

Using MSSC Courses For-Credit at the Secondary and Post-Secondary Levels

The Alamo Academies program has developed one of the most successful models in the U.S. for integrating the courses and industry-recognized credentials offered by the national Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) into their academic, for-credit curriculum. The Alamo Academies program is a model of the kind of community-wide strategy that, in MSSC's experience, provides the best framework for successful MSSC implementation.

The program is an educational partnership between the Alamo Colleges, San Antonio area cities, secondary school districts, local business and industry, the San Antonio Manufacturers Association, regional Workforce Investment Board and Economic Development offices. MSSC Courses that help students prepare for the MSSC Certified Production Technician (CPT) credentials are integrated into both for-credit and non-credit courses for participating high school and community college students.

Support from area employers is notable. Companies offer summer internships to high school students between their junior and senior years. The internship is a full-time, eight-week long position that pays students some \$2,800. Participating companies include AT&T, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Pratt & Whitney, and Toyota. A good example is Toyota's use of MSSC which includes:

- A requirement that all high school students participating in the junior internship first secure a CPT Safety Credential
- A requirement that all high school students participating in senior year internship also secure a CPT Quality Practices & Measurement Credential
- Added employment consideration for students who continue at the postsecondary level to secure CPT Manufacturing Process & Production and Maintenance Awareness Credentials
- Support for MSSC credentials as a good foundation for students who want to seek additional "stackable" national credentials at Alamo Colleges by adding Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC) training and credentialing for sector-specific advanced auto technician specialization

As part of this community-wide collaborative, school districts provide the books and transportation for high schoolers, and two-year Alamo Colleges provide MSSC-authorized Instructors and MSSC-authorized Assessment Centers. Graduates receive a high school diploma, a Level I Certificate (*almost 1/2 way toward an AAS*) and industry-recognized credentials, depending on the Academy. Success rates are impressive: 42% of graduates receive jobs and the remaining 58% go on to higher education.

The success of the Alamo Academies is also a powerful tool for economic development. The Regional Economic Development Office uses the Academies program as a strong argument for companies to locate in the San Antonio area. The office helped to form the Academies and plays an active intermediary role between the Academies and company locational teams.

The Alamo Academies are succeeding in increasing the available pool of skilled entry-level workers for local industries, and the MSSC CPT training and credentialing program is proving an effective tool in strengthening that success. For more about the Alamo Academies, call 210-485-0811 or visit <http://www.alamo.edu/academies>.