



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

### ***WHAT IS THE “QUALITY PLATFORM”?***

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

### ***WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?***

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

### ***WHAT ARE “ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS”?***

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

### ***WHAT ARE THEIR CHARACTERISTICS?***

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

### ***WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS?***

- *Coursera, Udacity, EdX, FutureLearn, France Université Numérique, Open2study, Veduca, Udemy*: online courses or modules for career, general education or general interest
- *Khan Academy*: online, free content and assistance
- *StraighterLine, Pearson*: private, low-cost online courses that may be used for college credit
- *Mozilla Open Badges*: electronic tools to array evidence of skills and achievements of individuals

***More...***

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE QUALITY PLATFORM?**

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

## **HOW DOES THE QUALITY PLATFORM WORK?**

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

## **EXAMPLES OF STANDARDS**

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

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

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



**INTERESTED IN A QUALITY PLATFORM REVIEW?  
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