



CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

What is the Certificate of Achievement?

The ProStart National Certificate of Achievement (COA) is the student's passport to the future. Earning the COA can give students a leg up in job searches, and opens the door to collegiate opportunities. Numerous restaurant, foodservice and hospitality programs offer benefits to ProStart graduates. These benefits include scholarships, class credits and credit towards work experience requirements.

To earn the ProStart National COA, a student must pass "The Foundations of Restaurant Management and Culinary Arts" Level 1 and Level 2 exams, document 400 hours of work experience and demonstrate proficiency on more than 50 workplace competencies. Work experience can come from paid jobs, school-based enterprises or relevant volunteer work.

The New COA Online System

The online COA application streamlines the COA process, increases NRAEF's capacity to award COAs and allows students to take responsibility for earning their COA.

There are three users of the COA System: Students, Educators, ProStart Coordinators. ALL must register on the website. <http://www.nraef.org/>

COA Tips for Educators:

- Have students register using their government name (legal name)
- Have students write down log in credentials on a notecard and give to educators. Also, a good tip for educators is to have students use the first letter of their first name and last name for the user ID. For example John Smith would be dsmith. For the password, have the student use their last name and graduating school year. For example, smith18.
- Students will not have access to the COA screen until they pass the 1st Exam. Once the first exam is passed, it triggers the online COA Hours to be able to be logged
- Students may begin counting hours one year before 1st exam
- Students and educators may use the same login credentials as they may be using on www.servsafe.com
- Once the COA is obtained, a paper certificate will always be mailed, however, students can print an e-certificate. Extra E-certificates may also be printed for portfolios, resumes, applications, educators, etc.
- Educator tip: have students keep a binder or print a spreadsheet for students to log hours throughout the year
- Students may turn in as many as 50 student checklist forms as they perform various jobs, volunteer jobs or activities. Educators: keep extra copies on hand for students to take to various jobs.

Earning COA Hours:

The 400 hours can be earned through any combination of paid employment, school-based enterprise (like catering, fund raisers, providing meals for student or community groups etc.) and service/volunteer work.

-To determine whether a position "counts" look to the Student Work Experience Checklist: in addition to the 400 hours, a student must achieve 52 of the 75 competencies on the checklist. They can submit many checklists, each signed by a different supervisor or manager, noting proficiency in the competencies that individual observed. So any job, volunteer work or school enterprise during which they will learn and demonstrate proficiency in one or more competencies will qualify. That means students don't have to work just in restaurants—students may earn hours in all kinds of different businesses—grocery stores, hospitals, offices etc. They can't do the entire 400 hours in one place but they can get a chunk of those hours. Hours volunteering at a shelter, food bank, church event etc. also apply.

-Hands on work during class ("practicum" and "labs") and practicing for competition (ProStart, Skills, FCCLA etc.) or FCCLA etc. projects **DO NOT** count toward the 400 hours. Those are classroom-related experiences and are distinct from paid/unpaid work where there is a job or responsibility and supervisor or manager.

-Caterings and events from freshman year to senior year absolutely count. The student needs to have had a specific job or set of duties they performed at the catering/event and the teacher needs to provide a letter or other document verifying the date(s) of the student participation and the total number of hours earned. This document can be provided at the conclusion of every event (preferable--and required in many school districts) or at the end of the semester. It's not a good idea for the teacher to create one letter toward the student's graduation covering all 4 years and 400 hours.

-Educators will also be required to complete a verifiable Checklist for each catering job/event. By verifiable we mean they shouldn't just check everything. There are random audits of the COA documents that catch things like a student working at Spaghetti Supper catered by the class where the teacher checks competencies under "Breakfast foods." Please refer to workplace experience checklist.

-Only students in recognized Texas ProStart schools can earn the COA. The new online COA system will make it easier for students to take responsibility for earning the COA—and will notify them if they are trying to do so but aren't enrolled in a recognized school.

-Documenting the 400 hours is challenging but earning the COA is not supposed to be automatic. It's a valuable credential that is supposed to recognize the extra effort a student achieved. Having a COA lets college admissions representatives and potential employers know that the student has gone above and beyond the classroom to develop skills in the industry—which isn't the same as completing the class.