

2016  
**Assessment** Institute  
in Indianapolis

OCTOBER  
16–18, 2016

Marriott Indianapolis Downtown

**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?



- **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 ascendancy 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

- 1 Higher education must tell its story more effectively—or others may write our story for us

# Behind the DQP, 3 Principles

- 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***

# Behind the DQP, 3 Principles

- 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*

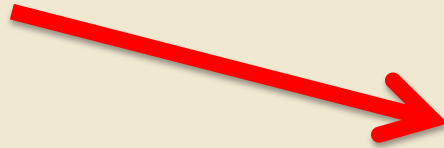
HOW IS THE DQP EVOLVING?



**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?



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

- 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”?

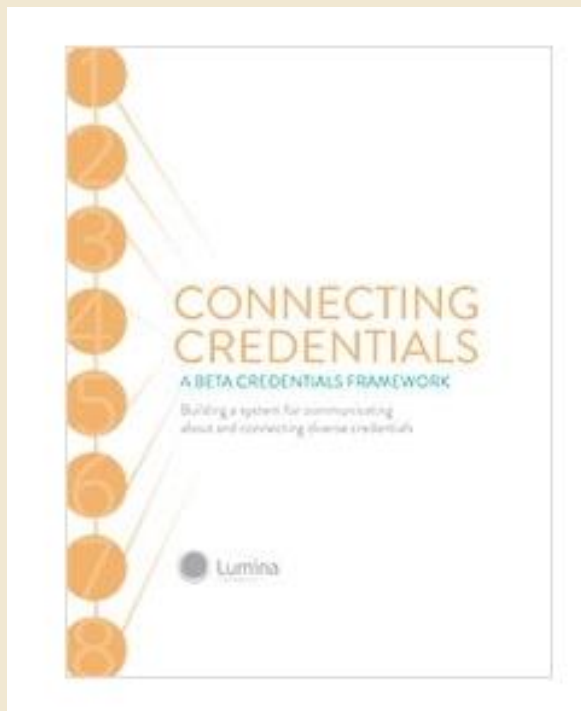
*DQP* now includes examples of institutional and organizational experience in using the *DQP*

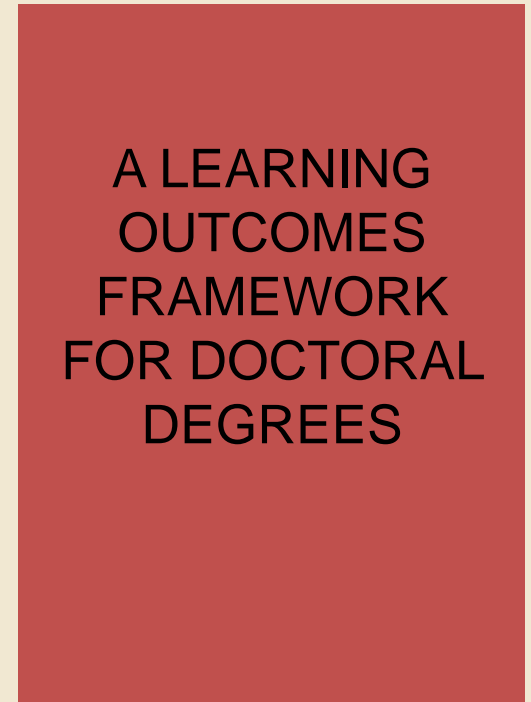
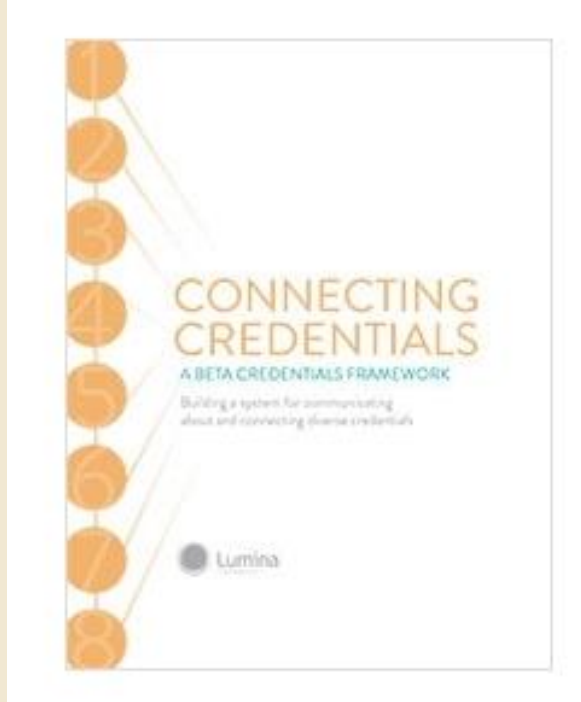
# NEXT STEPS





- 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)





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

# 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

## 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 . . .**

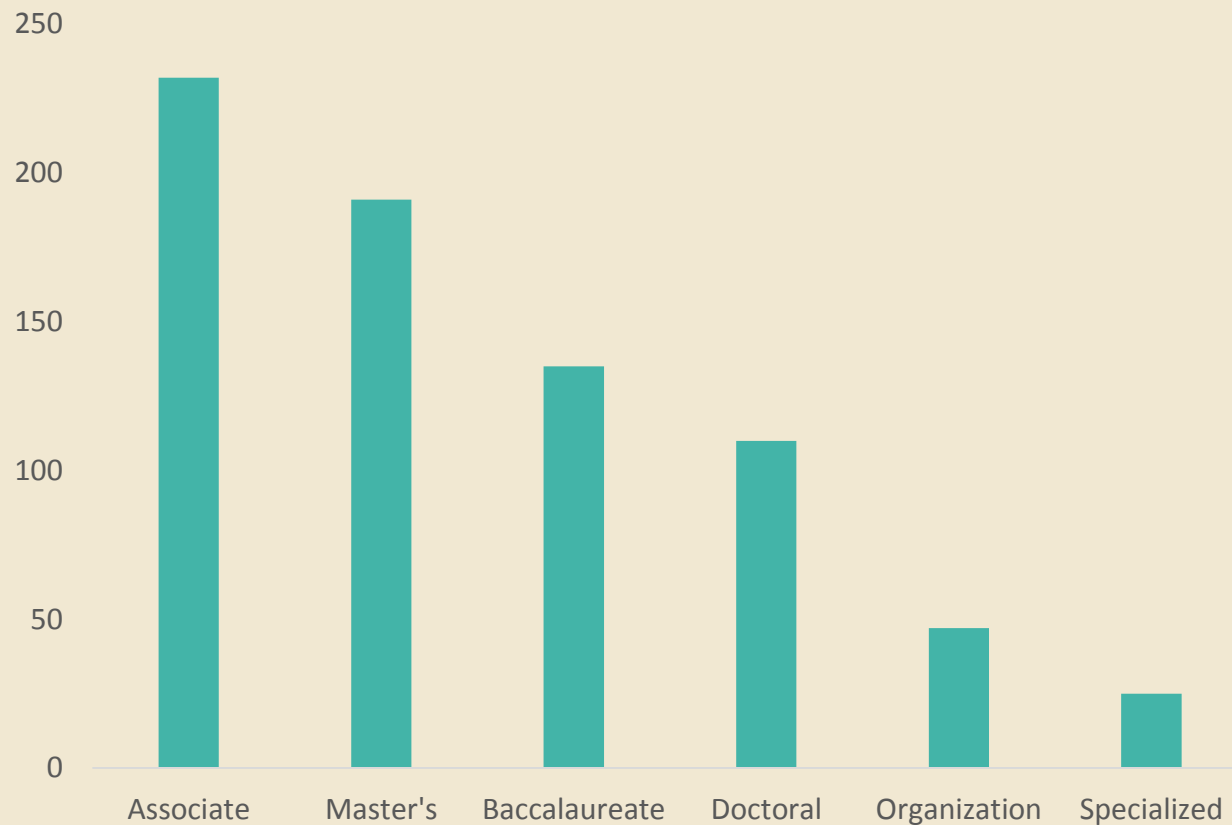
“The student understands the ethical dimensions of his or her discipline.”

**Consider . . .**

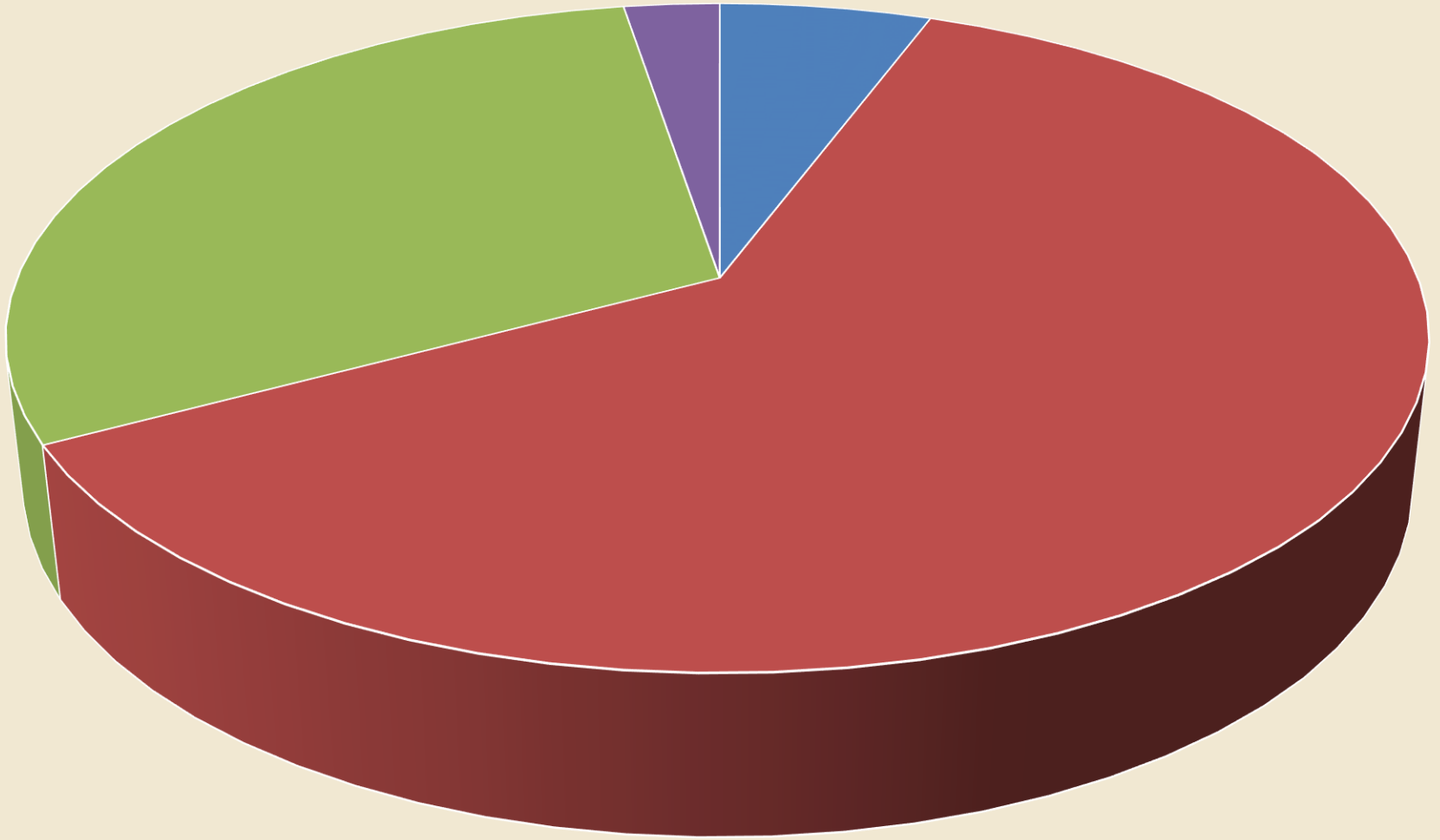
“The student analyzes competing claims from a recent discovery, scientific contention, or technical practice with respect to benefits and harms to those affected, articulates the ethical dilemmas inherent in the tension of benefits and harms, and either (a) arrives at a clearly expressed reconciliation 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](https://degreeprofile.org)

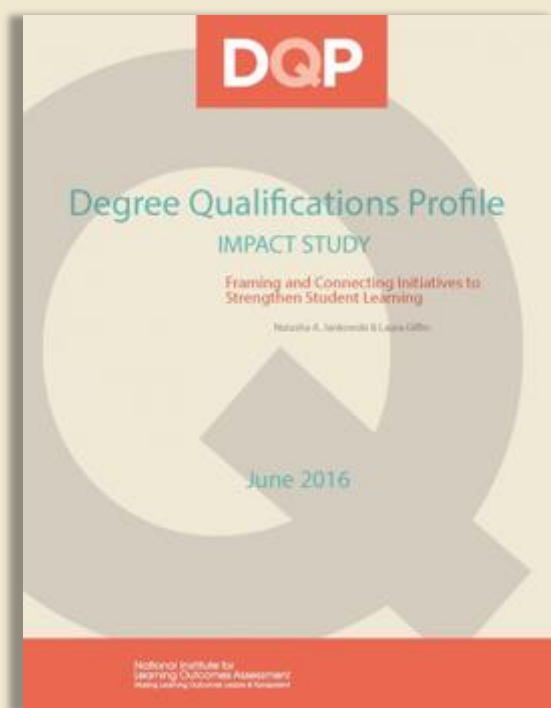


■ N/A   ■ Public   ■ Private   ■ For-Profit

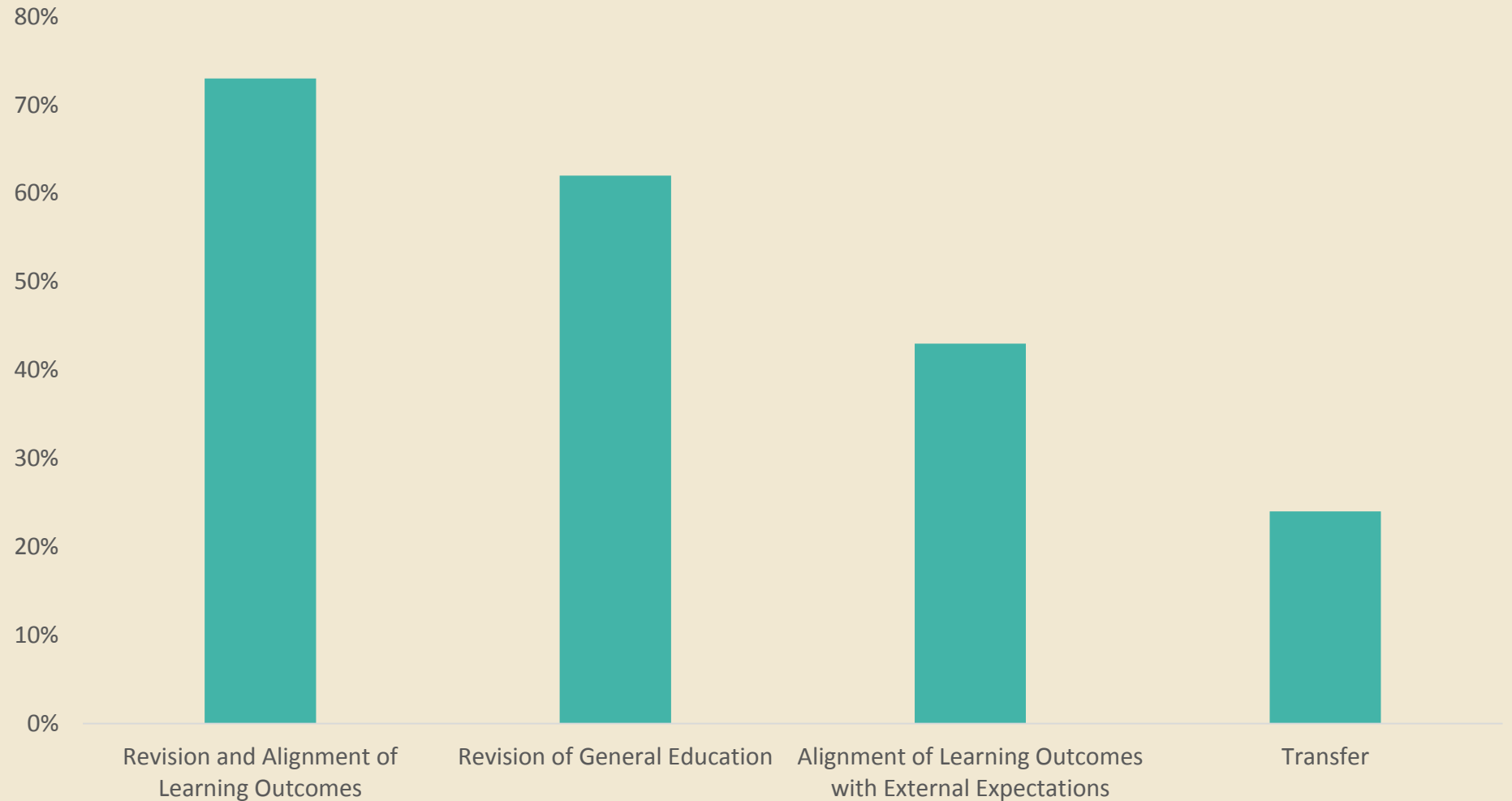


# Where is it being used?

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

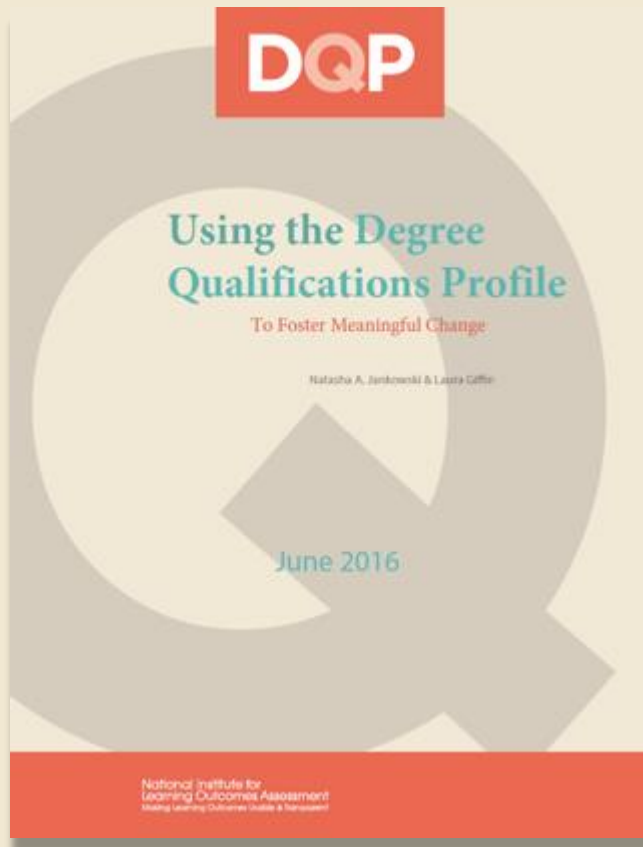
- Revise learning outcomes
- Develop coherent and integrated program/curricula
- Create curricular pathways
- Increase faculty engagement
- Align learning outcomes
- Change program review processes and policies

# 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

The image is a screenshot of the DQP Assignment Library website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for "HOME", "ASSIGNMENTS", "RESOURCES", "LEARN ABOUT DQP", "LOG IN", and "CONTACT US". Below the menu is a red header with the text "DQP Assignment Library". The main content area has a white background and contains the following text:

The purpose of this website is to provide a searchable online library of college-level course assignments in a wide variety of academic disciplines that link to one or more proficiencies in the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP).

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NLOA) has been working with groups of faculty from various institutions to revise and strengthen assignment alignment to specific proficiencies. The assignments and commentaries here are works in progress, generously shared by faculty members from a wide range of fields and institutional types committed to advancing and documenting student learning. To learn more about the assignment library initiative click [here](#). To see a list of advisors to the project click [here](#).

This library allows you to:

- Browse assignments
- Browse and adapt an assignment to fit your needs
- Submit an assignment to the library
- Consult a resource
- Comment on and ask questions about assignments
- Start a conversation on your own campus
- Give us feedback

**The Peer Review Process**

The materials in the DQP Assignment Library have gone through a three-stage review process. The first stage of review is undertaken by the NLOA project team, which makes decisions about whether to accept the submission or not. Those selected for a second stage of review are then shared with three to six faculty peers, typically from the same or related fields, who have experience with assignment design; their role is to provide written feedback and suggestions for revision. After making revisions, authors resubmit their materials to NLOA, where they pass through a final review to make sure that all required elements are included, and minor copy editing as needed. The finished materials are then published to the site.

We recognize, however, that assignment design is an iterative process, and we expect that many of the materials posted here will undergo further revision and improvement. Authors are encouraged to submit updated versions of their materials and to continue reporting how the assignment is being used in their classrooms.

**NEW!** A second installment in our "featured assignment" collection from Mary Kay Jordan-Fleming at Mount St. Joseph University focuses on integrative learning in a capstone course. Featured assignments include video clips, student work samples, and reflective commentary from colleagues in various settings. [Visit here](#) to learn more.

At the bottom of the page, there is a teal footer with the following text:

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment  
Making Learning Outcomes Visible & Valued

© 2014 Lumina Foundation  
This website is maintained by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

# Discussion

For more information:

<http://www.assignmentlibrary.org>

<http://degreeprofile.org>

[niloa@education.illinois.edu](mailto:niloa@education.illinois.edu)