



DEAC Continues its Focus on Student Employability

More programs are undergoing Essential Employability Qualities Certification (EEQ CERT) with Quality Assurance Commons

July 26, 2022 (Washington, D.C.) — Quality Assurance Commons (QA Commons) and the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) are pleased to announce a continuation of their partnership with two additional DEAC-accredited colleges engaged in the Essential Employability Qualities (EEQ) Certification process.

QA Commons issues EEQ Program Certification after a rigorous external and independent review process. It signals to employers and the public that educational programs prepare students with the employability skills critical for workers looking to build and advance in their careers.

QA Commons' Certification review for Abraham Lincoln University (ALU) includes its newly developed bachelor's degree in Professional Studies, which is designed to enable students to succeed in a variety of professional settings. The degree contains an interdisciplinary curriculum that exposes students to key business and social principles that can be applied in a broad range of occupations and needed by employers across a broad array of industries and occupations.

"ALU is excited about the development of the Professional Studies degree," said Dr. Robert Abel, Jr. Chief Academic Officer at ALU. "This new program stemmed from conversations with our advisory board on ways to address the gap in knowledge and skills that students bring to the workplace. The QA Commons' Essential Employability Qualities serve as the framework to address students' ability to enhance their learning and come away with skills that will be instrumental in the workplace."

American College of Healthcare Sciences (ACHS) has submitted its Associate of Applied Science in Integrative Health Sciences program for EEQ Certification. This professional degree program focuses on evidence-based, integrative health and wellness modalities such as aromatherapy, herbal medicine, and nutrition to support diverse populations and community wellness.

"To kick off this process, ACHS hosted an Employer Summit inviting leaders in wellness and sustainability industries to share the needs of today's employers who are considering hiring wellness professionals. The Essential Employability Qualities were at the center of the discussion with our employer partners," said Dr. Tiffany Rodriguez, Chief Academic Officer at ACHS. "It was a rich conversation and very helpful to use the QA Commons' employability framework to focus the discussion."

EEQ Certified programs foster a distinctive set of attributes in their graduates and completers. 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. Programs partici-

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pating in EEQ Certification are scored on five categories that represent a comprehensive and integrated framework for employability - Student EEQ Preparation, Employer Engagement, Integrated Support Services, Learner Engagement, and Transparency of Outcomes.

To date, QA Commons has certified 22 programs, representing numerous disciplines, at four-year public universities, two-year public colleges, and private for-profit institutions. Additionally, the organization offers assessment tools, professional development, and student EEQ badging. DEAC-accredited programs including Bottega University's BS in Communication and Martinsburg College's Certificate in Medical Assisting have achieved EEQ Certification.

Dr. Leah Matthews, Executive Director of DEAC expressed her enthusiasm for the continued focus on employability. "After observing the close alignment between certain DEAC accreditation standards and the EEQ Certification qualities, we are excited to expand and continue our collaboration with Quality Commons and work toward advancing opportunities for students to gain the skills they need for a successful future in the workplace."

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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. 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: The 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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