

THE QUALITY PLATFORM: EXTERNAL REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

WHAT IS THE “QUALITY PLATFORM”?

- An outcomes-based external review of alternative providers of higher education for their performance and quality
- May be used nationally or internationally



WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

- Equip students and the public with reliable information about the performance and outcomes of a provider’s offerings
- Serve students and the public by assuring and improving quality in the alternative provider sector

WHAT ARE “ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS”?

A recent and growing sector of higher education composed of companies or organizations that offer higher education experiences operating apart from traditional colleges and universities

WHAT ARE THEIR CHARACTERISTICS?

- Offer education experiences of short duration such as courses or modules
- May be focused on career development, general education or general interest
- Do not offer credits or degrees
- May offer certificates or badges
- Primarily online
- Typically, free or low-cost

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS?

- *Coursera, Udacity, EdX, FutureLearn, France Université Numérique, Open2study, Veduca, Udemy*: online courses or modules for career, general education or general interest
- *Khan Academy*: online, free content and assistance
- *StraighterLine, Pearson*: private, low-cost online courses that may be used for college credit



- *Open Badges*: electronic tools to array evidence of skills and achievements of individuals
- *Codeup, Epicodus, Founders & Coders*: coding bootcamp programs for web development and computer programming

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE QUALITY PLATFORM?

- *Students and the Public* benefit because the *Platform* provides reliable information about student outcomes and protects against substandard providers.
- *Federal and State Government* benefit because the *Platform* provides reliable information about provider performance that can be used in determining whether to make government funds available as part of addressing access and affordability.
- *Employers* benefit because the *Platform* provides reliable information to those seeking partners in workforce education and strengthening worker skills.
- *Colleges and Universities* benefit because they can rely on the *Platform* when making judgments about the performance and reliability of alternative providers.
- *Quality Assurance and Accrediting Organizations* benefit because they can rely on the *Platform* when reviewing their institutions and programs' work with alternative providers.

HOW DOES THE QUALITY PLATFORM WORK?

- Standards-based, outcomes-based review of performance
- Involves self-review and expert-based review
- Award of "Quality Platform Provider" status
- Periodic re-examination of the provider
- Transparency and comparability of review and results



EXAMPLES OF STANDARDS

- Learning outcomes are articulated and achieved.
- Learning outcomes meet postsecondary expectations.
- Curricula provide opportunities for successful transfer of credit.
- Transparency is maintained and comparability is established.

HOW DOES THE QUALITY PLATFORM DIFFER FROM EXISTING QUALITY REVIEW EFFORTS?

- *Quality Assurance/Accrediting Organizations*: The *Platform* differs because it reviews higher education providers other than institutions and programs.
- *Credit Recommendations and Assessment of Prior Learning*: The *Platform* differs because it holds the provider (organization) accountable for outcomes, in contrast to examining individual courses for credit or evaluation of individual student competencies for credit.
- *Government Review*: In a number of countries, government is not carrying this type of review.

WHAT IS THE COST OF A QUALITY PLATFORM REVIEW?

- The base fee for a *Quality Platform* review is \$12,000 (US) plus travel and lodging expenses for the expert review team, typically no more than three members. There may be some variation in the base fee resulting from any specific needs of the provider.

WE ARE READY TO PLAN A QUALITY PLATFORM REVIEW WITH YOU.



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