



## Announcement

### DETC Approved Quality Curriculum (AQC) Project

August 1, 2014

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New models of curriculum and course delivery rapidly continue to develop and evolve. The DETC Accrediting Commission announced today that it will spend the next six months (August 1, 2014 – January 31, 2015) exploring the viability of an Approved Quality Curriculum (AQC) review process on a trial basis. This effort is part of DETC's strategic thinking and planning for its potential role in the review of curriculum offered via distance education by providers that are external to higher education institutions. The purveyors of these models typically offer distance education curricula or courses that are tailored to the specific needs of an industry (e.g., information technology, health care, cyber security) or designed for inclusion in a broader program of study (general education).

For the AQC project, DETC will employ the same assessment process that it uses for certain aspects of its accreditation reviews. This assessment process will include the application of curriculum review standards under Section II, Educational Program Objectives, Curricula and Materials and Policy C.5. in the DETC Accreditation Handbook. DETC will draw upon its considerable talent pool of curriculum reviewers from regionally accredited institutions, reviewers who determine American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations, and its Subcommittee on Academic Review to evaluate applications for AQC review and determine whether AQC expectations have been met. Should a curricula provider complete DETC's review process and receive an AQC imprimatur, the Accrediting Commission will consider whether DETC-accredited institutions could incorporate that curriculum into their own programs of study in place of submitting an application for a course or program review. The AQC designation could also affirm the quality, reliability, and effectiveness of the curriculum for other interest groups within the higher education community and beyond.

The time frame and process for DETC to carry out AQC reviews on a trial basis are as follows:

#### **1. Timeframe for AQC Trial Period**

The trial period will commence August 1, 2014 and conclude with a final review by the Commission at its January 2015 meeting.

#### **2. Applications for the AQC Trial Period**

Curriculum providers interested in working with DETC and submitting curricula for review during the trial period may submit a letter of interest to DETC and obtain an application to participate from Nan Bayster Ridgeway, DETC's Director of Accreditation.

#### **3. AQC Review Expectations for Curriculum Providers**

The providers:

- Are voluntarily seeking an Approved Quality Curriculum (AQC) review by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC).

- Assume an obligation to be forthcoming, complete, and accurate in presenting information to DETC and answering any questions pertaining to the AQC process.
- Voluntarily accept responsibility to comply with DETC's AQC process, the accreditation standards, and curriculum review procedures.
- Understand that AQC review and determination *does not in any way convey* that DETC accreditation status is granted to any portion of the provider's curriculum or coursework.
- Agree that, once DETC sends confirmation that the Approved Quality Curriculum Application has been received and accepted, the provider will submit the appropriate curricular materials in accordance with DETC accreditation standards under Section II and Policy C.5. within 30 days. Otherwise, acceptance of the application will expire.
- Attest to the accuracy and integrity of the information submitted to DETC.

#### 4. Timeline

Trial-Period Activity for Providers Accepted by DETC	Approximate Timeline
A. The providers will submit an application for an AQC review and identify the course titles or curriculum areas for which it is seeking the review. The application fee will be \$500.	August 4 – August 15, 2014
B. Staff will review the course titles or curriculum areas to determine a 25 percent sample to undergo the AQC review. The review fee will be \$1200 per course or curriculum area.	August 15 – August 31, 2014
C. The AQC content will be sent to DETC curriculum reviewers for assessment and preparation of the subject specialist report.	September 1 – September 30, 2014
D. The providers will have the opportunity to respond to the subject specialist report.	October 1 – October 31, 2014
E. The DETC Subcommittee on Academic Review will meet to review the applications and determine whether to grant the providers AQC status for the courses or curriculum submitted.	December or 2014 or early January 2015
F. The DETC Subcommittee on Academic Review will provide the Commission its assessment of the AQC process at the January 2015 meeting and formally make its recommendations on providers to receive AQC status.	January 2015
G. The DETC Accrediting Commission will review the recommendations, undertake a detailed assessment of the AQC process, and determine an appropriate course of action.	January 2015

**For more information, contact Nan Bayster Ridgeway, Director of Accreditation via email to [nan@detc.org](mailto:nan@detc.org) or phone at 202.234.5100 extension 103.**