FROM THE BOTTOM UP:
GROUNDING ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN WORKFORCE-RELEVANT SKILLS

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WGU Workforce Intelligence & Credential Integrity

Outline

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2 Skills

3 Credentials

4 Assessments

5 Questions & Discussion

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Who We Are

Proudly Nonprofit
- Founded in 1997 by a bipartisan group of 19 governors

Core Experience 100% Online
- Competency-based and self-paced

Made up of Four Schools
- Business, IT, Health Professions, K-12 Teacher Education

Innovative Curriculum Design
- Workforce-aligned
- Skills-based
- Build industry certifications into our curriculum

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Problems to Solve

Learners need to gain new skills and communicate the value of their accomplishments.

The college credential landscape is growing, adding to ambiguity and confusion about what credentials represent.

Learners need more immediate ROI throughout their educational journey.

Learners need to showcase skills and communicate the value of their accomplishments through competency demonstration (assessment).

Learners need better ways to understand the skills their credentials represent and the value they hold.

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Think Back to Your Academic Journey…

- How aware were you of the skills you were developing?

- Could you articulate these skills to others?

- Could you connect these skills to your future career goals?

Survey Says…

45% of employers globally said they cannot find candidates with the skills that they need.

Does this surprise you?

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Survey Says…

70% of hiring professionals agreed:

"If a candidate has the right skills for an open position, it doesn't matter what time or format of education was used to get them."

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Refocus Towards the Future

Many employers are changing their degree requirements for various roles and focusing on hiring people based on their demonstrated skills and competencies.

Why Open Skills

Earner/learners need:

- to identify, represent, and communicate the value of their skills in a common language
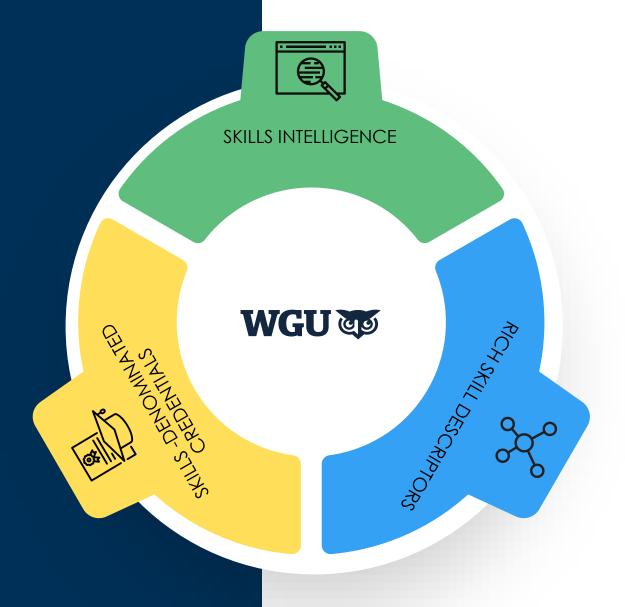
Employers need:

- to create clearer, skills-based job descriptions
- to make better, faster, cost-effective hiring and training decisions
- to understand the skillset of their current workforce

Education providers need:

- to ensure their programs and curriculum reflect the skills learners need to be successful in the workforce
- to develop more transparent, value-based, student-centric credentials

Open Skills

Enable a common language of skills.

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WGU's Response

Skills Intelligence is a comprehensive set of data points that enables WGU to gain insights into the skills required for specific occupations and job roles, as well as the current state of the workforce for those roles.

Rich Skill Descriptors (RSDs) are skill statements and the associated metadata that allows for the interoperability of the skill across digital platforms.

Skills-Denominated Credentials are verified credentials explicitly tied to skills and employment value that is sharable with employers and other education institutions in a currency they value and understand.

SKILLS INTELLIGENCE

RICH SKILL DESCRIPTORS

SKILLS-DENOMINATED CREDENTIALS

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Skills let us open the doors of opportunity for our learners in new ways.

Equity

At WGU, skills advance EQUITY by ensuring all students have equal access to opportunity, attainment, and expression of skill attainment, especially our "traditionally overlooked" populations (e.g., first-gen, minority, and low-income).

Return

Skills-based learning empowers our students with the language of employers to enhance their professional brand and pursue optimal economic RETURN on their education investment.

Completion

Rich Skill Descriptors (RSDs) illuminate relevancy of learning and credentials for our learners, demonstrating direct connections to their career goals. Relevance is a key driver of persistence and COMPLETION.
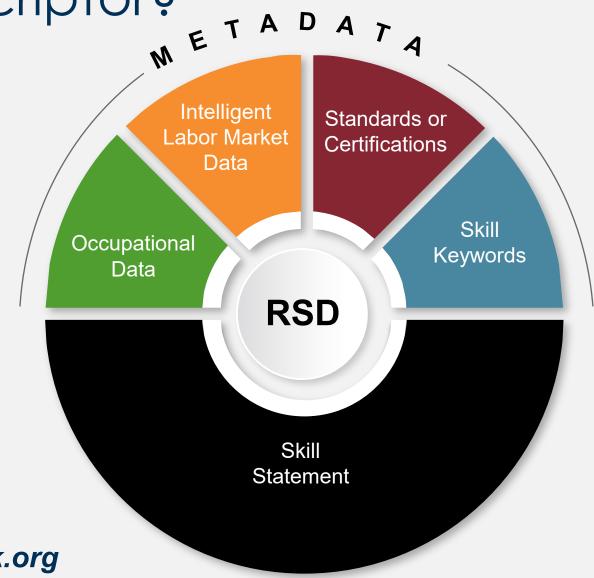
Equity

Competency-based, skills-driven credentials give individuals a verifiable way of showing their skills and abilities to employers. This evidence of attainment provides opportunities that advance EQUITY in post-graduation career pathways.
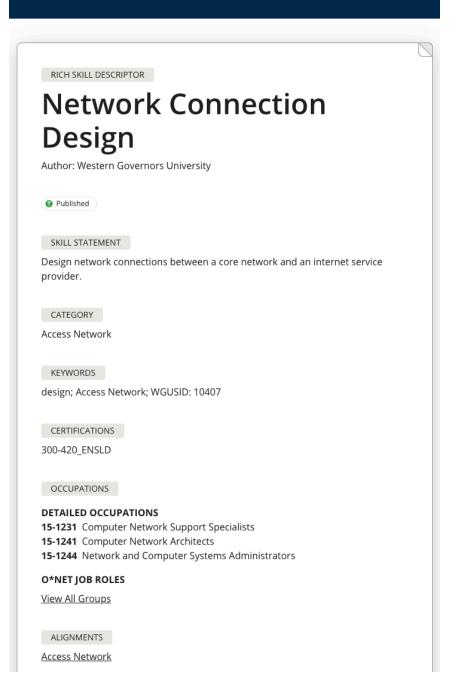
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What is a Rich Skill Descriptor?

A rich skill descriptor is made up of a contextualized skill statement and associated meta data that enables the interoperability of skills.

*Learn more at **rsd.openskillsnetwork.org***

METADATA

Intelligent Labor Market Data

Standards or Certifications

Occupational Data

Skill Keywords

RSD

Skill Statement

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Rich Skill Descriptor (RSD)

WGU Open Skills Management Tool

RICH SKILL DESCRIPTOR

Network Connection Design

Author: Western Governors University

🛈 Published

SKILL STATEMENT

Design network connections between a core network and an internet service provider.

CATEGORY

Access Network

KEYWORDS

design; Access Network; WGUSID: 10407

CERTIFICATIONS

300-420_ENSLD

OCCUPATIONS

DETAILED OCCUPATIONS
15-1231 Computer Network Support Specialists
15-1241 Computer Network Architects
15-1244 Network and Computer Systems Administrators

O*NET JOB ROLES

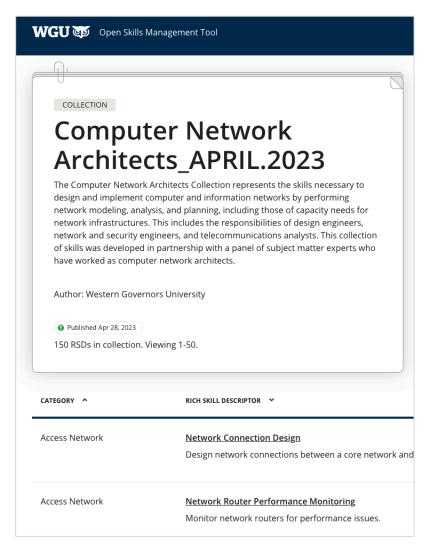View All Groups

ALIGNMENTS

Access Network

RSDs and WGU Skills Library Collections

The WGU skills library informs competencies in our educational model. This ensures that our courses are reflective of labor market demands.

Skills Libraries:
- Centralized and structured collections
- Contain skills data, qualifications, and attributes
- Create a unified understanding of skills for employment, curriculum development, job architecture, or competency grouping
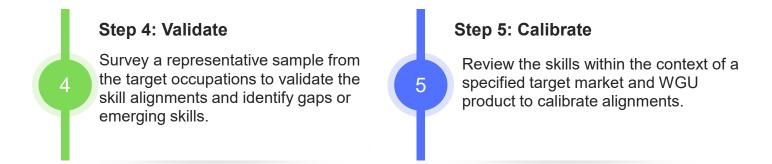
Skill Development Process

A skill represents knowledge, abilities, or learned behaviors described in a short, verb-driven phrase that communicates discrete, discernable value an individual can demonstrate or acquire.

Step 1: Identify

1   Identify the skills needed for a specific target market, product, or skill set.

Step 2: Assemble

2   Assemble an expert panel to help develop skills and align the associated workforce.

Step 3: Develop

3   Work with experts to create skills which meet relevant standards, certifications, and workforce data.

Step 4: Validate

4   Survey a representative sample from the target occupations to validate the skill alignments and identify gaps or emerging skills.

Step 5: Calibrate

5   Review the skills within the context of a specified target market and WGU product to calibrate alignments.

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Skills + Competency + Assessment = Workforce Aligned Products

Skills

- Modify instruction to meet goals based on assessment data.
- Design instructional plans that are appropriate for students based on assessment data.
- Analyze assessment data to adapt lesson planning and instruction.

Competency

The learner analyzes assessment data to design and modify instruction to meet student needs and mastery of content.

Assessment

- Description includes instructional accommodations for all student populations.
- Check for student understanding and appropriate for grade and content of the lesson.
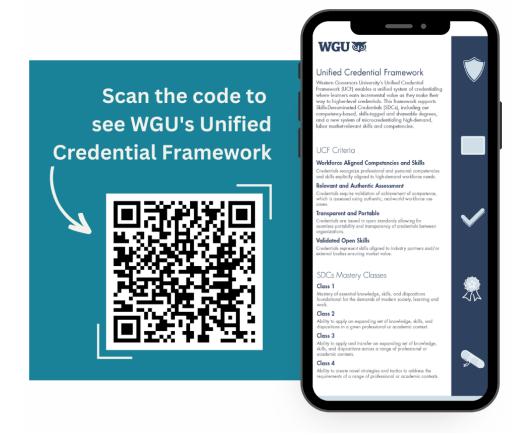- Demonstrated modification of lesson plan based on assessment data.

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Unified Credential Framework

Why: No consistent approach and definitions to ensure every credential at WGU was aligned with a clear market value.

What: The UCF provides the structure to ensure future university credentials' relevancy, credibility, and portability. Provides standard definitions and guidance on different types and classes of Skills-Denominated Credentials issued at WGU.

How: Though Credential Integrity alignment checks, ensures consistency in credential assertion requirements.

Scan the code to see WGU's Unified Credential Framework

UCF Criteria

Workforce Competencies and Skills
Achievements recognize professional and personal competencies and skills explicitly aligned to high-demand workforce needs.

Portable
Achievements are issued in open standards, allowing for seamless portability between organizations.

Relevant and Authentic Assessment
Achievements require verification of competence, which is assessed using authentic, real-world workforce use cases.

Validated Open Skills
Achievements represent skills aligned to industry and/or external bodies ensuring market value.

Psychometrically Sound Assessment

Fair

- Do not advantage or disadvantage any group or groups of learners

Reliable

- Measure what we intend to measure

Valid

- Inferences made on scores are reasonable, defensible

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Open Skills and Validity

Domain Analysis/Modeling

- Competency design: **skills** analysis informs competencies

Assessment Design

- What **skills** are we trying to measure?
- What **evidence of skills** do we need to see to make claims about students?

Open Skills

Enable a common language of skills.

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Assessment Design

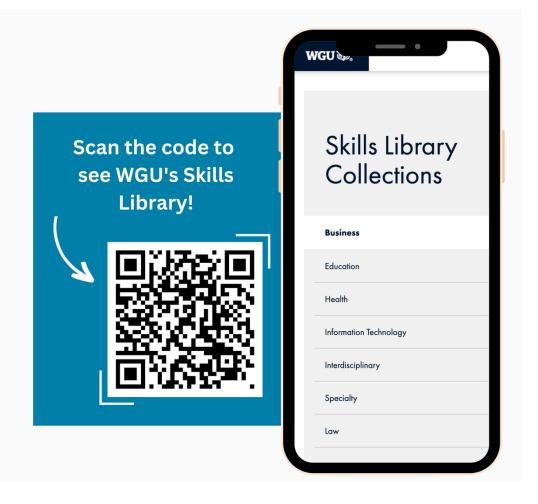*What evidence do we need to elicit from students to measure their competence?*

You Can Operationalize Skills

Join the Open Skills Network

- Coalition of employers, education providers, military, and other stakeholders advancing skills-based education and hiring
- Committed to reducing inequity by helping people get hired for what they can do, not for where they got their degree
- Focused on developing and implementing a common skills language and open, accessible, machine-actionable skills libraries

Open Skills Network™

Scan the code to see WGU's Skills Library!

Skills Library Collections

Business

Education

Health

Information Technology

Interdisciplinary

Specialty

Law

Use Open Skills Libraries

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Questions and Discussion

Thank You!

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