Updates From the Field

What Are We Learning From the Degree Qualifications Profile?

Overview

- WHAT is the DQP?
- WHEN did it emerge? How is it evolving?
- WHY is the DQP essential to effective assessment?

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- WHO is using the DQP?
- WHERE is it being used?
- HOW is it being used?

WHAT IS THE DQP?

What is the DQP?

What it IS.

- A synthesis of the consensus about what degrees should signify in terms of knowledge and ability.
- A standard for explicit statements of learning outcomes.
- A platform for effective assessment.

What it ISN'T.

- An attempt to create standards and promote standardization.
- A comprehensive collection of learning outcomes.
- A device for evaluating faculty performance.

WHEN DID THE DQP EMERGE?
HOW IS THE DQP EVOLVING?

Prompts for the *Profile* 1

- An increased emphasis on accountability
  - Declining state support, rising tuition
  - Student loan defaults
- A corresponding emphasis on assessment
  - An increasing priority on the part of accreditors
  - Rise of “performance funding”

Prompts for the *Profile* 2

- Europe's "Bologna Process"
  - A coordinated effort to secure European ascendency through higher education reform
  - An "accountability loop" assuming European and national learning outcomes frameworks
- Strong examples of learning outcomes frameworks (UK, Scandinavia, Australia)

Prompts for the *Profile* 3

Degree completion goals in the US

- President Obama's declared intent to restore US leadership in the percentage of citizens with college degrees
- Lumina Foundation's 2025 goal: to increase the percentage of Americans with ***high-quality*** degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025

Prompts for the *Profile* 4

- Arum/Roksa: *Academically Adrift*
- Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*
- Employer complaints regarding graduates' inadequacies
- Faculty members' concerns regarding student skills and knowledge

Prompts for the *Profile* 5

- Policy makers increasingly critical of higher education—and inclined to intrude
  - Spellings Commission recommendations
  - Department of Education concerns about accreditation
  - NACIQI recommendations

Behind the DQP, 3 Principles

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1. Higher education must tell its story more effectively—or others may write our story for us
2. Increasing the number of degrees awarded is meaningless ***unless there is a guarantee of quality***
3. A degree qualifications profile should address these concerns *in ways that institutions, faculty members, students, and many others can USE*

HOW IS THE DQP EVOLVING?

2010 draft circulated to 100+ experts and stakeholders
2011 publication as Beta document
2011-2014 broad dissemination, pilot applications, detailed reporting, NILOA tracking

2013-14 Distillation of feedback from hundreds of users, analysts, critics, proponents
October 2014 Official publication of the DQP

Is the “new DQP” a *radical* revision?

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- Short answer:

Is the “new DQP” a *radical* revision?

- Short answer: NO.

A radical revision?

Longer answer:

A radical revision?

Longer answer: **Those engaged in implementation or adaptation of the DQP may be confident that its structure and contents have not been substantially altered.** ***But there are significant enhancements that respond to advice and experience.***

What are some noticeable changes?

- New proficiency statements concerning ethical reasoning
- Greater emphasis on global learning
- Stronger and more descriptive statements concerning quantitative reasoning
- Lexicon for terms used in the DQP

And . . .

Greater emphasis on

- Independent investigation at all degree levels
- Analytical, cooperative approaches to learning that transcend fields of study
- Integration of intellectual skills with broad, specialized, applied, and civic learning

And, finally . . .

Acknowledgement of credentials not (yet) defined at this stage of the qualifications profile work

- Certificates
- Other short-cycle credentials
- Professional practice doctorates
- The Ph.D.

More “user friendly”?

DQP now responds to requests by directing users to resources that support the assessment of *DQP* proficiencies

More “user friendly”?

DQP now proposes a preliminary lexicon that defines higher education terms ***as used in*** the *DQP*

More “user friendly”?

DQP now clarifies “family resemblances” between the *DQP* and the Tuning Process

More “user friendly”?

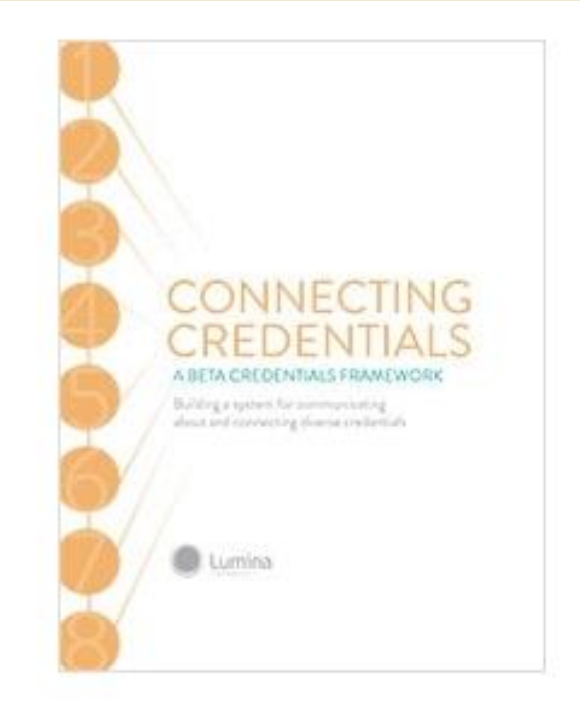
DQP now includes examples of institutional and organizational experience in using the *DQP*

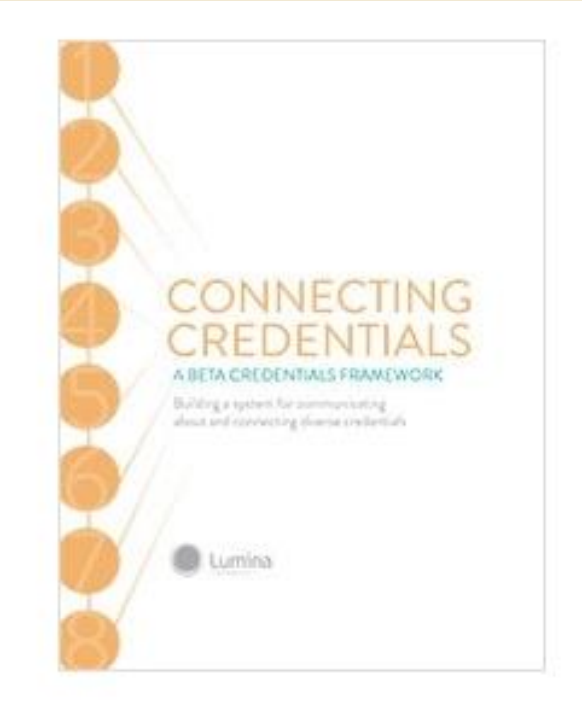
NEXT STEPS

DQP
THE DEGREE
QUALIFICATIONS
PROFILE

DQP
THE DEGREE
QUALIFICATIONS
PROFILE

1 Clear learning outcomes for “sub-degree” credentials such as certificates and diplomas
2 A tentative structure for a possible comprehensive framework that would include all higher education credentials (v. Australia)





A LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK FOR DOCTORAL DEGREES

In a very early stage of discussion, such a resource would capture the academy's understanding of outcomes specific to doctoral degrees—both professional (applied) and philosophical (Ph.D.).

WHY IS THE DQP ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT?

An Alignment of Values

Assessment

- Asks faculty members and other academic leaders to frame outcomes clearly
- Challenges the academy to measure performance in ways that support improvement
- Allows for comparisons that reflect the public interest and respect academic priorities

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Degree Qualifications Profile

- Expresses a consensus and provides support for articulation of outcomes
- Describes proficiencies in active terms that not only support but also invite assessment
- Enables institutions and programs to clarify their distinctive strengths

Above all, they embody the conviction that learning outcomes should be ***explicit***

Instead of . . .

"The student will gain an appreciation for the rich diversity of the world's cultures."

Consider . . .

"The student will identify a significant issue affecting countries, continents, or cultures, present quantitative evidence of that challenge through tables and graphs, and evaluate the activities of either non-governmental organizations or cooperative inter-governmental initiatives in addressing that issue."

They express the conviction that learning outcomes should be ***demonstrable***

Instead of . . .

"The student develops an awareness of the importance of collaborative work."

Consider . . .

"The student negotiates a strategy for group research or performance, documents the strategy so that others may understand it, implements the strategy, and communicates the results."

They express the conviction that learning outcomes should be ***assessable***

Instead of . . .

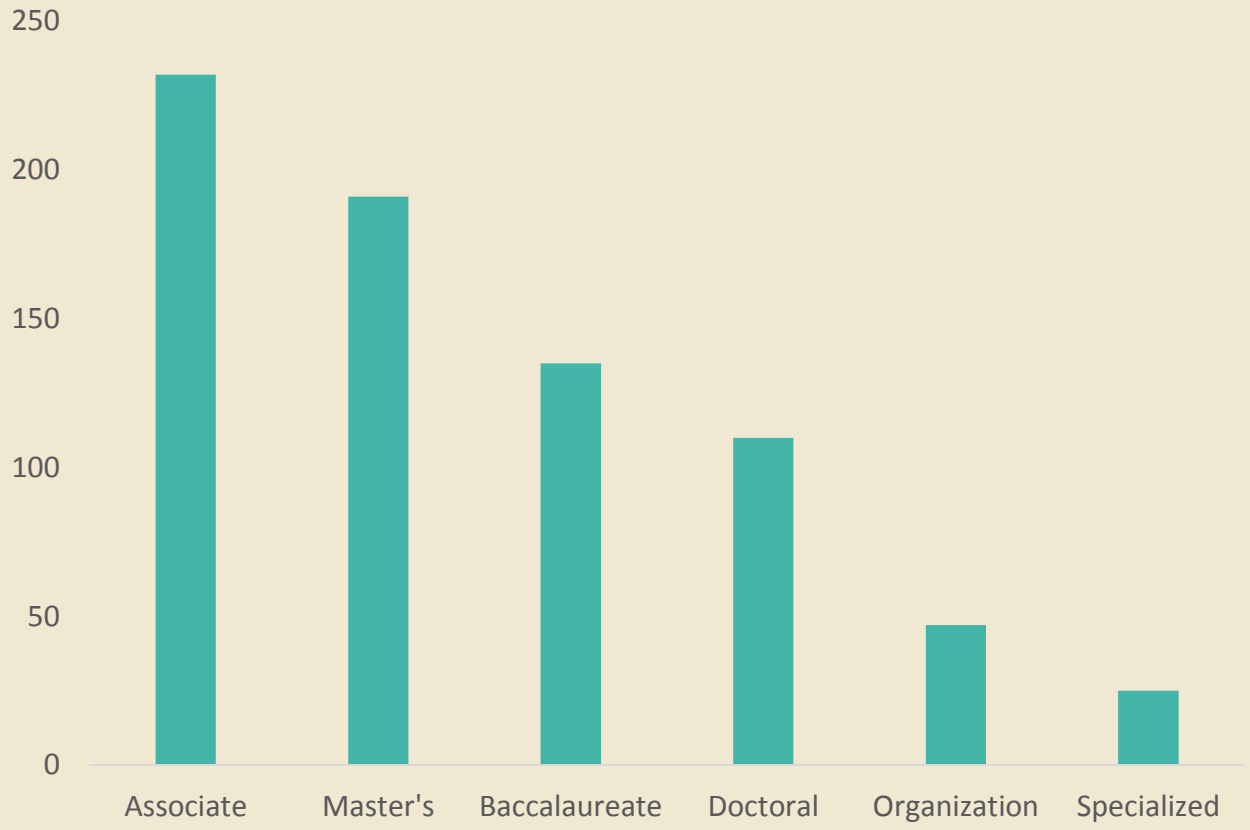
"The student understands the ethical dimensions of his or her discipline."

Consider . . .

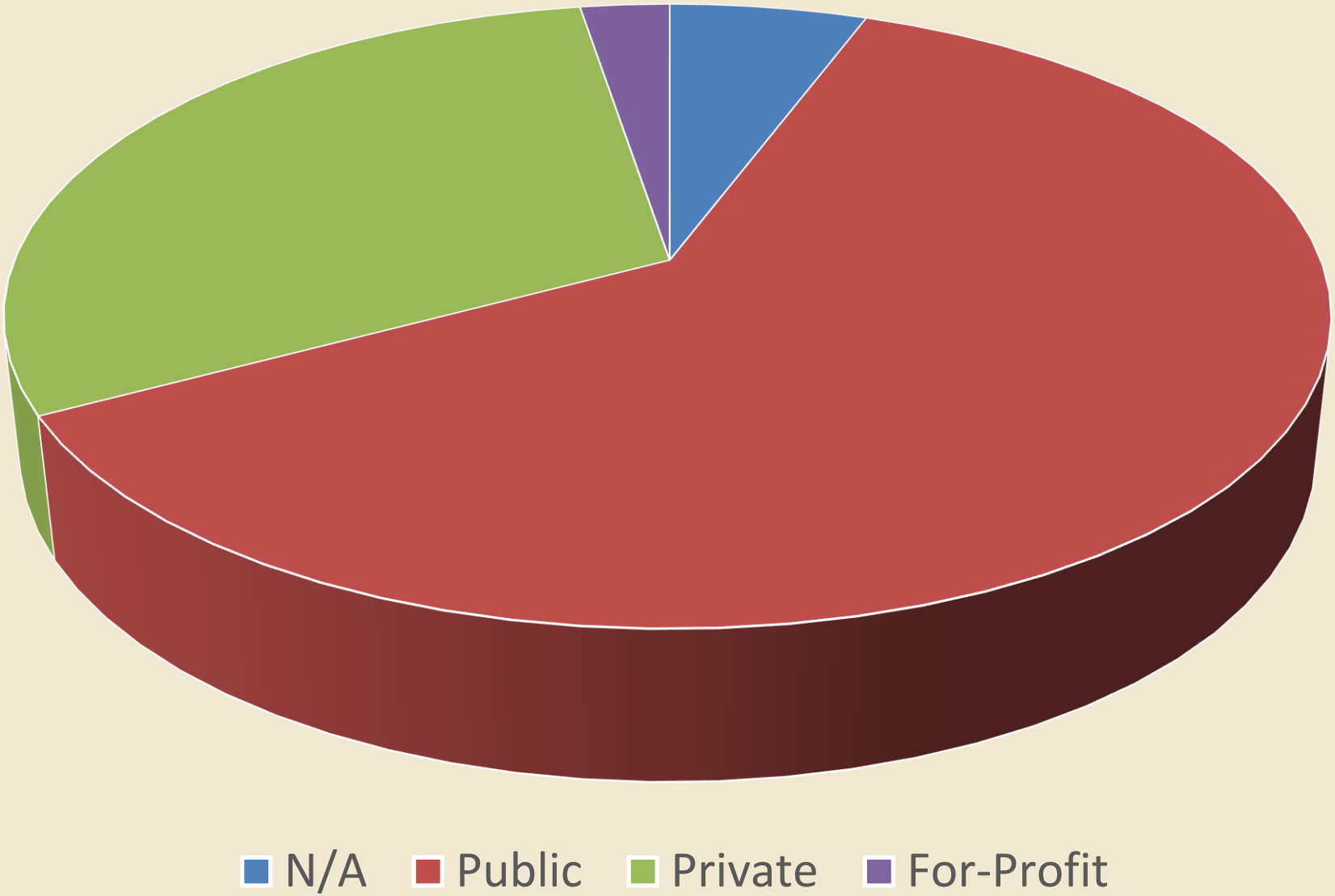
"The student analyzes competing claims from a recent discovery, scientific contention, or technical practice with respect to benefits and harms to those affected, articulates the ethical dilemmas inherent in the tension of benefits and harms, and either (a) arrives at a clearly expressed reconciliation of that tension that is informed by ethical principles or (b) explains why such a reconciliation cannot be accomplished."

Who is using the DQP?

740 institutions have or are currently using the DQP

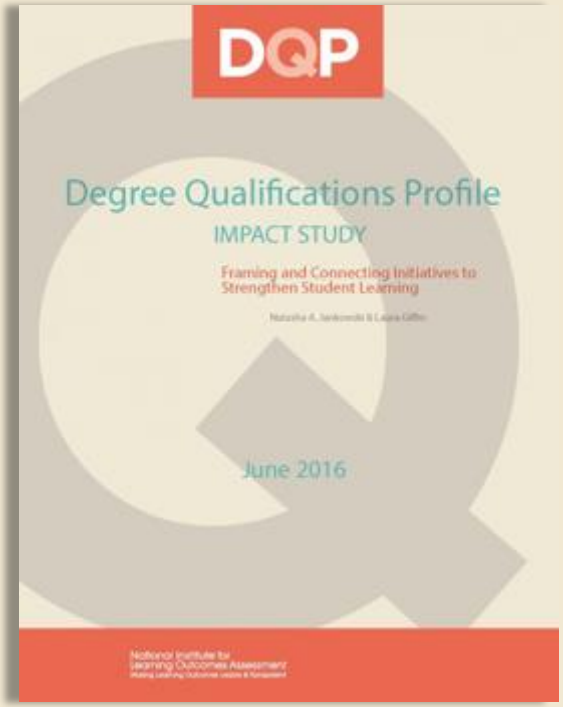


To learn more visit degreeprofile.org

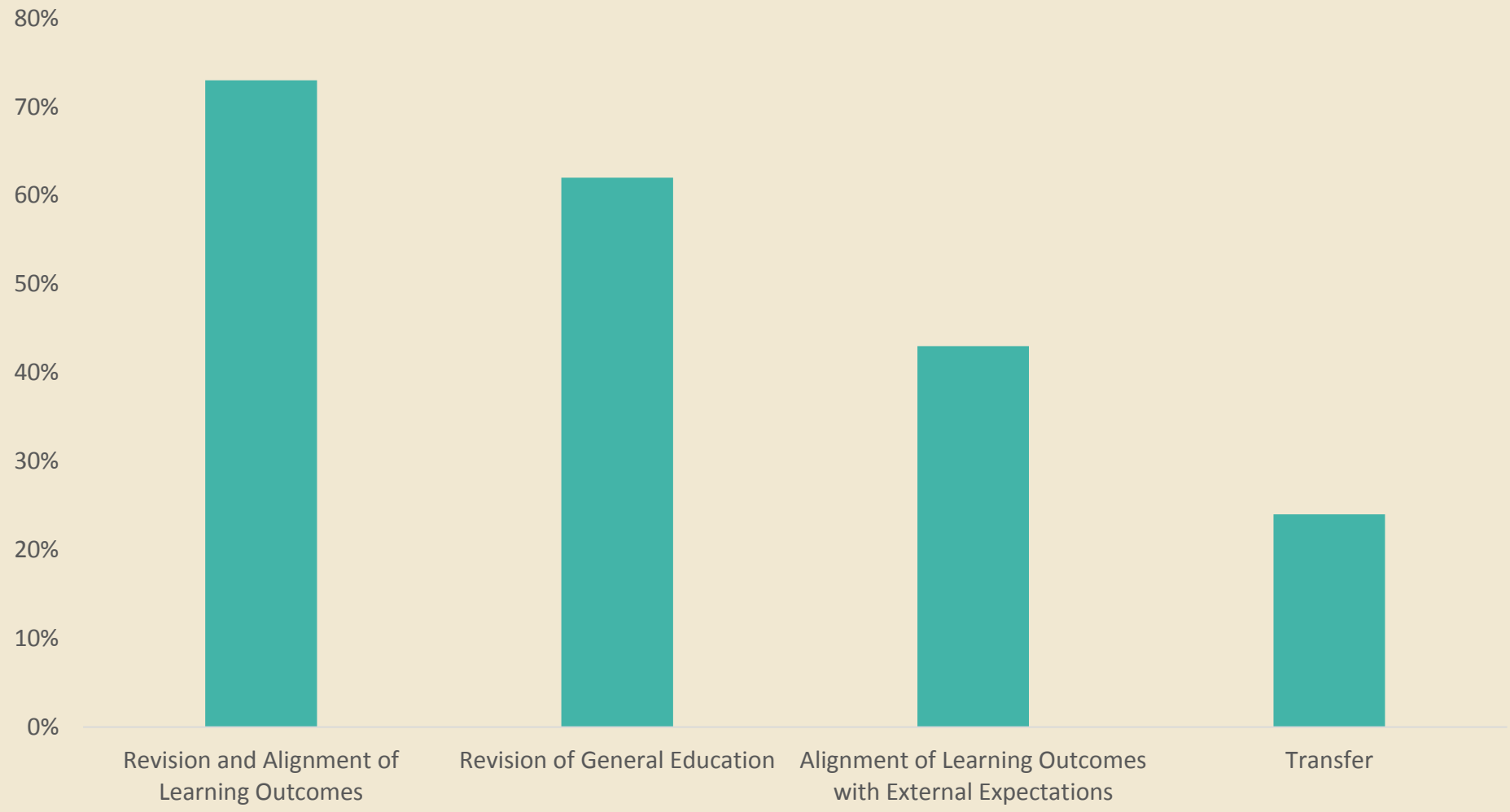

N/A
Public
Private
For-Profit

Where is it being used?

DQP is being used on campuses in connection with other initiatives such as program review, LEAP, general education revision, etc.



How is it being used?



Positive impacts

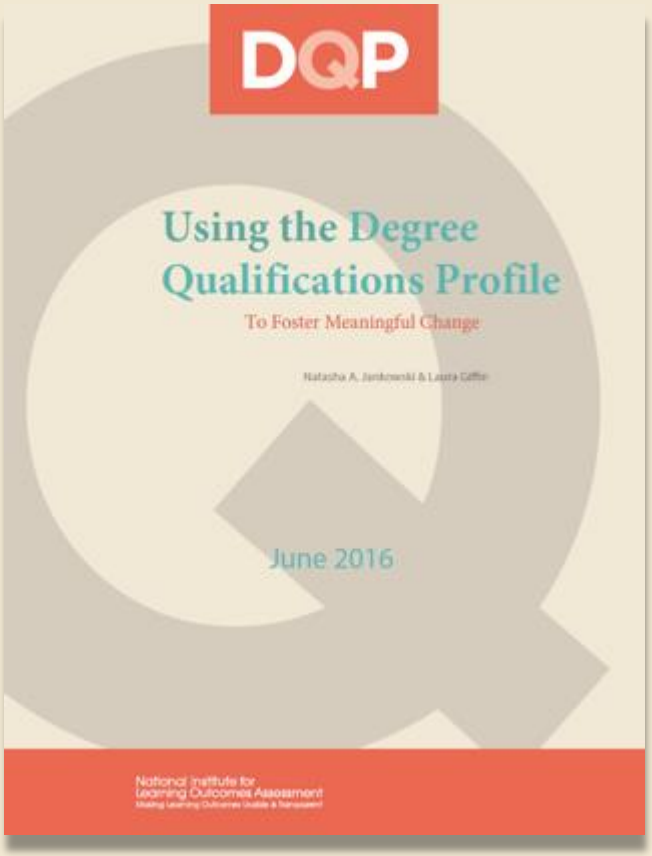
- Revise learning outcomes
- Develop coherent and integrated program/curricula
- Create curricular pathways
- Increase faculty engagement
- Align learning outcomes
- Change program review processes and policies

What does work with the DQP do?

- Foster meaningful cross-campus dialogue
- Engages faculty in meaningful assessment of student learning
- Drives revision of learning outcome statements for enhanced clarity and alignment to assignments
- Enhanced integration of learning experiences

What resources are available?

Process document and Toolkits



Assignment Library

Discussion

For more information:

http://www.assignmentlibrary.org

http://degreeprofile.org

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