Quality Credentialing: What Is It And What Do You Do With It?

Presentation to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, Comprehensive Learner Record Advisory Group

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Workcred
WORKCRED’S ROLE
AND SERVICES
Workcred Mission & Vision

**Mission:** To strengthen workforce quality by improving the credentialing system, ensuring its ongoing relevance, and preparing employers, workers, educators, and governments to use it effectively.

**Vision:** A labor market which relies on the relevance, quality, and value of workforce credentials for opportunities, growth, and development.
Higher Education Institutions

Industry and Employers

Certification Bodies

Professional Societies

State Governments
Complementary but Separate Programs

- Assesses against an American National Standard and/or ISO Standard, or other programmatic requirements
- Must comply with ISO/IEC 17011 and remain neutral, objective, and impartial
- Does not provide consultancy

Workcred
an affiliate of ANSI

- Maintains separation from and respects the impartiality of the ANSI National Accreditation Board
- Educates stakeholders about quality credentials, when credentials are appropriate and how they fit in career pathways
- Consults regarding:
  - building quality credentials (which includes conformity to accreditation standards)
  - evaluating credentials
  - identifying, aligning, and appropriately stacking credentials
- Conducts research to address industry and public needs
Workcred Services

Connecting Stakeholders
Connecting industry, education, credentialing organizations, and others to create a more integrated and effective credentialing system

Quality
Helping stakeholders better understand the quality, value, and effectiveness of credentials, and make informed decisions

Thought Leadership
Presenting at national workforce conferences; serving on national task forces, panels, and boards

Consulting
Building credentialing programs that meet quality standards; helping employers define their competency needs and select appropriate credentials; ensuring credentials match the current body of knowledge for an occupation; and more

Education & Training
Convening credentialing-focused workshops, conferences, and webinars

Research
Conducting research to address workforce credentialing issues
WHAT IS A QUALITY CREDENTIAL?
## How Do Credentials Differ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CERTIFICATE*</th>
<th>CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>LICENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awarded by</strong></td>
<td>Education and training providers, employers, labor unions, and industry associations</td>
<td>Industry certification bodies</td>
<td>Education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awarded for</strong></td>
<td>An exam at the end of a training or education course or a one-time assessment</td>
<td>Third-party, independent competency assessment</td>
<td>Course of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicates</strong></td>
<td>Education/ knowledge/skills</td>
<td>Skill mastery/ competencies</td>
<td>Education, successfully passed courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time to complete</strong></td>
<td>Variable, generally less than 2 years</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Variable, generally 2 years or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time and renewal requirements</strong></td>
<td>Often no time limit, no renewal requirement</td>
<td>Time-limited, includes recertification</td>
<td>No time limit, no renewal requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revocation process</strong></td>
<td>Cannot be revoked</td>
<td>Can be revoked for incompetence or unethical behavior</td>
<td>Cannot be revoked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>CNC Machinist, Zurich Insurance Apprenticeship</td>
<td>CompTIA Cybersecurity Analyst, Certified Energy Auditor, Medical Laboratory Scientist, MLS(ASCP)*</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Associate of Arts in Business Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There are many types of certificates. Some examples include: certificates of participation, certificates of achievement, certificates of completion for apprenticeship, and assessment-based certificates.

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Quality Standards

• The following standards set the bar for quality credentials:
  – ISO/IEC 17024:2012, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*

• Accreditation is a third-party attestation that an organization has met the requirements of a standard conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out its declared functions.
Standard 17024 For Personnel Certifications

• This standard was developed to establish a globally accepted benchmark for organizations operating personnel certification programs, and ensures:

  – certification bodies operating personnel certification programs function in a consistent, comparable, reliable, and impartial manner
  – applicants and candidates are treated fairly
  – a process that facilitates continued competence
  – due process procedures are in place to “take away” the certification for unethical or incompetent behavior
  – a continuous quality improvement approach
DEGREES OF RIGOR
FOR THE MANY FACES OF CERTIFICATION

Accredited by a third party (e.g., ANSI, NCCA)

Ability to revoke certification for violation or unethical behavior

Recertification requirement

Standardized exam

Note:
Training that is followed by an assessment to measure the learning outcomes is an assessment-based certificate, not a certification as sometimes referred to.
Standard E2659:18 For Certificate Programs

• This standard provides requirements for developing and administering quality assessment-based certificate programs

• It was created to distinguish between a certificate and a certification program
  – Some certification programs applying for accreditation were really certificate programs
  – Higher education accreditation says it is a “gap”

• Key elements addressed in the standard:
  – Organizational structure, management system – continuous quality improvement, personnel, financial management, communication to primary stakeholders, outsourcing and commercial support, access to information within records, complaints and appeals, certificate program instructional design to include assessment, certificate program evaluation, and requirements for certificate issuance and use
TYPES OF CERTIFICATES

- Participation
- Certificate
- Achievement
- Completion of Apprenticeship
- Performance
- Assessment-Based
- Criterion-Referenced Exam
- Competency
HOW CAN WORKCRED HELP?
Workcred’s Areas of Research Interest

1. Examining the relationship between quality, labor market value, and effectiveness of credentials
2. Exploring the relationship among different types of credentials (e.g., certifications, degrees, certificates) to improve credential holders’ labor-market outcomes
3. Mapping and integrating the credentialing landscape to create more defined credential pathways
4. Using data to identify credential values and outcomes
Embedding Certifications Into Bachelor’s Degree Programs

- Along with APLU, USU, and UPCEA, Workcred convened credentialing bodies and universities to explore how students can earn certifications as part of their four-year degree program.

April 23-24 2019
Healthcare convening in Washington, District of Columbia
Hosted by APLU
40+ stakeholders participated

October 10-11 2019
Liberal arts convening in Indianapolis, Indiana
Hosted by Lumina Foundation
35+ stakeholders participated

March 26-27 2020*
Hospitality convening in Miami, Florida
To be hosted by Florida International University
*Canceled due to the pandemic, but replaced with interviews.

July 9-10 2019
Cybersecurity convening in San Jose, California
Hosted by San Jose State University
40+ stakeholders participated

December 10-11 2019
Manufacturing convening in Atlanta, Georgia
Hosted by Georgia Tech University
40+ stakeholders participated
Embedding Certifications Into Bachelor’s Degree Programs, Cont’d

• Outcomes of the project:

  – Gained knowledge about the current landscape of relationships between universities and certification bodies, and among credentials
  – Fostered an emerging community of practice between universities and certification bodies
  – Discovered examples of C+D (certification-degree) pathways
  – Developed value propositions for C+D pathways for multiple stakeholders
  – Synthesized convening outcomes and themes into a framework that identifies C+D pathway examples, challenges, and opportunities to build these pathways
Embedding Certifications Into Bachelor’s Degree Programs, Cont’d

C+D pathways framework:

- Get leadership buy-in
- Create a common language
- Align competencies
- Determine appropriate “fit”
- Allocate resources
- Identify how credentials will be communicated

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Embedding Certifications Into Bachelor’s Degree Programs, Cont’d

• The report and associated documents can be found at https://workcred.org/Our-Work/Aligning-and-Embedding-Industry-Certifications-with-Bachelor-Degrees.aspx
Embedding Certifications Into Bachelor’s Degree Programs, Cont’d

- Phase II seeks to:

  - Address racial and credential inequities
  - Uncover more robust approaches aimed at reducing the barriers for universities to create credential pathways
  - Continue to cultivate and support the community of practice identified through phase I
Connecting Certification And Education Attainment Data To Understand Successful Career Pathways

• Workcred convenes a network of certification bodies to explore the potential for linking different administrative data sets that would provide information about the value of certifications, the labor-market outcomes of individuals who hold them, and insights into successful career pathways into the workforce.

• The network is working with the National Student Clearinghouse to link data from certification bodies, educational attainment and enrollment data from universities, and aggregate wage data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

• The overarching goal is to create a public-private data infrastructure that connects education attainment data with industry recognized credential attainment data and, ultimately, aggregate labor market outcomes for the purposes of understanding successful student pathways to the workforce.
Examples of Insights Gained by Linking Data Sets:

Student level education outcomes for certification holders:
- Degree attainment, including award date, degree title and major, and institution awarding
- Enrollment status in Title-IV education institutions

Aggregate education outcomes for cohort of certification holders:
- Highest degree or any degree attained by percentages
- Institution type by previous enrollment
- Top 5 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIPs)

Aggregate labor market outcomes since last credential:
- Average wages since last credential overall and by demographics, such as, gender, race and ethnicity, and age groups, and credential attainment level
- Average wages by credential pathway progression
- Entrance and retention in industry sector after credential is awarded
How does a credential help an individual get a job or advance in his/her career?

• Are there wage gains associated with specific credentials and what are they?

• Are there differences in wage outcomes for men and women or among different racial groups who hold the same credential?

• By linking data, we can gain insights and answers to those questions. We can gather more information about the return on investment for a credential. And, we get obtain a better understanding of successful career pathways.
For More Information

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