

Noncredit Training Certificates

Addendum to the Legislative Concept

May 2, 2014

Submitted by the OAR Workgroup

OAR Workgroup

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Executive Summary

The landscape of education and workforce preparation has changed, and community colleges in Oregon find themselves on an uneven playing field. Access to education and workforce preparation are the strengths of community colleges, which are poised to better meet the needs of their communities. At the present time, Oregon community colleges are not permitted to issue "certificates" for noncredit training.

In most U.S. states, community college Continuing Education, Workforce Training, and Career and Technical Education departments issue noncredit certificates. The certificates document skill attainment for entry-level positions in a wide variety of industries, and also serve as a gateway to the resources of the college, allowing less skilled workers to attain a college credential.

Universities in Oregon are currently providing a wide range of noncredit career and technical certifications in healthcare, business management, marketing, technology, sustainability and more. Public and private universities have a distinct advantage as they provide training similar in content and outcomes to that which is provided by community colleges, and are able to award the term "certificate" for completion. The Oregon University System (OUS) is currently providing the kind of training that aligns better with the mission and purpose of community colleges. Business and industry needs change quickly, and most often, they turn to community colleges for the varied trainings they need. The noncredit divisions of community colleges quickly meet the training needs of industry, and they could easily serve as incubators for future credit certificate and degree programs.

As colleges strive to achieve the goals of 40/40/20, teaching necessary skills for the "middle 40" makes it essential for community colleges to document successful completion of the education they provided. The time to level the playing field is now. Community colleges in Oregon are in the minority of states not permitted to offer noncredit training certificates. OUS institutions are providing noncredit certificates. Local business and industry have articulated the need for more responsive training. Noncredit certificates provide a credential to students, and open the doorway to non-traditional students to help us all reach the goals set forth in the "40/40/20" initiative.

The Proposed Change

A workgroup representing Continuing Education, Community Education, Small Business Development Centers, and Workforce & Contracted Training divisions of Oregon’s community colleges is requesting the ability to develop and issue “training certificates.” Current Oregon Administrative Rules indicate that community colleges may only issue “Certificate of Completion” based on credit-bearing coursework.

The workgroup is proposing this change in order to meet requests from employers and employees and to put us on consistent footing with other Oregon higher education entities currently offering noncredit certification courses. “Training certificates” would be awarded for a single stand-alone course or series of courses with combined instructional hours of 18-210. In order to meet the needs of local Oregon communities, the content and rigor would be determined and standardized at the institutional level.

Background

A significant number of students complete noncredit coursework at Oregon community colleges. In the academic year 2011-12, 42% of the headcount for the 17 community colleges were noncredit students, as stated in the table below.¹ In addition to serving thousands of students through the “ACE” (Adult Continuing Education) activity codes, an increasing number are served through noncredit occupational supplementary and preparatory coursework. Internal partnerships with colleagues and external partnerships with business and industry promote success and are embedded within the development of instructional work and mission.

Headcount by Age and Credit Status (2011-12)

Program	15 & under		16-19		20-24		25-44		45-64		65+		Unknown		Total
	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	
Credit	1,460	0%	28,461	8%	52,635	14%	79,626	22%	23,046	6%	1,701	0%	1,806	0%	188,735
Noncredit	4,245	1%	22,729	6%	12,179	3%	47,075	13%	47,957	13%	15,941	4%	2,453	1%	152,579
Developmental Ed	95	0%	5,302	1%	3,777	1%	9,125	3%	3,145	1%	253	0%	74	0%	21,771
Total	5,800	2%	56,492	16%	68,591	19%	135,826	37%	74,148	20%	17,895	5%	4,333	1%	363,085

**OCCURS Report

In the Spring of 2013, the Oregon Association of Community and Continuing Education membership met for its annual meeting. This association’s members represent the noncredit divisions in the Oregon Community Colleges and Community Education. After

¹ Community College Profile, 2011-12, A report by Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, updated February 11, 2011

much discussion and conversations with CCWD staff, a workgroup was formed to explore a change of the Oregon Administrative Rule to allow noncredit divisions to grant training certificates. Members of the Business and Industry Training System (OBITS)² were added and the workgroup began meeting by conference call in the summer of 2013. Discussions included national trends and criteria for the training certificates. Several members of the workgroup attended the National Council for Continuing Education and Training (NCCET) annual meeting in October and solicited input and feedback from community colleges across the country.

National Trends and Initiatives

Training certificates are a commonly established and acceptable way to document skill-based learning and facilitate certification preparation in many occupations and industries. Training certificates prepare students for entry level or advanced skill sets, specific job titles or industry-recognized credentials.

People earn certifications throughout their working lives. In a survey done by the U.S. Census Bureau between September 2004- May 2008, 80,000 participants between the ages of 23-64 responded to a special supplemental module on training with detailed questions on certificate holdings. Of the participants responding, nearly two-thirds received certification training in the years immediately after graduating high school or in the early years of their careers. The remaining one-third seems to have obtained a certificate to expand their occupational skills or to retrain for another occupation. Among the certificate holders, 18 percent received a certificate in their 30's and 16 percent received a certificate at the age of 40 or older.

Compared to other credentials, this is a relatively high percentage of workers who obtained certificates at an older age. In the same survey, only 11 percent of those with Associate's degrees and 6 percent of those participants with Bachelor's degrees attained their degrees after the age of 40. The fact that a third of the certificates were earned after the age of 30, shows many experienced workers upgrade their credentials to seek new employment opportunities or wage increases or to obtain a new career by obtaining a certificate.³

Noncredit training certificates are offered by many colleges throughout the U.S. Results of a survey of NCCET members, at the request of the OAR Workgroup, indicated noncredit training certificates are offered by most of the responding members.

² The Oregon Business and Industry Training System (ORBITS) organization is a collaboration of the state's community college training departments that provide professional development contract training to incumbent employees in both the private and public sectors. These ORBITS members share best practices; partner on large training projects; and work to increase the number of employee professional development trainings around Oregon.

³ Carnevale, A, Rose, S & Hanson, A, *Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees*, a report by the Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2012

Noncredit training certificates are offered in many areas of study including manufacturing, healthcare, business and computer technology. Employers want a labor ready workforce and employees want the credentials to advance in their careers or get a new career. Both employer and employee look to the local community college for their trainings. Examples of the responses are found in Appendix A.

A study by the Community College Research Center, funded by the Sloan Foundation and conducted in collaboration with the National Council for Workforce Education and the National Council for Continuing Education and Training, focused on the noncredit workforce seeking noncredit training. The community colleges in the study offered industry-based certifications through noncredit, but many offered very localized certifications to meet the needs of industry in the college's area. The community colleges, working with local employers, develop locally valued certifications for short-term trainings. The colleges worked closely with local industry to ensure these noncredit certifications have currency in the local labor market.⁴

Training certificates are an Affordable Option for Students

The benefit of a training certificate, such as better wage or greater employability, comes with a cost. When deciding to pursue a credential, the student is looking at that cost because most students finance higher education with student loans. Concerns are increasing about the amount of debt a student is taking on as the federal government cuts back on its subsidized student loan programs. State governments are also decreasing their support of community colleges, which may result in increased costs and/or the availability of some credentialing programs. The noncredit training certificates may be offered at a lower cost because different costing models are available with noncredit programs. Noncredit training certificates may be an affordable option to students as well as employers.

Business and industry want their local community colleges to train the local workforce. Training new employees is a cost to business. Employers are not concerned whether it is a credit or noncredit training certificate; they just want to know that the person they are hiring is "labor ready." But employers do want to see the term "certificate" used to describe the credentials being obtained.

⁴ Van Noy, M., Jacobs, J., Korey, S., Bailey, T., & Hughes, K. L. (2008). *Noncredit enrollment in workforce education: State policies and community college practices* [Report]. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges and Community College Research Center. Available from the AACC Web site: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/noncreditenroll>

Training Certificates Provide a Pipeline of Trained and Retrained Workers for Industry

In its 2012 white paper, NCCET stated, “Among community partners, the community college typically remains neutral, which means institutional leaders can facilitate change and partnerships from a non-competitive position. The college is dependent on the success of the workforce and economic development within the community. Community colleges provide a pipeline of trained workers that supports the growth of industry. In turn, industry looks to local community colleges to grow internal capacity to continue to meet its workforce development needs.”⁵ A report from the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges titled *Reclaiming the American Dream*, stated “...even now, in the midst of an economy struggling to recover, community colleges have responded to calls for retraining the American workforce, training displaced workers, and helping develop new industries. Despite these historic successes and amidst serious contemporary challenges, community colleges need to redesign for new times. The consequences of the current education model are evident. They are no longer acceptable.”⁶

Training Certificates Provide Less Skilled Workers Initial Job Placement

Dr. Faith Harland-White, the dean of Anne Arundel Community College’s School of Continuing and Professional Studies in Maryland, spent two years establishing continuing education certificate programs. She states, “There is an increased segment of the workforce seeking ways to document competencies and job skills, especially in business/entrepreneurial and healthcare professions. Many occupational fields value the workforce credential over an academic documentation for initial job placement and for promotion or advancement. Formal transcription of job skills provides workers with a highly portable means of advancing their careers. College-sponsored certification programming can, also, allow for credentialing to be earned in an area where there is no readily available industry standard. The noncredit certificate can allow the less skilled worker an opportunity to attain a college credential.” Since 2006, Anne Arundel Community College has awarded 1,132 noncredit certificates across 112 programs in a broad range of occupational fields.⁷

⁵ See Kim Barnum, Donna Lawrence, Mona Rabon & Kirk White, *Delivering the Programs that Industry Needs*, a report to the National Council of Continuing Education & Training, December, 2012

⁶ See American Association of Community Colleges, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (2012) available at <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/21stcenturyreport/21stCenturyReport.pdf>

“Many business organizations look to Oregon’s 17 community colleges to provide training for incumbent workers and new hires.. A common expectation from both the employer and the trainee is that the learning experience will be documented with certificates. As a current example, the City of Portland requires that contracted training organizations provide printed completion certificates to the organization.

*For the successful trainee, a certificate in hand provides a sense of accomplishment, validates the investment and strengthens documentation of their qualifications. By providing a printed certificate of training, community colleges will be able to better respond to the needs of employers, workers and job seekers.”
(Jarrod Hogue, Mt Hood CC)*

Current Practices in Oregon

Recognition Awards

At the present time, noncredit divisions of Oregon community colleges cannot grant a certificate for training. Oregon Administrative Rule 589.006.0050 (43) states: "Recognition award" is defined as an award given to a student by a community college for completion of a state-approved course or courses or for attendance and participation in workshops or seminars. Recognition awards may not be called "certificates of completion" nor "certificates" and may not be included on the official student transcript."⁸

The OAR workgroup representing the noncredit divisions in the Oregon community colleges believes the current OAR wording is not understood by business and industry as to denote any significant skill attainment. For business and industry, the term "recognition award" does not have the same meaning as the term certificate. By definition, an award is a prize or other mark of recognition given in honor of an achievement. Synonyms for award, according to the Oxford dictionary, are prize, trophy, or decoration and do not have an academic indication. The definition for certificate, according to the Oxford dictionary, is a document attesting a level of achievement in a course of study or training.⁹

Oregon Universities Currently Offer Noncredit Certificates

Several universities in Oregon offer a wide range of noncredit career and technical certificates in health care, business, management, marketing, technology, sustainability and more. The course content of these noncredit programs is quite similar to courses offered by Oregon community colleges. These colleges, however, are not allowed to use the word "certificate" in awarding completion of the very same course or set of courses. The chart below lists some of the certification classes and programs being offered by extended learning departments in the Oregon University System.

⁷ See American Association of Community Colleges, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (2012) available at <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/21stcenturyreport/21stCenturyReport.pdf>

⁸ See Division 6 Community College Course Approval, Community Colleges and Workforce Development Administrative Rules

⁹ Oxford Dictionary, definition of certificate and award, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/award>
http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/certificate

Examples of Higher Education Noncredit Certifications Offered by Oregon Public Institutions	
University of Oregon -	Sustainability Leadership
Portland State University -	Advanced Digital Strategies
	Business Analysis
	The Business of Craft Brewing
	Business Communication
Oregon State University-	Master Interpretive Guide
	Recipe to Market
	Digital Communication and Brand Management
Western Oregon University -	Healthcare Interpreting
University of Portland -	Technology Entrepreneurship Certificate
Pacific Northwest College of Art -	Communication Design
Willamette University -	Utility Management
	Public Management

Education in Oregon

Never has education been more important to the lives and economic wellbeing of our citizens. Yet, Oregon is falling behind. In most other states – and countries – the younger generation of adults is more highly educated than their elders. In Oregon, adults ages 25–34 are less educated than their parents’ generation, with fewer earning certificates or degrees beyond high school. Almost a third of Oregon students are failing to graduate with a regular diploma after four or even five years of high school.

The state, through legislation passed in 2011 and 2012, has embarked on the most

significant education reform in 20 years, reshaping governance, priorities and budgeting in order to invest in better educational outcomes for Oregon students.

The 2011 Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 253, which established the most aggressive high school and college completion goals of any state in the country. By 2025, we must ensure that 40% of adult Oregonians have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher, that 40% have earned an Associate's degree or **post-secondary credential**, and that the remaining 20% or less have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. Those targets form Oregon's "40/40/20" goal.¹⁰

Oregon community colleges must enhance student academic progression and completion in order to achieve the "middle 40" of the 40/40/20 goal. It is imperative to shift from simply providing "access to education" to ensuring education outcomes that provide access to life success.¹¹

Training certificates can provide an avenue to higher education for the middle "40." Students may complete a short-term training to obtain an advanced skill set or to meet requirements for an industry-recognized credential, and then utilize the experience as "credit for prior learning" toward a degree or certificate of completion. A training certificate will help students reach their educational goals in both the short-term and long-term scenarios.

Student Success Story

It may be helpful to illustrate the importance of short-term community college training with a student success story:

Jackie* is a young woman who married her high school sweetheart right after graduation. Jackie works as a reservationist at a local hotel and her husband James* works full-time during the day as a warehouse supervisor.

Jackie was overjoyed to learn that she was expecting their first child and as part of their planning for their new arrival, she and James began to discuss childcare and the additional costs associated with raising a child. After thoughtful consideration, they decided they would prefer not to incur the additional cost of childcare; they began to explore other options for the care of their child.

A few months prior to the baby's arrival, a position for a night auditor opened up at

¹⁰ See Oregon Blue Book, Public Education in Oregon available at <http://bluebook.state.or.us/education/educationintro.htm>

¹¹ Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Oregon Community College Budget Picture 2013-15, available at <http://www.oregon.gov/ccwd/pdf/Budget/CCBudgetPicture13-15.pdf>

Jackie's work. She reviewed the job posting and was excited to see that the job not only would allow her the flexibility to be at home during the day while James worked, but that it would pay more than she currently earned. However, the job required an Excel certification, which Jackie did not currently have. Jackie's best friend had just started classes at the local community college and had told her that the college also offered some "one day classes" in computers. The 6 hour "one day" Excel classes were offered sequentially over a period of three Saturdays and had been "bundled" into a noncredit training certificate in Excel.

Jackie contacted the college hoping that they might be able to help her gain the skills she needed to qualify for the new job. Jackie enrolled in the Adult Continuing Education class in Excel spreadsheets. Jackie successfully completed all three of the Excel classes and was granted a certificate. As a result, Jackie applied for and was hired for the night auditor position just five weeks later.

Later, Jackie and James welcomed a beautiful baby girl. As a result of the positive experience she had with Adult Continuing Education, she is considering enrolling in more noncredit classes to become an Office Manager.¹²

Business and Industry Needs a Skilled Workforce

A skilled workforce is vital for Oregon's economic growth. Business and industry look to their local community colleges to provide needed training. For example, the wine and craft beer industry is rapidly growing, offering a myriad of employment opportunities.

Recent statistics from the Craft Beer Association state:

Total economic impact from the beer industry is \$2.83 billion for Oregon's economy employs+ 29,000 people¹³

Oregon Wine Association website states:

The industry has experienced rapid growth in the past decade. A 2010 study showed that the wine industry contributed \$2.7 billion to the state's economy and represented 13,500 jobs. The wine industry is a key component of the state's \$8 billion tourism

"A formal degree or certificate is not needed for entry level workers. I'd like to send my employees to short-term courses in the basics of brewing operations; cleaning, sanitation, packaging and customer service. I see a big need for entry level training, and a noncredit certificate would meet the needs of most craft-breweries".

Darren Welch, Brewmaster, Pelican Brewery

¹² The student success story is a compilation of the many success stories heard by noncredit divisions throughout the state and is an example of how the noncredit training certificates could improve students' lives

¹³ Oregon Craft Beer Facts (October 21, 2013) available at <http://oregoncraftbeer.org/facts/>

industry.¹⁴

The noncredit divisions of community colleges can meet the training needs of their local businesses and industries with training certificates. The training certificate courses are offered quickly to meet immediate needs. Training certificate courses can be targeted to specific skills for specific industries or offered to educate for a future need for skilled workers.

"As a seasoned professional in the visual communications industry, COCC has proved to be a vital resource for passing on my experience through teaching in the graphic design and advertising area, and keeping my technical skills up-to-date by taking Continuing Ed web classes.

Although I can vouch for my own increased knowledge and improved skills from the classes COCC offers, it would be wonderful if there was a training certificate that would prove to a potential employer or contractor, like myself, that a person had the appropriate competencies in using our industry's software.

I support the development of a training certificate at COCC to support our expanding community's need to meet positive business growth."

Pamela Trow-Johnson, Creative Director/Owner

OAR Workgroup Recommendation

The OAR Workgroup recommends the following definition, rigor and approval criteria for an Oregon community college noncredit training certificate:

Definition

"Training certificate" is defined as recognition of successful completion of the learning skills and knowledge requisites and educational achievements associated with specific course outcomes in noncredit classes or programs.

Rigor

The rigor will be determined at the institutional level but the OAR Workgroup has a standardized recommendation. "Attendance only" classes would not qualify for the

¹⁴ Oregon Wine available at <http://www.oregonwine.org/industry.aspx>

training certificate categorization. In order to qualify for a training certificate, there must be an assessment of measurable outcomes or mastery of learning and knowledge. Assessments include, but are not limited to, quizzes, exams, written assignments, participation, projects or activity or demonstration of skills.¹⁵ The rigor will be modeled on national education and industry training benchmarks. See Appendix B for an example of one national model by the Learning Resource Network (LERN).

Approval Criteria

This approval criterion follows the current conditions set forth for noncredit occupational preparatory and occupational supplementary course approval.

1. Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code identified.
2. Class encompasses a minimum of eighteen (18) hours of instruction.
3. Class will be noncredit.
4. Class shall be transcribed as per individual institution's transcribing policy.
5. Contact hours for ALL classes cannot exceed a total of two hundred-ten (210) hours. A single class or series of classes must be completed within the 210-hour limitation.
6. Chief Academic Officer at each community college validates standards prior to submission of application.
7. College receives approval from the state after offering the class.

¹⁵ LERN Standard One

Conclusion

The changing landscape of education and workforce preparation coupled with demands by business are challenging higher education to develop new solutions to meet the needs of both students and industry. Oregon community colleges, uniquely positioned to meet those needs, must create new processes to stay relevant in the new environment.

By developing a more rigorous means to document student learning in non-credit business and workforce related courses, Oregon community colleges will remain relevant and perhaps even elevate the community perception of the valuable education and training resources we offer. Research in the development and application of noncredit training certificates exhibit a clear direction for the Oregon community college system. The workgroup, represented by a majority of community colleges in the state, through careful deliberation, has clarified the definition, approval criteria and rigor to create an oversight system to maintain the integrity of noncredit training certificates, in deference to credit Certificates of Completion and degree programs. The time to implement this noncredit training certificate process is now.

Thank you for giving this your serious consideration.

Appendix A

NCCET Survey

Bellevue College, Bellevue Washington

Any program college determines as a need in the mid-career area or where there is a market need which does not need a degree and a certificate is sufficient.

Bookhaven College, Dallas Texas

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has set criteria by which each college is allowed to issue non-credit certificates. The guidelines the CE certificate MUST be workforce courses, demonstrate need by employers, consist of 360 contact hours or more (CEU program), or must have 144 contact hours for a Marketable Skills Award Certificate, and demonstrate fiscal support from the institution.

College of Southern Maryland, La Plata, Maryland

Colleges decide for themselves which programs they will award Continuing Education Certificates.

Mostly limited to workforce development related courses / programs, but not necessarily.

Community College of Baltimore County, Baltimore Maryland

Continuing Education Certificate Programs. The entire name is to be used in order to clearly differentiate it from credit certificate programs.

Houston Community College, Houston Texas

Varies from college to college

Depends on the local industry need

Many tend to be in healthcare (i.e. medical assisting, pharmacy tech, etc...) or, Other industries where there are external agency / accreditation requirements that dictate a short get-to-work program curriculum that does not require college credit (i.e. truck driving, air conditioning technician, welding technician, etc...)

Howard Community College, Columbia Maryland

Usually those that have a licensure/ certification component; however, we frequently bundle courses together for marketing courses and issue a certificate, i.e. Project Mgmt, Office Skills

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Variety of noncredit certificates at all 15 Iowa community colleges. Primary cluster areas are:

Information Technology

Industrial Technology

Health Care

Transportation/

Logistics

Appendix B

LERN Standards

Noncredit training certificates rigor was developed using the LERN standards as the benchmark. The Learning Resource Network (LERN), an international association, is the leading training and consulting organization for lifelong learning programs. LERN has over 4,000 members serving 16 countries. The 48 benchmark criteria in the LERN Program Review and Certification are increasingly being used as the practical standards for measuring success in lifelong learning programming

Standard One

Less than 20 hours is not considered sufficient engagement or knowledge to constitute a certificate. Attendance only certificates would not qualify for the certificate categorization. In order to qualify there must be an assessment of measurable outcomes or mastery of learning and knowledge. Assessments include, but are not limited to, quizzes, exams, written assignments, participation, projects or activity, or demonstration of skills.

LERN Categories of Certificate and Certification Programs:

Title	Hours of Engagement	Average Length
Class A	20-40 hours	3-5 days (1week)
Class B	41-80 hours	2 weeks
Class C	81-120	3-4 weeks
Class D	121-180 hours	2-5 months

Standard Three

Benchmark Knowledge Skills

With this standard your organization benchmarks the knowledge skills in the certificate or certification. A regulatory body, association, or other recognized authority may set the subject matter benchmark. If there is no recognized authority in the subject area for the certificate or certification, your organization may determine you as provider are the best source for benchmarking the knowledge skills.

The benchmark is a normative one, comparing assessment scores by analyzing scores within the defined audience for the certificate or certification.

The 'completion rate' is the intended target as a percentage of participants who pass or successfully complete the certificate or certification assessment outcome. It is a decision

that is intentionally and purposefully left up to recognized authorities in each subject area to determine.

The following are categories of completion rates in order that those within and outside of the subject matter field can contrast and compare different kinds of certificates and certifications for intensity, comprehensiveness, and difficulty of knowledge skills.

If your organization has not yet confirmed in writing the target audience for the certificate or certification, then the target audience should be defined in writing and estimated numbers for the target audience established.

Completion Rate Targets

Top 100%

Everyone passes. In order to be involved in the particular area of study or subject matter, the person must have passed.

Top 80%

Everyone should pass. Some persons may simply not be able to pass for lack of ability or other circumstances, but the intention is that everyone should pass.

Top 50%

The level of difficulty is such that it is intended for only the top half of candidates are successful.

Top 20%

Only the top 20% of candidates should pass. A certificate or certification intended to be reserved for only those of superior knowledge skills.

Top 5%

A level of outstanding expertise is required in order to pass.

The second step in this process is to confirm, modify and adjust the assessment to meet the desired success rate by testing different groups in the target population to benchmark the completion rate.

Certifying or Provider agencies are not responsible for the amount of knowledge retained or assessment results by the learner or student.

These groups should be tested:

- 1.** Those in the target audience participating in the course of study and then taking the assessment. This is the group that, over time, conforms to the completion rate in terms of passing.
- 2.** Experts in the area of study of the certificate or certification. Experts - those with outstanding knowledge skills in the subject area - should be able to pass the assessment. Around 80% to 98% of the experts should be able to pass the assessment without substantial study. The experts may be those creating the assessment, teaching the program of study, authors in the field, or other experts who have either created the body of knowledge or are teaching the body of knowledge.

3. Those in the target audience not participating in the course of study. This group, by and large, should not be able to pass the assessment. Around 80% should fail the assessment. A certain percentage, from 2% to 20%, will have such ability and knowledge skills that they will be able to pass the assessment without participating in the course of study.

4. Those not in the target audience taking the assessment. It is not required that those not in the target audience be tested. However, if so conducted, the success rate of those not in the target audience taking the assessment should be 0% to 5%. That is, almost no one outside of the target audience should be able to pass the assessment.

5. Outstanding practitioners in a related area. Outstanding practitioners in a related area of study should not be able to pass the assessment. Only from 2% to 20% of experts or outstanding practitioners in a related field of study should be able to pass the assessment.

Numbers of people taking the assessment

Validity and reliability of assessments depend on the numbers of people taking the assessment. However, the numbers in the target audience may be limited to the extent that statistical verifications are impractical. In addition, the resources of the organization may be limited in testing a large number of people.

Validity and reliability should be regularly measured as the numbers of people taking the assessment grow.