



MINNESOTA STATE

**mn** OFFICE OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

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Minnesota State – Office of Higher Education

## Quality Credentials Framework – Credentials of Value Workgroup

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# Why does Minnesota need to define Quality Credentials?

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1. The State has multiple funding streams and approval processes that focus on compliance, but not necessarily quality across both education and workforce sectors.
2. As federal and state leaders evaluate shifts that potentially support non-degree and non-credit credentials, the State wanted to be ready with a differentiating criteria and process.
3. None of the current standards impact all types of credentials, from workforce training to degrees and even graduate degrees.
4. In an economy as diverse as Minnesota's, not all occupations are aligned to "industry recognized" credentials.
5. Preference for a definition that could flex to inter-disciplinary and emerging occupations, as well as changes to employment, i.e. self employment.
6. Looking to support truly stackable credentials and collaboration between workforce training systems and colleges.

# Goal of COV Workgroup

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Develop a Quality definition or framework to include both Degree and Non-Degree Credentials

- A common standard for all types of education and training to create alignment and understanding
- Provides meaningful standards while being flexible to be applied to a range of programs from work-based training to degrees and even graduate-level education
- Standards to support consumers having needed information
- Standards to support responsible use of public dollars

# Why Inclusive of Degree and Non-Degree?

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- Did not want to have separate standards for differing types of education experiences
- Concern a quality standard for only non-degree credentials would create an unequal standard
- See value in the opportunity for the full range of credentials to demonstrate their value to policy makers, as well as consumers
- Consumers and those responsible for spending public dollars will benefit from a criteria that assess the value of across credential types
- Higher education can benefit by highlighting the economic relevance of all types of programs
- Accreditation, State agency program approvals, and Minnesota State process for program approvals and review were models for framework development

# Quality Criteria Framework in Other States

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Project included guidance from the National Skills Coalition (NSC). Categories of Quality Criteria recommended (based on the work of other states) and **Minnesota priorities**

- Evidence of substantial job opportunities
- Evidence of competencies mastered
- Evidence of employment and earnings outcomes
- Evidence of stackable learning sequences or enhanced career pathways across employment, workforce training, and postsecondary education
- Additional criteria related to equity and inclusion

# Quality Framework Organization

<b>Areas of Responsibility</b> <span style="font-size: 2em;">→</span> <b>Criteria Categories</b> <span style="font-size: 2em;">↓</span>	<b>Credential –                      predetermined set of                      learning outcomes</b>	<b>Program – how a                      credential is delivered</b>	<b>Provider – how mindful                      and prepared a given                      organization or entity is in                      delivering the credential</b>
<b>Demand</b>			
<b>Wages</b>			
<b>Knowledge and Competencies</b>			
<b>Access</b>			
<b>Encouraged</b>			

# Draft Framework (1)

Credential	Program	Provider
<p><b>Demand:</b> The credential meets one or more of the following demand criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) It is aligned to occupations that are in demand statewide or regionally, as verified by job posting data, employer engagement, or other evidence.</li> <li>b) The credential represents the completion of a program that prepares individuals for a range of employment opportunities and represents the attainment of essential learning outcomes valued across employers.</li> <li>c) The credential is associated with strong self-employment outcomes for credential holders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wages :</b> Credential is aligned to occupations that provide a family-sustaining wage either regionally or statewide, opportunity for economic mobility, or meet essential community needs. Wage outcomes should be demonstrated through job posting data, historic employment outcomes for individuals with this credential, or provider-demonstrated evidence</p>	<p><b>Demand:</b> Evidence that individuals completing the program find employment at high rates in a field/profession that utilizes the skills and long-term learning outcomes gained in their education, including successful self-employment if relevant.</p> <p><b>Wages:</b> Evidence that individuals completing the program achieve a family-sustaining wage either regionally or statewide, have economic mobility, or are working in occupations that meet essential community needs</p>	

# Draft Framework (2)

Credential	Program	Provider
<p><b>Knowledge and competencies</b> are demonstrated/assessed and aligned with demand</p> <p><b>Access:</b> Assessments and examinations required in order to obtain the credential provide requested delivery method and appropriate accommodations for individuals with need, including but not limited to learners of English.</p> <p><b>Encouraged – stackable credentials:</b> The credential is stackable to additional training or upward career mobility (academic ladder and/or enhanced career path)</p>	<p><b>Knowledge and competencies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Learning outcomes are published and meet the skills and knowledge needed in the aligned in-demand occupations.</li> <li>b) Programs include a clear strategy for assessing learning based on published outcomes and/or are aligned to an external examination/credential.</li> <li>c) Instructors are knowledgeable in program of study, teaching methods</li> <li>d) Programs prioritize culturally-inclusive practices</li> </ul> <p><b>Access:</b> Programs demonstrate entry requirements are realistic, appropriate and do not result in bias/ inequitable access</p>	<p><b>Knowledge and competencies:</b> Providers are approved by OHE, accredited or otherwise vetted by an agency, board or designated authority.</p> <p><b>Access:</b> Provider has a statement of intention and resources to address diversity, equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Provider has wrap-around supports for student/trainee success</p> <p>Providers participate in required data collection</p> <p><b>Encouraged – collaboration:</b> Prioritize state investment in providers and programs that connect services and pathways between workforce agencies, higher education and employers for the benefit of students and trainees.</p>



# How can P-20 assist?

- **Provide feedback on language and design of Quality Framework.**
- **Approve development of a “promising credentials” report to highlight credentials aligned to occupations that meet demand and wage criteria.**
- **Create an interagency governance structure to ensure fidelity of implementation across state agencies, Minnesota State, and others.**
- **Establish partnerships with community organizations.**
- **Offer use cases for which the framework could be implemented.**