



Congratulations! You have decided the manufacturing Skills Certification System (SCS) may be a good strategy for solving your workforce challenges. Industry certifications provide an objective tool for reviewing potential new hires to determine if they meet the criteria for your open positions.

You will be joining other employers who have reported significant benefits to their companies resulting from the use of certifications. Follow the steps to get started with building industry-based certifications into your hiring processes.



1. Decide which job openings you want to target and match the needed skills to the right certifications

Review your job description and make sure it includes all current job requirements. Many companies find that job descriptions on file are outdated and need to be revised. The next step is to match the job requirements to the standards measured by the various certifications. Most certification sponsors provide examples on their websites of job tasks related to the certification. These examples can help you match the various certifications to your skill requirements. Some community colleges also can assist with this process. Input from a supervisor or team leader also may be helpful in selecting the certification. Occasionally, more than one certification is appropriate for a position. Select the one that is the closest fit, or you may decide to use more than one, based on the nature of the position.

2. Determine minimum score requirements, if appropriate, and decide if the certification will be "required" or "preferred"

Minimum score requirements are helpful in selecting the candidates. If you decide to use the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), select a score based on the minimum skills required for the position. It may be helpful to benchmark against a team of high-performing current workers to determine the minimum score. For any certifications you select, decide if they will be "required" or "preferred." Many employers have found that "preferred" works better. Although more desirable, "required" may eliminate a viable candidate who could secure the credential prior to or immediately following hiring. This allows you the option to include candidates who may meet other selection criteria.



3. Identify potential sources of certified workers, solicit applicants, and hire the most qualified candidates

Many community colleges offer certifications as part of their training programs and have a ready pool of certified workers. Certification sponsors can provide detailed information on local testing centers and may share information on certified workers in your area. Once you have a candidate pool, review applications and certifications. Follow your usual hiring and selection processes, using certifications as one of the objective criteria. Encourage quality candidates to seek out the certification prior to the interview.

4. Monitor performance, track outcomes, and measure impact on key factors

Most employers are aware of the costs involved in the hiring process. Employers using the Skills Certification System have identified significant cost savings due to a better pool of candidates and reduced time spent in screening and hiring. Once your new worker is on the job, you will need to monitor performance based on your company's performance management system. Track and document the employee's work skills, considering both soft skills and technical skill performance. Compare performance of previous hires to certified workers and determine if there were any changes or different outcomes. Did the use of the certification result in any improvements? If yes, consider including other certifications as criteria for future hiring.

Employers have found that using the SCS as part of the hiring process can often be done at little or no cost to the company since the candidate is expected to present test results as part of the application process.

Employers who have adopted certifications as part of their hiring process also have seen significant measurable improvements. These include reduced on-the-job-training time, improved retention, better candidates for promotion, overall improved product quality, and less overtime and waste.

Employers find that candidates with certifications are familiar with key manufacturing concepts like safety and quality before they walk through the door. Workers are more productive sooner. Some companies offer a premium starting wage for employees with certifications due to the cost savings they realize with these candidates.

Hiring certified workers can positively affect your bottom line.

