



Technical Advisory Committee Guidebook *For Postsecondary Schools*

About the Division:

Career & Technical Education (CTE) is the administrative arm of the State Board for Career & Technical Education that provides leadership, advocacy, quality control, and technical assistance for career & technical education in Idaho, from secondary students to adults. CTE provides the focus for career & technical education within existing schools and institutions by targeting resources, organizing and applying industry input, and managing programs.

Introduction

Idaho Career & Technical Education believes that all Idaho residents deserve the opportunity to experience the dignity of work, and the education required to prepare them for work. As Idaho's primary educational delivery system for workforce education, career & technical education is critical to the big picture of lifelong learning, ongoing training and education, economic vitality, and success in the workplace.

To fulfill our mission of *preparing Idaho's youth and adults for high-skill, in-demand careers* there must be a strong partnership between education and industry.

Industry represents the ultimate employer of the students we prepare. Industry is also constantly incorporating the latest technology into its processes and envisioning the future of the marketplace –which translates to the ever-evolving skills necessary for their workforce.

Purpose of Technical Advisory Committees

Successful career and technical education programs maintain close ties with business, industry, and labor and must be integrally linked to their communities and state. Career and technical education programs in Idaho are required to “incorporate active input from an appropriately qualified business/industry technical advisory committee.”¹

An effective technical advisory committee reveals local career opportunities, prepares students to enter the workforce, and/or helps upgrade the skills of workers already employed. The committee advises the program to ensure that it stays up to date in terms of content and training. Committee members also assist in, and advocate for, student, faculty, and program needs. Ultimately, committees strengthen the working relationships between the career and technical education programs and the communities they serve. Specifically, technical advisory committees should:

- bring focus to important program outcomes.
- bring training expertise to the table – they provide on-the-job training to their employees, and can share best practices.
- secure resources for programs – i.e., equipment, manpower, expertise, speakers/judges for student organizations (CTSOs).
- provide students and staff with new opportunities – internships, work experiences, and career exploration.
- connect with the larger community – committee members have networks they can engage as appropriate.
- advocate on behalf of programs.

¹ IDAPA 55.01.03.102.02(g)

Creating a Technical Advisory Committee

Advisory committees are generally established by a program representative, which is usually the departmental chairperson. An advisory committee can also be established as a joint committee with nearby school districts (Advisory committees can be shared between secondary and postsecondary programs as long as adequate geographic representation exists from business and industry representatives. This is especially helpful in ensuring alignment of curriculum and seamless transition for students from high school to the technical colleges.) For new career and technical education programs, or for those programs in need of a more formal committee structure, the program representative should take these steps to help ensure the success of the committee.

1. Determine the structure of the committee:
 - a. Interview the representatives from programs with well-established committees.
 - b. Study the duties, function, and framework of existing committees.
 - c. Observe committee meetings.
 - d. Consider creating an ad hoc committee to plan and develop the new advisory committee.
2. Prepare a general structure and plan for the committee.
3. Obtain appropriate approvals.²
 - a. Explain the intended function of the advisory committee to administration.
 - b. Share examples of other committees, particularly for similar areas of study or those with similar workforce needs.
 - c. List potential benefits to the administration, institution, and teachers.

General Committee Framework

An advisory committee is a group that is:

- recognized for its expertise in a specific occupational area,
- made up of business, industry, and labor representatives of the occupation(s) for which training is provided, and
- organized to advise institution personnel on matters concerning the career and technical education program.

Committee Size

The size of the committee may vary by the size of the community, scope of the career and technical education program, diversity of businesses and industries in the community, and purpose of the committee. Size may also vary over time to align with

² Note: If a program representative is unable to obtain approval for an advisory committee, ICTE should be notified immediately, as committees are a *required* component of CTE programs.

specific committee activities. Committees should be large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to be managed effectively.

Committees with fewer than five members tend to be less effective as they may have limited perspectives, inadequate information on a number of target jobs, and too few employers represented. Committees with more than 15 members can become unmanageable. Five to nine members are generally an adequate size for most committees.

Length of Service

To ensure continuity among committee members, each committee member should serve a standard term length, generally three years. These terms should be staggered, with 1/3 of the membership expiring each year. For a new committee, this may mean that initial appointments are assigned for one, two, or three years. As the initial appointments expire, subsequent members will serve the standard three-year term.

Generally, committee members should not be appointed to successive terms to ensure the committee allows for new perspectives. In addition, former members should have at least a one-year absence before being eligible for reappointment.

Governance

The program representative is responsible for developing draft policies (bylaws) regarding the technical advisory committee. Written policies should address the following items and should be established during the first or second meeting of the committee:

- Approval of committee establishment
- Committee membership
- Appointment procedures
- Length of appointments
- Officers and their responsibilities
- Any available financial resources
- Minimum number of meetings annually
- Any standing subcommittees
- Communication protocol with school administration
- Any data collection or annual reporting requirements

These bylaws may be specific to a program or general for many programs within a postsecondary institution. Bylaws help establish expectations for industry representatives and provide a process by which concerns or issues can be addressed.

Meeting Frequency

The frequency of meetings is dependent on the implementation of the program of work (Attachment A). Some committees may need to meet monthly; others may meet bi-monthly or quarterly during the academic year. All programs should demonstrate that the committee has taken an active role in its relevant career and technical education

program through the implementation of the program of work. ICTE's expectation is that a committee meet at least twice each year.

Meetings can employ the use of technology (i.e., conference calls) as appropriate. The program representative can also meet individually with committee members to collaborate on specific goals and action items stemming from the program of work. Industry involvement in the development and successful execution of the program of work is far more important than when or how meetings take place.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

As committees are developed and conduct their ongoing business, members may be assigned specific roles and responsibilities that align with individual roles on the committee and within the community.

Industry Representatives

- Create and accomplish program of work
- Support Career & Technical Student Organizations, if applicable

Role of Program Representative

- Work with chair to schedule meetings and create agendas
- Orient new committee members
- Track progress for the program of work and assist industry representatives as needed
- Communicate with CTE Program Quality Manager

Role of Institution Administration

- Invite and appoint new members
- Publish press release naming new members
- List technical advisory committees in institution publications

Selection of Members and Appointment Process

Committee members should be appointed using the guidelines outlined below and a standard selection process. Division representatives, instructors or faculty of the programs, and other staff may serve *only* in an ex-officio capacity.

1. Develop a list of prospective members that include several key characteristics.
 - a. Representatives of:
 - i. business/industry
 - ii. local community (including Idaho Department of Labor representatives, if located in the community)
 - iii. general geographic area to be served
 - iv. programs at other schools, if applicable
 - b. People who:
 - i. have recent experience related to the program area
 - ii. are available to attend TAC meetings

- iii. have an interest in education and the program
2. Once the list is compiled, interview prospective members. The interviews should:
 - a. explain the nature of the committee.
 - b. explain the prospective member's role on the committee.
 - c. describe the terms and length of service.
 - d. gauge the prospective member's level of interest in serving and determine to what extent his or her participation would benefit the program.
3. Send an invitation letter to prospective new member, which is signed by appropriate leadership, including the date, time, and location of the next committee meeting (see Attachment B for an example).
4. Once the administrator approves the appointment and the member has accepted it, send a formal letter of appointment (see Attachment C for an example).

Committee Meetings

Conducting the First Meeting and/or the First Meeting of the Academic Year

The initial committee meeting is critical, as it provides the foundation to engage the interest and support of committee members. The program representative facilitates the meeting until the committee selects a chairperson. It is essential that the program representative contact members and organize an agenda well in advance of the meeting. In addition, the program representative may want to have discussions with new members to ensure that at least one individual is willing to serve as chairperson.

Organizing and Conducting Meetings

Following the initial meeting, committees may fluctuate in the number of times they meet throughout the academic year. The Annual Program of Work (see template in Attachment A) helps to determine the frequency of the meetings. Contributions of advisory committee members depend to a great extent on how they are prepared for, and oriented to, their roles. For the committee to be effective, program of work responsibilities should be divided among all members so that no one individual has total responsibility for the committee's success.

The Chairperson

The chairperson collaborates with the program representative and facilitates member participation. The chairperson should be familiar with Roberts' Rules of Order and should have the ability to lead.

The chairperson's responsibilities include:

- coordinating with committee secretary (program representative) to establish meeting dates and call the committee together when appropriate.
- developing the meeting agenda with the secretary.
- preparing background information and reports as necessary.

- seeking consultants for advice on specific problems.
- presiding at meetings and ensuring agenda and schedules are followed.
- promoting the committee's role as an advisory, not policy-making, body.
- helping members reach consensus on issues.
- reviewing meeting minutes with the secretary for accuracy.
- representing the committee at various official functions (e.g., Career & Technical Student Organization banquets, board of trustees meetings).
- assigning/organizing sub-committees, standing committees, and ad hoc committees.
- maintaining communication with members, program representatives, and board members.
- determining strategies for developing and completing the program of work.
- recruiting members for the committee.
- following up on committee decisions to ensure that they are acted upon.

The Vice Chairperson

The vice chairperson is familiar with all the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson and will assume these responsibilities in the absence of the chairperson.

The Secretary (Program Representative)

The success of the committee depends a great deal on the program representative, who serves as the committee secretary. The secretary must devote enough time and attention to keep the committee actively involved in the career and technical education program. The secretary plays a dual role, switching from leader to helper, depending on the needs of the committee.

The secretary's responsibilities include:

- coordinating meeting arrangements.
- developing meeting agendas with the chairperson and distributing them to the committee members in advance of the meeting.
- acting as recorder for the committee (e.g., coordinate all mailings, take minutes, compile committee recommendations for leadership).
- reviewing goals and objectives with the committee.
- providing members with resource materials and program information.
- initiating and facilitating discussion during each meeting.
- providing feedback to members on the results of their recommendations.
- compiling and maintaining contact information and background data from committee members, including e-mail addresses.

Ongoing Committee Activities

All members of the committee have the following responsibilities:

- Attending meetings regularly
- Assisting with development and execution of the program of work
- Respecting the opinions of other committee members
- Helping reach consensus on issues
- Maintaining objectivity and focus on the needs of the program
- Making recommendations
- Accepting assignments for subcommittee work

Given their different functions within the education system, industry, and the community, committee members will have a wide variety of roles and responsibilities on the committee. The following list, while not exhaustive, should be useful in determining how committee members can contribute.

Offer Guidance		
Labor market information	On-the-job training techniques	Equipment and technology
Skill gaps	Certifications	Facility design
Marketing/Communications	Needs analysis	Curriculum review
Work Experience/Career Exposure		
Career exploration	Internships/job opportunities	In-service opportunities for faculty
Career & Technical Student Organizations		
Speakers	Judges	Leadership development
Financial Support and Advocacy		
Scholarships and fundraising	Support college bonds and other legislative efforts	Equipment and supplies donation/purchase

Developing the Annual Program of Work

During the first committee meeting each academic year, create the program of work (see Attachment A for a template). Investing time in developing a quality program of work will guide the committee for the remainder of the year. Align the program of work with the reasons for having a technical advisory committee. The committee can provide the following benefits to the program:

- Bring focus to important program outcomes
- Provide training and best practice expertise
- Secure resources for the program (i.e., equipment, manpower, expertise, speakers/judges for CTSOs)
- Identify new opportunities for students and faculty (i.e., internships, work experiences, exposure to career options)
- Connect the program with the larger community through colleagues and networking
- Advocate on behalf of the program

To make it even simpler, the action items can be developed under the following objectives:

- Outcomes
- Resources – Curriculum, Equipment, Expertise
- Exposure to Work/Careers
- Advocacy

All goals and activities should be formatted as SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. A few examples are:

- Provide XX quality work experiences to students by March 20XX.
- Secure resources to purchase (or secure a donation) a XXX by December 20XX.
- Recruit XX freshmen to the Fall 20XX semester.

Once the program of work is finalized, incorporate a progress review into future meeting agendas. The need for subcommittees and assignments for committee members should become clear.

Reporting Requirements

In Idaho, technical advisory committees are required to meet at least twice per academic year and should demonstrate that the committee has taken an active role in the program.

Idaho Career & Technical Education requires that the Annual Program of Work (Attachment A) be submitted by June 1 each year. The "Status" column should be completed by the program representative prior to forwarding the report to the Dean of the Technical College. The Dean will compile the reports (using Attachment D) and submit them to ICTE. Committees should ensure their recordkeeping supports this requirement. Reports should be emailed to: tac@cte.idaho.gov.

Additional Resources

The Association for Career & Technical Education (ACTE) has developed a handbook "Building Advisory Boards that Matter" that provides additional recommendations. It can be purchased at www.acteonline.org/shop.