

## DCM Consulting engaged stakeholders from across the state in July and August 2020

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### Surveys

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- 12 question survey
  - 125 respondents
  - Wide range of stakeholders submitted by campuses
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### 1-on-1 Interviews

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- 8 question interview
  - 23 1-hour interviews
  - Narrower range of stakeholders
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## Interviews: When you hear the term “readiness” what does that mean to you, particularly when you think of a technical college graduate?

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### Headlines

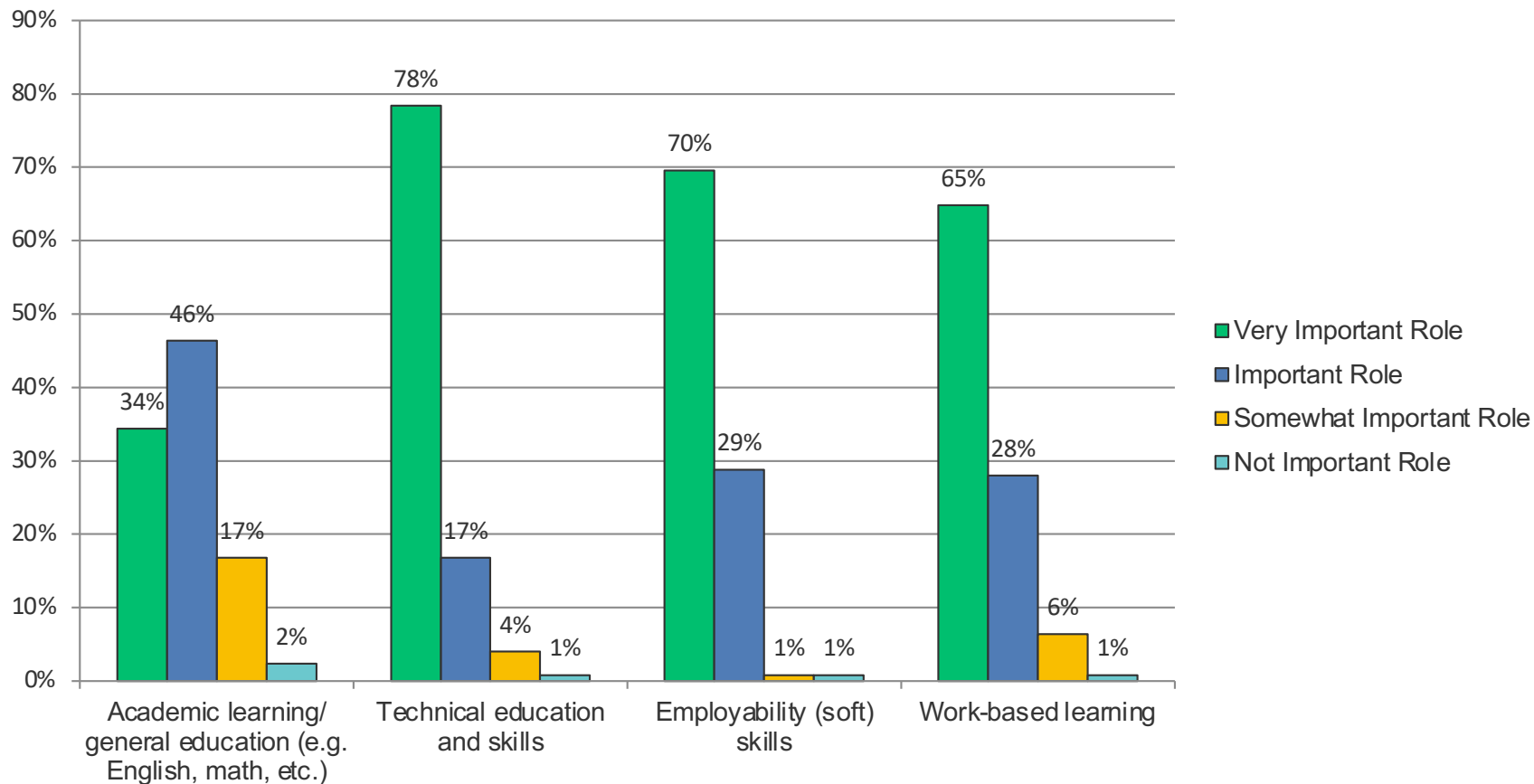
Ready graduates:

- Meet the expectations of employers (above entry-level)
- Have high job placement rates
- Require less onboarding and on-the-job training
- Have excellent technical and employability skills
- Are highly successful in their first job

*“A tech college graduate, if they are ready, they are employable and ready to work on day one. They have up-to-date technical knowledge and skills, essential interpersonal skills and understand the practices within their industry and the regulations that would affect that job. While they may need some specialist training, they are essentially a plug and play resource for employers.” – Interviewee*

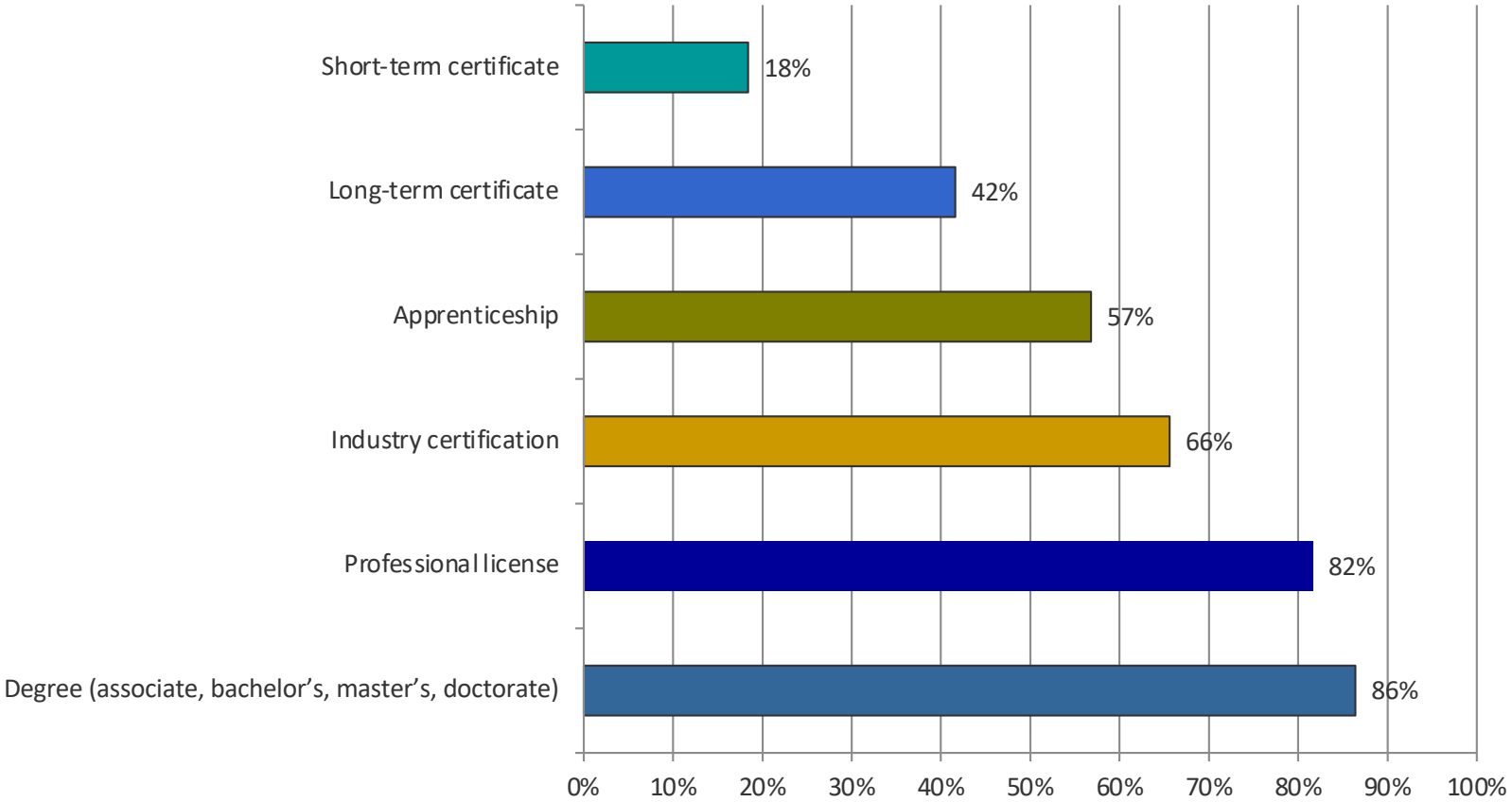
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## Survey: What role do the following play in determining the readiness of a technical college graduate?



Answered: 125 Skipped: 0

# Survey: What does the term “high-quality credential” mean to you when you think about a technical college?



Answered: 125 Skipped: 0

## Interviews: What does the term “high-quality credential” mean to you when you think about a technical college?

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### Headlines

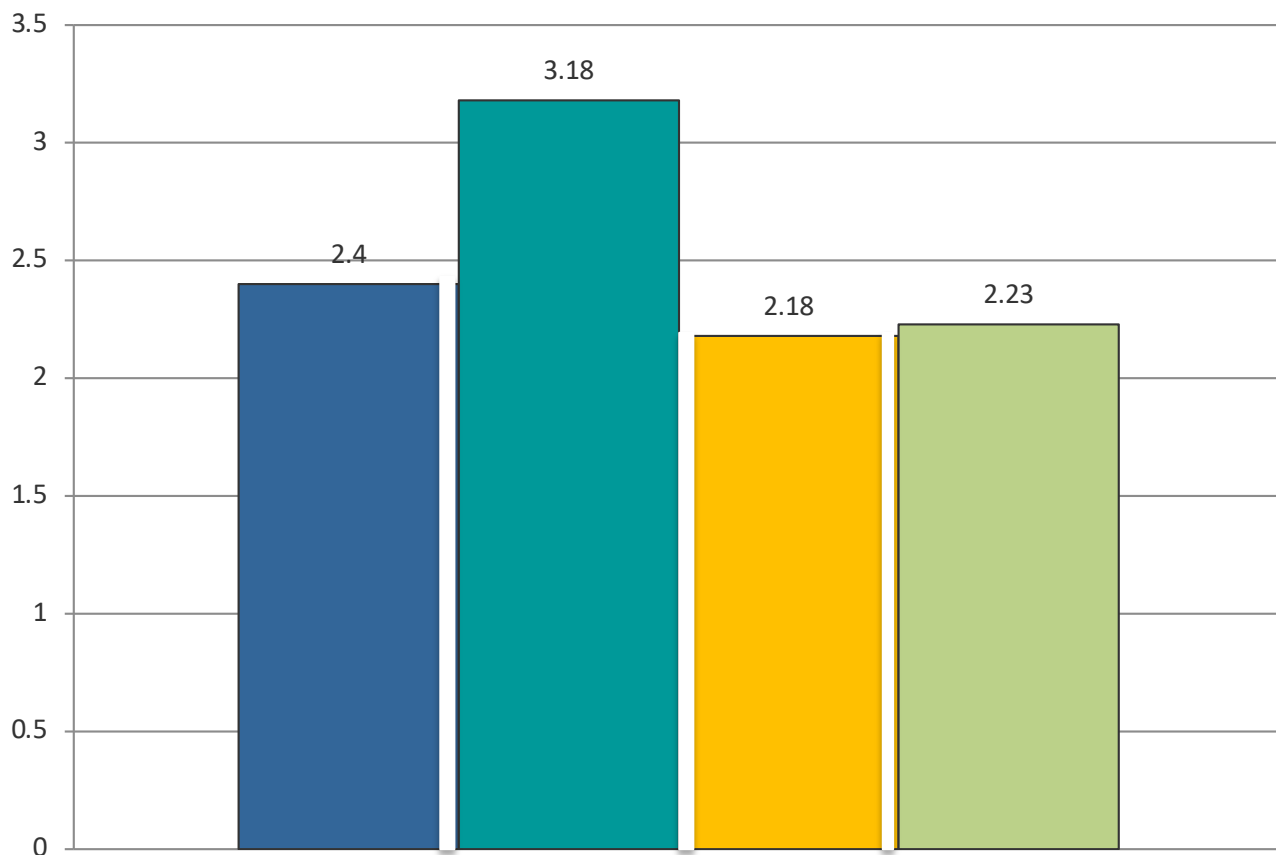
High-quality credentials are:

- In-demand
- Meaningful to employers
- Industry recognized
- Lead to a wage premium
- Rigorous
- Highly validated
- Taught by high-quality faculty

*“ High-quality credentials are accepted by employers and industry- it’s not just the education system saying here is what we think means to be well-prepared for industry or your field. It’s the industry telling education- this is what we need. Qualified faculty are critical.” – Interviewee*

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## When considering existing technical college education-to-workforce learning pathways in South Dakota, rank the following statements from most challenging to least challenging.



- The biggest education-to-workforce learning pathway challenge we face is skills mismatching (i.e. an imbalance in the level or type of skills learned compared to what the labor market needs).
- The biggest education-to-workforce learning pathway challenge we face is opportunity mismatching (i.e. not enough applicants in priority learning pathways to meet workforce demands).
- The biggest education-to-workforce learning pathway challenge we face is some pathways reflect low-skill, low-wage, or not in-demand occupations.
- The biggest education-to-workforce learning pathway challenge we face is not all pathways reflect local/regional workforce opportunities (current/projected), limiting choice for graduates who choose to remain where they reside.

Answered: 125 Skipped: 0

Key: 1 - 4 Scale, with 4 being *Most Challenging*

## Interviews: In your opinion, what will it take to attain the outcomes for students, employers, the state, and technical colleges?

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### Headlines

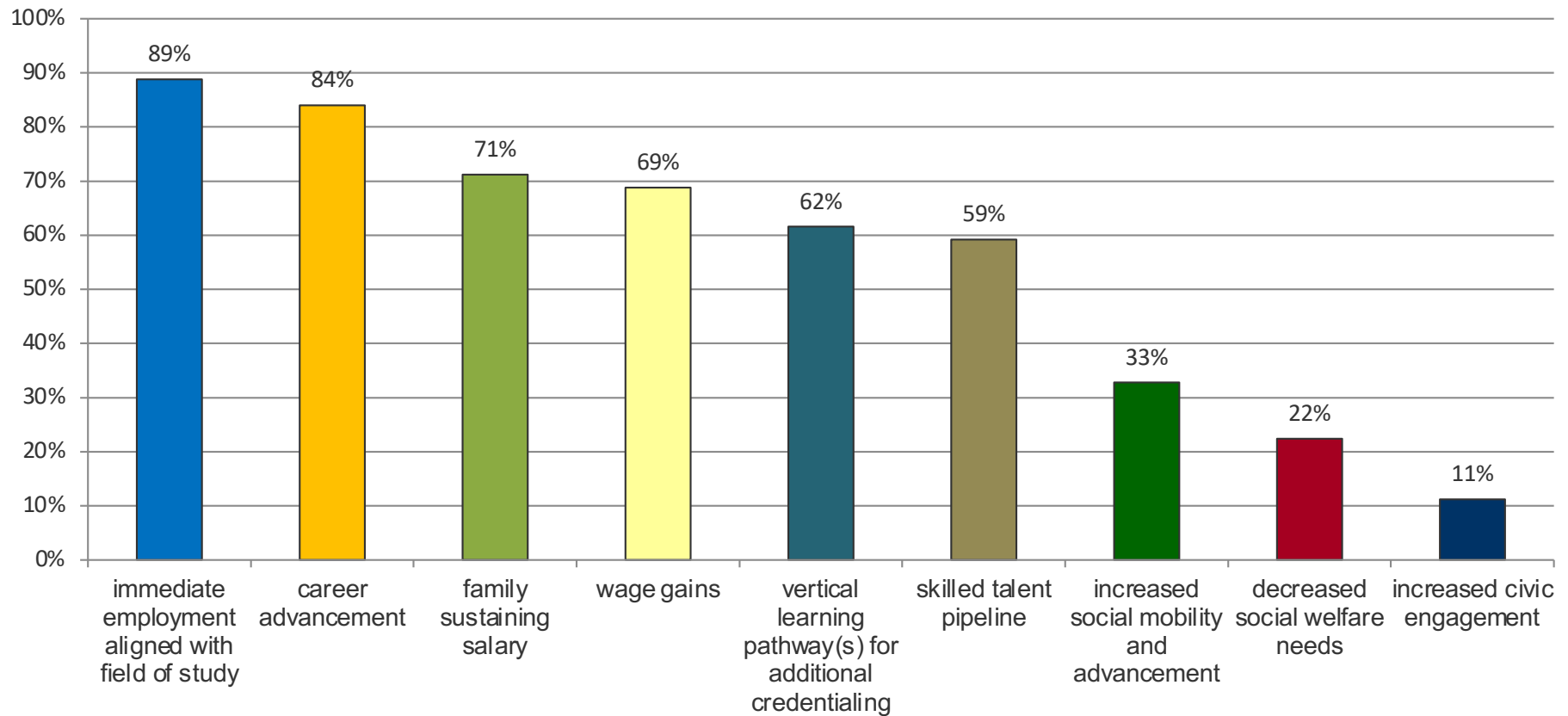
The biggest common responses included:

- Consistency among the technical colleges
- Funding
- Ensuring the cost is affordable for students
- Strong industry partnerships
- Focus on non-traditional and first-generation students
- Qualified faculty
- Access to data
- Innovation
- Continued narrative shift about the value of technical education

*“All four tech colleges need to calculate that data the same. That is not consistent across the board. So when it comes time for the state or BOTE to compare those statistics, we are not all calculating it the same way- there needs to be a standardized process or policy for that.” - Interviewee*

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## For a student, which of the following outcomes should occur if a technical college credential is of high-quality?



Answered: 125 Skipped: 0



**Interviews: If a technical college credential is high-quality, what should be some expected outcomes for...? *(most frequent responses)***

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<b>Students</b>	High placement rates, prepared/skilled workers, earn a wage premium, career advancement, retention in South Dakota
<b>Employers</b>	Access to skilled workers, highly satisfied, less onboarding and on-the-job training, retention in South Dakota, strong relationships with technical schools
<b>South Dakota</b>	Economic development, resident and business recruitment and retention, meet workforce demand with skilled workers, educated state, increased community engagement
<b>Technical Colleges</b>	Increased enrollment, stronger industry partnerships, new partnerships, consistency across tech schools, growth, access to tech and resources, improved reputation

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## Interviews: What are the biggest hurdles you see currently in attaining outcomes for students, the state, employers, and technical colleges?

### Headlines

The biggest hurdles identified were:

- Cost of tuition for students compared to other states
- Technical schools working as separate institutions
- Funding
- Perception of tech programs as a viable option (for K-12, students, parents, etc)
- Resources/technology (including physical capacity)
- Balance between state and local control
- Competition with regental system
- Not targeting non-traditional, first generations and diverse populations of students enough

*“There needs to be more unity and consistency across the four technical colleges and need to get better at working as a system. Consistency means from academic quality, academic allowances, rigor...” - Interviewee*

*“Technical colleges do pretty well on the whole; but they need to work more as a system rather than 4 separate institutions. That will help them move along faster to reach their outcomes.” - Interviewee*

## Lumina Grant Stakeholder Engagement Summary

May 2021

**WHY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT?** When the implementation of the Lumina Grant began, there had been no formal conversations as a system about what outcomes we want our credentials to produce for our students, employers, and the state of South Dakota. To develop policies and procedures aligned with those outcomes, it was critical to engage a wide range of stakeholders early on in the implementation process.

**APPROACH.** Using rosters provided by the System Office and technical colleges, DCM Consulting (“DCM”) developed an online survey and a 1-on-1 interview plan to engage stakeholders during July and August, 2020. Identified stakeholders represented a diverse mix and included board members, technical college students and faculty, K-12 education, community leaders, and employers. Overall, DCM received responses from 125 unique internal and external constituents and conducted 23 one-hour interviews with prioritized stakeholders.

Surveys	1-on-1 Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 question survey</li> <li>• 125 respondents</li> <li>• Wide range of stakeholders submitted by campuses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 question interview</li> <li>• 23 1-hour interviews</li> <li>• Narrower range of stakeholders</li> </ul>

**RESULTS.** DCM synthesized the feedback that was received via interviews and online survey submissions. This summary represents that synthesis.

### STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

**STUDENT READINESS.** When responding to the question: “When you hear the term “readiness” what does that mean to you, particularly when you think of a technical college graduate?”, respondents most commonly described students who are prepared at or above the level expected of entry-level workers and who require less onboarding and on-the-job training. Specific headlines about “readiness” include students:

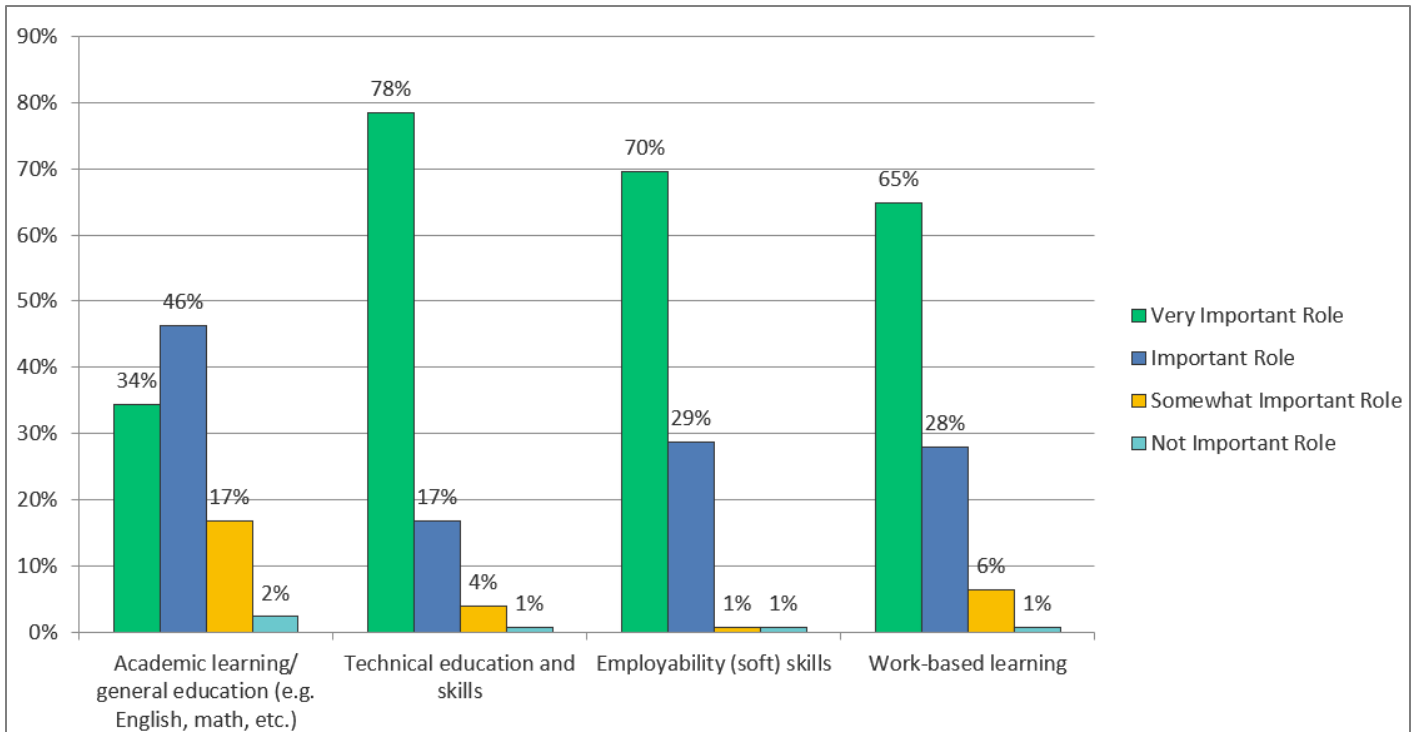
- Meeting the expectations of employers (above entry-level)
- Having high job placement rates
- Requiring less onboarding and on-the-job training
- Possessing excellent technical and employability skills
- Being highly successful in their first job

*“A tech college graduate, if they are ready, they are employable and ready to work on day one. They have up-to-date technical knowledge and skills, essential interpersonal skills and understand the practices within their industry and the regulations that would affect that job. While they may need some specialist training, they are essentially a plug and play resource for employers.”*

– Interviewee

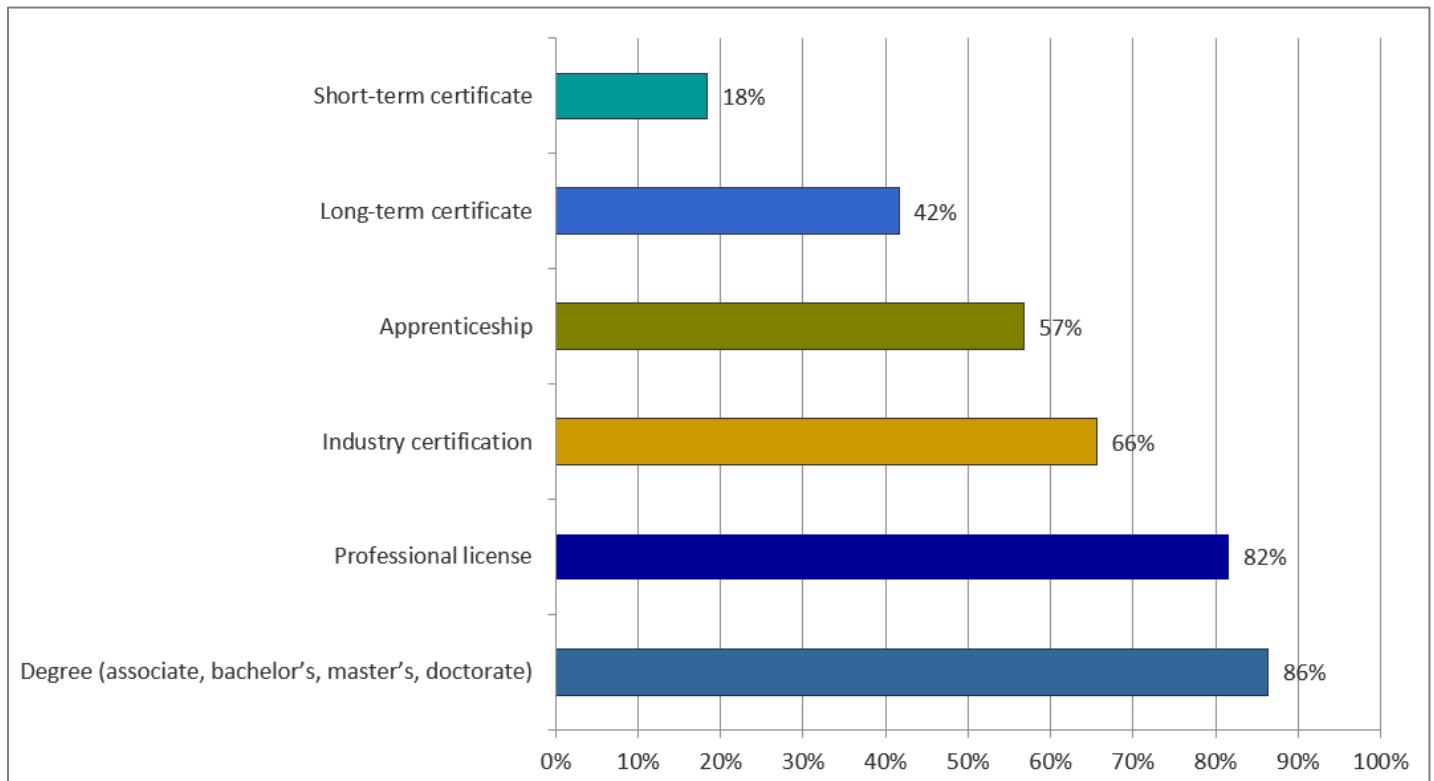
When responding to the survey question: “What role do the following play in determining the readiness of a technical college graduate?”, technical education and skill and employability skills were most often rated as “very important”, closely followed by work-based learning. The following bar graph (Figure 1) shows that while respondents generally agree that academic learning plays an important role, they indicated it was less important than the other three choices.

Figure 1



**“HIGH-QUALITY” CREDENTIALS.** When asked “What does the term “high-quality credential” mean to you when you think about a technical college?”, the following bar graph (Figure 2) shows that the majority of respondents selected a degree program (associate, bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate) and/or a professional license, while short-term and long-term certificates receiving the fewest responses.

Figure 2



While interviewees gave similar responses when asked to provide examples of high-quality credentials, DCM was able to gather more anecdotal descriptions around what the term “high-quality” means. Specific headlines about the meaning of “high-quality” include credentials that are:

- In-demand
- Meaningful to employers
- Industry recognized
- Associated with a wage premium
- Rigorous
- Highly validated
- Taught by high-quality faculty

*“ High-quality credentials are accepted by employers and industry- it’s not just the education system saying here is what we think means to be well-prepared for industry or your field. It’s the industry telling education- this is what we need. Qualified faculty are critical.”*

– Interviewee

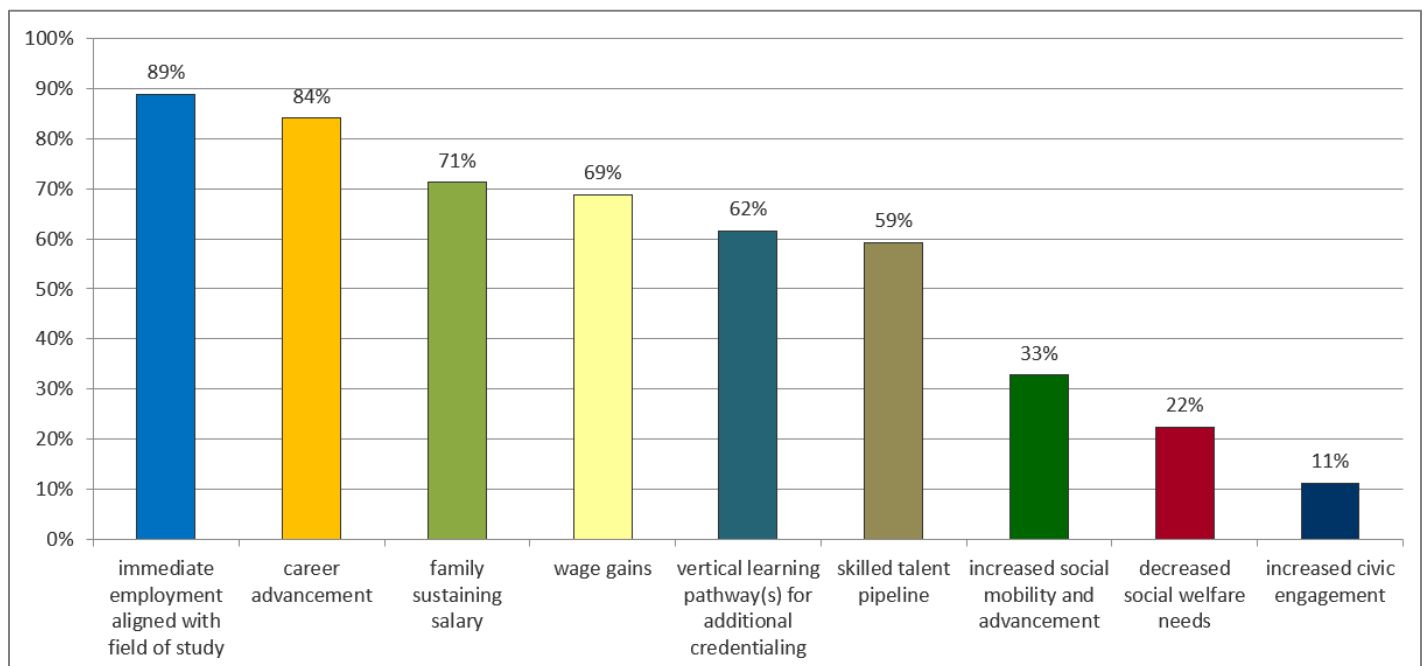
**OUTCOMES OF HIGH-QUALITY CREDENTIALS.** Interviewees were asked about expected outcomes for students, employers, the state of South Dakota, and Technical Colleges if technical college credentials are high-quality. While responses were diverse depending on a stakeholder's role and proximity to this work, several trends and themes were prevalent in the responses as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Students	High placement rates, prepared/skilled workers, earn a wage premium, career advancement, retention in South Dakota
Employers	Access to skilled workers, highly satisfied, less onboarding and on-the-job training, retention in South Dakota, strong relationships with technical schools
South Dakota	Economic development, resident and/or business recruitment/retention, meet workforce demand with skilled workers, educated state, increased community engagement
Technical Colleges	Increased enrollment, stronger industry partnerships, new partnerships, consistency across tech schools, growth, access to tech and resources, improved reputation

These responses were further validated by survey responses (Figure 4) to the question: “For a student, which of the following outcomes should occur if a technical college credential is of high-quality?”

Figure 4



**HURDLES AND CHALLENGES.** When asked to highlight challenges, the most commonly identified issues by interviewees in attaining outcomes for students, the state, employers, and technical colleges were:

- Cost of tuition for students compared to other states
- Technical schools working as separate institutions
- Funding
- Perception of tech programs as a viable option (for K-12, students, parents, etc)
- Resources/technology (including physical capacity)
- A balance between state and local control
- Competition with the regental system
- Not targeting non-traditional, first generations and diverse populations of students enough

*“There needs to be more unity and consistency across the four technical colleges and need to get better at working as a system. Consistency means from academic quality, academic allowances, rigor...”*

– Interviewee

When responding to the question “In your opinion, what will it take to attain the outcomes for students, employers, the state, and technical colleges?”, responses strongly supported addressing the challenges named above. Specifically, the most common responses were:

*“Technical colleges do pretty well on the whole; but they need to work more as a system rather than 4 separate institutions. That will help them move along faster to reach their outcomes.”*

– Interviewee

- Consistency among the technical colleges
- Funding
- Ensuring the cost is affordable for students
- Strong industry partnerships
- Focus on non-traditional and first-generation students
- Qualified faculty
- Access to data
- Innovation
- Continued narrative shift about technical education

## **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

With desired outcomes front of mind, and with input from stakeholders, the System Office and DCM have drafted systemwide academic policies and forms to support policy implementation. The draft policies have been shared with members of the Quality Assurance Task Force, as well as college presidents, for feedback. It is desired that all drafted academic affairs policies be considered for SDBOTE approval no later than July 2021.