



**Center on Education and Training for Employment
The Ohio State University**

Innovations in Workforce Credentialing

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Session Goals

- Define the workforce credentialing space, where credentials are developed and used, and the primary stakeholders involved;
- Describe issues that serve as obstacles to effectively evaluating and utilizing workforce credentials;
- Summarize some of the efforts underway to address some of the issues and obstacles.



Workforce Credentialing

Credentialing is the process of awarding an individual some form of verifiable indicator that the individual has demonstrated qualification in a subject area.

Workforce credentialing refers to credentials that are useful for signifying knowledge, skills, and competencies applicable to work performance.

Credentials come in a variety of forms. They include academic degrees, state licenses, training certificates, continuing education units, board certifications, internal (to the organization) credentials, and digital badges and micro-credentials indicating discrete learning accomplishments.

Credentialing Assessments

Credentialing assessments are used to document

- the mastery of specialized industry knowledge;
- possession of key job-related skills, abilities; and
- possession of job-relevant competencies.

Credentialing assessments can range from lower stakes to higher stakes.

- Certification and licensure exams ~ higher stakes
- Certificates or micro-credentials ~ lower stakes

Test development and psychometric rigor varies dramatically across types of credentials, and across credentialing organizations within a credential type.

Emerging Interest in Credentialing

Employers- For years employers have looked at degrees and certifications as indicators of competence, and have used them in *hiring, promotion, and placement decisions*. More active fields include healthcare and information technology.

The Public- Key stakeholder in the credentialing industry. The stated goal of many credentialing programs, especially licensing, is the *protection of the public*.

Career-Technical Education Community- Used for program *accountability*, demonstrating *program effectiveness*.

Federal Government- Accredited certification programs are preferred b/c quality is established (esp. Dept of Defense)

Emerging Interest in Credentialing

State Governments- Several examples of states supporting credentialing in order to upgrade the workforce and increase competitiveness (e.g., Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina).

Trade Associations- Trade associations in general are interested in credentialing, and many are credential providers. A trade association for the certification industry is the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE).

Association of Test Publishers- Certification and Licensure Division; Workforce Credentialing Division.



Issues in Credentialing



Credential Confusion

Lack of clarity regarding the differences between types of credentials: certificates, certifications, degrees, badges, micro-credentials, and licenses.

Certification vs. Certificate Programs

	Certification	Certificate Program
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verifying education/training and experience obtained elsewhere• Assessing current knowledge, skills, abilities• Requiring continued learning/competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educating/training individuals to achieve learning objectives (LOs)• Assessing attainment of intended learning outcomes
Core Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligibility requirements• Rigorous Assessment• Ongoing Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning event(s)• Assessment of LO attainment

Certification vs. Certificate Programs

	Certification	Certificate Program
Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be revoked• Results in a designation and associated acronym	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot be revoked• No designation/ acronym or one that doesn't state or imply certification
Content Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on formal job/practice/ occupational analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on curriculum, which can be derived from formal job analyses or less formal procedures
Program Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less formal management structure

Credential Quality

A second issue in workforce credentialing is the lack of information regarding credential quality. Quality can vary on a number of dimensions, including

- The **value** of the credential
- The quality of the **content standards** that the credential measures.
- The quality of the **assessments**
- Regarding the organization providing the credential, **organizational integrity**: issues with respect to the quality of service, the customer support, management, and organizational effectiveness.

Credential Meaning

A third issue in the credentialing space concerns the meaning of any given credential.

- What does a credential really signify?
- To what depth and level of knowledge and skill?
- How do we compare credentials?



Emerging Trends



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A Credentials Framework

Part of the Connecting Credentials Initiative

(<http://connectingcredentials.org/>)

An attempt to improving the understandability and utility of credentials through the development of a standardized framework to allow the comparison of credentials with respect to the content and level of proficiency they represent. The goal is to enhance

- Transparency
- Comparability
- Portability, and
- Quality Assurance



A Credentials Framework

Eight levels of breadth, depth, and complexity for each of the following domains:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
 - Personal abilities
 - Social abilities

Credential Transparency Initiative

<http://credentialtransparencyinitiative.org/>

- Funded by Lumina Foundation, the project is led by George Washington University, Southern Illinois University, and Workcred, an affiliate of ANSI
- The initiative will develop common terms for describing key features of credentials; create a voluntary, web-based registry for sharing the resulting information; and create software applications for employers, students, educators, and other credential stakeholders.
- The registry will include all kinds of credentials – from educational degrees and certificates to industry certifications, occupational licenses, and micro-credentials.
- Among the apps, there will be the Directory App, and Employer App, Transfer Value App, Competency Authoring App.

Credential Transparency Initiative

Stakeholders can use the Directory App to

- Identify credentials meeting user-defined criteria based on key features of credentials.
- Compile customized lists and descriptions of credentials based on search criteria.
- Build customized, branded directories for different users based on their own criteria, without the need for continual, duplicative content development and updating.
- Publish comparable information through public directories or through existing career and education guidance systems

Efforts to Define Value and Utility of Credentials

The American National Standards Institute's creation of WorkCred, an organization dedicated to bringing clarity to credential confusion and questions related to content and quality. WorkCred conducts research in the following areas:

- Market Research
- Credential Quality
- Market Value
- Predictive Value
- Alignment of Credentials with Industry
- Stacking of Credentials

<http://www.workcred.org/>

Efforts to Define Value and Utility of Credentials

Initiatives from the Institute for Credentialing Excellence

<http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/>

- Publication: A Look at the Value of Professional Certification (2012)
- Tools: Value of Certification Toolkit (2012)

Accreditation of Certification and Certificate Programs

- Provides certification/certificate issuers standards and guidelines for program & process quality.
- Involves a rigorous third-party review of program elements, processes, and procedures
- Provides stakeholders with quality assurance for certification or certificate credentials.
- Thorough documentation and transparency of policies and procedures are key to accreditation.

Accreditation of Certification and Certificate Programs

Accrediting Body	Certificate Program Standards	Certification Program Standards
ANSI	ASTM E2659-09 Standard Practice for Certificate Programs	ANSI/IO/IEC 17024:2012 Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons
ICE/NCCA	ANSI/NOCA 1100 – Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs	NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs

Digital Badging

- Digital representations of credentials
- Numerous advantages over traditional paper credentials
- Contain information and link to deeper evidence of mastery, such as documents, course outlines, content standards, and testimonials
- Portable, stackable, easily shared
- May be more secure than paper certificates
- Well suited to moving from “seat time” to competency-based education.
- Growing area, full potential yet to be realized

Micro-Credentials

- Micro-credential = credential of a smaller scope than what many think of as traditional credentials - focused on a specific knowledge or skill set rather than a full role.
- Digital badges are NOT micro-credentials. They are representations of credentials, micro or macro.
- Micro-credentials could be very useful as add-ons to base macro-credentials. Specialties within a certification

Micro-Credentials

Why Micro-Credentials?

- The environment is changing: Changing jobs more quickly
- Employers indicate college prepared does not mean job ready
- Knowledge half life is short
- Traditional Certification Model:
 - Often only one or two long pathways to eligibility
 - Broad content
 - No recognition along the way
 - Inflexible, inconvenient, burdensome, generic, irrelevant
- Micro-credentialing
 - Flexible, convenient, earned in a reasonable timeframe, recognition along the way can be met through micro-credentials.

Other Resources

- Advance CTE (State Directors):
 - <https://careertech.org/resources/credentials-and-assessments>
- Workforce Data Quality Campaign Workforce Credentials Coalition:
 - <http://www.workforcedqc.org/WCC/Data>
 - <http://www.workforcedqc.org/resources-events/resources/credential-data-pioneers>
- Certification Data Exchange Project
 - https://www.acteonline.org/certification_data/#.V40efODr2Uk
- ANSI ISO 17024 Accreditation
 - <https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/Default.aspx>
- ANSI Certificate Programs Accreditation
 - <https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/certificate-issuers/Default.aspx>

Other Resources

- Institute for Credentialing Excellence
 - <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/>

A few interesting articles:

- Digital Badges
 - <http://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2014/12/10/online-courses-experiment-with-digital-badges>
- Badges and Nanodegrees
 - <http://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2016-01-22/what-employers-think-of-badges-nanodegrees-from-online-programs>
- Stackable credentials
 - <http://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2016-04-12/stackable-credential-options-rise-in-online-education>



Questions? DISCUSSION

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