



At-a-Glance: Interim Credentials Apprenticeship Final Rule, 29 CFR Part 29

What are Interim Credentials?

The revised regulations include new provisions in § 29.5(b)(16) that provide for interim credentials. These are credentials issued by the Registration Agency, upon request of the appropriate sponsor, as certification of competency attainment by an apprentice. Issued in the form of certificates, interim credentials provide portable recognition of an apprentice's accomplishments. Interim credentials can only be issued for recognized components of an apprenticeable occupation.

How was this issue addressed in the original regulations?

The previous regulations did not address the use of interim credentials.

What is the reason for the change?

By including interim credentials, the revised regulations further align Registered Apprenticeship with the needs of new workers and high-growth industries that value and utilize certifications of skill and/or competencies. Interim credentials offer active apprentices recognition of their accomplishments and enable them to demonstrate to employers their proficiency in the critical skills and competencies required in their industry. Use of interim credentials also helps modernize the National Apprenticeship System by providing a greater measure of flexibility to program sponsors and apprentices.

Programs that choose to use interim credentials must identify and demonstrate how these credentials link to the components of the apprenticeable occupation, and establish a process for assessing an apprentice's competency. Interim credentials do not document the completion of an apprenticeship program. The regulations make a clear distinction between the issuance of a completion certificate and the issuance of interim credentials. For further information, please refer to pages 64411-64413 of the Federal Register Notice for the final rule (73 FR 64402, Oct. 29, 2008).

Are programs required to use Interim Credentials?

No. Apprenticeship programs are not required to offer interim credentials. If a program sponsor *chooses* to register program standards that use a competency-based or hybrid approach and *chooses* to issue interim credentials, the program sponsor must follow the requirements set forth in § 29.5(b)(16).

The Office of Apprenticeship (OA) anticipates that interim credentials will be used most frequently by programs that take the competency-based or hybrid approach to progression through apprenticeship.

What are the next steps?

The final rule was published October 29, 2008, in the Federal Register, and takes effect on December 29, 2008. The final rule provides State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs) with two years from the effective date to implement necessary changes. OA recognizes that program sponsors and SAAs may require more information and clarification regarding interim credentials. OA intends to issue additional policy guidance and hold meetings and training sessions to provide further explanation and technical assistance about interim credentials, and other changes outlined in the revised regulations. These training and technical assistance materials and additional policy guidance about final rule implementation will be posted on the OA's regulations Web page, www.doleta.gov/oa/regulations.cfm.

For more information about the revised regulations, please contact OA at (202) 693-2796 or Regs.Apprenticeship@dol.gov.