

EXHIBIT A

TECHNICAL BRIEF

Job Qualifications of ACT NCRC® Recipients

MARY LEFEBVRE

Two decades of collecting data generated by the ACT WorkKeys® assessment system contributes to unique ACT data sets. ACT JobPro®, ACT's proprietary database of occupational information, represents a one-of-a-kind repository of data describing the tasks, skills, and skill requirements established by more than 20,000 job analysis studies. The common language of the ACT WorkKeys system creates linkages between ACT JobPro and the abundant examinee data produced by administering millions of ACT WorkKeys assessments.

Linking these data sets creates a unique perspective on skill supply-and-demand forces within the workforce, one that is useful to individuals, employers, workforce and economic developers, and policymakers. ACT data also help individuals connect with jobs, enable employers to identify qualified applicants, facilitate standards for jobs and training programs, and serve as an indicator of career and work readiness.

The multilevel ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC) is based on the ACT WorkKeys system and its linked data sets. These relationships often lead to questions such as “How does an ACT NCRC level relate to skill requirements?”

“Qualified for” versus “Meets Skill Requirements”

What jobs are ACT NCRC holders qualified for? Individuals who have earned the ACT NCRC have demonstrated that they have the core foundational

skills to be successful in a job. Individuals with a Silver ACT NCRC, for example, have the essential foundational skills needed for 67% of jobs.

Determining the precise number of jobs for which an ACT NCRC recipient has the skill requirements is challenging for a number of reasons, including:

- ACT JobPro organizes task, skill, and skill level information in terms of O*NET occupations. Multiple profiles have been completed for most occupations.
- The ACT NCRC level is determined by the lowest score its recipient achieved on Applied Mathematics (AM), Reading for Information (RI), and Locating Information (LI). This means that many combinations of scores are associated with the same certificate level. For example, a Bronze ACT NCRC is issued for combinations of scores that include 3(AM)-3(RI)-3(LI), 3-4-3, 3-4-4, 4-4-3, 5-3-5, 3-5-3, 3-3-5, and many others.
- Skill requirements for occupations listed in ACT JobPro can be expressed as more than one hundred different combinations of scores achieved on the three assessments supporting the ACT NCRC.
- Some occupations listed in ACT JobPro do not require the three assessments associated with the ACT NCRC. This is because related job profiles concluded that other ACT WorkKeys skill areas are more essential to performing the tasks these occupations require.

- The **ACT WorkKeys** assessment system measures job skills that are valuable for any occupation—skilled or professional—at any level and in any industry.
- The **ACT National Career Readiness Certificate** is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies achievement of foundational skills essential for workplace success.
- The **Occupational Information Network (O*NET)** is an electronic portal used to access occupational information generated by federal agencies. Different employers often identify the same job with different titles; to remedy this, every job profile is assigned a code that links it to an O*NET occupation and, by extension, to data and information that pertain to it.

Mary LeFebvre is a principal research scientist specializing in workforce research, policy evaluation, and competency supply/demand analysis.

ACT Technical Briefs provide reliability, validity, and other psychometric analysis on ACT education and workforce development assessments, services, and programs. For more on ACT WorkKeys and the ACT NCRC, visit www.act.org/workkeys.





The Question of “Qualified for”

A conservative approach can be used to estimate the number of jobs—and percentage of profiled jobs—for which a certificate recipient is qualified, based on possession of the essential foundational skills.¹ An ACT WorkKeys score indicates the ability to perform skills associated with a specific skill level and all of the levels that precede it: a Level 6 score on Reading for Information reports the ability to perform skills that are associated with Level 6 as well as Levels 3–5.

A Platinum ACT NCRC requires minimum scores of Level 6 on three assessments, so the individual who earns this credential would meet the score requirements for any job requiring scores of Level 6 or lower in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information. Similarly, the recipient of a Gold ACT NCRC would qualify for all occupations requiring scores of Level 5 or lower in these three ACT WorkKeys skill areas.

This approach yields a breakdown of jobs by certificate level. “Jobs” are O*NET-defined occupations identified in ACT JobPro. At least one profile for each occupation was performed between 2004 and 2014, and the profile(s) identified the three ACT NCRC skills as essential.

The figure should be interpreted as showing that individuals with a Silver ACT NCRC have the essential foundational skills needed for 67% of jobs.

ACT NCRC level	Percentage of jobs	ACT NCRC level	Percentage of jobs
	99%		67%
	93%		15%

Source: ACT JobPro database, 2004–2014.

Percentage of jobs recipients of each ACT NCRC level have the essential foundational skills for

ACT National Career Readiness Certificate

The ACT NCRC is a portable, evidence-based credential that certifies foundational skills essential for workplace success. This credential is used across all sectors of the economy and verifies the following cognitive skills:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Reading and using work-related text
- Applying information from workplace documents to solve problems
- Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
- Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations

- Locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically
- Comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics

Key Takeaway

The question of which jobs an individual who has earned the ACT NCRC is qualified to perform is difficult to answer due to many variables. Rather than *qualified for*, the key is to address how the core skill levels achieved *meet job skill requirements*. For example, an individual with a Silver ACT NCRC has the essential foundational skills required by 67% of jobs. ■

¹ “Profiled Jobs” are O*NET-defined occupations identified in ACT JobPro for which at least one profile for each occupation was performed between 2004 and 2014 and the profile(s) identified the three ACT NCRC skills as essential. ACT NCRC levels were assigned to each job profile in ACT JobPro based on the maximum score for each of the three ACT NCRC skill assessments.