



Value of Assessment-based Certificate Programs Statement

Credentialing is an overarching term that includes processes, policies, and practices that support credentials such as a license, registration, certification, qualification, or assessment-based certificate to demonstrate that an organization or individual has met predetermined and standardized criteria. Given the range of terms, different interpretations and distinctions between mandatory versus voluntary requirements among these credentials can create confusion. This document serves as the second in a series of brief statements that clarify and communicate the value of credentials to stakeholders.

An Assessment-based Certificate (ABC) 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 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 on an assessment verifying learning.* This distinguishes assessment-based certificate programs from those that only require attendance and/or participation.

Value of Assessment-based Certificates

Certificate programs can help build capacity in an industry, emerging profession or specialty area. When there is an ongoing learning gap to fulfill a role or become workforce ready, an Assessment-based Certificate (ABC) program is well suited to address this gap. Because ABC programs are built on a needs analysis, the learning and assessment are directly tied to a knowledge, skill, or ability gap that the program is designed to fill. Finally, when highly specialized knowledge or skills are required for a particular job or role, a well-designed training program with learning objectives that are aligned to an assessment can help confirm attainment of the requisite skills or competencies.

Certificate holders benefit from:

- Learning from a focused course of instruction
- Acquisition of new skills
- Opportunity to learn new content or skills specifically tied to workplace needs (through a needs analysis)
- Recognition of accomplishment for demonstrating desired educational outcomes
- Increased recognition by peers and respect of colleagues in the profession
- Improved opportunities for employability and advancement
- Greater confidence in their professional competence
- Increased professional trust from employers or the public
- Increased autonomy in the workplace
- Potential for higher compensation and greater career longevity

Consumers benefit from:

- Better trained workforce / training targeted to needs
- Objective, independent, third-party evaluation and assessment of professional knowledge
- Knowing the certificate holder is committed to continuous professional development

Employers benefit from:

- Better-qualified individuals for employment or advancement
- Ability to match workplace needs with current, relevant training
- Justification for potential compensation differential

**Content for this statement inspired by I.C.E. 2010 Defining Features document, I.C.E. 2020 Terminology document.*