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## THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

# Non-Degree Credentials Quality: A Conceptual Model to Guide Measurement

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Non-Degree Credentials Research Network meeting
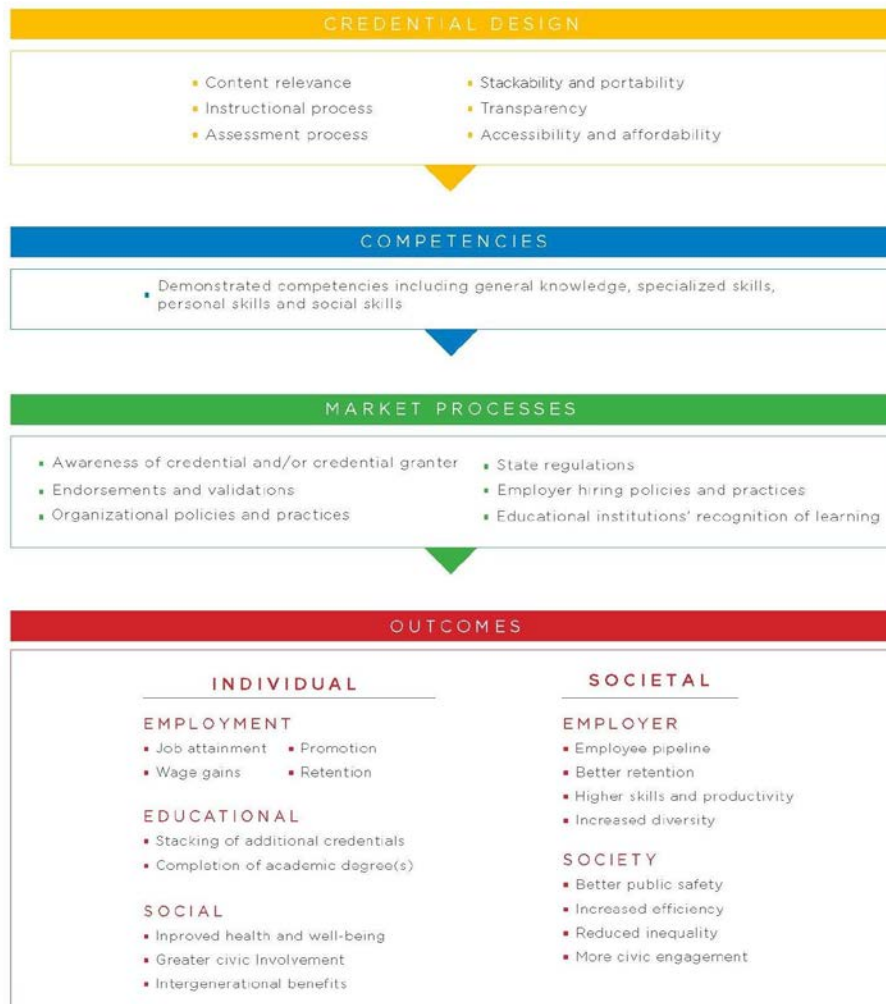Washington DC, August 13, 2019

# Types and Definitions of Non-Degree Credentials

| Type | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Sub baccalaureate credit certificates** | Credential awarded by an educational institution for completion of a subbaccalaureate credit educational program, usually less than one year in length (short-term and long-term credit) |
| **Non-credit certificates** | Credential awarded by an institution (educational or workplace) for completion of a noncredit educational program |
| **Apprenticeship** | Credential awarded after completion of structured educational and workplace program based on industry and occupational standards. |
| **Industry certification** | Credential awarded by an industry body or governmental agency for demonstration of skills typically via examination based on industry or occupational standards. |
| **Occupational or professional licensure** | Credential awarded by a governmental agency for demonstration of skills in a specific occupation and sometimes also completion of an educational program; often required to work in an occupation. |
| **Badges, microcredentials** | Credential awarded for completion of a short program of study or demonstration of a targeted set of skills; these are newly emerging and are still being developed. |

# Research Approach

- Developed conceptual model through a review and synthesis of existing research.

- Goal is to guide efforts to understand and measure non-degree credential quality.

- Key guiding questions:
  - How can quality be conceptualized for non-degree credentials?
  - What are possible measures of quality for non-degree credentials?
  - How can stakeholders better measure and promote quality in non-degree credentials?

# Conceptual Model of Credential Quality



**CREDENTIAL DESIGN**
- Content relevance
- Instructional process
- Assessment process
- Stackability and portability
- Transparency
- Accessibility and affordability

**COMPETENCIES**
- Demonstrated competencies including general knowledge, specialized skills, personal skills and social skills

**MARKET PROCESSES**
- Awareness of credential and/or credential granter
- Endorsements and validations
- Organizational policies and practices
- State regulations
- Employer hiring policies and practices
- Educational institutions' recognition of learning

**OUTCOMES**

**INDIVIDUAL**

EMPLOYMENT
- Job attainment
- Wage gains
- Promotion
- Retention

EDUCATIONAL
- Stacking of additional credentials
- Completion of academic degree(s)

SOCIAL
- Improved health and well-being
- Greater civic Involvement
- Intergenerational benefits

**SOCIETAL**

EMPLOYER
- Employee pipeline
- Better retention
- Higher skills and productivity
- Increased diversity

SOCIETY
- Better public safety
- Increased efficiency
- Reduced inequality
- More civic engagement

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# Credential Design

- Competency relevance

- Instructional process

- Assessment process – initial and ongoing

- Stackability and portability

- Transparency

- Accessibility and affordability

# Competencies

- Demonstrated competencies, including general knowledge, specialized skills, personal skills, and social skills

# Market Processes

- Transparency initiatives
- Awareness of the credential and/or the credential grantor
- Endorsements or validations
- State regulation
- Employer hiring practice and politics
- Educational institutions recognition of learning

# Outcomes

- Individual economic outcomes

- Individual educational outcomes

- Individual social outcomes

- Employer outcomes

- Societal outcomes

# Suggestions on Using this Framework

- Importance of examining equity

- Quality elements as a guide

- Quality elements as  diagnostic tool

- Quality relative to goals

- Quality relative to context

# Recommendations for Policy and Practice

- Create awareness of non-degree credential quality and how to measure it.

- Collect better information on non-degree credential quality and outcomes.

- Develop and promote systems to assess non-degree credential quality.

- Promote and understand the use of data on non-degree credential quality.

# For More Information, Contact Us.

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