

## Establishing a SkillsUSA Industry Advisory Committee

Industry support is integral to the success of career and technical education programs and SkillsUSA chapters. Successful CTE programs with integrated SkillsUSA chapters establish advisory committees to lend structural integrity and support to their program instruction and related activities. The advisory committee can assist the SkillsUSA chapter advisor in many activities related to career success from industry visits to evaluating skills, judging local career competitions, conducting mock employment interviews or hiring program graduates.

They can also work with the instructor to ensure the program has adequate equipment and supplies and aligns with the current needs of industry. Instructors, their students, the school and the local community can all benefit from an active and purposeful advisory committee.

### Determine the Purpose of the Committee

Your industry advisory committee can effectively strengthen your CTE program and SkillsUSA chapter. Here are a few possible objectives for your advisory committee.

### Curriculum and Professional Development

- **Provide course content advisement.** Review and update program competencies. The level of skill development necessary for entry-level employment and advancement can be determined. In addition, appropriate equipment and tools can be identified for use in instruction.
- **Identify the essential skills needed to obtain employment.** These skills can be integrated into the existing curriculum and should include both technical skills and career readiness skills based on the [SkillsUSA Framework](#).
- **Conduct industry update training** for instructors to keep them current with technology and trends.





### **Student Career and Job Skill Development**

- **Participate in student evaluations** to assess the knowledge and skills gained through SkillsUSA Framework instruction and the use of the [SkillsUSA Career Essentials Suite](#), reviewing accomplishments against stated objectives.
- **Conduct industry or community phone surveys** to determine current and future employment needs/opportunities and share this with the instructor.
- **Assist with student placement.** Committee members can inform the advisor and the school placement office of current or projected job openings. Graduates from the programs can be offered employment by advisory committee members or their business associates.
- **Provide opportunities for job shadowing.** This is especially important for students who have little or no work experience.
- **Mentors individual students** to provide guidance and encouragement in completing their education. This is helpful for students who are identified as at-risk of not completing the program or high school. Role models are extremely important for at-risk learners.

### **Student Activity Support**

- **Participate in CTSO activities** by preparing SkillsUSA students for competitive activities and by serving as judges at local, district or state competitions.
- **Recognize student efforts** by participating in awards programs and banquets.
- **Provide financial support** by hosting or covering the cost of meal functions, special events or covering the cost of for a student competitor to attend a state or national conference.

### **Community Resource**

- **Help marketing the CTE program** by sharing information with others so industry colleagues and community members know of the school and the skills taught through SkillsUSA. Information can be shared through speaking engagements, newspaper articles, radio spots, podcasts, TV news stories or social media.

### **Secure School Administrators**

- Secure administrative support before organizing the advisory committee. At this meeting, be prepared to outline the purpose and responsibilities the committee will undertake.

### **Form the Advisory Committee**

Once you have identified the need for an industry advisory committee, it is time to plan the structure and outline the work the group will accomplish. You can appoint a chair before the group meets if you have a leader already identified, or you can allow the advisory committee to elect a chairperson. Here are things to consider:

- Size of the committee
- Committee responsibilities
- Number of meetings per year (at least quarterly)
- Goals and objectives of the committee
- How members will be selected



- Length of term for each member (one year or two years)
- Selection and duties of committee officers (chairperson and secretary)
- Order of business during meetings
- Identify potential ad hoc sub-committees for competitions, awards banquets, etc.
- Review the school calendar and SkillsUSA calendar to identify dates of events such as open house, local competitions, state conference or an awards night, especially events that can benefit from advisory committee participation

### **Select Committee Members**

Committee members should be from your local community and have a genuine interest in your program and students, as well as expertise in the industry. Invite members who have the time to give to this endeavor and are willing to share their expertise. Members also should represent the diversity of your students and local career opportunities.

### **Prepare a Press Release**

Introduce your advisory committee members to the community by preparing a news release about the new industry advisory committee, its members and its role to support your students, program and school to help develop a pipeline of workers who are ready for future employment.

### **Conducting an Initial Advisory Committee Meeting**

Once the advisory committee has been established, the advisor is ready to conduct the first meeting. Efficient and purposeful meetings are important to engage members and validate the committee's existence. Advisory committee members are typically busy individuals who work fulltime. Set a schedule for the meetings at a time when the program instructor can participate, this could be before or after the school day. Select a comfortable meeting location with a conference table and chairs that is comfortable for the size of the group and where you will not be interrupted. First thing in the morning works well at 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. over a light breakfast made by students or hold meetings at the end of the day from 4 to 5 p.m. and offer cookies and drinks. At the first meeting be sure to:

- Have each committee member introduce themselves
- Elect or appoint a chairperson or other roles, such as a recorder to take notes
- Provide an overview of the SkillsUSA program and mission

### **Use a Meeting Checklist to Organize Each Meeting**

- It is important that you are organized so the meetings and events they attend use their time effectively. As you prepare for each meeting, consider the following items:
- Set the agenda and email it out a week prior to the meeting
- Arrange for a meeting room and refreshments
- Gather meeting supplies: pads of paper and pens, markers and flip charts, etc.
- Provide previous meeting minutes and agendas before the meeting
- Call or email your committee members the day before the meeting as a reminder
- Have chapter officers greet advisory committee members as they arrive
- Have a SkillsUSA officer welcome the group with opening remarks
- Keep accurate notes of the meeting by appointing a recorder for the group or assigning someone to take notes and provide them back to you
- As the meeting ends, review what was accomplished as well as the date of the next meeting or other upcoming events
- Email the meeting minutes to committee members with a note of appreciation
- Send a copy of the meeting minutes to your school administrators with a note about what was accomplished

#### **Sample Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda**

1. **Call to order**
2. **Secretary or Recorder's minutes**
3. **Introductions**
4. **Old business**
5. **Special reports**
6. **New business**
7. **Plans for next meeting**
8. **Other items**
9. **Adjournment**
10. **Tour of school if members are new to the committee**



### Sample Advisory Committee Letter of Invitation

(Date)  
(Name of advisory committee person)  
(Company)  
(Address)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As a leader in your field, we invite you to serve as a member of our program advisory committee. The (name of program) program at (name of school) provides training for students preparing for meaningful careers. Our goal is to prepare graduates who are ready for further education or to succeed in entry-level employment. Our committee meets (quarterly or monthly) and the purpose of the group is to:

- Provide industry counsel on our course content and program competencies
- Help align our instruction to current industry practices, equipment and materials
- Identify essential career readiness skills students need to succeed on the job
- Help us determine current or future local employment opportunities
- Assist with student placement into career opportunities
- Assist with career competitions by serving as contest organizers or judges
- Support SkillsUSA students who are competing or attending events
- Participate in SkillsUSA events as it aligns with your time and interests

The first advisory committee meeting will be held on (date) at (time) at (location). If you can join us, please let me know and I will provide more information.

Thanks for your assistance,

Instructor's Name  
CTE Program  
Phone and Email

### Sample Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

\_\_\_\_\_ Program Advisory Committee

**Present:** List members present

**Call to order:** The meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Advisory Committee was held on \_\_\_\_\_ and was called to order at \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Secretary's minutes:** Review the minutes of the last meeting to be approved or corrected.

**Introductions:** List members or guests who were introduced.

**Old business:** Briefly summarize old business items.

**Special reports:** Summarize the major points discussed.

**New business:** Briefly summarize new business items that were discussed.

**Plans for next meeting:** List plans for future meetings or subcommittees.

**Adjournment:** List the time the meeting adjourned.



### **Sample Advisory Committee Thank-You Note for Service**

(Date)  
(Name of advisory committee person)  
(Company)  
(Address)  
(City, state and ZIP code)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your dedicated service to the (CTE program) at (name of school) over the past (number) years. During your time on the committee, we have accomplished many great things with the ultimate goal of serving students so they can become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders and responsible community members. Your input and suggestions were integral to our success.

While your term on the committee has expired, we hope you will stay involved with our program and students and we look forward to working with you to ensure the ongoing success of our students.

Enclosed is a certificate of appreciation (or SkillsUSA gift item) to say thank you for your service to our program and school.

Sincerely,

Instructor's Name  
CTE Program  
Phone and Email