



the QA commons
 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMONS
 for HIGHER and POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

EEQ Graduate Profile: The Essential Employability Qualities

EEQ Certified programs foster a distinctive set of attributes in their graduates. These qualities, which are embodied in this EEQ Graduate Profile, are intended to prepare graduates to make important contributions in their workplaces. The qualities are not specific to any discipline, field, or industry, but are applicable to most work-based, professional environments; they represent the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences that help ensure that graduates are not only ready for their first job, but also support learners' foundation for a lifetime of engaged employment and participation in the rapidly changing workplace of the 21st century.

Graduates of EEQ Certified Programs are:

Communicators

Graduates express ideas and information coherently and appropriately in a variety of modes appropriate to work-based settings, including in writing, orally, interpersonally, and in presentations. Graduates participate in discussions by listening actively and responding constructively. They demonstrate competence in engaging with others from cultural backgrounds different from their own.

Thinkers & Problem Solvers

Graduates exercise initiative in applying critical and creative thinking skills to identify and address complex work-related problems. Graduates accurately apply quantitative, financial, data, and technical fluency, and demonstrate cultural competence in addressing work-based situations. Graduates are system thinkers and demonstrate an ability to understand concepts and perspectives across multiple disciplines and different cultures.

Inquirers

Graduates conduct inquiry and research by reviewing, evaluating, verifying, citing, and applying multiple sources of information and perspectives to help address work-based problems or to perform tasks. Graduates generate new ideas through independent or collaborative inquiry.

Collaborators

Graduates engage in teams and groups and work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others both in person and virtually. Graduates seek a range of points of view, are willing to modify their perspectives, and they help resolve conflicts where appropriate. Graduates work effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and cultures, individually or in groups. They exhibit cross-cultural competence in working with others. Graduates take initiative in leading work-based groups, and/or follow direction from others as appropriate.



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Adaptable

Graduates approach new or unfamiliar work-based situations and uncertainty with agility and openness. Graduates explore, learn, and apply new roles, ideas, perspectives, approaches, tools, technologies, and strategies to support their effective work-place contributions. They understand the implications of an increasingly globally interconnected world, and can work effectively across a variety of environments, cultures, and perspectives.

Principled and Ethical

Graduates make reasoned, ethical decisions about work-based situations or problems. Graduates act equitably and with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and respect for individuals, groups, and broadly diverse communities.

Responsible and Professional

Graduates establish priorities and manage their time to meet the obligations of work-related assignments with a minimum of external supervision or direction. Graduates carry out their responsibilities consistently, persistently, reliably, and maintain appropriate confidentiality. Graduates take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Learners

Graduates adopt new tools (technologies or strategies) for working more effectively, analyzing work-based situations, or making decisions. Graduates continually develop themselves professionally, interculturally, and personally. They assess and understand their strengths and areas for improvement in order to support their learning and professional development. Graduates seek out and engage in formal and informal professional learning opportunities on a continuing basis and actively apply learning from these opportunities to work-related assignments.



About the EEQ Graduate Profile

For Students:

These qualities communicate a set of attributes that students are developing through the course of their program, and also communicate to students what employers will be expecting of them in the workplace. Students can use the Graduate Profile to continually self-assess, develop, provide evidence of, and communicate their EEQs.

For Employers:

These qualities reflect what employers are seeking in people they hire and wish to retain, particularly in regard to the continuously changing nature of work. The QA Commons has validated these qualities through the analysis of national data sets and studies, such as those completed by Burning Glass, LinkedIn, ACT, the Foresight Alliance, Jobs for the Future, Career Tech, the Business Roundtable, O*NET, third way, National Network of Business and Industry Associations, and the Institute for the Future, to name a few. They will be continually reviewed and revised to ensure currency and relevance, and they can and aligned to regional or local needs to ensure relevance to specific workforce needs.

For Academic Programs:

As stated above, the Graduate Profile represents current and future employer expectations. Many of the EEQs also build upon existing learning frameworks and outcomes embedded in many academic programs. The qualities can be appropriately adapted to degree and certificate programs of different levels, timeframes, and modalities. Many of these qualities are included in existing aspects of some programs, but by necessity, they have an applied work-based character that may warrant separate or supplemental articulation and application in order to prepare graduates for a lifetime of successful employability. There are existing frameworks that generally reflect aspects of the EEQs, including:

- Lumina [Degree Qualifications Profile](#) (DQP)
- AAC&U's [Essential Learning Outcomes](#)
- NACE's [Career Readiness Competencies](#)
- [Connecting Credentials Framework](#)

While individual general education and disciplinary courses may address the qualities, they are best developed over time and with consistent attention across students' curricular, co-curricular, and applied and work-based experiences. Generally, the qualities are developed and fostered by programs that:

- Intentionally integrate authentic, work-relevant, and applied or experiential learning activities into the curriculum and co-curriculum, such as through internships, apprenticeships, community-based and service learning activities, work-based projects, fieldwork, simulations, and leadership roles in various organizations.
- Directly address and assess these qualities in an ongoing way throughout the student's educational pathway, recognizing qualities that learners bring with them; identifying areas where learners need more development and providing resources or interventions to further such development; and engaging learners in reflecting on their own development in these areas.
- Engage deeply with employers to ensure that the programmatic and curricular approaches develop these qualities in ways that are authentic to the workplace and meet the needs of the relevant employment community.



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