Specialized Accreditation and Employer Engagement

January 2018; CHEA Conference, Washington, DC
What’s the big deal about employer engagement?

• Perceived skills gap - mismatch in which job seekers lack the skills or qualifications for the jobs employers need to fill.

• Implication of a disconnect between the education system and industry.

• Are accreditors and educational programs not interacting with employers to ensure students are equipped with necessary competencies?

• Testing this disconnect, the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) asked:
  • how accreditors interact directly with employers and,
  • how are programs required to engage with employers.
Who is ASPA?

- Collaborative forum and collective voice for accreditors of specialized and professional higher education programs/schools in USA
- Established 1993
- 62 members
  - Nursing, architecture, engineering, physical therapy
  - >23,000 programs accredited
- Twice yearly conferences: business + professional development
What do specialized and professional accreditors do?

• Set educational standards that protect the public interest by producing safe and competent practitioners in the students’ chosen professions or fields of study.

• Accreditation standards and process is inclusive - developed with input from expert stakeholders in the profession:
  • practitioners,
  • employers and industry,
  • educators,
  • professional associations, and
  • other communities of interest.
Employer Engagement

Programmatic Accreditation Practices

December 2017

Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors
Findings (n=62)

- Ninety percent (90%) of ASPA member accreditors directly engage with employers.

- Ninety percent (90%) of ASPA member accreditors require accredited programs to engage with employers.

- Overall, 100% of ASPA member accreditors of programs whose mission is linked to employment have mechanisms in place for employer engagement.
How Accreditors Engage with Employers

- Employers participate in standard review/development: 68%
- Employers participate on decision-making bodies: 48%
- Job practice analysis informs accreditation standards: 45%
- Employers participate on site visit teams: 42%
- Employer/industry surveys: 34%
- Employer/industry/practice advisory board/council: 18%
- Other: 24%
- None: 10%
### How Programs Engage with Employers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential/practical/clinical placements for students</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer satisfaction with program completers</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<td>Employer/industry/practice advisory board/council</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<td>Community/employer involvement in curriculum design and other program aspects</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Questions – at end