

National Organization for Competency Assurance

Background Information ANSI/NOCA 1100 – Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs

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Established in 1977, the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) is the leader in setting quality standards for credentialing organizations. Through its annual conference, webinars, and publications, NOCA serves its membership as a clearinghouse for information on the latest trends and issues of concern to practitioners and organizations focused on certification, licensure, and human resource development.

NOCA's MISSION

NOCA promotes excellence in credentialing worldwide. We accomplish our mission through services such as:

- *Education*
- *Research*
- *Advocacy*
- *Accreditation*
- *Standards*

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Table of Contents

Background.....	v
I. Definitions and Terminology.....	1
II. The Standards Development Process.....	4
III. Alignment of Standard with Best Practices.....	14
IV. Value of ANSI/NOCA 1100 to Stakeholders and Certificate Program Providers.....	23
V. The Use Professional Designations.....	28
VI. Process for Reviewing and Updating the Standard.....	31
VII. NOCA’s Commitment to Supporting the Standard.....	32
Attachment A: Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs	
Attachment B: NOCA Standard Development and Maintenance Policies	
Attachment C: Matrix Cross-Walking ANSI/NOCA 1100 with a Variety of Technical Guidelines, Standards, and Accreditation Requirements	

Background

Established in 1977, the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) is dedicated to promoting excellence in credentialing worldwide. It is the leader in setting quality standards for credentialing organizations and through its division, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), has provided more than 30 years of accrediting services to the credentialing industry. NOCA is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a developer of American National Standards.

The NOCA Board of Directors recognized that assessment-based certificate programs, through the instruction and training they provide, play a valuable role in helping individuals to attain occupational or professional competence and thus, relate to NOCA's mission of promoting excellence in credentialing. Furthermore, the Board noted that assessment-based certificate programs have some functions in common with professional or personnel certification, namely, identifying and evaluating the knowledge, skills, and competencies requisite to effectively performing occupational and professional roles. In January 2007, NOCA established a Certificate Task Force, comprised of NOCA members and other key parties, to:

- identify characteristics of quality certification and quality assessment-based certificate programs;
- outline the distinguishing features of each; and
- explore what NOCA's future role might be with respect to assessment-based certificate programs.

This effort resulted in the publication of a document entitled *Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs* (see Attachment A), which highlights the similarities and differences between the two types of programs.

Based on the recommendations of the Certificate Task Force, the NOCA Board established the Main Committee for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs in January 2008 and charged the committee with developing a national standard for assessment-based certificate programs.

The 41-member Main Committee included representatives from the following key stakeholder groups:

- providers (organizations that provide assessment-based certificates);
- users (individuals or organizations that use assessment-based certificate programs in some capacity, such as individuals who participate in such programs, employers, public advocacy organizations, accrediting bodies, and organizations that award continuing education credit);
- government (any government agency having jurisdiction over assessment-based certificate programs or which uses assessment-based certificate programs in some capacity); and

- general interest (an individual or organization directly impacted by certificate programs, e.g., consultants or vendors who provide services to the certificate industry, but do not fall under any other category).

The Main Committee met in February 2008 to identify the essential elements of quality for assessment-based certificate programs. Three working groups were subsequently formed to discuss the essential elements further and develop specific requirements pertaining to these elements. These groups were: the Administration Working Group, focusing on program administration, quality management, and program evaluation; the Education/Training Working Group, focusing on the content, design, and delivery of the education/training; and the Assessment Working Group, focusing on the design, conduct, and evaluation/scoring of assessment methods. Each working group consisted of 10-13 individuals from the Main Committee, as well as stakeholder representatives not serving on the committee. The groups were convened on an ongoing basis from March through June 2008 to develop the draft standard.

In July 2008, the preliminary draft standard was published on the NOCA website, along with an invitation to all interested parties to participate in a series of web conferences to review and discuss the standard. Participating in the web conferences were the Main Committee members and other stakeholder representatives. This open review process was completed on July 29, 2008. A second open review period for the standard was initiated on September 11 and completed on October 10, 2008. On September 26, 2008, the Main Committee approved the draft standard by affirmative ballot. The ANSI public review period was completed on December 29, 2008 and the standard was approved as an American National Standard on March 25, 2009.

I. Definitions and Terminology

ANSI/NOCA 1100 pertains to assessment-based certificate programs. An assessment-based certificate program is a non-degree granting program that:

- a) provides instruction and training to aid participants in acquiring specific knowledge, skills, and/or competencies associated with intended learning outcomes;
- b) evaluates participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes; and
- c) awards a certificate only to those participants who meet the performance, proficiency, or passing standard for the assessment(s) (hence the term, "assessment-based certificate program").

The standard is NOT intended to cover classes, courses, programs, or events that award only a certificate of attendance or participation; nor is it intended to apply to professional or personnel certification programs.

A. Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certificates and Certificates of Attendance or Participation

Certificates of attendance or participation are provided to individuals (participants) who have attended or participated in classes, courses, or other education/training programs or events. The certificate awarded at the completion of the program or event signifies that the participant was present and in some cases that the participant actively participated in the program or event. Demonstrating accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes by participants is NOT a requirement for receiving the certificate; thus, possession of a certificate of attendance or participation does not indicate that the intended learning outcomes have been accomplished by the participant. These are key distinctions between a certificate of attendance or participation and an assessment-based certificate program.

B. Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certificates and Professional or Personnel Certification Programs

Professional or personnel certification is a voluntary process by which a non-governmental body grants time-limited recognition and use of a credential to individuals who have demonstrated that they have met predetermined and standardized criteria for required knowledge, skills, or competencies. To retain the credential, certificants must meet requirements for renewal. The credential awarded by the certifier denotes that the participant possesses particular knowledge, skills, or competencies.

Whereas the primary focus of an assessment-based certificate program is on the provision of education/training, with assessment(s) being used to confirm that participants have achieved the intended learning outcomes, the primary focus of professional or personnel certification is on assessment. Moreover, the assessment conducted by a certification program is independent of a specific class, course, or other education/training program and also independent of any provider of classes, courses, or programs. The assessments are NOT designed to evaluate accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes of a specific class, course, or other education/training program or event, and the certifier is NOT the sole provider of any education or training that may be required for certification. Defining features of professional/personnel certification programs which differentiate them from assessment-based certificate programs are the:

- a) primary focus on assessment (as opposed to providing education/training);
- b) independence of the assessment process from any education/training program or provider;
- c) linkage of the assessment to predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, or competencies, rather than to the learning outcomes of a particular education/training program; and
- d) the ability of certificants to use a credential or letters following their names to indicate they have satisfactorily met the requirements for certification.

In addition, the ANSI/NOCA 1100 standard is not intended to cover quality guidelines for the issuance of continuing education units or other similar type programs; these types of programs are already covered under standards and guidelines such as ANSI/IACET 1 – 2007¹ or the International Learning Unit Guidelines.²

C. Types of Assessment-Based Certificate Programs and Providers

Content and Design of Program

Assessment-based certificate programs may provide education/training and assessment relevant to any type of knowledge, skills, or competencies, whether related to occupational and professional roles or to general interest or leisure (e.g., first aid, sailing). Both instructor led and non-instructor led (e.g., independent study) programs are included in this standard.

¹ The ANSI/IACET 1-2007 Standard for Continuing Education and Training provides a descriptive framework to assist organizations in adhering to quality practices for all types of continuing education and training programs. The Standard is available from the International Association for Continuing Education and Training, 1760 Old Meadow Rd., Suite 500, McLean, VA 22102.

² The Learning Unit (© LERN), or International Learning Unit- ILU (© LERN) is an outcome based measurement of learning designed for lifelong learning activities. The Guidelines are available from LERN, P.O. Box 9, River Falls, WI 54022, E-mail: info@lern.org, website: <http://www.learningunit.org>

Providers of Programs

A wide variety of entities offer assessment-based certificate programs. These entities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- academic institutions;
- for-profit education and training providers;
- professional and trade associations;
- charitable organizations;
- employers; and
- governmental bodies.

D. Assessment Methods Used by Assessment-Based Certificate Providers

This standard recognizes the diverse methods used by assessment-based certificate providers to evaluate participants' accomplishment of intended learning outcomes. In doing so, it supports the efforts of assessment-based certificate providers to align their assessment(s) with the varied needs of their stakeholders and the wide array of potential learning outcomes which may be identified for the program.

Examples of assessment methods that may be used include:

- observation of a participant demonstrating knowledge, skills, and/or competencies (e.g., performing a hands-on demonstration, delivering a presentation);
- evaluation of a product (e.g., an assembled automobile engine, a financial report);
- evaluation of a portfolio (e.g., a collection of evidence consisting of a videotaped class, a description of teaching methods used and their purpose, and examples of student work for the purpose of demonstrating a teacher's competencies);
- conduct of an oral examination (e.g., querying a participant about a case study he/she has prepared); and
- conduct of a written examination of any type (e.g., short answer, essay, multiple choice).

Although both formative and summative assessments may be used in an assessment-based certificate program, the assessment requirements in ANSI/NOCA 1100 pertain only to summative assessments.

E. Provisions for High-Stakes, Assessment-Based Certificate Programs

Some assessment-based certificate programs may be high stakes in nature (i.e., they may be required for regulatory purposes or for hiring, promotion, and other key employment-related outcomes, such as hospital privileging for physicians). In one instance, the requirements of ANSI/NOCA 1100 differ for high-stakes vs. mid- or low-stakes certificate programs. It is important to note that for purposes of this standard, the

level of stakes for an assessment-based certificate program is defined by the statements made by the provider about the purpose of the program and the claims it makes about the uses of the certificate.

It is conceivable that although a provider may not have designed or promoted its assessment-based certificate program as appropriate for high stakes use, the market or a particular stakeholder group may treat it as such. Under this standard, such a program would NOT be considered high stakes, as the certificate is being used for purposes other than those defined by the provider, and it would not be appropriate to hold the provider responsible for uses it has not sanctioned.

II. The Standard Development Process

A. Representative and Qualified Consensus Body

The composition of a standards development consensus body and the qualifications of its participants are critical to the creation of a quality standard that meets stakeholders' needs. The consensus body which developed ANSI/NOCA 1100 consisted of a balanced group of stakeholder representatives as follows: 39% providers, 27% users, 24% general interest, and 10% government. The consensus body participants represented diverse industries, occupations, and professions, and less than half were NOCA members. Nearly the entire consensus body had experience with developing standards, accrediting to standards, and/or ensuring that their organizations conform to third-party standards. There was substantial certificate program expertise within the group, with approximately half of the participants having had experience with developing, managing, and/or evaluating certificate programs. Of note is the fact that the consensus body included representatives of organizations that themselves represent large numbers of certificate program stakeholders. These organizations were as follows:

- Society for Human Resource Management (users) - human resource professionals
- International Society for Performance Improvement (users and general interest) - performance technologists, training directors, human resources managers, instructional technologists, human factors practitioners
- American Society of Association Executives & The Center for Association Leadership (providers and users) - executive and staff professionals of professional and trade associations and philanthropic organizations

B. Active Stakeholder Involvement

One of the unique aspects of the process used to develop ANSI/NOCA 1100 was that the consensus body played a hands-on role in crafting the standard and did so through real-time, interactive discussion and deliberation. What makes this process different? Standard developers often rely on a technical lead or small task groups to draft the

standard, which is then sent out to the full committee for ballot and comment. The standard is then revised (or not), based on the opinion of the technical lead or task group and sent out again to the committee for further balloting and comment. While this process incorporates a two-way feedback loop, it is a closed loop, with the feedback taking place between each individual member of the consensus body and the technical lead or the task group. Thus, active deliberation among consensus members does not take place (or is limited), and one could develop the standard without ever having had a “live” discussion of the full committee. The NOCA process also included active deliberation among the public and the consensus body through the use of interactive technology.

Active and interactive deliberation amongst consensus body members and the general public facilitates genuine consensus building by providing the opportunity for members to present their viewpoints to the group, to clearly hear and fully understand the opinions of other stakeholders, to engage in in-depth evaluation of the impact of various options, etc. These interactions enable the standard developer to better understand the sentiments of the consensus body members and better gauge the strength of the convictions of the group as a whole regarding *each* requirement of the standard. In addition, the interaction between diverse stakeholders serves as a catalyst for new ideas and solutions. Finally, a more intensive level of engagement enhances the credibility of the standard and can help to facilitate acceptance by the larger stakeholder community.

Given the diverse stakeholders groups impacted by certificate programs, it was critical that the standard be the product of an open and interactive consensus-building process, rather than a closed-looped system of written communications and iterative balloting. We also were concerned about placing the responsibility for determining: (a) the disposition of comments received and (b) whether and what revisions to make on the shoulders of a single technical lead or small task group, however knowledgeable they might be.

The approach utilized to engage stakeholders in the development of ANSI/NOCA 1100 was based on three, interrelated consensus-building processes involving the consensus body, three working groups, and the larger community of stakeholders. The process began with a face-to-face meeting of the consensus body, during which members of the body and other interested parties had the opportunity to express their (often diverging) opinions on what would constitute the essential elements of a quality certificate program. Following the meeting, three working groups were formed to discuss the essential elements further and develop specific requirements pertaining to these elements. These groups were: the Administration Working Group, focusing on program administration, quality management, and program evaluation; the Education/Training Working Group, focusing on the content, design, and delivery of the education/training; and the Assessment Working Group, focusing on the design, conduct, and evaluation/scoring of assessment methods. Each working group consisted of 10-13 individuals from the consensus body, as well as stakeholder representatives not serving on the consensus body. The groups were convened on an ongoing basis from March through June 2008 to reach consensus on, and draft, the required elements for the areas they had been assigned.

Once the working groups reached consensus on the required elements for their areas, the work of the three groups was compiled into the full draft standard and forwarded to the consensus body in June 2008. The consensus body met for a series of web conferences to review, discuss, and reach consensus on the full standard document. During this time, the third layer of consensus building based on public comment from the larger stakeholder community occurred. A 30-day open review period was initiated and an invitation was issued to all interested parties to participate in the consensus body web conferences in which the full standard document was discussed. As noted in previous sections, NOCA also engaged other organizations in a comprehensive outreach effort designed to ensure broad participation by stakeholders.

Following the open review period and the consensus body review, the working groups reconvened in August 2008 to address the recommendations and comments received. A second open review period for the revised standard was initiated on September 11, 2008 and completed on October 10, 2008. During this period, NOCA also hosted a public forum via web conference to solicit comment from stakeholders and foster further discussion of the requirements of the standard.

In conclusion, the NOCA consensus body, which was a balanced group of stakeholders, took an active role in crafting ANSI/NOCA 1100 using an approach that involved three, interrelated consensus-building processes with stakeholders. Throughout the standard development process, the consensus body was diligent in reaching out beyond its own members to obtain feedback from other stakeholders and interested parties. As part of this outreach, the consensus body also engaged other organizations, which represented large groups of stakeholders, to disseminate information and solicit feedback.

C. *Protection Against Bias and Conflict*

Bias is a function of both experience and hard-wired cognitive processes. It is inevitable and unavoidable. Members of a consensus body will naturally bring their biases to a standard development process. The key is to ensure that a particular bias does not predominate or control the process and that members' biases do not influence the standard development process or the product of this process such that it is prejudiced and partial.

The *ANSI Essential Requirements*³ specify three essential requirements for due process: openness, lack of dominance, and balance. These three key elements are addressed in the ANSI approved *NOCA Standards Development and Maintenance Policies* (refer to Attachment B) as follows:

Openness. Participation in the NOCA standards process shall be open to all persons who are directly and materially affected by the standard. Participation is

³ *ANSI Essential Requirement: Due process requirements for American National Standards*, American National Standards Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, 4th Floor, New York, New York 10036

available through membership on committees and task groups, by meeting invitation, or by public review and comment.

Committee Selection. In reviewing the application, the Chair of the applicable committee or group shall consider the following:

- need for active participation by each interest category;
- potential of dominance by a single interest category;
- extent of organization or company support on behalf of the applicant; and
- committee size.

Participation on the NOCA consensus body was open to all individuals directly and materially affected by the development of a certificate standard. No individual who completed a volunteer interest form was denied membership on the consensus body.

Unlike some ANSI-approved standard developers, which require membership in their organization to obtain voting rights on the consensus body, voting rights on the NOCA consensus body were NOT conditional upon membership in NOCA. In fact, a majority of the committee members were not members of NOCA. This NOCA policy is in accordance with Paragraph 1.1 of the *ANSI Essential Requirements* which states that, "Voting membership on the consensus body shall not be conditional upon membership in any organization, nor unreasonably restricted on the basis of technical qualifications or other such requirements."

Even with appropriate policies in place, an active effort is required on the part of the standard developer to ensure due process and minimize bias. The actions taken to minimize the impact of bias on the development of the NOCA Standard are described below.

Balance. The consensus body which developed ANSI/NOCA 1100 was balanced with respect to the interest categories defined by ANSI, as well as other categories pertinent to the content and purpose of a certificate standard. The representation of interest categories on the consensus body was as follows: 39% providers, 27% users, 24% general interest, and 10% government. Diverse industries, occupations, and professions also were represented on the committee. No single group constituted a majority of the membership of the consensus body.

Lack of dominance. Balance, open participation, and full voting rights are not sufficient to prevent dominance from influencing the standard development process. Paragraph 1.2 of the *ANSI Essential Requirements* notes that dominance is defined not simply by representation, but also by means of "... a position or exercise of dominant authority, leadership, or influence by reason of superior leverage, strength or representation to the exclusion of fair and equitable consideration of other viewpoints." It can be argued that a technical lead, chair or task group can potentially exert dominance over the larger consensus body if they are granted the authority to independently draft the standard, determine the disposition of comments and negative ballots received,

and/or conclude whether and how to revise the standard. Clearly, this would violate the spirit of a consensus-driven standard development process. To avoid this situation, NOCA took three substantive actions:

- (1) There was no technical lead for the project. Nor was a technical lead needed, as there was substantial depth of expertise on the consensus body, which included multiple subject matter experts in each of the following areas: a) education/training [with participation from academia (both public and private institutions), corporate training, and government]; b) measurement and assessment in academic, corporate training, credentialing and regulatory contexts; and c) program evaluation and quality management systems.
- (2) The consensus body itself, assembled in three working groups, created the initial draft standard.
- (3) The consensus body itself, as a full group, met via web conferences to determine what revisions should be made in the draft standard.

Lack of dominance also was achieved through skilled facilitation of consensus body meetings and discussions. The chair of the consensus body, an experienced group facilitator, ensured that discussions were balanced, by supporting the exploration of minority and alternative viewpoints and encouraging the consideration of both majority and minority viewpoints in deliberations.

The question may arise as to whether NOCA, which has historical ties to the certification community, can serve as an unbiased standards developer. Perhaps NOCA might seek to protect certification programs at the expense of certificate programs. Besides the already stated NOCA policies related to participation, balance and lack of dominance, there are several facts that belie such an idea.

- (1) The broadened mission which NOCA adopted in 1998 includes certificate and certification programs, as well as other programs related to occupation/professional credentialing. Indeed, since 2007, NOCA has sponsored a variety of educational sessions, publications, and public forums on not only certificate program standards, but also how to develop quality certificate programs.
- (2) After designating the chair of the consensus body, NOCA served as the non-voting Secretariat for the standard development process, as specified in the *NOCA Standards Development and Maintenance Policies*:

NOCA shall be the Secretariat and shall be responsible for:

- *overseeing compliance with these Policies;*
- *maintaining a roster of Main Committee membership and maintaining a list of standards assigned to each Main Committee;*

- *providing administrative services to the Main Committee Chairs in assisting them in performing their duties;*
- *nominating officers for the initial formation of Main Committees;*
- *submitting documentation to ANSI, when required;*
- *documenting actions and decisions made by the Main Committee;*
- *distributing documents relevant to the business of the Main Committee; and*
- *performing other functions as required by these Policies.*

Further review of the policies reveals that no actions of the consensus body require approval or consent from NOCA. In addition, neither the NOCA Board nor staff made proposals or recommendations regarding the membership of the consensus body or the content of the standard. Nor were such proposals or recommendations ever sought by the consensus body.

- (3) Whereas some standard developers require that their full membership – which may or may not include subject matter experts and interested parties – review all standards prior to adoption, the *NOCA Standards Development and Maintenance Policies* do NOT include such a requirement.
- (4) The content of the standard clearly is aligned with best practices in education/training, assessment, and program oversight and management.

No single interest category, individual, or organization – including NOCA itself – dominated the standard development process. The process placed the responsibility for the development of the standard in the hands of those most knowledgeable on the subject – the consensus body – without any approval being required by the NOCA Board or membership.

Those unfamiliar with standards development and conformity assessment processes might wonder whether there would be a conflict of interest if NOCA should serve as both the developer of ANSI/NOCA 1100 and an accreditor to the same standard. In fact, this has been a long standing accepted practice in the standards and conformity assessment industry as shown through the ANSI's accreditation of standards developers who also provide certification or accreditation services. However, it is important that a standards developer provides protection in its processes to ensure no undue influence can be placed on the process. As noted above, NOCA has provided such protection through its policies. In addition, NOCA does not serve as a voting member on the ANSI/NOCA 1100 consensus body, thus avoiding any perceived undue influence. Furthermore, NOCA has encouraged the use of ANSI/NOCA 1100 in all relevant accreditation programs and encourages other accreditation bodies to serve on the NOCA Main Committee as voting members, even though NOCA, through its policies, may not serve as a voting member.

D. Transparency

The transparency of the NOCA standard development process was first evidenced in the initial stakeholder discussions on whether a certificate standard should be developed and whether NOCA should serve as the standard developer. NOCA approached ANSI in early 2007 to advise them of NOCA's intent to develop a standard and expressed a strong interest in working with ANSI, given ANSI's interest in developing an accreditation program. For a period of time, NOCA served on the ANSI Certificate Accreditation Advisory Panel in an effort to serve as a liaison between the standards development process and the ANSI Panel.

On October 11, 2007, NOCA held a public forum to discuss these issues and solicit feedback on the requisite features of a quality certificate program. The forum was conducted simultaneously face-to-face and via web conference to facilitate participation by all interested and affected parties. One hundred twelve (112) individuals representing eighty-six (86) different organizations participated in the forum; only 56% of these organizations were NOCA members. During the forum, NOCA's Executive Director, Jim Kendzel, explained the standard development process as specified in the *ANSI Essential Requirements* and indicated that NOCA's goal was to become an ANSI-approved standard developer and ultimately, if a certificate standard was developed, it would be designated as an American National Standard. Based on feedback received from this forum and other sources, NOCA elected to proceed with developing a standard for certificate programs and to engage in discussions with ASTM International regarding the development of a joint certificate standard.

Once the development of ANSI/NOCA 1100 was underway, the transparency of the process used by the consensus body was evident throughout its work, and the actions taken by NOCA as a standard developer to promote and ensure transparency exceeded those specified in the *ANSI Essential Requirements*. Specifically, NOCA took the following actions:

- Updates on the development of the standard were provided to the public throughout the process.
- All relevant documents were freely available to the public.
- Participation on the three working groups which created the original draft of the standard was open to all interested parties.
- Meetings and deliberations of the full consensus body which took place during the drafting of the standard were open to the public and advertised as such.
- The process used to develop the standard was described in all published drafts and in the final standard.
- Interested parties and organizations representing large numbers of stakeholders were invited to participate in the standard development process and kept apprised of progress.
- NOCA engaged other organizations to assist in the outreach effort and disseminate information about the standard development process.

Below we have provided further detail on the transparency of the standard development process and a few illustrative examples of how it was manifested, particularly with respect to key milestones.

On-going status updates and public access to all documents. Throughout the standard development process, there was a public page on the NOCA website which apprised stakeholders of the progress of the consensus body. This page included at all times a downloadable copy of the *NOCA Standards Development Policies and Procedures*, the draft standard (once the original draft was created), and the NOCA publication, *Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs*. Whereas some standard developers require that interested parties request a copy of these documents, any individual or organization could immediately and directly obtain these documents from the NOCA website. No site registration or contact with NOCA representatives was required to receive the documents. Nor, as is the practice of some standard developers, did the draft standard document contain a statement prohibiting readers from circulating the document. In addition to the public page devoted to the certificate standard project, the NOCA website main page contained announcements and information about the project throughout most of the time period during which the standard was developed.

Examples of outreach with interested parties and organizations representing stakeholders. On January 8, 2008, the NOCA consensus body was formed and a notice announcing the first meeting date of this body was published. All interested parties were invited to attend. On January 9, NOCA sent the announcement of the consensus body meeting to the ANSI Advisory Panel on Certificate Accreditation and to interested standards developers, such as ASTM, with an invitation to attend.

NOCA announced the July publication of the draft standard and the first, 30-day open review period on the main page of its website. In addition, this information was published in the *NOCA News*, a publication with a circulation of 4,000, including both NOCA members and nonmembers. To ensure adequate notification of stakeholders, NOCA also requested, and was granted, announcements regarding the publication of the draft standard and the open review period in the following sources:

- the main page of the website of the American Society for Training & Development;
- the weekly newsletter of the American Society for Association Executives & The Center for Association Leadership (ASAE & The Center);
- the Professional Development list serve of ASAE & The Center (the list serve targets association professionals responsible for education/training);
- the International Society for Performance Improvement member newsletter; and
- the Certified Performance Technologist newsletter.

NOCA also notified the American Association of Community Colleges, ANSI, IACET, and ASTM.

Examples of open participation by the public and interested parties. The first working meeting of the consensus body was held on February 20, 2008 and was attended by approximately 30 individuals, only one-third of which were NOCA members. As mentioned previously, this was a public meeting which included both consensus body members and other interested parties. Nearly one-third of the attendees were interested parties and members of the public who were NOT part of the consensus body.

On June 19, 2008, the full draft standard was simultaneously distributed to the consensus body and published for open review. Prior to this time, three working groups had been convening to develop their respective sections of the standard. These sections were compiled into the full draft standard published on June 19, 2008. Thus, the consensus body saw the full draft standard for the first time at precisely the same time that it was made public.

Announcements regarding the July open review period included a notification that all interested parties could participate in the series of web conferences in which the consensus body reviewed and deliberated on the draft standard. As is evident from this description, the deliberation process was completely open and transparent and permitted the opportunity for input from outside the consensus body.

The draft standard was revised based on the consensus body and open review comments and on September 11, 2008, a second, 30-day open review period was held for the revised draft standard. Once again, announcements of the open review period were made and key interested parties were notified. In addition, on October 2, 2008, NOCA hosted a public forum web conference to solicit additional comments and discussion on the revised draft standard. The forum was attended by approximately 35 individuals. Participation was open to all interested parties. A subsequent 45-day ANSI public review period was completed on December 29, 2008.

E. ANSI Approval

Following the consensus body's (NOCA Main Committee) approval of a standard there are two steps that must be followed in order to obtain from ANSI an approval of the standard as an American national standard. The first step is to provide the standard for public review through the ANSI public review process which was completed on December 29, 2008. The second step is to have the draft standard reviewed by the ANSI Board of Standard Review (BSR) to determine if all requirements of the ANSI Essential Requirements were followed by the standards developer. The BSR is comprised of individuals with extensive knowledge and experience in the development of standards. The BSR approved ANSI/NOCA 1100 as an American National Standard on March 25, 2009. ANSI/NOCA 1100 is the first American National Standard covering certificate programs.

F. Consensus Body Participants

Thanks to the following organizations for helping to support this project by providing staff to serve on the consensus body for ANSI/NOCA 1100:

Alberta College of Paramedics
The American College
American Academy of Personal Training
American Hospital Association Certification Center
American Institutes for Research
American Nurses Credentialing Center
APICS – The Association for Operations Management
ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership
CASTLE Worldwide, Inc.
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Competency and Credentialing Institute
Consulting Measurement Group
Defense Acquisition University
Dental Assisting National Board
Global Skills X-change
Hale Associates
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society
HumRRO
International Society for Performance Improvement
J. Garza Consulting & Associates
Knapp & Associates International, Inc.
Learning Resources Network
Lamaze International
LERN
Microsoft Corporation
Motorola
National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
National Strength and Conditioning Association Certification Commission
NSF International, The Public Health and Safety Company
Oncology Nursing Society
Practice Transformation Institute
PSI Services, LLC
Seacrest Company
Security University
Society for Human Resource Management
Society of Manufacturing Engineers
Training Education Management
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Green Building Council
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

III. Alignment of Standard with Industry Best Practices

A. *Design of Education/Training*

Best practices are identified through professional consensus and empirical research, and are reflected in industry standards and guidelines and the peer-reviewed professional/technical literature of the field. To ensure that ANSI/NOCA 1100 was aligned with best practices in education/training, the consensus body relied on the substantial depth of subject matter expertise represented within the group. We were fortunate to have serving on the consensus body a number of educators, instructors, and trainers with graduate degrees in instructional design and adult education. These individuals also were highly experienced practitioners, having served in academic (both public and private), corporate, not-for-profit, and government settings. In addition, approximately half of the consensus body members had experience with developing, managing, and/or evaluating certificate programs. Throughout the standard development process, the subject matter experts on the consensus body contributed their expertise and their knowledge of the professional literature and industry standards and guidelines to ensure that the requirements of ANSI/NOCA 1100 were consistent with what the Training and Education community considers essential to providing a quality learning experience.

Attachment C presents a matrix cross-walking ANSI/NOCA 1100 with a variety of technical guidelines, standards, and accreditation requirements. It also should be noted that the processes for developing, evaluating, and managing education/training that are outlined in ANSI/NOCA 1100 are consistent with: (a) the professional competencies outlined in *The ASTD Competency Model*⁴, which serves as the basis for the ASTD CI Certified Professional in Learning and Performance™ (CPLP) credential and (b) the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction's *Instructional Design Competencies*.⁵

The Training and Education community recognizes many different models for training and instructional systems design. Most of these models are founded on a generic model for training and instructional design – the ADDIE model. The five steps in this widely cited model are as follows:

- Analyze needs
- Design the learning
- Develop the program
- Implement the design
- Evaluate performance

⁴ American Society for Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443 Alexandria, VA 22313-1443

⁵ Richey, Rita C.; Fields, Dennis, C.; Foxon, Marguerite; ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology, Syracuse University, 621 Skytop Rd., Suite 160, Syracuse, NY 13244-5290

The ADDIE model has been prominent in the field since the introduction of instructional systems design during World War II and is accepted as best practice in the field. The alignment of ANSI/NOCA 1100 with each element of the ADDIE⁶⁶ model is outlined below.

Analyze needs. The first step of instructional/training design involves identifying the target audience, conducting a needs assessment and identifying the gaps between the knowledge, skills, competencies which currently exist and those that are required for a specific purpose or in a specific context. ANSI/NOCA 1100 requires that certificate providers conduct such an assessment and explicitly states that:

6.6 *The intended learning outcomes and the knowledge, skills, and competencies to be addressed in the education/training shall be determined systematically based on an analysis of the needs of the:*

- a) participants;*
- b) industry (as appropriate);*
- c) consumers (as appropriate); and*
- d) other identified stakeholders (as appropriate).*

The procedure used to conduct this analysis shall be consistent with the published purpose of the program. The procedure for selecting content for the education/training shall include an analysis of participant and stakeholder needs appropriate to the purpose, scope, and stakes of the certificate program.

The standard also specifies that certificate providers must publish a statement describing the target audience for the certificate program (Requirement 2.4).

Design the learning. This step of the ADDIE model centers on identifying the goals of the instruction/training. The design process should include a description of the high-level goals of instruction/training (including purpose and scope) as well as specification of the intended outcomes, which describe the performance that is expected upon completion of the training. ANSI/NOCA 1100 requires that “The content of the education/training shall be consistent with the purpose and scope of the certificate program and the intended learning outcomes” (Requirement 6.4).

The NOCA consensus body believed it was important not just that the design of the education/training be based on an identified purpose and scope and explicit learning outcomes, but also that stakeholders have access to this information when selecting a program. Thus, in Section 2 of the standard, under the subheading “Responsibilities to Stakeholders,” ANSI/NOCA 1100 states certificate providers must publish the purpose and scope of the certificate program and the intended learning outcomes (Requirement 2.4)

⁶⁶ Perhaps not surprisingly given its status as a “generic” model, authors in the training field differ slightly in their interpretation of some of the nuances of each step of the ADDIE model (e.g., some include items in the analysis step that others assign to the design step), thus it should be noted we have used the conceptualization of ADDIE contained in ASTD’s *Basics of Instructional Systems Development* (2005).

Develop the program. In the development phase, the trainer or instructional designer creates the framework and tools for accomplishing the goals of the program. Activities include structuring the content to ensure the most effective sequencing of material, selecting the appropriate instructional method and media, developing the materials (e.g., handouts), planning the assessment of learners' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes, and creating a mechanism for evaluating the program. Some experts also suggest that this step should include a review of content by subject matter experts to ensure accuracy. In some cases, prototyping of the design elements also may occur during this step.

The following requirements of ANSI/NOCA 1100 relate to the development phase:

- 6.1** *The certificate provider shall ensure that the education/training is developed, delivered, and reviewed by subject matter experts and qualified individuals.*
- 6.4** *The content of the education/training shall be consistent with the purpose and scope of the certificate program and the intended learning outcomes.*
- 6.5** *The intended learning outcomes, content and design of the education/training, delivery method, and assessment(s) shall all be in alignment [i.e., the content, design, and delivery of the education/training shall be appropriate for accomplishing the intended learning outcomes, and the assessment(s) shall be appropriate for assessing participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes].*
- 6.8** *The design of the education/training shall be consistent with generally accepted instructional design principles and appropriate for the intended learning outcomes.*
- 6.10** *The certificate provider shall specify the methods for delivery of the education/training (e.g., classroom, online synchronous, online asynchronous). These methods shall enable accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes and be consistent with the purpose and scope of the certificate program.*
- 7.2** *The assessment(s) shall be appropriate for measuring participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes and consistent with the published purpose of the certificate.*

A key instructional design principle that is especially pertinent to the development phase is the concept of alignment. The effectiveness of training is impacted by the congruence of the intended outcomes, the instructional processes, and the assessments. Thus, alignment is strongly emphasized in the standard.

Implement the design. Implementation involves conducting the program, including selecting and training facilitators/instructors, and adjusting the program, as necessary, to ensure the needs of the learner are met. The following requirements of ANSI/NOCA 1100 are pertinent here:

- 6.1** *The certificate provider shall ensure that the education/training is developed, delivered, and reviewed by subject matter experts and qualified individuals.*
- 6.2** *The certificate provider shall document and ensure that facilitators/instructors possess the qualifications and skills to deliver the education/training as designed.*
- 7.4** *Individuals who develop or conduct the assessment(s) or who evaluate/score participants' performance shall have the required knowledge and skills for their role.*
- 6.3** *The certificate provider shall provide facilitators/instructors with feedback on their performance.*
- 6.9** *The design of the education/training should be modified as needed to ensure that it incorporates changes in the purpose, scope, or content of the certificate program and reflects current, generally accepted instructional design principles.*
- 7.6** *The certificate provider shall ensure that the assessment is revised as necessary to reflect changes in the scope or purpose of the program (e.g., changes in the intended learning outcomes, changes in the education/training).*

The standard includes additional requirements relating to collecting data (including feedback from learners) which may be relevant to implementation. These requirements are described in the *Evaluate Performance* section below.

When the delivery of the education/training takes place in multiple sites and involves multiple facilitators/instructors/assessors, it is incumbent on the certificate provider to ensure consistent quality and standardization (as appropriate). Consequently, ANSI/NOCA 1100 includes the following requirements:

- 3.1** *The certificate provider is responsible for monitoring, assessing, and assuring the quality of all activities performed on its behalf in accordance with documented procedure. This responsibility includes activities performed by employees, committees, contractors, and/or other individuals.*
- 3.2** *The certificate provider shall employ or contract a sufficient number of people with the necessary education, training, technical knowledge, and experience to perform functions relating to the type, range, and volume of work performed, under a responsible management.*

Evaluate performance. Evaluation gauges whether the intended learning outcomes have been accomplished and examines the quality and effectiveness of all aspects of the education/training program (e.g., content, design, delivery, facilitator/instructor) to inform future improvement. Evaluation of the intended learning outcomes centers on the assessment of learners' knowledge, skills, and/or competencies. The requirements of

ANSI/NOCA 1100 focus on ensuring that such assessments take place and that these assessments are of sufficient quality to warrant the inferences that will be drawn from them. The elements of ANSI/NOCA 1100 which contribute to a quality assessment are described in Section II.A. Below are the requirements in the standard which specifically relate to the need to conduct the assessment and how the information gleaned from the assessment should be used to support learners.

- 7.1** *The certificate provider shall conduct one or more assessments of participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the education/training.*
- 7.2** *The assessment(s) shall be appropriate for measuring participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes and consistent with the published purpose of the certificate.*
- 7.3** *The certificate provider shall adhere to generally accepted measurement principles in the development of the assessment(s) and the evaluation/scoring of participants' performance.*
- 7.12** *The certificate provider shall report the results of the assessment(s) to participants in a consistent format that is appropriate to the type of assessment. At a minimum, participants shall be informed as to whether they have accomplished the intended learning outcomes. A report of participants' relative strengths and weaknesses also may be provided.*
- 7.13** *The certificate provider shall prepare reports of assessment results in aggregate form (e.g., results based on the performance of an entire class) to support program evaluation and address other stakeholder interests.*
- 7.14** *The certificate provider shall supply participants and stakeholders with guidance on interpreting and using the results of the assessment(s), including what inferences can appropriately be drawn from the results.*

Comprehensive program evaluation and continuous improvement are addressed in the ANSI/NOCA 1100 as follows:

Quality Assurance

- 5.1** *The certificate provider shall have a documented quality assurance procedure in place for all administrative, educational/training, and assessment processes. The quality assurance procedure shall specify the:*
 - a)** *quality criteria for operational procedures and the products and services offered by the certificate provider;*
 - b)** *procedures used to ensure that the quality criteria are met;*
 - c)** *procedures for identifying products, services, and/or processes that do not conform to quality criteria;*
 - d)** *procedures for correcting identified deficiencies;*
 - e)** *procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of corrective actions; and*

- f) *title of the person responsible for managing the quality assurance procedure.*

Program Evaluation

- 5.2 *All components of the certificate program shall be reviewed periodically (at least annually) by subject matter experts and other qualified individuals to ensure that the:*
 - a) *content of the education/training and assessment(s) is current and accurate;*
 - b) *design and delivery of the education/training are consistent with generally accepted instructional design principles and appropriate for the intended learning outcomes; and*
 - c) *development of the assessment(s) and the evaluation/scoring of participant performance on the assessment(s) are consistent with generally accepted measurement principles and appropriate for assessing accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes.*
- 5.3 *The certificate provider shall conduct periodic program evaluations to assess program quality and effectiveness and implement future improvements. At a minimum, program evaluations shall include the evaluation of the:*
 - a) *participants' performance and their accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes by the certificate provider;*
 - b) *facilitators/instructors by participants and the certificate provider;*
 - c) *certificate program [content, design, delivery method, assessment(s)] by facilitators/instructors and certificate providers; and*
 - d) *certificate program [content, design, delivery method, assessment(s)] by participants.*

Evaluation of the certificate program by other stakeholders also may be included.

- 6.7 *The content of the education/training shall be reviewed periodically (at least annually) to ensure that it remains current and accurate. The certificate provider shall specify the procedures to be used for updating the content as well as the circumstances under which updating should occur.*
- 7.15 *The certificate provider shall assess the effectiveness of the assessment(s) on a regular basis to ensure ongoing utility for measuring participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes ...*

B. Assessment Development and Scoring

NOTE: The text below features quotes containing the term "test." The sources of these quotations intend the term to refer to ALL forms of assessment.

The concepts of reliability and validity form the foundation of all quality assessments, regardless of type of assessment, intended audience, setting, or purpose. Reliability is

defined as the consistency of the measurement or the degree to which the results of an assessment are free of measurement error. It quantifies measurement precision. “Although reliability is a necessary feature that a test must have to be useful for decision making, it is not the most important characteristic.” [*Measurement and Evaluation in Psychology and Education*, 1999, p. 123]. An assessment can be reliable, yet not valid. That is, it may be measuring something very accurately, but the “something” is not what the developer intended to measure.

Validity is the degree to which an assessment measures what it purports to measure and thus, the degree to which the interpretations of the assessment results and the inferences drawn from them are appropriate. “The foremost question to be asked with respect to any testing procedure is: How valid is it? When we ask this question, we are inquiring whether the test measures what we want to measure, all we want to measure, and nothing but what we want to measure.” [*Measurement and Evaluation in Psychology and Education*, 1999, p. 123].

Thus, ensuring that assessments are both reliable and valid is critical to maintaining quality, ensuring fairness to learners, and meeting stakeholder needs.

It has sometimes been suggested that the rigorous application of the concepts of reliability and validity to assessments used in education/training programs is too onerous for the providers of these programs and thus, unrealistic. Proponents of this view also may argue that these concepts are intended for more high-stakes assessments, such as certification and employment testing. Quotes from experts in the area of training-related assessment refute this argument:

“Reliability and validity are the two most important characteristics of a test.”
[*Criterion-Referenced Test Development: Technical and Legal Guidelines for Corporate Training and Certification* (2000), p. 16]

“Reliability and validity describe the qualities that any good test must possess.” [*Criterion-Referenced Test Development*, p. 203]

“If you are going to judge people using a test, you have a responsibility to evaluate the test and what it represents.” [*Tests That Work: Designing and Delivering Fair and Practical Measurement Tools in the Workplace* (1999), p. 287]

“Good assessment throws light in every direction, informing workers, training and performance staff, and management at every level. It is very costly to stay in the dark. If you are doing so, at least consider that an invalid test is not worth anything to anybody, at any time, for any purpose. So you might as well light the candle and do level 2 evaluation right!” [*ASTD Handbook for Workplace Learning Professionals* (2009), p.520]

Reliability

With respect to reliability, ANSI/NOCA 1100 specifies:

7.15 *The certificate provider shall assess the effectiveness of the assessment(s) on a regular basis to ensure ongoing utility for measuring participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes. This procedure may include the collection of data pertaining to the ... measurement precision of the assessment(s), that is, the degree to which the results obtained are free from measurement error (e.g., a measure of inter-rater agreement on the assessment of a product produced by a participant).*

Subjectively evaluated/scored assessments (e.g., essays, work products, portfolios, demonstrations, presentations) pose a particular challenge to ensuring reliability. In general, it is more difficult to attain adequate reliability for a subjectively evaluated/scored assessment than for an objectively scored assessment (e.g., multiple choice). However, stakeholders often find subjectively evaluated/scored assessments more appealing and meaningful and view them as more face valid. As stated in the introduction to ANIS/NOCA 1100, the consensus body strove to support the efforts of certificate providers to align their assessments with the varied needs of their stakeholders and the wide array of potential learning outcomes which may be identified for the program. Thus, the standard includes requirements specifically designed to enhance the reliability of subjectively evaluated/scored assessments and consequently, their fairness and accuracy:

- 7.10** *For subjectively evaluated/scored assessment(s) (e.g., essays, work products, portfolios, demonstrations, presentations), the certificate provider shall:*
- a) *supply raters with rating or scoring scales, performance evaluation checklists, rubrics, and/or other appropriate guidelines to be used to evaluate participant performance;*
 - b) *train raters in the use of the rating or scoring scales, performance evaluation checklists, rubrics, and/or other appropriate guidelines;*
 - c) *establish procedure(s) by which raters can be calibrated periodically (if multiple raters are used);*
 - d) *conduct analyses of the consistency and/or agreement in the raters' evaluation/scoring as appropriate for the type of assessment and its intended use; and*
 - e) *establish procedure(s) by which significant differences between raters can be discussed and/or remedied (if applicable).*

As noted by Westgaard, "Assuming reliability can cause problems. If you assume the test is reliable, you (or someone else) will make decisions based on the results. Your decisions may be very important to people who have taken the test. Two circumstances make establishing reliability important: (1) The test is used more than once and/or in more than one location; (2) The results of the test are used to make critical decisions about people or situations. If these conditions pertain, you want a reliable test." [Tests

That Work: Designing and Delivering Fair and Practical Measurement Tools in the Workplace (1999), p. 294].

Validity

Validity is a more complex and multi-faceted concept as compared to reliability. It is commonly assumed that validity is established simply by mapping the content of the assessment to the intended learning outcomes. In fact, validity relies on a collection of evidence relevant to the quality of the assessment. As noted in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*⁷ (commonly referred to as the “Joint Technical Standards”), “This includes evidence of careful test construction; adequate score reliability; appropriate test administration and scoring; accurate scale scoring, equating and standard setting; and careful attention to fairness for all examinees ...” [*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, p. 17]. The goal of the NOCA consensus body was to ensure that certificate providers have sufficient evidence to support the validity of their assessments, and accordingly, the inferences to be drawn from them.

Below are sources of validity evidence for assessments of learners and a reference to the requirement(s) in ANSI/NOCA 1100 which pertain to each source of evidence.

- Careful construction of the assessment – Requirements 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6
- Adequate score reliability – Requirements 7.9, 7.10, 7.15
- Appropriate administration/conduct of the assessment – Requirements 7.4, 7.7
- Equivalency of different forms of the assessment – Requirement 7.11
- Appropriate standard setting – Requirement 7.8
- Careful attention to fairness – Requirement 7.12

Westgaard summarizes the importance of validity: “Validity is critical to the success of a test. If a test isn’t valid, it’s probably a waste of time and energy at best. At most, it could destroy morale and work relationships. So I urge you to ensure validity for your tests. At the same time though, I ask you not to misuse this tool. Claiming a test is valid when it isn’t can lead to big problems.” [*Tests That Work*, p. 288].

If the certificate provider does not or cannot confirm the reliability and validity of an assessment, neither certificate providers nor stakeholders can have confidence that the assessment findings are appropriate and accurate measures of learners’ achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In these circumstances, it would not be appropriate or ethical for certificate providers to claim that those who earn the certificate have achieved the intended learning outcomes; as such claims would imply a level of confidence in the assessment that is not supported by fact. As noted by measurement experts in the training field, without reliability and validity, the assessment is meaningless for purposes

⁷ *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), 1999, AERA Publications Sales, Washington, DC 20005

of decision making. The certificate awarded then becomes no different from a certificate of attendance (in terms of its value in confirming the accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes). To claim otherwise to stakeholders would be to “sell them a bill of goods.”

IV. Value of ANSI/NOCA 1100 to Stakeholders and Certificate Program Providers

A. Assistance in Identifying Quality Programs

Alignment of the standard with best practices. The requirements of ANSI/NOCA 1100 are aligned with best practices in program oversight, management, and evaluation; education/training; and assessment. Consequently, the standard provides stakeholders with effective criteria for identifying quality certificate programs. A detailed explanation of the alignment of ANSI/NOCA 1100 with best practices in the areas of education/training and assessment has been provided in Section III. With respect to program oversight, management and evaluation, the requirements of the standard are aligned with best practices; existing standards, guidelines, and principles; and accreditation/approval processes related to specific management processes (e.g., ISO 90001⁸ for quality assurance) and to the administration of educational and training programs (e.g., the Council on Occupational Education *Accreditation Standards*, the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation). Attachment C contains a matrix which cross-walks ANSI/NOCA 1100 to relevant standards, guidelines, and principles and accreditation/approval processes.

Accessibility of standard to a variety of audiences. The existence of a standard and criteria for quality certificate programs is not, in itself, sufficient to secure the use of these requirements by stakeholders in their search for an appropriate program. To facilitate usage, the standard must be both technically sufficient to be properly implemented by a knowledgeable practitioner in the field and also written in a manner to be understood by, and accessible to, a lay audience. This was one of the first issues discussed by the NOCA consensus body when it began the standard development process. In its initial face-to-face meeting, the consensus body addressed the question, “What is the goal of creating a certificate program standard?” Recognizing that the goal would influence the content of the standard and how this content was presented (e.g., organization, terminology used), the group sought to reach consensus on this point. They decided that the standard should be not “just” a standard or list of “rules and regulations.” It also should provide guidance to stakeholders seeking to identify quality certificate programs and to providers seeking to develop such programs. To that end, the consensus body strove to make the standard as user-friendly and as unintimidating as possible.

⁸ ISO 9001 (2008) – *Quality Management System Requirements*, International Organization for Standardization, 1, ch. de la Voie-Creuse, Case postale 56 CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Another example of the consensus body's consideration of the usage of ANSI/NOCA 1100 by stakeholders was the group's focus on ensuring the clarity of the text of the standard. The consensus body purposefully erred on the side of including more, rather than less text when specifying the requirements of the standard. The consensus body wanted to ensure that there was sufficient clarifying language in each requirement to minimize the possibility that the intent or content of the requirement would be unclear or misunderstood.

Encouraging use of the standard. The consensus body was diligent in its efforts to create an accessible standard for stakeholders, but NOCA also recognizes that stakeholders often do not read standards. Rather, they look for an indicator that standards have been met (e.g., accreditation, certification). Stakeholders then use the presence or absence of this indicator to guide their decision making. For example, many individuals seek to purchase certified organic products and use the "USDA Certified" symbol on the package to identify these products. It is the rare consumer though, who will have read the standards on which this certification is based. Given this reality, NOCA has publicly supported the concept of accreditation for certificate programs and endeavored to educate and keep stakeholders informed of all such activities since 2007.

Although stakeholders may not always be inclined to read the original text of a standard, there are a variety of mechanisms through which the valuable information contained in the standard can be conveyed to them in a manner which will encourage them to more readily incorporate this knowledge in their decision-making. One example is a checklist stakeholders can utilize to assist them in identifying quality programs. Another might be a document that highlights the key elements of the standard and succinctly explains *why* such elements are critical to quality. This document is one example of how NOCA is providing background information to stakeholders of the standard to assist them in understand its relevance to a quality certificate program. NOCA is exploring the creation of other communication vehicles and tools which will better enable stakeholders to benefit from ANSI/NOCA 1100. In September 2008, NOCA published an updated version of a document entitled, *Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs* (originally published in May 2007). This document (see Attachment A of this report) was specifically designed to provide a lay-friendly summary of the distinctions between the two types of programs and what constitutes quality for each. To facilitate dissemination to stakeholders, the publication is readily available to the public on the NOCA website, where it can be downloaded for free.

NOCA is committed to continuing to provide educational opportunities for stakeholders on the purpose and use of the standard. These educational/marketing opportunities will be used to promote the acceptance of ANSI/NOCA 1100, which in turn, will benefit all stakeholders including accreditation bodies that choose to use the standard as the basis for their accreditation programs. In addition, it is NOCA's hope that accreditation bodies using ANSI/NOCA 1100 will partner with NOCA to implement joint educational/marketing programs related to the standard. By working together to promote the standard and educate stakeholders, we can ensure the successful implementation of the standard.

B. Distinguishing Certification from Certificate Programs

The confusion among the general public, and even providers, regarding certificate and certification programs generally centers on the primary purpose of each program and what holding a certificate or certification signifies (or does not signify). The introduction to ANSI/NOCA 1100 begins with a succinct description of what a certificate program is and a brief explanation of the distinctions between certificate and certification programs. Beginning the standard with this information alerts readers to the distinctions and their importance. The definition and descriptions provided can be excerpted from the standard and used in a variety of other communication vehicles aimed at educating the general public and other stakeholders about the differences between certificate and certification programs.

Within ANSI/NOCA 1100 there are several requirements aimed at helping to reduce confusion among stakeholders regarding certificate and certification programs. Included among these are requirements specifying what information providers must publish and/or provide to participants, specifically:

- 2.4** *The certificate provider shall publish: a) the purpose and scope of the certificate program ...*
- 2.5** *The certificate provider shall publish and provide to certificate holders a statement explaining what inferences can properly be made regarding individuals who hold the certificate. These inferences shall be consistent with the stated purpose of the certificate and the assessment(s) and also other information the certificate provider makes public about the certificate and the assessment(s).*
- 8.5** *The certificate document shall contain the following information: ...
c) scope of the certificate...*

Requirements 2.4 and 8.5 are directed toward elucidating and reinforcing the purpose of certificate programs; Requirement 2.5 is designed to clarify what a certificate does or does not signify. The intent of these three requirements is to ensure that stakeholders receive adequate and accurate information regarding what the certificate represents.

In addition to the above requirements, ANSI/NOCA 1100 contains requirements pertaining to the use of certificates (8.9 -8.11). These requirements are especially instrumental to highlighting the fact that a certificate and a certification are two different offerings. It is believed by many in the credentialing community that there are two major factors contributing to the confusion of the general public and other stakeholders. The first is the lack of precision in the terminology providers use to describe their programs (i.e., many certificate providers refer to their programs as “certification programs” and award a “certification” upon completion). The second is that some certificate providers award an acronym or letters to certificate holders for use after their names.

Requirements 8.9-8.11 address these contributing factors as follows:

- 8.9** *The certificate provider shall not award an acronym or letters to certificate holders for use after their names upon completion of the certificate program.*
- 8.10** *The certificate provider shall publish and provide to certificate holders a statement defining the appropriate ways in which to reference the certificate. This statement shall specify that certificate holders:*
- a) *may state that they hold a “Certificate in”*
 - b) *shall not say that they are “Certified in ...”*
 - c) *shall not use acronyms or letters after their names to reference the certificate they hold.*
- 8.11** *The certificate provider shall publish and provide to certificate holders a statement defining the purpose and scope of the certificate. This statement shall specify that certificate holders shall not make:*
- a) *claims or imply that the certificate is a professional certification or that its purpose and scope are beyond that specified by the certificate provider; or*
 - b) *any other statement regarding the certificate which the certificate provider may consider misleading or unauthorized.*

It should be noted that requirement 8.11 also recognizes that providers are not the only group that may contribute to the confusion among the general public and other stakeholders. Certificate holders themselves may unintentionally misrepresent what their earned certificate implies. Requirement 8.11 creates a vehicle through which providers can: (a) alert certificate holders to the fact that a certificate and certification are distinct and (b) supply guidance to them as to how to appropriately represent their certificate. Engaging the provider in helping to educate certificate holders is especially critical, given that they have direct access to this group, whereas standard developers and accrediting bodies typically face substantial logistical challenges to directly communicating with this population.

If providers do not publish the information specified in the above requirements, an information void will be created. The absence of information will do nothing to rectify the current confusion and may even serve to exacerbate the problem. Moreover, the absence of requirements would give uninformed or unscrupulous providers the latitude to make ambiguous, misleading, or incorrect statements regarding their certificate programs. ANSI/NOCA 1100 requires that providers be responsible and accountable for disseminating instructive and accurate information to the general public and other stakeholders.

The publication and use of the standard is only one step toward resolving the current confusion about certificate and certification programs. To make substantial progress toward eliminating confusion, a communication plan aimed at heightening awareness of the requirements of the standard and of the distinctions between certificate and certification programs is needed. This plan should focus on distilling the information

included in the standard into a readily understandable and usable form, tailoring it to meet the unique needs of each stakeholder group.

NOCA has made the commitment to implement a communication plan to educate stakeholders regarding certificates and certification and related standards and accreditation processes. Indeed, in the last several years, NOCA has produced more publications, sponsored more educational sessions, and hosted more public forums on these topics than any other organization. Since January 2007, when NOCA began its work in defining the features of quality certificate programs, it has:

- hosted two public forums on the certificate standards and the distinctions between certificate and certification programs (October 2007 and October 2008);
- sponsored an annual meeting session on the defining features of quality certificate and certification programs (November 2007);
- participated in a panel discussion on what constitutes quality for a certificate program (June 2008);
- sponsored a webinar which covered the NOCA Standard, the distinctions between certificate and certification programs, and the business aspects of developing a certificate program (October 2008);
- sponsored an annual meeting session on developing certificate programs (November 2008);
- sponsored an annual meeting session on the development of the NOCA standard (November 2008);
- included content on the distinctions between certificate and certification programs in its Certification 101 and 201 preconference workshops (November 2008); and
- sponsored a roundtable discussion on certificate programs (November 2008).

Of particular note with respect to educating the general public and stakeholders is NOCA's publication entitled, *Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs* (see Attachment A). NOCA created this publication in response to the confusion that exists among stakeholders regarding certificate and certification programs. The publication was specifically designed to provide a lay-friendly summary of the distinctions between the two types of programs and explain what constitutes quality for each. Initially published in May 2007, *Defining Features* was subsequently updated in September 2008 to incorporate new content from ANSI/NOCA 1100. To facilitate dissemination to the general public and other stakeholders, the document is, and has been, readily available to the public on the NOCA website where it can be downloaded for free.

Prior to 2007, NOCA published *The NOCA Guide to Understanding Credentialing Concepts* (2005), which includes a discussion of certificate programs and how they differ from certification programs. In addition, *The NOCA Basic Guide to Credentialing Terminology* (2006) contains definitions which distinguish certificate programs from

certification programs. Like the *Defining Features* document, both publications are available as free downloads from the NOCA website (www.noca.org).

V. The Use of Professional Designations

The question of whether certificate providers should award professional designations (i.e., an acronym or letters to use after one's name) is one of the most controversial issues to be addressed when developing a certificate program standard. In truth, there may be no inherently "right" answer to this question. If there were one, this matter would perhaps have been resolved long ago. The reasoning by which the consensus body (comprised of a balanced representation of stakeholders which included certificate providers) arrived at its conclusions is outlined below.

Although the awarding of designations does not have a direct bearing on the quality of a certificate program, the consensus body believed it did relate to another purpose of ANSI/NOCA 1100, namely to aid stakeholders in gaining a better understanding of the distinctions between certificate and certification programs and thereby, reduce the confusion which exists regarding these two types of programs. The consensus body had heard from stakeholders outside the body that educating stakeholders would be an uphill battle. The opinion of the consensus body (and likely many individuals in the fields of certification and education/training) was that even under the optimal conditions of unlimited access and resources, the task of educating stakeholders regarding the distinctions between certificate and certification programs would be a challenging, long-term effort. The distinctions between these programs are not yet well understood by all certification and certificate providers, much less by the stakeholders they serve. Whether due to a simple lack of information, a historical lack of standardization in the terminology used, or the fact that there are many similarities between the two types of programs, the bottom line is that considerable confusion exists.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the consensus body concluded that the most effective and expeditious approach to helping stakeholders distinguish between certificate and certification programs was to provide them with a clear, unambiguous, and salient indicator of which was which. The awarding of professional designations was seen as a possible way to accomplish this.

As was the case when they developed the other requirements of the standard, the consensus body next sought to explore the potential advantages and disadvantages of permitting or prohibiting the awarding of professional designations. They looked at this matter from the perspective of *each* stakeholder group (e.g., what would be the advantage to the stakeholder of receiving a designation, what would be the disadvantage to the certificate provider of not awarding a designation). These deliberations were given due consideration and were not taken lightly.

If a designation could serve as an unambiguous, salient indicator of whether an offering was a certificate or certification program, permitting certificate programs to award a designation would continue to contribute to the confusion about certificates and

certification. Further analysis suggested that such confusion had the potential to negatively impact all stakeholders. The confusion could lead to:

- a learner wasting time and money on a program that does not meet his/her needs;
- an employer believing that a program will deliver something it will not (and thus wasting resources);
- a regulator selecting an ineffective vehicle to accomplish his/her purpose; and
- a certificate provider obtaining less business because the market does not understand the unique value proposition a certificate program vis a vis certification.

Should certificate providers be prohibited from awarding designations, there would be a clear way for stakeholders to distinguish between certificate and certification programs. The above cited problems related to stakeholder confusion would be diminished. However, there could be disadvantages to prohibiting the awarding of designations. All things being equal, will a certificate holder receive the same value from a certificate program that awards a designation vs. one that does not? Also, there are certificate providers that currently offer designations and believe them to be of value in promoting their programs. If this is true, they would be disadvantaged by not being able to award a designation.

The consensus body reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of each option and ultimately concluded that the potential benefits of the prohibition against awarding a designation outweighed the potential negative impact. Having an unambiguous, salient way to distinguish between certificate and certification programs would reduce confusion, which in turn, would positively impact most stakeholders. Although there could be some negative consequences associated with prohibiting the awarding of designations, these consequences are limited primarily to just two stakeholder groups (certificate holders and certificate providers), and there are alternatives available to each of these groups to mitigate negative impact. Certificate holders can specify on resumes, business cards, stationary, etc. – in the same locations where they would have inserted a designation – a phrase such as “Certificate in XYZ.” The phrase serves the same purpose that a designation would, namely, to indicate that the holder has successfully completed the certificate program. Some might suggest that having letters after one’s name is of greater value than a phrase describing the certificate. The question though is where does this value come from? Does it derive from the misconception that the designation implies a certification?

In terms of mitigating potential negative impact on certificate providers, the consensus body identified a number of remedies available to this stakeholder group. For example, certificate providers could offer suggestions to their certificate holders as to how to effectively promote their certificates through prominently featuring the phrase, “Certificate in XYZ,” on resumes, business cards, stationary, etc. They also can provide talking points to certificate holders to be used to convey the value of the certificate to employers, customers, etc. In addition, certificate providers could successfully position

their certificates against certification programs by emphasizing the unique value proposition offered by their program.

In understanding the reasoning of the consensus body, it may be helpful to explain two of the guiding philosophies the group adopted during the standard development process. The first guiding philosophy was that current practice is not necessarily best practice. In other words, the fact that one could point to examples of a particular practice is not sufficient to categorize the practice as desirable or “best.” Nor does the fact that something *has* been done, in and of itself, indicate that the practice is associated with quality. Thus, the fact that some certificate providers currently award designations does not mean that this practice is best practice or desirable practice or consistent with the purpose of the standard. This philosophy regarding current vs. best practice guided the group in all of its deliberations, not just those related to the awarding of designations. For example, when discussing other requirements of the standard, the consensus body noted that many certificate providers do not have bona fide quality assurance programs in place and do not utilize valid and reliable assessments to evaluate achievement of the intended learning outcomes, but it was believed that promoting these practices was in the best interest of serving all stakeholders and fulfilling the purpose of the standard.

The second guiding philosophy was to not be unduly influenced by the fact that some certificate providers might not like or abide by a proposed requirement. The sentiment of the consensus body was that there will always be those who choose not to follow voluntary standards. Although the standard development process must consider all viewpoints, it is not incumbent on the consensus body to please all stakeholders on all accounts. Instead, the most important consideration is whether a particular requirement ultimately is in the best interest of promoting quality and serving diverse stakeholder needs.

VI. Process for Reviewing and Updating the Standard

NOCA Standards are reaffirmed, revised, or withdrawn at least every five years [see Section 16 of *NOCA Standards Development and Maintenance Policies* (hereafter referred to as “*Policies*”) in Attachment B]. However, the *Policies* allow for directly and materially affected interests to request a new standard project or revision to an existing standard at any time (item 5.1.4).

The *ANSI Essential Requirements* provide three options for the maintenance of American National Standards:

- Periodic – review of entire document on a schedule not to exceed five years;
- Continuous – consideration of recommended changes to any part of the standard according to a documented schedule; or
- Stabilized – does not apply to this situation since it only applies to standards in existence for at least 10 years.

The NOCA Main Committee serves as the consensus body responsible for the handling of proposed revisions to the standard. The committee is committed to providing prompt action on all requests for revision to the standard. Furthermore, the committee fully understands that with the publication of ANSI/NOCA 1100 and implementation by the stakeholders, there is an anticipated need to provide a robust revision process early on to ensure that critical areas of concern which might not have been covered or that need further clarification are addressed. For this reason, the standard has been placed into the continuous maintenance category to allow for prompt consideration of recommended changes to any part of the standard.

In general, the handling of proposed revisions to a NOCA standard is conducted in an identical manner as the open and balanced process NOCA follows in the development of a new standard. The following key steps define the process:

- Interested party submits a request for revision (item 5.1.4).
- Main Committee reviews the proposed revision and determines if the revision should proceed; this may be done at a meeting of the Main Committee or through letter ballot (see Sections 6 and 7 of *Policies*); Main Committee may choose from following options:
 - reject the proposal;
 - process the recommendation as a revision to the standard; or
 - form a task group to further develop the proposal and provide recommendations back to the Main Committee (3.1.3).
- If the consensus of the Committee is to not proceed with the revision, the submitter is notified and provided the opportunity to appeal the decision (see item 7.1.5 and Section 8 of *Policies*).
- If consensus is reached to move ahead with the proposal, a proposed revision to the standard is developed and the proposed revision is balloted by the Main Committee (see Section 7 of *Policies*); this step may have already been completed under the second bullet depending on the complexity of the request.
- Once consensus is achieved on the proposed revision, it is submitted to ANSI for public review and also through NOCA public review channels (e.g. website, e-blasts, etc.) (see item 5.3 of *Policies*)
- All negative ballots and public review comments are handled in accordance with 7.1.5 of the *Policies*.

In addition to processing proposed revisions to the standard, the NOCA Main Committee provides the option to stakeholders to request an interpretation of the standard. This process is defined under Section 12 of the *Policies*. As an example, an accreditation body may desire an interpretation of ANSI/NOCA 1100 based on a particular situation. Interpretations are intended to provide clarification as to the intent of a requirement of a standard but cannot contradict the requirements set forth in the standard. Interpretations are sometimes used by a stakeholder to obtain clarification and, if appropriate, the interpretation may lead to an actual revision of the standard.

VII. NOCA's Commitment to Supporting the Standard

The purpose of ANSI/NOCA 1100 is to:

- provide guidance to organizations seeking to develop high-quality, assessment-based certificate programs;
- communicate to stakeholders the essential elements of a high-quality, assessment-based certificate program;
- establish requirements which may form the basis for an accreditation process for assessment-based certificate programs; and
- aid stakeholders in gaining a better understanding of the distinctions between assessment-based certificate programs, certificates of attendance or participation, and professional or personnel certification programs.

Based on the defined purpose, NOCA plans to do the following:

Provide education/training opportunities for all stakeholders. NOCA will develop and provide education/training programs covering the scope of the standard. The targeted audiences for the education/training programs will be: providers of certificate programs, employers, government entities, and stakeholders including accreditation bodies.

In addition, and as noted in previous responses, NOCA plans to develop evaluation tools such as checklists or similar items that can be used by stakeholders in evaluating a certificate program against the requirements of the standard.

Communicate to stakeholders the essential elements of quality certificate programs. NOCA is committed to continue its ongoing efforts to promote ANSI/NOCA 1100 to the stakeholder community. Examples of promotional efforts will include, but are not limited to: NOCA website presence, periodic notice in NOCA electronic newsletter, exposure at conferences where NOCA exhibits, and presentations at conferences and other events. In addition, NOCA will advocate the use of the standard in state and federal guidelines/regulations, when appropriate, and will work side-by-side with stakeholders and accreditation bodies in promoting the standard to all stakeholders.

Establish and maintain requirements that serve as the basis for accreditation. NOCA has understood from the beginning of this standard development project that the end product would be used by other accreditation bodies as a baseline standard. The goal of drafting the standard was not specifically related to NOCA offering an accreditation program, but rather to provide one American National Standard developed through a true open consensus process that serves the best interests of all those directly impacted by the scope of the standard. Now that the standard is completed, NOCA has implemented a development project to determine if it will be offering an accreditation program based on the standard.

In addition to the above initiatives, there has been an expressed need from interested parties for NOCA to sponsor additional industry specific certificate standards with ANSI/NOCA 1100 serving as the “umbrella” quality system standard. As an example,

specific standards may be developed which define requirements for a given certificate program scope delivered by multiple certificate providers (e.g. CPR certificate programs, Emergency Training Certificate programs, etc). These standards would be used to define requirements for such elements as: learning objectives, review mechanisms, evaluation tools, instructor qualifications, etc. that would be considered appropriate for the given scope of the certificate program.

Ultimately, what is done with the standard and how it is used in national as well as international markets will be driven by the stakeholders impacted by the standard and their needs. NOCA is committed to investing the resources to ensure all interested stakeholders are aware of the standard and its value, and have every opportunity to participate in the process to continually improve the standard and develop new standards.

Attachment A

Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs



Defining Features of Quality Certification and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs

September 4th, 2008

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DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Introduction

Established in 1977, the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) is dedicated to promoting excellence in credentialing worldwide. It is the leader in setting quality standards for credentialing organizations and through its division, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), has provided more than 30 years of accrediting services to the credentialing industry. NOCA is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a developer of American National Standards.

The NOCA Board recognized that quality assessment-based certificate programs, through the instruction and training they provide, play a valuable role in helping individuals to attain occupational/professional competence and thus, relate to NOCA's mission of promoting excellence in credentialing. Furthermore, the Board noted that assessment-based certificate programs have some functions in common with professional or personnel certification, namely, identifying and evaluating the knowledge, skills, and competencies requisite to effectively performing occupational and professional roles. In January 2007, it established a Certificate Task Force, comprised of NOCA members and other key parties, to:

- (a) identify characteristics of quality certification and assessment-based certificate programs;
- (b) outline the distinguishing features of each; and
- (c) explore what NOCA's future role might be with respect to assessment-based certificate programs.

The work of the Certificate Task Force was incorporated in this document, which highlights the similarities and differences between quality certification and assessment-based certificate programs.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to aid stakeholders in gaining a better understanding of the distinctions between assessment-based certificate programs, certificates of attendance or participation, and professional or personnel certification programs. The document focuses on 12 key aspects of certification and assessment-based certificate programs:

- Primary Focus of the Program
- Content of the Program and How It Is Identified
- Program Oversight
- Provider Role in Education and Training
- Education and Training Requirements and Prerequisites
- Assessment
- Validation of Assessment Content

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Standard Setting
- Evaluation of Assessments
- Credential Maintenance
- Identification of Individuals Who Have Completed Program
- Statement of Program Purpose

NOTE: The features of quality professional or personnel certification programs described in this document are derived from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies' *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs* (www.noca.org/ncca).

Definitions

An assessment-based certificate program is a non-degree granting program that:

- (a) provides instruction and training to aid participants in acquiring specific knowledge, skills, and/or competencies associated with intended learning outcomes;
- (b) evaluates participants' achievement of the intended learning outcomes; and
- (c) awards a certificate only to those participants who meet the performance, proficiency or passing standard for the assessment(s) (hence the term, "assessment-based certificate program").

Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certificates and Certificates of Attendance or Participation

Certificates of attendance or participation are provided to individuals (participants) who have attended or participated in classes, courses, or other education/training programs or events. The certificate awarded at the completion of the program or event signifies that the participant was present and in some cases that the participant actively participated in the program or event. Demonstration of accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes by participants is NOT a requirement for receiving the certificate; thus, possession of a certificate of attendance or participation does not indicate that the intended learning outcomes have been accomplished by the participant. These are key distinctions between a certificate of attendance or participation and an assessment-based certificate program.

Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certificates and Professional or Personnel Certification Programs

Professional or personnel certification is a voluntary process by which individuals are evaluated against predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, or competencies. Participants who demonstrate that they meet the standards by successfully completing the assessment process are granted

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

a time-limited credential. To retain the credential, certificants must maintain continued competence. The credential awarded by the certification program provider denotes that the participant possesses particular knowledge, skills, or competencies.

Whereas the focus of an assessment-based certificate program is on education/training, the focus of professional/personnel certification is on the assessment of participants. Moreover, the assessment is independent of a specific class, course or other education/training program and also independent of any provider of classes, courses, or programs. The assessments are NOT designed to evaluate mastery of the intended learning outcomes of a specific class, course or education/training program and the certification program provider is NOT the sole provider of any education or training that may be required for certification.

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Feature	Certification ¹	Assessment-Based Certificate Program ²
Primary Focus of the Program	<p>The primary focus of a professional/personnel certification program is on providing an independent³ assessment of the knowledge, skills, and/or competencies required for competent performance of an occupational or professional role or specific work-related tasks and responsibilities.</p> <p>Certification also is intended to measure or enhance continued competence through recertification or renewal requirements.</p> <p>The certification awarded designates that participants have demonstrated the requisite, work-related knowledge, skills, or competencies and met other requirements established by the certification program provider (e.g., academic degree, specified number of years of occupational or professional experience).</p>	<p>The primary focus of an assessment-based certificate program is on facilitating the accomplishment of intended learning outcomes. Although assessment is an integral part of the certificate program, the primary purpose of the program is to provide education and training which supports the accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>The certificate awarded designates that participants have completed the required education/training and demonstrated accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes.</p>

¹ The features of quality professional or personnel certification programs as described in this document are derived from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies' *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*.

² Assessment-based certificate programs are distinct from certificates of attendance/participation in that they require successful completion of an end-of-program assessment to confirm participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes.

³ The assessment is independent of a specific class, course or other education/training program and also independent of any provider of classes, courses, or programs. The assessment is NOT designed to evaluate mastery of the intended learning outcomes of a specific class, course or education/training program and the certification program provider is NOT the sole provider of any education or training that may be required for certification.

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Feature	Certification ¹	Assessment-Based Certificate Program ²
<p>Content of the Program and How It Is Identified</p>	<p>The content of a professional/personnel certification program is based on the knowledge, skills, or competencies required for competent performance of an occupational or professional role or specific work-related tasks and responsibilities.</p> <p>The knowledge, skills, and competencies that are the focus of the certification program are identified through a formal study (e.g., job/practice analysis, role delineation). Program content is defined by job incumbents and/or employers through the formal job/practice analysis or role delineation process.</p> <p>The knowledge, skills, and competencies targeted by the certification program are periodically updated, as needed, based on the findings of a formal study (e.g., job/practice analysis, role delineation) to ensure that the certification program continues to reflect current occupational or professional practice.</p>	<p>The content of an assessment-based certificate program may include knowledge, skills, or competencies related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an occupational or professional role or specific work-related tasks and responsibilities; or (b) general interest or leisure pursuits (e.g., first aid, sailing). <p>The intended learning outcomes and associated knowledge, skills, and competencies that are the focus of the education/training are identified through a systematic analysis of the needs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) participants; (b) industry; (c) consumers; and/or (d) other identified stakeholders. <p>The content of the program (education/training and assessment) is reviewed periodically and updated, as needed, by subject-matter experts and qualified individuals to ensure that it remains current and accurate and consistent with generally accepted instructional design and measurement principles.</p>
<p>Program Oversight</p>	<p>A governing body with representation from relevant stakeholders⁴ is charged with oversight of the certification program. This body is legally or administratively autonomous from other entities and maintains control over all essential decisions related to certification activities.</p>	<p>A governing body with oversight responsibilities for the assessment-based certificate program is NOT required; however, the program should function with input from subject-matter experts and qualified individuals, who assist in development, delivery, and evaluation of the program.</p>

⁴ **Stakeholders** are the various groups with an interest in the quality, governance, and operation of a certification program, such as candidates, certificants, employers, regulators, customers/clients and the public.

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Feature	Certification	Assessment-Based Certificate Program
Provider Role in Education and Training	The certification program provider conducts the certification program independently of any educational/training programs. That is, the assessment is NOT linked to a specific class, course or other education/training program or to a specific provider of classes, courses, or programs. The assessment is NOT designed to evaluate mastery of the intended learning outcomes of a specific class, course or education/training program, nor is the certification program provider the sole provider of any education or training that may be required for certification. The certification program provider also is not responsible for accreditation ⁵ of educational or training programs or courses of study leading to the certification.	The certificate program provider conducts or sponsors the education/training that is required for the certificate. The assessment is aligned with the education/training and is designed to evaluate accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes that the provider has identified for the class, course, or program.
Education and Training Requirements and Prerequisites	Eligibility requirements may include completion of specific education/training; however, the certification program provider is NOT the sole provider of any education/training that may be required for certification. Nor is the certification program provider responsible for accreditation of educational or training programs or courses of study leading to the certification.	The program requires completion of education/training offered or sponsored by the certificate provider. There may be other prerequisites in addition to the education/training required to attain the certificate.

⁵ **Accreditation** is the voluntary process by which a nongovernmental agency grants a time-limited recognition to an institution, organization, business, or other entity after verifying that it has met predetermined and standardized criteria.

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Feature	Certification	Assessment-Based Certificate Program
Assessment	<p>The purpose of the assessment process is to evaluate mastery of the knowledge, skills, or competencies required for certification. Any generally accepted assessment method may be utilized for this purpose.</p> <p>The assessment takes place <i>after</i> the participant has had the opportunity to acquire the targeted knowledge, skills, or competencies.</p> <p>The assessment is conducted in a standardized manner in a secure, proctored environment.</p> <p>Successful completion of the assessment is required to receive the certification.</p>	<p>Both formative and summative assessments are typically conducted. The purpose of formative assessment is to provide feedback to both participants and facilitators/instructors with the intent of enhancing the learning process. Formative assessment may include self-reflection and diagnostic components (e.g., pretest) and may be remedial (i.e., focusing on correction or improvement). Formative assessment may take place on one or more occasions throughout the learning process.</p> <p>Summative (end-of-program) assessment is used to evaluate participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes and generally takes place at the completion of the education/training component of the program. Any generally accepted assessment method may be utilized for conducting the summative assessment.</p> <p>The certificate program provider ensures that the environments in which the assessment is conducted are comparable. Any additional specifications pertaining either to how the assessments should be conducted or the required level of security should be consistent with the intended purpose of the certificate program.</p> <p>Successful completion of the summative assessment is required to receive the certificate.</p> <p><i>NOTE: If an assessment-based certificate program is promoted by the provider as being appropriate for regulatory purposes or for decision making related to hiring, promotion, and other key employment-related outcomes (e.g., hospital privileging for physicians), the assessment(s) should be developed and evaluated/scored in a manner that is consistent with generally accepted measurement principles and legally defensible. The assessment(s) also should be administered in a secure, proctored environment.</i></p>

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Feature	Certification	Assessment-Based Certificate Program
Validation of Assessment Content	<p>The process of validating the content of the assessment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a formal study (e.g., job/practice analysis, role delineation) conducted in accordance with generally accepted practice; and (b) documentation of the link between the study findings and the knowledge, skills, and competencies represented on the assessment. <p>The assessment content is periodically revised, as needed, based on the findings of a formal job/practice analysis or role delineation process to ensure that it continues to reflect current occupational or professional practice.</p>	<p>The process of validating the content of the assessment includes, at a minimum, documentation of the link between the intended learning outcomes and the assessment (e.g., a table listing the knowledge, skills, and/or competencies needed for participants to accomplish the intended learning outcomes and identifying how the specified knowledge, skills, and/or competencies are covered by the assessment). For high-stakes certificate programs, the validation process should include a job/practice analysis or role delineation.</p> <p>The assessment content is periodically revised, as needed, by subject-matter experts and qualified individuals to ensure that it continues to reflect the scope and purpose of the program and remains aligned with the education/training and the intended learning outcomes.</p>
Standard Setting	<p>The certification program provider uses a generally accepted method for setting the passing standard. This method, in which trained stakeholders participate, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) link the passing standard to the expected performance of individuals who possess the requisite knowledge, skills, or competencies; and (b) be consistent with the nature and intended use of the assessment. <p>The governing body for the certification program retains authority for setting/approving the passing standard.</p>	<p>The certificate provider uses a generally accepted method for setting the performance, proficiency, or passing standard for the summative (end-of-program) assessment. This method, in which trained subject-matter experts participate, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) link the performance, proficiency, or passing standard to the expected performance of a participant who has accomplished the intended learning outcomes; and (b) be consistent with the nature and intended use of the assessment. <p>The certificate provider retains authority for setting/approving the performance, proficiency, or passing standard.</p>
Evaluation of Assessments	<p>The effectiveness of the assessment is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure its ongoing utility for measuring the knowledge, skills, and competencies targeted by the certification program. The procedures and analyses performed for this purpose are consistent with generally accepted measurement principles.</p>	<p>The effectiveness of the assessment is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure its ongoing utility for evaluating participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes. The procedures and analyses performed for this purpose are consistent with generally accepted measurement principles.</p>

DEFINING FEATURES OF QUALITY CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Feature	Certification	Assessment-Based Certificate Program
Credential Maintenance	<p>A certification is time limited (i.e., it will lapse or expire at the end of a predetermined time period if recertification/renewal requirements are not met).</p> <p>To maintain the credential, a certificant is required to engage in specified activities designed to measure or enhance continued competence. Certificants are subject to disciplinary policy.</p>	<p>An assessment-based certificate is generally NOT time limited (i.e., it typically does NOT lapse or expire at the end of a predetermined time period).</p> <p>A certificate holder is generally NOT required to engage in subsequent activities to maintain the certificate; however, in some cases, providers may require additional education, training, and/or assessments for this purpose.</p>
Identification of Individuals Who Have Completed Program	<p>Certificants are “Certified in XYZ” or “Certified XYZ Professionals.” <i>(NOTE: These terms are illustrative; they are not meant to be inclusive or prescriptive).</i></p> <p>Certificants are awarded an acronym or letters for use after their names to signify that they have obtained and maintained the credential.</p>	<p>Certificate holders have a “Certificate in XYZ.” <i>(NOTE: This term is illustrative; it is not meant to be inclusive or prescriptive).</i></p> <p>Certificate holders are NOT awarded an acronym or letters for use after their names upon completion of the certificate program.</p>
Statement of Program Purpose	<p>Certification program providers publish an explicit statement regarding the primary purpose of the certification program (e.g., to protect the public, to provide employers with a tool for identifying qualified individuals). They also provide guidance to candidates, certificants and other stakeholders as to what inferences can properly be made regarding those who hold the certification. Furthermore, these inferences are consistent with the stated purpose of the certification and the type of assessments, evaluation/scoring procedures, and standard-setting methodologies utilized.</p>	<p>Assessment-based certificate program providers publish an explicit statement regarding the primary purpose of the certificate program (e.g., to assist participants in achieving specified learning outcomes). They also provide guidance to participants, certificate holders and other stakeholders as to what inferences can properly be made regarding those who hold the certificate. Furthermore, these inferences are consistent with the stated purpose of the certificate and the type of assessments, evaluation/scoring procedures, and standard-setting methodologies utilized.</p>

Attachment B

NOCA Standards Development and Maintenance Policies



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR COMPETENCY ASSURANCE

NOCA Standards Development and Maintenance Policies

January, 2008

Established in 1977, the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) is the leader in setting quality standards for credentialing organizations. Through its annual conference, regional seminars, and publications, NOCA serves its membership as a clearinghouse for information on the latest trends and issues of concern to practitioners and organizations focused on certification, licensure, and human resource development.

NOCA's MISSION

NOCA promotes excellence in credentialing worldwide. We accomplish our mission through services such as:

- *Education*
- *Research*
- *Advocacy*
- *Accreditation*
- *Standards*

These Policies are subject to revision.
Contact NOCA to confirm this revision is current.

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National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) -----

Standards development and maintenance policies

Standards Developer

National Organization for Competency Assurance

Approved by the NOCA Board of Directors
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Contents

1	General	1
	1.1 Definitions	1
2	Openness	1
3	Committee Structure	2
	3.1 Committees	2
	3.2 Secretariat	2
	3.3 Officers	3
	3.4 Members	3
4	Committee Membership	4
	4.1 Application	4
	4.2 Selection and recommendation	4
	4.3 Term and committee size	4
	4.4 Membership interest categories	4
	4.5 Review of membership	5
	4.6 Observers and experts	5
	4.7 Membership roster	5
	4.8 Proxies	5
5	Notification of standards development	6
	5.1 Project Initiation Notification System (PINS)	6
	5.2 Discontinuance of a proposal	6
	5.3 Public review of draft standards	6
6	Meetings	7
	6.1 Main committee meetings	7
	6.2 Task group and standing committee meetings	7
	6.3 Quorum	7
	6.4 Meeting notice	7
	6.5 Open meetings	7
	6.6 Closed meetings	7
	6.7 Meeting summaries	8
7	Balloting of standards	8
	7.1 Main committee	8
8	Appeals process	9
9	National adoption of ISO standards as American National Standards	10
10	Patents in standards	10
11	Commercial terms and conditions	11
12	Interpretations	11
13	Committee experts and contracts	12
14	Editorial revisions	12
15	Issuance	13
16	Periodic reviews	13
17	Record keeping	13
18	Disclaimers	13
19	Metrication	13
20	Legal representation	14

National Organization for Competency Assurance Standards development and Maintenance policies

1 General

These Policies are used in the development of National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) voluntary consensus national standards. These Policies are consistent with the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) *Essential Requirements: Due Process Requirements for American National Standards*¹. In addition, these Policies are consistent with the OMB A-119 *Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Standards*.² NOCA Standards are intended to be consistent with government regulations and codes, when they exist. ANSI procedures referenced in these Policies may not be applicable when the NOCA Standard is not intended to be an American National Standard.

1.1 Definitions

Consensus: Substantial agreement by directly and materially affected interests that signify the concurrence of more than a simple majority but not necessarily unanimity. It requires that all views and objections be considered and that an effort be made toward their resolution.

Main Committee: The consensus body responsible for development and revision of any NOCA Standard(s).

Standing Committee: A group appointed by the Main Committee Chair to provide ongoing functional support to the Main Committee (e.g. editorial, interpretation).

Secretariat: the National Organization of Competency Assurance.

Task Group: A group appointed by the Main Committee Chair to address a specific issue within a Standard.

2 Openness

Participation in the NOCA standards process shall be open to all persons who are directly and materially affected by the standard. These Policies are written in a manner to ensure there are no undue financial barriers to participation, and participation is not conditional upon membership in any organization, nor unreasonably restricted on the basis of technical qualifications or other such requirements.

Participation is available through membership on committees and task groups, by meeting invitation, or by public review and comment.

Timely and adequate notices of any action to create, revise, reaffirm, or withdraw a standard, and the establishment of a new consensus body shall be provided to all known directly and materially affected interests. Notice shall include a clear and meaningful description of the purpose of the

¹ American National Standards Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036

² Office of Management and Budget, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC, 20230.

proposed activity and shall identify a readily available source for further information. In addition, the name, affiliation, and interest category of each member of the consensus body shall be made available to interested parties upon request.³

3 Committee structure

3.1 Committees

3.1.1 Main Committee

The Main Committee is the consensus body and shall be responsible for:

- proposing NOCA Standards consistent with NOCA's mission;
- voting on approval of proposed NOCA Standards;
- maintaining standards in accordance with these Policies;
- responding to requests for interpretation of NOCA Standards within its scope of activity;
- proposing additional policies and procedures to the Secretariat appropriate to its scope of activity as permitted within these Policies; and
- other matters requiring consensus body action as provided in these Policies.

3.1.2 Standing committees

3.1.2.1 Editorial Committee

The Main Committee Chair shall select from members of the committee an Editorial Committee. The Editorial Committee is responsible for ensuring draft standards are editorially accurate prior to issuance of the final approved standard and edits are made in accordance with Section 14 of these Policies.

3.1.2.2 Interpretation Committee

The Interpretation Committee shall be comprised of the Main Committee Chair along with a representative from each interest category appointed by the Main Committee Chair. The Interpretation Committee is responsible for handling interpretation requests in accordance with Section 12 of these Policies.

3.1.2.3 Other

Other standing committees may be formed at the discretion of the Main Committee Chair.

3.1.3 Task groups

If deemed appropriate by the Main Committee Chair, Task Groups may be formed to address a specific issue. Task Groups are responsible for providing recommendations to the Main Committee responsible for the standard(s) impacted by the recommendation. Task Groups are not governed by the rules of balance or consensus as defined in these Policies.

3.2 Secretariat

NOCA shall be the Secretariat and shall be responsible for:

- overseeing compliance with these Policies;
- maintaining a roster of Main Committee membership and maintaining a list of standards assigned to each Main Committee;

³ Contact information may not be provided

- providing administrative services to the Main Committee Chairs in assisting them in performing their duties;
- nominating officers for the initial formation of Main Committees;
- submitting documentation to ANSI, when required;
- documenting actions and decisions made by the Main Committee;
- distributing documents relevant to the business of the Main Committee; and
- performing other functions as required by these Policies.

3.3 Officers

3.3.1 Main Committee Chair

The Main Committee Chair shall be selected by the NOCA President and serve one-year terms.

The Chair shall be responsible for:

- managing the Main Committee meetings in a manner that is efficient and in compliance with these Policies;
- completing Main Committee responsibilities in a timely manner, including reviewing drafts for ballot;
- providing a liaison role with other Main Committees;
- adjudicating all views and objections encountered in the balloting and public review processes;
- representing the Main Committee in appeal actions; and
- performing other functions as required by these Policies or by request of the Main Committee membership.

The Chair shall be a nonvoting member of the Main Committee except where necessary to determine a decisive vote.

3.3.2 Main Committee Vice Chair

The Vice Chair is selected by the NOCA President and shall assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the Chair's absence. The Vice Chair shall serve a one-year term.

3.3.3 Secretariat

The Secretariat shall be responsible for:

- documenting all actions and decisions made by the committees;
- distributing documents relevant to the business of the committees; and
- maintaining current membership rosters.

The Secretariat is not a voting member of the committee.

3.3.4 Standing committees and task groups

Standing Committee and Task Group Chairs shall be selected by the Main Committee Chair.

3.4 Members

Members shall be responsible for:

- participating actively at meetings and reviewing documents;
- returning ballots within prescribed deadlines;

- o advising the appropriate Chair when a change in employment may impact the member's interest category;
- o providing technical expertise;
- o abiding by the NOCA's antitrust policies; and
- o conducting themselves in a manner that is courteous, respectful, and consistent with the principles of the consensus process.

4 Committee membership

4.1 Application

Any directly and materially affected person may apply for membership by completing an application and submitting the application to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall forward membership applications to the responsible Chair, who determines eligibility. Participation shall not be conditional upon membership in any organization or unreasonably restricted on the basis of technical qualifications or other such requirements.

Applicants shall define their direct and material interests in the scope of activities covered by the committee, qualifications, willingness to participate actively, and indicate their interest category.

All memberships are based on the experience and expertise of the individuals and are not "company" memberships and therefore are not transferable. Applicants not accepted may have their application maintained on file by the Secretariat for consideration by the responsible Chair when openings occur.

4.2 Selection and recommendation

In reviewing the application, the Chair of the applicable committee or group shall consider the following:

- o need for active participation by each interest category;
- o potential of dominance by a single interest category;
- o extent of organization or company support on behalf of the applicant; and
- o committee size.

The Main Committee shall have a balance of interests. Members from diverse interest categories shall be sought with the objective of balance. The process shall not be dominated by any single interest category, individual, or organization. Dominance shall mean a position or exercise of dominant authority, leadership, or influence by reason of superior leverage, strength, or representation to the exclusion of fair and equitable consideration of other viewpoints. No single interest category shall constitute a majority of the membership of a consensus body.

The requirement for balance shall not apply to Standing Committees or Task Groups.

4.3 Term and committee size

Main Committee and Standing Committee members are requested to serve a minimum one-year term. The Main Committee Chair has the authority to limit the size of the Main Committee to ensure efficiency while still maintaining balance.

4.4 Membership interest categories

Committee membership shall include persons directly and materially affected by the standard(s) under the scope of the committee. Directly and materially affected may be defined by the membership interest categories below.

- User/Consumer: A member who purchases, uses, or specifies materials, products, systems, or services covered in the scope of the standard. User/consumer association representatives, third-party accreditation organizations, and standards developers are included in this membership classification.
- Producer: A member, who produces, assembles, distributes, or sells materials, products, systems, or services covered in the scope of the standard. Trade association representatives are included in this membership classification.
- Government: A member who is from a public agency (local, regional, state, federal, or international) or represents a professional organization of government members, academia, or a model code organization.
- General Interest: A member who does not fall under the other three categories but has demonstrated a direct and material interest in the standard.
- Non-voting Liaison: A member who has expertise in areas of interest to NOCA. The member would receive all Main Committee materials and may perform duties expected of Main Committee members with the exception of balloting and making motions.

The interest categories appropriate to the development of consensus in any given standards activity are a function of the nature of the standards being developed. Main Committees may determine that additional or different interest categories are appropriate for the Committee's scope of activity. Changes in interest category designations shall be approved by a majority of the Main Committee. Interest categories shall be discretely defined, cover all materially affected parties and differentiate each category from the other categories.

4.5 Review of membership

Member attendance and voting records shall be reviewed by the Committee Chair at least on an annual basis. A Main Committee member may be terminated if he/she has completed two one-year terms or is considered inactive, i.e., fails to return ballots on two consecutive issues and/or misses two consecutive meetings. A Main Committee member whose change in employment affects his/her voting interest may also be terminated. Standing Committee and Task Group memberships may be terminated at the discretion of the responsible Chair.

4.6 Observers and experts

Observers are permitted at all meetings at the discretion of the responsible Chair and shall be given a non-transferable invitation by that Chair when their request to attend is approved. Individual experts may be invited to address a committee on technical matters.

4.7 Membership roster

A current membership roster for each Main Committee, Standing Committee and Task Group containing all pertinent member contact information and affiliation shall be maintained by the Secretariat of that group and supplied to the Secretariat. The membership roster shall be available to group members upon request. Member names and affiliation are available to the general public upon request.

4.8 Proxies

A committee or task group member may be represented by a proxy at a meeting if unable to attend or participate. A signed statement from the member not in attendance authorizing a designated proxy shall be provided to the Chair prior to the meeting, unless otherwise provided in these Policies.

5 Notification of standards development

5.1 Project Initiation Notification System

5.1.1 At the initiation of a project to develop or revise an American National Standard, notification shall be transmitted to ANSI using the Project Initiation Notification System (PINS) form. Notification shall also be placed on the NOCA website and published in the NOCA News.

5.1.2 The comment period shall be one of the following:

- A minimum of thirty (30) days if the full text of the revision(s) can be published in *NOCA News* and *ANSI Standards Action*;
- A minimum of forty-five (45) days if the document is available in an electronic format, deliverable within one day of a request, and the source (e.g., URL or an E-mail address) from which it can be obtained by the public is provided in the public announcements.; or
- A minimum of sixty (60) days, if neither of the aforementioned options is applicable.

5.1.3 Prompt consideration shall be given to all expressed views and objections received during public review processes. A concerted effort to resolve all expressed objections shall be made, and each objector shall be advised in writing of the disposition of the objection and the reasons therefore.

5.1.4 Directly and materially affected interests may request a new standard project or revision to a standard at any time. The party shall submit a request for a revision to the appropriate Main Committee Chair. The Chair shall decide to forward to the Main Committee for review or hold until the routine review cycle of the standard.

5.1.5 A directly and materially affected interest may request the development of a new standard to the Secretariat if the scope of the new standard is not covered by an existing Main Committee.

5.2 Discontinuance of a proposal

If the Secretariat determines that a proposal presents an unreasonable safety or legal risk, the Secretariat has the authority to cease processing the proposal and promptly notify the consensus body. The Secretariat shall post a notice in *ANSI Standards Action* that it is abandoning the proposal and readers should contact NOCA for more information, if it has been available for public review. A written justification for abandoning the proposal shall be made available upon receipt of any written request received by the Secretariat within 60 days of the date of the final action. The decision to abandon a proposal may be appealed to the ANSI Executive Standards Council, but is not appealable to the Secretariat.

5.3 Public review of draft standards

5.3.1 Draft standards and proposed revisions to existing standards shall be put out for public review through placement on the NOCA website and the NOCA News. The public review process may occur either at the same time the Main Committee ballot is occurring or following the Main Committee ballot.

5.3.2 Proposals for new American National Standards (ANS) and proposals to revise, reaffirm or withdraw approval of an existing ANS shall be submitted to ANSI for listing in *ANSI Standards Action* in order to provide an opportunity for public comment.

6 Meetings

6.1 Main Committee meetings⁴

Main Committee meetings shall be held as decided by the responsible Main Committee Chair, the Secretariat, or by petition of five or more members.

6.2 Task group and standing committee meetings

Standing Committee and Task Group meetings may be held as decided by the responsible Chair.

6.3 Quorum

A majority of the members of the committee membership shall constitute a quorum for conducting business at a meeting. If a quorum is not present, actions shall only be taken subject to subsequent confirmation by letter ballot or vote at a future meeting/date. Main Committee actions, outside of the balloting of a proposed standard, may move forward based on a majority of those present at a meeting. *Robert's Rules of Order* (latest edition) shall apply to questions of parliamentary procedure not covered herein.

6.4 Meeting notice

Committee members shall receive announcements of meetings and meeting agendas. Meeting announcements shall be posted on the NOCA website. Main Committee meeting notices shall be posted at least 30 calendar days prior to the meeting date and as soon as known for Standing Committee and Task Group meetings. The notice shall describe the purpose of the meeting and shall identify a readily available source for further information. An agenda shall be available and shall be distributed in advance of the meeting to members and any others expressing interest.

6.5 Open meetings

Non-member observers may request in writing an invitation from the Chair to attend a meeting. The request shall include the observer's interest category and the reason attendance is being requested. The Chair shall consider the following in determining attendance at a meeting:

- parties have a direct involvement in agenda items (documented concerns, presentations, etc.);
- representation from all directly and materially affected interest categories; and
- meeting room size and/or other logistical limitations.

6.6 Closed meetings

The Chair may choose to hold closed sessions for members only when matters of a confidential nature are under discussion. Outcomes of any discussions held in a closed session, which may affect content of a standard(s), shall be reviewed during a subsequent session, including review with observers at the same meeting.

On questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by these Policies, *Robert's Rules of Order* (latest edition) shall prevail.

⁴ The term "meeting" covers all standards meetings and includes teleconferences, videoconferencing, and other forms of electronic group interaction.

6.7 Meeting summaries

The Secretariat shall be responsible for creating and distributing Main Committee meeting summaries. The summaries shall contain all motions and the voting results for the motion. Any other discussion may be added at the Chair's discretion. Summaries shall be distributed to all committee members and made available to other interested parties.

The Chair of each Standing Committee and Task Group is responsible for assigning responsibility for the development of meeting summaries. Once completed, the meeting summaries shall be provided to the Secretariat.

7 Balloting of standards

7.1 Main Committee

7.1.1 General

All proposed new standards or revisions to existing standards shall be reviewed by the full Main Committee via electronic ballot.

7.1.2 Ballot period

Generally, members shall return their ballots within thirty (30) days of the transmittal date although the Main Committee Chair may request a ballot return in fewer than thirty (30) days. Members shall, in all cases, be given a minimum of fourteen (14) days to return ballots. Ballots received after the closure date may not be counted, unless the Main Committee Chair has authorized an extension.

7.1.3 Ballot options

Each member of the committee shall have one vote. The use of proxies is not permitted for the balloting of proposed standards. A member shall vote based on one of the following positions:

- affirmative
- affirmative with comment(s): only editorial comment(s) shall be considered.
- negative, with reason(s):
- abstain

7.1.4 Ballot results - Consensus

Affirmative ballots shall be received from a majority (greater than 50 percent) of committee members, and an affirmative ballot of at least two-thirds of those voting, excluding abstentions, shall be attained before a proposed standard or revision is recommended for adoption.

7.1.5 Negative ballots/public comments

7.1.5.1 The Secretariat shall record and consider all negative votes accompanied by any comments that are related to the proposal under consideration. This includes negative votes accompanied by comments concerning potential conflict or duplication of the draft standard with an existing NOCA or American National Standard, if applicable, and negative votes accompanied by comments of a procedural or philosophical nature. These types of comments shall not be dismissed due to the fact that they do not necessarily provide alternative language or a specific remedy to the negative vote.

7.1.5.2 If comments not related to the proposal are submitted with a negative vote, the comments shall be documented and considered in the same manner as submittal of a new proposal. If a negative vote unaccompanied by comments related to the proposal is received notwithstanding, the vote may be counted as a “negative without comment” for the purposes of establishing a quorum. However, such votes (i.e., negative vote without comment or negative vote accompanied by comments not related to the proposal) shall not be factored into the numerical requirements for consensus.

7.1.5.3 Negative votes and comments cast with substantive issues shall be referred to the Main Committee Chair for review. The Main Committee Chair shall determine whether expressed views and objections shall be considered by correspondence, by telephone, or at a meeting.

7.1.5.4 Prompt consideration shall be given to all negative ballots and comments. A concerted effort to resolve all negative ballots and comments shall be made, and each submitter shall be advised in writing of the disposition of the negative and the reasons thereof.

7.1.5.5 The Main Committee Chair may work with the submitter to develop a resolution to the negative ballot without a substantive change to the standard.

7.1.5.6 All unresolved negative ballots/comments and substantive changes to the draft standard resulting from the resolution of negative ballots/comments shall be submitted to the Main Committee for review to afford them the opportunity to reaffirm or change their votes. At the completion of the Main Committee review, if the requirements of 7.1.5 are obtained, all negative ballots/comments shall be considered adjudicated.

7.1.5.7 When submitting the decision of the Main Committee to the objector, the Chair shall advise the objector of the right to appeal the decision in accordance with these Policies.

7.1.5.8 The Secretariat or Main Committee Chair shall not change a vote unless instructed to do so by the voter. If the change of vote was not submitted in writing by the voter, then written confirmation of such a vote change shall be provided to the voter by the Chair.

7.1.6 Member resignation during balloting period

If a member resigns from the Main Committee during the balloting period, the member shall be removed from the Committee and not be included in the ballot calculations. If a member votes and then resigns, the vote shall be recorded and counted.

8 Appeals process

8.1 All unresolved objectors, including public review objectors, shall be notified of their right to appeal. The notification of the right to appeal letter shall notify the unresolved objectors that they have the right to appeal on procedural issues and provide the objector with a copy of the procedures relating to an appeal.

8.2 Persons who have directly and materially affected interests and who have been or may be adversely affected by the action of a Main Committee, or by the lack thereof, shall have the right to appeal those actions or inactions solely based on procedural issues. Procedural complaints include whether a technical issue was afforded due process. Appeals shall only be considered when due process provided in these Policies has been exhausted. The burden of proof to show adverse effect shall be on the appellant.

8.3 The appellant shall file a written appeal with the Main Committee Chair within thirty (30) business days after the date of notification of action or at any time with respect to inaction. The appeal shall state the nature of the objection(s), including any adverse effects, the section(s) of

these Policies that are at issue; actions or inactions that are at issue; and the specific remedial action(s) that would satisfy the appellant's concerns. Previous efforts to resolve the objection(s) and the outcome of each shall be noted.

8.4 Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Main Committee Chair shall respond in writing to the appellant, specifically addressing each allegation of fact in the complaint.

8.5 If the appellant and the Main Committee Chair are unable to resolve the appeal in a manner consistent with these Policies, the Chair shall initiate formation of an appeals panel.

8.6 The appeals panel shall consist of three individuals chosen by the President of NOCA. At least two of the members shall be acceptable to the appellant. NOCA shall serve as the Secretariat of the panel and shall be a non-voting member. Panel members shall be chosen so as not to have a conflict of interest in the specific action being considered. The appeals panel shall be charged with ensuring the appellant received due process and that proper procedures were followed in addressing the appellant's objections. Technical issues shall be addressed by the appropriate committee.

8.7 The appellant has the burden of demonstrating adverse effects, improper actions or inactions, and the efficacy of the requested remedial action. The Chair of the Main Committee shall act as respondent to the complaint. The respondent has the burden of demonstrating that the committee did take all actions in compliance with these Policies. Each party may adduce other pertinent arguments, and members of the appeals panel may address questions to individuals. *Robert's Rules of Order* (latest edition) shall apply to questions of parliamentary procedure for the hearing not covered herein.

8.8 The Secretariat, with final approval by the Chair of the Appeal Panel, shall document the decision of the appeals panel within thirty (30) calendar days, stating findings of fact and conclusions, with reasons therefore, based on a preponderance of the evidence. Consideration may be given to the following positions, among others, in formulating the decision:

- o finding for the appellant and remanding the action to the Main Committee ;
- o finding action taken by the Main Committee was appropriate; or
- o finding that new, substantive evidence has been introduced and remanding the entire action to the Main Committee for appropriate reconsideration.

8.8 At the completion of the appeals process, the Chair of the Appeal Panel shall advise the appellant of the right to appeal the decision rendered to ANSI if the appeals panel did not find for the appellant and the standard in question is an American National Standard. If the appellant gives notice that further appeal to ANSI is intended, a full record of the complaint, response, hearing, and decision shall be submitted by the Secretariat to ANSI.

9 National adoption of ISO standards as American National Standards

If the Secretariat wishes to adopt an International Standardization Organization (ISO) standard as an American National Standard, it shall comply with the requirements set forth in the *Procedures for the National Adoption of ISO or IEC Standards as American National Standards* and these Policies.

10 Patents in standards

A standard may include the use of a patented item, if it is considered that technical reasons justify this approach. If a standard requires the use of a patented invention, the following shall apply.

10.1 Statement from patent holder

Prior to approval of a standard referencing a patented item, the Main Committee Chair shall receive from the identified party or patent holder assurance in the form of a general disclaimer to the effect that such party does not hold and does not currently intend holding any invention the use of which would be required for compliance with the proposed standard or assurance that:

- a license will be made available without compensation to the applicants desiring to utilize the license for the purpose of implementing the standard; or
- a license will be made available to applicants under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination.

10.2 Record of statement

A record of the patent holder's statement shall be retained by the Secretariat. If the standard is intended to be submitted as an American National Standard, the statement shall be provided to ANSI.

10.3 Notice

When the Main Committee Chair receives from a patent holder assurance set forth in 10.1, the standard shall include the following statement:

NOTE – The user's attention is called to the possibility that compliance with this standard may require use of an invention covered by patent rights. By publication of this standard, no position is taken with respect to the validity of this claim or of any patent rights in connection therewith. The patent holder has, however, filed a statement of willingness to grant a license under these rights on reasonable and nondiscriminatory terms and conditions to applicants desiring to obtain such license. Details may be obtained from the Secretariat.

10.4 Responsibility for identifying patents

The Secretariat shall not be responsible for identifying patents for which a license may be required or for conducting inquiries into the legal validity or scope of those patents that are brought to its attention.

11 Commercial terms and conditions

Provisions involving business relations between buyer and seller such as guarantees, warranties, and other commercial terms and conditions shall not be included in a NOCA Standard. The appearance that a standard endorses any particular products, services or companies must be avoided. Therefore, it generally is not acceptable to include manufacturer lists, service provider lists, or similar material in the text of a standard or in an annex (or the equivalent). Where a sole source exists for essential equipment, materials or services necessary to comply with or to determine compliance with the standard, it is permissible to supply the name and address of the source in a footnote or informative annex as long as the words "or the equivalent" are added to the reference. In connection with standards that relate to the determination of whether products or services conform to one or more standards, the process or criteria for determining conformity can be standardized as long as the description of the process or criteria is limited to technical and engineering concerns and does not include what would otherwise be a commercial term.

12 Interpretations

The Main Committee is the sole authorized body to interpret NOCA standards. The Secretariat reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the processing of interpretation requests. Each Main Committee shall have a Standing Interpretation Committee responsible for responding to interpretation requests.

12.1 All requests for interpretation of standards shall be submitted in writing and shall include the reasons for the request and a clearly stated suggested interpretation for consideration.

12.2 The Secretariat, in consultation with the Main Committee Chair, shall determine if the interpretation may be issued by the Secretariat or if the Interpretation Committee should consider the request. If the requestor is not satisfied with the interpretation provided by the Secretariat, the requestor may request the interpretation be considered by the Interpretation Committee. If submitted to the Committee, the interpretation shall be accepted by an affirmative ballot of at least two-thirds of those voting, excluding abstentions.

12.3 The Interpretation Committee may decide in the case of lack of consensus or for other reasons, to submit the request to the Main Committee for consideration.

12.3 No interpretation is binding on NOCA unless it has been established in accordance with the above procedures.

13 Committee expenses and contracts

13.1 Committee expenses

13.1.1 Main Committee expenses

Expenses for committee participation (meetings, teleconferences, etc.) will not be assumed by NOCA unless expenditures are previously authorized by NOCA on recommendation of the Main Committee Chair and are within amounts determined to be reasonable by NOCA.

Committees shall not pay salaries or professional fees in any form to any committee member to carry out the responsibilities of their participation.

13.2 Contracts

No person has the authority to negotiate or execute any contract on behalf of NOCA except for the President of NOCA or designee thereof.

14 Editorial revisions

The Main Committee Chair shall appoint an Editorial Committee responsible for ensuring that the finished standard is editorially correct. The Editorial Committee may editorially revise (without Main Committee review) standards to ensure requirements are clearly stated. Editorial revisions shall not affect the intent or requirements of the standard. Examples of substantive changes that would not be considered editorial are:

- “shall” to “should” or “should” to “shall”;
- addition, deletion or revision of requirements, regardless of the number of changes; and
- addition of mandatory compliance with referenced standards.

The Editorial Committee is responsible for reviewing all standards approved by the Main Committee prior to publication of the Standard. There shall be complete agreement of the Editorial Committee prior to any editorial change being made to the Standard. Any unresolved issues may be submitted to the Main Committee for consideration.

15 Issuance

NOCA may issue new and revised standards approved by consensus of the Main Committee. The President of NOCA reserves the right to not proceed with the issuance of a standard. Effective dates are not part of the standard normative text and are established by the end user of the standard.

16 Periodic reviews

NOCA Standards shall be reaffirmed, revised, or withdrawn at least every five years.

16.1 If a reaffirmation, revision, or withdrawal is in process when the five-year limit is reached the time limit may be extended. No more than two extensions may be granted. Each extension shall be based on a plan and schedule for reaffirmation, revision, or withdrawal. The standard shall be withdrawn if no action is taken at the end of the second extension.

16.2 Standards shall not be designated as American National Standards if no action has been taken beyond 10 years from the date of approval.

16.3 The Main Committee shall be notified of all extensions.

17 Record keeping

General correspondence, including, but not limited to, draft standards, ballots, meeting summaries, appeals, or related information relative to review, revision, affirmation, or withdrawal of a standard shall be retained for at least five years, or until the next full revision of the standard, whichever comes later. Records related to a standard that has been withdrawn shall be retained for at least five years following the withdrawal.

18 Disclaimers

Participation in NOCA's standards development/maintenance activities by government agency representatives does not constitute endorsement of NOCA or its standards by the member's governmental agency or any of its subdivisions.

19 Metrication

Metric units shall be included with inch-pound units in all standards. The primary units used shall be determined by the applicable Main Committee. When inch-pound units are the primary units, "soft metrication" shall be used when providing metric units as equivalent. The intended tolerance, when not otherwise specified, shall be based on the inch-pound unit.

20 Legal representation

A member of a committee or an observer who intends to have legal representation at a meeting may do so only after requesting and receiving prior written authorization by NOCA. A written request shall be provided to NOCA at least 10 calendar days before the meeting. If such a request has not been made, legal representation will not be permitted at the meeting. NOCA reserves the right to have legal counsel present at any time without notice.

Attachment C

Matrix Cross-Walking ANSI/NOCA 1100 with a Variety of Technical Guidelines, Standards, and Accreditation Requirements

**Cross-walk of NOCA Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs with
Related Standards, Guidelines, and Accreditation Requirements**

NOTE: Source and full name of standards, guidelines, and accreditation requirements can be found at the end of Appendix

NOCA Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs	Related Standards, Guidelines, Accreditation Requirements
<p>Organizational Structure, Resources, and Responsibilities to Stakeholders</p> <p>The certificate provider shall be structured so as to give stakeholders confidence in its competence and integrity and shall publish all essential information related to the assessment-based certificate program (hereinafter referred to as certificate program) to ensure that stakeholders understand its purpose, scope, and requirements.</p>	<p>ACCST: Sec I, C; Sec III, B, C; Sec IV, B; Sec VI, D ACEa: #7, items 3, 5, 6 ACICS: 3-1-203; 3-1-400; App C as referenced in 3-1-701 AERA/APA/NCME: 1.2, 3.2, 4.1, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.15, 8.7, 8.10, 8.11, 8.13, 13.10 Code: A.1, 2, 3; B.3; C.1, 3, 4; D.1, 4, 7 COE: Std 7, Crit 3 and 10; Std 10, Crit 8 IACET: 4.4, 6.3</p>
<p>Conduct and Oversight of Certificate Program Activities</p> <p>The certificate provider is responsible for all activities performed on its behalf and shall ensure these activities are performed properly by qualified individuals.</p>	<p>ACCST: Sec III, B ACICS: 3-1-202 COE: Std 10, Crit 1 IACET: 6.1</p>
<p>Management of Program Records, Documents, and Materials</p> <p>The certificate provider shall maintain orderly and accurate records, documents, and/or other materials and manage them in a responsible manner.</p>	<p>ACCST: Sec VI, B ACEa: #2, item 2; #5, item 1; #6, item 3 ACICS: 3-1-303 AERA/APA/NCME: 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.13, 8.5, 8.6 Code: B.4, 7; D.5 COE: Std 3, Crit 1; Std 10, Crit 3, 4, 7 IACET: 9.1, 9.2, 9.4</p>

NOCA Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs	Related Standards, Guidelines, Accreditation Requirements
<p>Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation</p> <p>The certificate provider shall set quality standards for the certificate program and shall evaluate the program using these standards.</p>	<p>AAHE: Principles 4, 8 ACCST: Sec 1, B ACEa: #4, item 2 ACICS: 3-1-111, 3-1-113, 3-1-514 COE: Std 2, Crit B.2, B.4; Std 3, Crit 5; Std 8, Crit A.3 IACET: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3</p>
<p>Development, Delivery, and Maintenance of Education/Training</p> <p>The certificate provider shall ensure that the education/training is developed and delivered by qualified individuals and that the content, design, and delivery are suited to the intended learning outcomes and consistent with generally accepted instructional design principles.</p>	<p>ACCST: Sec 3, B ACICS: 3-1-531, 3-1-532, 3-1-541 COE: Std 2, B.3; Std 8, A.2, 3; D.3 IACET: 4.1, 4.2, 6.1, 7.1, 7.2, 10.4</p>
<p>Development, Conduct, and Evaluation of Assessments</p> <p>The certificate provider shall conduct an assessment of participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes and shall ensure that the procedures used to develop and conduct the assessment(s) and to evaluate/score participants' performance are consistent with accepted measurement principles and the intended use of the certificate.</p>	<p>AAHE: Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 ACCST: Sec VI, B ACEa: #1, item 1; #2, items 1-2; #3, items 1-2; #4, item 1; #6, item 3 ACEb: 13a-b ACICS: 3-1-532; App D as referenced in 3-1-421 AERA/APA/NCME: 1.2, 1.6, 1.10, 2.1, 2.10, 2.13, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.19, 3.20, 3.22, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 4.1, 4.10, 4.21, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.9, 5.10, 6.7, 13.3, 13.5, 13.14 CAEL: Assmt of LO, Principle 4 Code: A.1, 2, 4, 5; B.1, 4, 5; C.1, 3, 4, 6 COE: Std 2, B.3, C.8 IACET: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.9, 13.12</p>

NOCA Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs	Related Standards, Guidelines, Accreditation Requirements
<p>Issuance and Use of Certificates</p> <p>A certificate shall be issued only in accordance with documented requirements and procedures, and certificate holders shall be informed of the proper uses of the certificate.</p>	<p>ACCSCT: Sec III, D</p>

- AAHE: American Association for Higher Education, *9 Principles of Good Practices for Assessing Learning*
- ACCST: Accrediting Commission for Career Schools/Colleges of Technology, *Standards of Accreditation*
- ACEa: American Council on Education, *ACE Quality Assessment Questionnaire*
- ACEb: American Council on Education, *Course Evaluation Handbook*
- ACICS: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, *Accreditation Criteria, Policies, Procedures, and Standards*
- AERA/APA/NCME: American Educational Research Association/American Psychological Association/National Council on Measurement in Education, *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*
- CAEL: The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, *Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners*
- Code: Joint Committee on Testing Practices, *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (Test Developers)*
- COE: Council on Occupational Education, *Handbook of Accreditation*
- IACET: International Association for Continuing Education and Training, *ANSI/IACET Standards for Continuing Education and Training*