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THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMONS
for HIGHER and POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION



DEAC and The QA Commons Collaborate to Promote Essential Employability Qualities

June 15, 2021 (Washington, D.C.)—The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) and The Quality Assurance Commons are pleased to announce a joint effort to evaluate how DEAC-accredited institutions prepare students for employability through the QA Commons Essential Employability Qualities Certification (EEQ CERT™) program. Employability skills are increasingly important, yet employers too often find recent graduates are lacking skills in key areas. Employers today are looking for workers who are flexible, have initiative and can demonstrate the ability to perform varied tasks in different environments.

“Through DEAC accreditation, distance education institutions are able to provide assurance to students, jobseekers, and employers about the quality of learning and institutional effectiveness. We see this collaboration as an exciting opportunity to demonstrate the strength of DEAC accreditation through the employability focus of The Quality Commons.” says Leah Matthews, Executive Director of DEAC.

The Quality Commons EEQ Certification offers a unique and timely approach to demonstrating how soft skills are integral to educational attainment. The EEQ CERT program establishes a collaborative environment where institutions and programs work directly with employers as partners to align educational outcomes with the skills that students need to be prepared for employment in the real world.

Ralph Wolff, founder and president of the QA Commons added: “We are delighted to partner with DEAC and see our EEQ CERT process complement the accreditation process by focusing on key employability outcomes and building stronger relationships to employers and alumni to ensure that graduates are well prepared for the workplace.”

DEAC has identified four institutions – Aspen University, Martinsburg College, Bottega University and American College of Business and Technology – to pilot the EEQ CERT process which focuses on five key areas: demonstrated proficiency of eight Essential Employability Qualities, integration of career support services, engagement of employers, feedback from alumni, and transparency of program career outcomes. Programs will submit a portfolio of evidence reviewed by trained external reviewers who provide extensive feedback to identify program strengths and areas of improvement. Certification of programs is provided by the independent QA Commons, an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

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About DEAC: The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) is a private, non-profit organization that operates as an accreditor of institutions that primarily offer distance education. Founded in 1926, the DEAC holds recognition by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Learn more at www.deac.org.

About The Quality Assurance Commons: Founded in 2016, the QA Commons has worked nationally with over 70 programs at more than 40 colleges and universities through a set of processes to improve preparation of learners for the workplace. A key focus is on integrating academic and employability qualities, building stronger career awareness beyond the first job, and addressing the needs of first generation and underrepresented students. Learn more at www.theqacommons.org.