Designing and Delivering Career Pathways at Community Colleges
Practice Guide Introduction

What Works Clearinghouse™

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This Practice Guide, developed by the What Works Clearinghouse™ (WWC) in conjunction with an expert panel, focuses on promising career pathways interventions where there is evidence of improved educational or labor market outcomes. It provides community colleges with five specific recommendations for supporting occupational skills training through career pathways. This guide may also interest employers, labor unions, and industry associations that wish to collaborate with community colleges to design or operate workforce development strategies that are responsive to the preparation and training needs of the modern workforce.

Recommendations in this practice guide:

1. Intentionally design and structure career pathways to enable students to further their education, secure a job, and advance in employment.

2. Deliver contextualized or integrated basic skills instruction to accelerate students' entry into and successful completion of career pathways.

3. Offer flexible instructional delivery schedules and models to improve credit accumulation and completion of non-degree credentials along career pathways.

4. Provide coordinated comprehensive student supports to improve credit accumulation and completion of non-degree credentials along career pathways.

5. Develop and continuously leverage partnerships to prepare students and advance their labor market success.

The discussion of each recommendation includes four critical components:

The Recommendation

Includes an actionable recommendation, a summary of the research evidence that supports the recommendation, and a description of how the recommended practice supports student learning.

Guidance

Explains how to carry out the recommendation, informed by studies that support the recommendation, as well as the panel's expertise and knowledge of strategies available to help implement the recommendation.

Potential Obstacles

Includes obstacles and advice from the expert panel about how to overcome them.

Tools and Resources

Offers practical information and examples to help practitioners implement the recommendation.

Readers are encouraged to use the advice provided in ways that work best in the varied contexts in which they work. Users of this Practice Guide may decide to implement some or all of the recommendations.

The complete Practice Guide can be accessed through the What Works Clearinghouse website: **https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/27**.