institute at Hiram G. Andrews Center is an ACCSC-accredited institution that provides individualized vocational rehabilitation services and on-site post-secondary education to prepare individuals for employment and independence.
[Learn more: www.dli.pa.gov](http://www.dli.pa.gov)

The EWS Pilot

The EWS pilot was born out of ACCSC's recognition that essential workforce skills are an essential part of a high-quality career education program. However, ACCSC recognized that a structured, formal quality assurance process was needed to guide schools on how to comprehensively address essential workforce skills in their programs. CTI has been a pilot partner in this innovative program.



We joined the EWS pilot because we were looking for a mechanism to help us ensure we were giving our students a way to develop and demonstrate certain behavioral skills that are hard to teach and measure through traditional means. The pilot has brought our team together and we've been able to make significant improvements, not only to our processes, teaching methods, etc., but also to our culture.

Pamela Evans-Hartland
Commonwealth Technical Institute

About ACCSC



ACCSC's Mission is to Ensure Quality Education that Enhances Student Success in the Workforce. ACCSC encourages schools to adopt a framework for high-quality programs which includes not only technical and academic competencies, but also workforce competency - those skills necessary to succeed in any career and to continuously find, attract, and create opportunities for working and learning that are lifelong and lifewide.
[Learn more: www.accsc.org](http://www.accsc.org)

About CareerPrepped



CareerPrepped is a lifelong career success system that empowers individuals to continuously build in-demand soft skills, prove their soft and hard skills with open badges and portfolio evidence, and showcase their full set of abilities to employers through their own career site. CareerPrepped is an ACCSC member service powered by MaxKnowledge, Inc., the leading provider of online talent development solutions for the career education community.
[Learn more: www.careerprepped.com/for-organizations](http://www.careerprepped.com/for-organizations)