Mandatory Use of NIMS
The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has mandated the use of NIMS Machining Level 1 tests as the acceptable occupational competency test for students in machining-related approved CTE programs. The NIMS credentialing tests are drawn from industry-validated metalworking standards. Both performance and theory tests are developed and piloted by the industry.

Students enrolled in the following PDE-approved programs are required to use the NIMS Machining Level 1 credentialing tests: 48.0501/Machine Tool Technology/Machinist and 48.0599/Precision Metal Working, Other.

NIMS Credentialing Tests
PDE and NIMS have partnered to provide NIMS credentialing tests in Machining Level 1 areas. Earning NIMS credentials requires a performance test and an online theory test. The performance requirements and theory tests are drawn directly from the NIMS Standards and are written and piloted by industry. Machining Level 1 credentials are designed to meet entry-level requirements for on-the-job skills. These 11 credential test areas are:

1. Measurement, Materials and Safety
2. Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout
3. CNC Mill Operations
4. CNC Milling Programming Setup & Operations
5. CNC Lathe Operations
6. CNC Lathe Programming Setup & Operations
7. Drill Press I
8. Grinding I
9. Milling I
10. Turning I (Between Centers)
11. Turning I (Chucking)

NIMS Testing Process
The NIMS credentialing tests certify a student’s skills as measured against the NIMS Standards. Test site coordinators should manage the NIMS testing process just as they do the NOCTI process, including all policies and security measures. To earn a NIMS credential, students must successfully complete an online test and a performance test.

Online Registration
Below are roles that NIMS offers in the online testing center:
- **Candidate** – student pursuing a credential
- **Account Administrator** – individual registered with NIMS and able to access account codes, candidate credentials, and reports
- **Evaluator** – individual who oversees candidate performances and submits affidavits
- **Proctors** – individual who oversees online multiple-choice test administration

Test site coordinators or instructors must register all students taking NIMS Level 1 credentialing tests as part of the occupational competency testing program. Online registration is completed on the NIMS website and is required only once per student. PAsecureIDs are required to complete the online registration. Use account code EC49 to bypass the registration payment step. It is encouraged to complete online registration at least 24 hours prior to online testing.

Online Multiple-Choice Test
All online, multiple-choice tests are administered through the NIMS Online Testing Center (www.nims-skills.org). All tests have a 90-minute time limit and require the presence of a NIMS-registered proctor. Proctors must register (for free) 24 hours prior to the scheduled online testing at www.nims-skills.org. During testing, students may use a pen or pencil, blank paper, calculator, any edition of the Shop Reference for Students and Apprentices, and any edition of the Machinery’s Handbook. Proctors are encouraged to view short tutorial videos on proctor accounts and online testing procedures.

Paper versions of the online tests are available. See the Allowable Accommodations section of this document.
Assigning Proctors – As of October 1, 2018, NIMS requires that proctors be assigned online to students prior testing. Any account administrator at the school can assign a proctor to student testing by following these steps:

1. Login to www.nims-skills.org
2. Enter the testing center
3. Click on “Manage Candidates”
4. Click on “Assign Candidates”
5. Search by test(s)
6. Select the candidate(s) and test(s) then click “Assign Proctor”
7. Select a proctor of your choosing from the drop-down menu

Performance Test
Each school will administer the performance tests in accordance with the NIMS policies and procedures. Each credential has its own performance test, which requires students to manufacture a specific part, set-up and operate a machine, and/or write a program that will manufacture a specific part. Costs of materials and supplies required for the performance component of the test are the responsibility of the school. (Note: The Measurement, Materials, and Safety credential does not have a performance test.) It only requires the online test.

NIMS uses two types of performance tests:

- **Credentialing Achievement Records (CARs)** – When completing a CAR, the student will program, set-up, and operate a CNC lathe or mill. **All CARs are available to view or download from the NIMS website.** Instructors must supervise students as they complete the CARs. Upon successful completion of a CAR, the student and instructor will complete and sign the final page, the **Affidavit of Successful Completion.**

Submitting CAR Affidavits: If the program instructor is already a registered user in the NIMS database and requires the evaluator role, they can email support@nims-skills.org and a NIMS representative will add the evaluator role to the program instructor’s existing account. When an evaluator is ready to submit an online CAR affidavit, they should follow these steps:

1. Login to www.nims-skills.org and enter the Testing Center
2. Enter their Evaluator role in the top-right hand corner
3. Click the Evaluate Candidates tab at the top of the screen and then Submit Affidavit(s) for the candidates

- **Prints** – When completing a print-based project, the student will manufacture a specific part based on a blueprint provided by NIMS. **All prints are available to view or download from the NIMS website.** NIMS does not set a time limit on the manufacturing process, however, instructors may set their own time limits.

To inspect student parts, each school must form a **MET-TEC Committee**, which is a group of industry employees who are willing and able to inspect student projects on an as-needed basis. Two MET-TEC members inspect each student’s part to validate that the part meets all specifications and allowable tolerances. Those members may be employees of the same manufacturing company or they may be employees of different companies.

Inspections may occur at the school, at the manufacturing company, or anywhere with access to the appropriate measuring tools. The Job Planning, Benchwork, and Layout credential requires two prints and instructors can inspect both parts. This test does not require participation from the MET-TEC Committee.

Submitting a Prints Affidavit: For prints, MET-TEC inspection is required. If your MET-TEC inspectors have not already done so, they must go to www.nims-skills.org and register as an evaluator for your school. Once approved, evaluators will receive a confirmation email. We recommend that evaluators register 24-48 hours prior to evaluation. They will then login to the NIMS website and enter the **Testing Center.** From there, they will be able to click on “Evaluate Candidates” and submit affidavits.

Assigning Performance Evaluators – As of October 01, 2018, NIMS requires that evaluators be assigned online for each student’s performance tests. Any account administrator at the school can assign an evaluator to candidate performances by following these steps:

1. Login to www.nims-skills.org
2. Enter the Testing Center
3. Click on “Manage Candidates”
4. Click on “Assign Candidates”
5. Search by test(s)
6. Select the candidate(s) and test(s) then click “Assign Evaluator”
7. Select a due date and the evaluator of your choosing from the drop-down menu
Testing Window
NIMS Level I credential tests can be administered beginning in the first year that a student is enrolled in an approved CTE program and continue throughout the student's enrollment in the program. For secondary concentrators graduating all NIMS credentialing tests must be complete by **APRIL 30, 2019**. Student data on the NIMS Verification Form must be submitted to Penn State Greater Allegheny by **MAY 15, 2019**.

Ordering and Costs
For each student, PDE will assume the cost of the first attempt for each NIMS Level 1 Machining test and scoring and reporting services for this occupational competency testing program. Costs associated with additional attempts for each credentialing test will not be assumed by PDE. In addition, PDE will not assume the optional one-time registration fee of $40 for students who wish to receive NIMS credential certificates indicating their successful completion of each credential.

Account code **EC49** and a valid PAsecureID must be used to register students on the NIMS online testing system. This code must be used only by secondary students who are part of this statewide testing program. The cost of the first attempt of each credentialing test will automatically be assumed by PDE when using this code. Costs associated with additional attempts for each credentialing test will be billed directly to the school by NIMS. These additional attempts are considered to be retakes and are not allowable.

Instructors who are interested in taking any of the NIMS credential tests for their own certification are **NOT** permitted to use PDE’s student account code (EC49). NIMS waives test fees for instructors. Contact NIMS to receive a fee-waiving code at support@nims-skills.org.

Allowable Accommodations
NIMS accommodations are available at [http://bit.do/NIMSaccommodations](http://bit.do/NIMSaccommodations). NIMS offers the following accommodations for learners with IEPs:

- **Readers** – The NIMS Online Testing Center has a built-in reader that can read all test questions and answers aloud. Alternatively, a third party (not an instructor) may sit with a student to read the exam aloud. In similar fashion, translators may sit with any student needing language assistance during testing. NIMS does not require notification when readers are used.

- **Visual Assistance** – Paper versions of the online tests are available. Schools may request paper tests by sending the student’s name, test name, and proctor’s contact information to support@nims-skills.org. Schools may request multiple paper tests once and NIMS will ship the test kits in a single mailing. NIMS always mails paper tests directly to the test proctor.

  The paper test kit includes one test, one scantron form, and one pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope for returning the test to NIMS for scoring. During paper test administration, students may use a pen or pencil, blank paper, calculator, any edition of the *Shop Reference for Students and Apprentices*, and any edition of the *Machinery’s Handbook*. When test administration is complete, it is the responsibility of the test proctor to return the tests to NIMS using the provided envelope. When requesting a paper test, schools are encouraged to contact NIMS 7-10 business days prior to scheduled testing to allow for ample time to mail the test kit(s).

Reports and Required Forms
NIMS test results are provided electronically to PDE. Students should be encouraged to make their first attempt on each NIMS credentialing test when they are sufficiently prepared. Additional attempts will not be reported to PDE for inclusion in federal data reporting.

PDE will forward reports to test site coordinators who are responsible for verifying student data and submitting the NIMS Verification Form to Penn State Greater Allegheny by **MAY 15, 2019**. The NIMS Verification Form is available at [http://bit.do/NIMSVF](http://bit.do/NIMSVF).

NIMS Reporting
NIMS offers Account Administrators 24-hour access to online reporting. NIMS offers four new reporting options: Credentialing Activity Reports, Testing Reports, Account Code Reports, and Performance Activity Reports. When logged into the Testing Center, select the “Reports” tab at the top of the screen to run any report for any date range.
Receiving Pennsylvania Certificates

PDE has determined that only the first attempt for each NIMS credentialing test will be reported and used in determining students’ eligibility for Pennsylvania certificates. Additional attempts are considered to be test retakes, which are not permitted and are not accepted by PDE. Refer to the Guide to Student Occupational Competency Testing in Pennsylvania.

Both PDE and NIMS recognize the Measurement, Materials and Safety and the Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout credentialing tests as being basic skills tests; therefore, only one of these two tests (numbers 1 and 2 above) may be counted towards a Pennsylvania certificate. Students that take only the NIMS machining skills tests (numbers 3-11 above) are eligible for a Pennsylvania certificate if they meet the performance level requirements. The following performance levels and requirements are used:

**ADVANCED LEVEL**  
This level reflects the technical skills, knowledge and abilities required to successfully perform the duties of an entry level job, in a safe and effective manner with minimal supervision.

**Requirements:** Pass FOUR or more credentialing tests on the first attempt  
(This could include one of the basic skills tests.)

**Certificate:** Pennsylvania Skills Certificate

**COMPETENT LEVEL**  
This level reflects the technical skills, knowledge and abilities required to adequately perform duties on the very first day of a job, in a safe and effective manner with an appropriate amount of "new employee" supervision.

**Requirements:** Pass THREE credentialing tests on the first attempt  
(This could include one of the basic skills tests.)

**Certificate:** Certificate of Competency

**BASIC LEVEL**  
This level does not meet the competent level. Students who do not meet above the basic level are not eligible for Pennsylvania certificates.

Certificates will be sent to test site coordinators when the NIMS Verification Form is submitted and approved to Penn State Greater Allegheny. (Refer to the Guide to Student Occupational Competency Testing in Pennsylvania.)

Additional Information

Visit the NIMS website at www.nims-skills.org to view and download the following resources:

- Credentialing Starter Kit for Schools  
- Guide to Establishing a MET-TEC Committee  
- Paper Testing & Other Accommodations  
- Credentialing Video Tutorials  
- Machining Credentialing Toolkit

Schools may also request a (free) one-on-one consultation with a NIMS representative to review all roles, responsibilities, and processes, and to explore the updated testing website.

For assistance with NIMS credential testing process, contact NIMS Testing Support at support@nims-skills.org. For questions on Pennsylvania requirements or PDE’s Student Occupational Competency Testing Program, contact Lori Bell, Penn State Greater Allegheny at (412) 675-9065 or email lvb6@psu.edu.