

# YouScience® Industry Certifications FAQs

The top frequently asked questions about Industry Certifications.

## Q. What are Industry Certifications?

**A.** Industry Certifications are end-of-course or end-of-program certification exams. They're entry- to mid-level industry knowledge and skills certifications. They're used in career and technical education (CTE) programs in high schools, technical schools, and two and four-year colleges.

## Q. What value do the exams offer students, educators, and industry?

**A.** Earned certifications give students tangible proof of their skills and knowledge. Proof they can use to enter the workforce or skip entry-level college courses, and proof of the skills needed by industry.

Educators access validated industry standards, exams, and data to support their programs and meet federal and state requirements. Comprehensive pre- and post-exams let them measure student growth, drive program improvements, adapt to local pathway needs, build stackable credentials, and easily meet and report on funding requirements. Data also lets educators increase diversity in certification programs to maximize funding.

Standards give employers and educators a common language about industry needs, which strengthens education-to-career connections.

Note: For information about pretesting in your state, contact a YouScience representative.

## Q. What makes YouScience's offering better than other vendors?

**A.** YouScience offers the nation's largest library of industry-recognized exams. Exams are available for all National Career Clusters, offer detailed district-level reporting, can be proctored remotely, and support pre- and post-testing.

## Q. How many exams are there, and how are they organized?

**A.** YouScience offers more than 200 entry- to mid-level industry certifications that align with the National Career Clusters® Framework. We also offer an employability and soft skills cluster. Each certification comes with a comprehensive set of standards created by industry and education subject matter experts (SMEs). See [available clusters and exams](#).

## Q. What are the top exams?

A. A few of our most popular exams include the [21st Century Skills exams](#). This cluster includes the 21st Century Success Skills exam that assesses employability or soft skills, General Financial Literacy, and Preparing for College and Careers.

Other popular certifications and certification groups include Information Technology, Food and Nutrition, Medical Terminology, Manufacturing, Business, and Construction Trades. See [available clusters and exams](#).

## Q. What does industry-recognized mean?

A. Industry-recognized means exams are relevant to and valid for industry. That's achieved when industry professionals help create, validate, and maintain exams and standards.

## Q. How do you determine the standards for an exam?

A. SMEs from government, industry, education, associations, and YouScience specialists develop our standards and certification exams. SME educators work in the classroom and industry professionals work directly in the field.

For example, professional welders or marketers act as SMEs for welding or marketing standards and exams along with educator experts actively teaching those subjects.

In the case of the [21st Century Skills standards](#) and exams, industry professionals across a variety of fields offer expertise for a holistic workforce solution.

## Q. Who writes Industry Certifications material?

A. Our team of [psychometric](#) and exam creation specialists works with external SMEs to develop exam standards and exams. This combination of experts helps ensure certification subject matter is current, accurate, validated, and aligned to industry needs.

All Industry Certifications standards also align with the [National Career Clusters® Framework](#), which “serves as an organizing tool for Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, curriculum design and instruction.” For example, YouScience exam standards align to the [Advanced CTE Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources \(AFNR\)](#) and industry standards, etc.

## Q. How does YouScience verify SMEs' expertise?

A. YouScience requires that SMEs have a license and/or an endorsement and be active in the industry at a professional level. A license permits the holder to serve in a professional capacity in the public education system or an accredited private school. An endorsement is earned through coursework or equivalent, such as an academic minor or higher, or demonstrated competency. Professional experience is industry-specific and always includes peer-accepted professional experience.

Some states oversee and qualify education SMEs for state-driven exams. These SMEs then work with YouScience exam specialists. They include teachers, specialists, and industry professionals designated by the state.

## Q. What is the process for reviewing exams?

A. Industry Certifications are reviewed at least once every four years—most more frequently. Exams are always reviewed when industry requirements, products or processes, or standards change and when performance data shows a need.

The rigorous multistep testing process is summarized as follows:

- A review committee, consisting of YouScience exam specialists, education and industry SMEs, and state or association specialists, meets to:
  - Review or modify the existing exam standards.
  - Build or modify an exam blueprint to define the exam scope. The blueprint ensures the exam and questions align to each standard. It also acts as a guide to focus the committee on a quality product.
  - Review psychometric data for the exam and each item/question to ensure proper performance.
  - Review, modify, or add exam content as needed to insure exam items match exam blueprint, and each item aligns with the course standards.
- Based on the review, exams or individual questions on the exam are enhanced, meaning information is improved to deliver better results, deleted, or rewritten, or a new question added.
- Based on SME input, YouScience exam specialists create a draft of the updated exam.
- The committee reviews the draft at least three times to ensure it matches the blueprint before the exam is published.

## Q. How many parts do the exams include?

A. Industry Certifications assessments include the knowledge standards portion and an optional performance standards portion. Exams test students on the material in the knowledge portion of the standards. This is a written portion that assesses the students understanding of the skill and subject matter. The optional performance standards are evaluated separately, usually by an instructor, and test the student's actual physical ability to perform a skill. An example for the [Medical Terminology](#) exam is a written test on meanings of terms learned in the course for the knowledge portion. The performance portion requires interpreting and exacting information from medical documents, using a medical reference book to find information and applying medical terminology to a real-life setting.

## Q. What data do you use to validate the performance of your exams?

A. We use extensive psychometric reporting to examine the overall health of each exam and to drive reviews, enhancements, and rewrites.

Reports include, but aren't limited to:

- **Item (question) analysis report.** It assesses the difficulty of a question based on the number of correct and incorrect answers. This helps reviewers and specialists assess question difficulty and adjust accordingly.
- **Test statistics report.** It shows the overall performance of the exam, such as minimum and maximum score, mean raw score, deviations, and more.

## Q. Do you offer curricula for your exams?

A. Yes, YouScience offers two comprehensive curricula to support student learning and career preparation:

### 1. Preparing for College and Careers Curriculum:

- Designed for high school students to explore their aptitudes and develop essential skills.
- Features a semester-long program with 12 modules and 60 lessons, each lasting 40 minutes.
- Lessons align with YouScience Industry Certification standards, allowing flexibility for various teaching styles and schedules.

### 2. Exploring Aptitudes for Careers Curriculum:

- Created for middle school students to discover their aptitudes and connect classroom learning to real-world careers.
- Includes 8 modules and 40 lessons, each fitting within a 40-minute class.
- Lessons align with YouScience Industry Certification standards to promote career-connected learning.

Additionally, YouScience provides certification exams and standards documentation, which form the foundation of exam questions and learning materials. To ensure alignment with certification standards, we collaborate with education partners and publishers such as National Geographic Learning, G-W (Goodheart-Willcox), and B.E. Publishing. Many educators and local CTE groups also create customized learning materials to support these standards. Developed by industry and educator subject matter experts (SMEs), YouScience Industry Certification standards align with National Career Cluster standards to ensure quality curricula nationwide.

## Q. Can teachers take exams?

A. Each state has regulations for how teachers participate in student certification programs. YouScience does sometimes offer certification labs for educators at regional and national conferences. To learn more, contact your state CTE program or YouScience.

## Q. How do you determine cut scores for exams?

A. All exams are initially released as pilots. Then, with SME input and psychometric analysis of pilot results and other data, and based on a Modified-Angoff method, the cut-score is set. (Modified-Angoff is the most common method for determining the cut scores used for licensure and certification achievement tests.)

Cut scores are individual to each exam and set to validate that students learn the required material.

Learn more at  
[youscience.com](https://www.youscience.com)  
or contact us.

