



the **QA** commons

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMONS
for HIGHER and POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

DRAFT CRITERIA FOR EEQ CERTIFICATION

The Essential Employability Qualities Certification for Programs that Prepare Graduates with Essential Qualities for 21st Century Employability

The Essential Employability Qualities Certification – or EEQ CERT – is intended to certify higher educational programs that graduate individuals who have the essential qualities for 21st century employability. The following Criteria for Certification (currently in draft form) and suggested evidence will be tested and refined during the pilot process to assess and ensure the relevance, operational feasibility, direct and indirect costs to implement, and value for stakeholders.

1. Assuring Learners' Essential Employability Qualities

This category addresses the outcomes of graduates' preparedness in regard to the EEQs in addition to the effectiveness of program design and support to help develop graduates' EEQs. See the [EEQ CERT Graduate Profile](#) for a draft of specific graduate qualities.

Elements of this category include:

- Program has established acceptable levels of performance for all EEQs;
- Program assures that each graduate meets them;
- Program provides opportunities for students to develop the EEQs in a work-relevant, applied context;
- Program continually validates its implementation of the EEQs to ensure currency and relevance by employers, students, and other relevant stakeholders.

2. Public Information Regarding Program Employability Preparation & Outcomes

This category addresses the extent to which the program provides meaningful, validated, representative, and disaggregated (gender, race, ethnicity) employability information about the program to prospective and current students, employers, and the public.

Elements of this category include:

- Program provides employability qualities that students will acquire (e.g. outcomes) and how they will acquire them;
- Program provides data on typical program costs, career pathways and opportunities, job placement, and salaries;
- Program provides student success data – persistence/retention, completion data.



The QA Commons

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

www.theqacommons.org - 6/14/17

3. Student Support for Employability

This category addresses the extent to which all students are supported throughout their program of study by the program and/or institutional services to aid in employability.

Elements of this category include:

- All students have experiential learning opportunities in a work-relevant context such as internships, simulations, applied projects, capstones, fieldwork, etc.
- All students engage in career planning and professional development activities to aid in their employability preparedness;
- All students are supported in persisting in and completing the program in a timely manner;
- All students are provided with a student record that documents their achievement of the EEQs.

4. Student & Employer Engagement

This category addresses the extent to which – and how – students and employers (and other relevant stakeholders) are engaged in the design, development, and evaluation of the program.

Elements of this category include:

- Employers (and other relevant stakeholders) are engaged in defining the outcomes of and designing the program to ensure graduates' preparedness for employability;
- Students and employers have clear mechanisms for providing feedback about the program; programs use the feedback to continuously improve student and program performance;
- Students and employers actively participate in assessing the effectiveness of the program.

5. Program Integrity

This category addresses the extent to which program performance information is accurate, timely, comprehensive, transparent, collected over time (trend data available), and disaggregated. Additionally, the program behaves ethically and demonstrates operational and academic integrity. Elements of this category will be defined more specifically during the pilot process.

Suggested Evidence

The EEQ Certification will ultimately be awarded based on verifiable evidence that is primarily outcomes-based. For the pilot, programs will not be required to collect new data, but will identify and share existing data/ information / evidence they may have. Evidence for meeting the criteria may include:

- Available program data (federal, institutional, local) – retention, graduation, placement, salary, etc.
- Student work samples; evidence of student learning
- Findings from locally and/or externally conducted surveys of alumni, current students, employers, and other constituents
- Employer engagement and feedback
- Student engagement and feedback
- Website, catalog, syllabi, and other relevant materials



The QA Commons

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

www.theqacommons.org - 6/14/17

- Public information provided by the program to students
- Documentation of student achievement
- Connection to and effectiveness of institutional support systems (e.g., career services, advising, etc.)
- Other elements to be suggested by pilot programs

ABOUT THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMONS

The EEQ Certification process is a project of The Quality Assurance Commons for Higher & Postsecondary Education. The QA Commons is funded by Lumina Foundation to explore, develop, and test alternative approaches of quality assurance that respond to the changing landscape of higher and postsecondary education and will serve the needs of learners, employers, and the larger society.

The QA Commons Team:

Ralph Wolff - President & Founder
Melanie Booth - Executive Director
Peter Ewell - Senior Advisor; President Emeritus, NCHEMS
William Plater - Senior Scholar
Simon Boehme - Director of Student Engagement
Sally Johnstone - President, NCHEMS
Marianne Boeke - Senior Associate, NCHEMS

Find out more about us at: www.theqacommons.org



The QA Commons

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

www.theqacommons.org - 6/14/17