

# Informatics Curriculum



College or Career?...Why Not Both?

# Advanced Career combines college-ready academics with authentic, hands-on projects.

*The New Approach*

## Advanced Career

A rigorous and relevant blend of technical and academic skills in authentic projects

- Advanced Training
- Community/Technical College
- Jobs *(more options)*
- College

*The Old Approach*

COLLEGE TRACK

→ College

OR

CAREER TRACK

→ Jobs  
→ Training

Schools are challenged to better prepare students for a wide array of postsecondary options. The workforce of today and tomorrow demands a higher level of skill — people who grasp complex problems, understand technology and troubleshoot problems.

Advanced Career (AC) answers both of these needs. By fusing a rigorous academic core with challenging project work and advanced technology in a career pathway program of study, AC courses give students a greater depth of knowledge and skills and prepare them for more options after high school.

## Advanced Career provides:

- ready-to-implement AC course work for students
- comprehensive training for teachers
- access to tools and technology for project-based learning
- end-of-course assessments
- opportunity for industry certification and/or dual credit

## Informatics.....

Informatics leverages technology, data and communication by instilling in a new generation the knowledge, imagination and flexibility to tackle complex issues successfully in a data-rich digital world. It is the process of designing systems that take raw data and convert it into new knowledge that can be applied to any field while considering the impact on individuals, organizations and society. For example, students design, build and test a database to collect data on customers' shopping habits that will lead to target marketing of products customers will purchase. In today's global market, the ability to collect vast amounts of information cost-effectively is changing the way business manages information, creates knowledge and makes decisions. Students in this program will have the opportunity to explore such information systems and more through authentic project experiences.

This program will prepare students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in both college and the global workforce. Career opportunities include new fields and transformed traditional fields. Examples of such careers include bioinformaticist, data mapper, chemical informaticist, database designer, digital artist, human-computer interface designer, information architect, usability analyst, interaction designer, system integrator, web designer, software engineer, project manager and many careers not yet created.

The curriculum is comprised of four courses: computers, networks and databases; design for the digital world; databases in the cloud; and developing a cloud presence. Students will apply software systems such as Excel, Access and other industry software to acquire, collect, store and communicate data in meaningful ways to clients. Students will manage projects, work in teams, think critically, solve problems and propose solutions to design problems. Further, they will learn to apply literacy, mathematics and science concepts and use technology to effectively solve real-world challenging problems. Through project-based learning, students will explore the future of informatics and learn those habits of behavior and mind unique to professionals in the field.

Students completing the program may become a Microsoft Office Specialist and may be prepared to earn other relevant industry certifications.

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*Informatics was developed by SREB and Kentucky as a part of a multi-state consortium to improve career and technical education in this country.*

For more information about other Advanced Career curricula, visit [sreb.org/AC](http://sreb.org/AC).

# Advanced Career Informatics Curriculum

Informatics is for students who have an inquiring mind and are interested in the design of information systems to solve problems.

## Course 1: Computers, Networks and Databases

This project-based-learning course engages students who are curious about informatics. In this course, students will learn how to use a design process to create systems that acquire, store and communicate data for a variety of career fields. Students will work collaboratively in teams to design systems, solve problems, think critically, be creative and communicate with each other and business partners. Students will participate in real-world experiences such as designing an inventory system for a retail store, comparing stores in a company to project future sales, track customer buying habits and more.

## Course 2: Design for the Digital World

This project-based-learning course engages students who are interested in applying the design process to create systems such as a cloud-based digital storage system for images. Students will design a system to automatically collect and report data on highway usage. They will apply a geospatial system to map a store and develop a database that studies shopping habits. Through these projects, students will learn about data management and logic-based queries by collecting data, using the Global Positioning System (GPS) and analyzing data utilizing a geographic information system (GIS). They will learn how to automate data collection to make processes more effective and efficient. Students will work collaboratively in teams and demonstrate their knowledge and skills by presenting new and innovative ideas, techniques and solutions to business and industry partners.

## Course 3: Databases in the Cloud

This project-based-learning course is for students who successfully completed courses one and two and who want to tackle the more complex challenges that business and industry face. Students at this level will learn about Web technologies, cloud storage, information security, data, animation, introductory computer programming and database applications. Students will take more responsibility for their own learning, problem solving and thinking outside of the box. Real-world challenges will require higher levels of research, building, testing, analyzing and improving systems. Students will develop solutions for real-world problems by designing a database for ticket sales; designing security for a database; creating a game with animation; reporting information based on population data in a community; and designing, building and testing an application for a database.

## Course 4: Developing a Cloud Presence

Students in this capstone course will focus on the ethics of privacy, social networking, designing for clients and artificial intelligence through six authentic projects. Students will select a business partner and design, build and test a Web presence for a company that will apply the concepts from the three prior courses. Student teams will work collaboratively with a business partner to develop a proposal for the project with evaluation criteria. Once the business partner accepts the proposal, the student team will implement it by designing, planning, building the system, and testing and revising the system to meet the needs of the business. Depending on articulation agreements or state policy, opportunity for dual credit may be available to students who successfully complete this course.

# Key Features of Advanced Career

## Fully Developed Pathway Programs

Advanced Career (AC) encompasses a coherent sequence of four ready-to-implement courses; comprehensive training for teachers; access to tools and technology for project-based learning; and end-of-course assessments. To ensure fidelity from site to site, each course has a syllabus that includes instructional philosophy, instructional delivery and support systems, assessment and a recommended grading system.

## Advanced Career Programs of Study

Each AC program of study (POS) is a progression of non-duplicative courses joined with a college-ready academic core and aligned from high school to postsecondary studies. The integration of academic and technical content in each POS prepares students for more options after high school graduation, offers opportunity for dual credit and leads to an industry-recognized credential, advanced training, or an associate's or bachelor's degree. The high-skill, high-wage career fields represented among the AC programs of study are important to the economy.

## Project-Based Learning

Each course is designed around project-based units — featuring essential questions, project descriptions, authentic roles and tasks that require students to utilize an industry-recognized decision-making process. Assignments in AC courses encompass essential elements of good project-based learning to engage students in an extended process of asking questions, using resources and developing answers. Students collaborate and work in teams and develop important 21st-century skills.

## Blended Learning Experiences

AC course work creates rigorous blended learning experiences for all students. Students apply their academic and technical skills to real-world projects in ways that advance their literacy, math, science and technical knowledge and skills, and strengthen their habits of behavior and mind for success.

## Technology and Software

Students employ industry-standard data acquisition hardware and software systems to complete authentic tasks simulating the work of professionals in the field.

## Assessments

Each project unit includes formative and summative assessments. Each course has an end-of-course assessment that measures both academic and technical achievement with the performance level needed for jobs, advanced training and postsecondary credit-bearing courses. In addition, students and teachers complete surveys about what works or does not work in the AC course. This serves to inform continuous improvement of the AC program.

## Counseling for Careers

Student and parent orientation to each AC program of study highlights the career field, including requirements for jobs and postsecondary study in the career field. Each AC course has a career and education exploratory component. Counselors trained to support the AC program will assist students in developing a career and education plan aligned with students' goals and aspirations.

## Teacher Selection, Professional Development and Support

Teachers are selected who have strong math skills and experience in the pathway career field. Staff development is essential and includes an intensive two-week summer institute for teachers to prepare them to teach each course and to use a project-based approach. They will perform students' assignments and use the tools developed by national industry partners. A support team including the principal, counselor and academic teachers in literacy, math and science learn how to support AC teachers and students in course implementation.

## Dual Credit and Industry Certification

Courses three and four in the AC program offer the potential for dual credit when a state or district has an established process for approving such courses. Each AC program of study also offers opportunities for industry certification for students who complete the program.

## Collaboration and Partnerships

Ongoing relationships among education, business and other stakeholders are central to AC pathway programs. Representatives from industry and postsecondary institutions have helped shape the curriculum design and technical content. Serving as an expert panel, they have collaborated with secondary educators and state education agency staff to identify authentic learning experiences for students that can lead to additional opportunities after high school. Organizations represented in the development of the Informatics Pathway Program include:

AT&T	Morehead State University	St. Elizabeth Healthcare
Bluegrass Community and Technical College	Murray State University	The Kroger Company
Creative Images Technologies, LLC	National Instruments	Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky
DMD Data Systems	National Research Center for Career and Technical Education	
Georgetown College	Northern Kentucky University	
Kentucky Department of Education	SAS Institute, Inc.	
Kentucky State University	Southern Regional Education Board	
Maysville Community and Technical College	Spencerian College	