



DEAC and The QA Commons Announce Three New Programs Have Been Granted Essential Employability Qualities Certification

January 14, 2022 (Washington, D.C.)—The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) and The Quality Assurance Commons (QA Commons) are pleased to announce and are pleased to announce that three new programs have been granted Essential Employability Qualities Certification (EEQ CERT). EEQ CERT™ is granted by QA Commons after a rigorous process of external and independent review.

EEQ Certified programs foster a distinctive set of attributes in their graduates and completers. These qualities are intended to prepare students to make important contributions in their workplaces. The eight Essential Employability Qualities (EEQs) are communication, thinking and problem solving, inquiry, collaboration, adaptability, principles and ethics, responsibility and professionalism, and learning – the qualities most often cited by employers as lacking in the workplace.

“In today’s workplaces, employability skills are critical for workers looking to build and advance in their careers,” said Mason Bishop, President of the QA Commons. “Our partnership with DEAC and EEQ program certification of these college programs represents what students are calling for—education aligned to employment.”

All three newly Certified programs were a part of a project with DEAC that examined, through QA Commons, [EEQ CERT process](#) and how DEAC-accredited institutions prepare students for employability. Strong alignment of the EEQs and their definitions to the DEAC standards were found – based on the requirement to promote “critical thinking, ethical reasoning, social responsibility, global citizenship, or lifelong learning.” In going through the process and applying the framework to program design, all participants came away with ideas on how to execute the identified “areas for improvement” with respect to student employability outcomes.

“Our collaborative aim was to emphasize the importance of EEQs when considering distance education and to provide a unique opportunity to students,” said Dr. Leah Matthews, DEAC Executive Director. “Partnering with QA Commons aligns with DEAC’s commitment to serving the greater social good through quality standards for distance education that ensure excellence in teaching, learning, and student outcomes.”

Aspen University’s RN to BSN program, for registered nurses who wish to pursue a baccalaureate degree, as well as Bottega University’s Associate of Science in Communication program were granted full EEQ Certification, good for three years. Martinsburg College’s Medical Assisting Certificate program, which began in October of 2020, was granted Provisional Certification, and will submit supplemental documentation at the end of 2021 to be evaluated for full Certification. Programs’ executive summaries can be found [on the QA Commons’ website](#).

To date, QA Commons has EEQ Certified 17 programs, representing all disciplines at four-year public universities, two-year public colleges, and private for-profit institutions that include liberal arts and pre-professional programs of study. Several additional programs currently have EEQ CERT portfolios under review.

About DEAC: The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1926 that operates as an institutional accreditor of distance education institutions.

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Accreditation by DEAC covers all distance education activities within an institution and it provides accreditation from the secondary school level through professional doctoral degree-granting institutions. DEAC's geographic area of accreditation activities includes all states within the United States and international locations. DEAC's website is designed to be a resource for all those interested in distance education accreditation: students, faculty, administrators, and the public. Learn more at www.deac.org.

About The Quality Assurance Commons: Quality Assurance Commons' (QA Commons) mission is to make certain all learners are prepared for the changing dynamics of the workforce and economy. QA Commons aspires to help all people realize upward mobility by developing a foundation of employability skills needed by all workers in all jobs. Founded, in 2016, with a grant from the Lumina Foundation and support from the National Center for Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), QA Commons offers a range of services – from helping embed Essential Employability Qualities (EEQs) into courses and curriculum – to training instructors and staff on employability and deploying programmatic certification. Learn more at www.theqacommons.org.

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