

Ability to Benefit Update and Career Pathways Support Definition:

We have received a definition of “career pathways” from a September 15, 2015 U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid presentation entitled **Career Pathway Programs and Title IV Eligibility**. This definition means both the traditional IBEST and Academic IBEST programs meet the definition of “career pathways.” The following is ATB background and confirmation of the career pathways definition.

Students who are enrolled in an eligible career pathway program, on or after July 1, 2014, and who are not high school graduates, may be eligible to receive Title IV aid if the student meets one of the following ATB alternatives:

- Passes an independently administered Department of Education approved ATB test.
- Completes at least 6 credit hours or 225 clock hours that are applicable toward a degree or certificate offered by the postsecondary institution.

A student who meets one of those alternatives may use that alternative to establish his or her Title IV eligibility at any eligible Title IV institution where the student *enrolls in an eligible career pathway program*.

“Eligible career pathway programs contain 2 components:

- *An adult education component, and*
- *A Title IV eligible postsecondary program component”*

The Adult Education Component is defined as academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increases an individual’s ability to:

- read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- Transitions to postsecondary education and training;
- Obtains employment

The definition of eligible program includes all coursework of Title IV academic programs;

- Be at least a two-academic-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree; or
- Be at least a one-academic-year training program that leads to a certificate, or other non-degree recognized credential, and prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.
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A student enrolled in *any* developmental/remedial course would not qualify under these ATB guidelines. Current State Need Grant ATB awarding practices continue and will be codified to align with the federal requirements in the upcoming WAC revision.

Should you have questions, please contact Scott Copeland, Student Services Policy Associate at scopeland@sbctc.edu

SBCTC Education Division

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