



Education Quality Summary

U.S. Career Institute

2010

Introduction

U.S. Career Institute is dedicated to providing students with quality, career-focused education. Investing in higher education is a major decision. Each prospective student navigates the extensive range of school and program choices to settle on the option that best fits their situation and goals.

Now, more than ever, students need to be assured they are receiving the highest quality in education for return on their investment. Advances in technology, fluctuations in the economy and competition in the job market all contribute to the ever increasing importance of quality in education.

To this end, the following article outlines the measurement tools we use to assess our education quality, as well as the results we have gathered. In the past, this data has served as an assessment tool to allow us to constantly improve in order to meet the needs of each student. Our goal in presenting this information publicly is to help students make an informed decision for their future. Each section that follows provides insight in order to give you a complete picture of our school, our processes and our results.

"U.S. Career Institute's mission is to provide high-quality and affordable distance education. We provide innovative, real-world curricula that students in any geographical location can obtain. The U.S. Career Institute faculty and staff focus on the needs and satisfaction of students in order to provide exceptional, applicable instruction and service. We continually assess the effectiveness of our curricula and service, as well as the academic achievement of our students. We use these results to improve academic and institutional quality."

~U.S. Career Institute Mission Statement

Measures of Quality in Distance Education

How to measure quality in education, from preschool through higher education, has long been a subject of debate in the United States. The need for quality measurements is clear, but the tools used to gather such data are often scrutinized. Educational organizations and the federal government are all trying to decide on the best way to measure student success. The debate continues.

Currently, the most common research method used to measure quality in education is student surveys that indicate students' satisfaction with their education. Each accredited school reports the results of their data to their accrediting agency each year. However, in response to calls for more accountability in distance education, accredited distance institutions will start disclosing these outcomes to the public this year.

This article details the quality controls we employ at U.S. Career Institute, as well as the results of our 2010 student surveys.

U.S. Career Institute Goals

We strive to offer the highest quality career-based education to working adults. We want to help our students improve their future lives and careers. Our goal is to ensure:

- Quality course materials
- Effective instructors
- Helpful student services
- Affordable tuition
- Satisfied graduates

U.S. Career Institute Internal Quality Controls

Course Content

Each U.S. Career Institute course is written by industry professionals. Materials are created on site to allow us more control over content. Our courses are focused so that students' studies are applicable to their future careers. Courses also go through rigorous academic review prior to publication. This review tells us if the course material thoroughly covers the subject, how easy the lessons are to follow, and if all instructions and questions are clear. Finally, we constantly monitor industry changes and standards for each course in order to keep curricula up-to-date and relevant.

Course Format

U.S. Career Institute courses are fully self-paced. Students can fit their studies around work and family commitments. This unique feature allows us to best serve our student population, which is largely made up of working adults, parents and even grandparents. Students can adjust their studies to their lives, allowing for a higher rate of success.

Student Services

During their studies, students have access to instructors by phone or through email. Instruction faculty are experts in their subjects. They also receive close supervision and continuing education to maintain the highest standard in student instruction.

We also have an extensive student services department to assist with tuition/billing questions, issues with course materials, or any other inquiries during or after students' studies. After graduation, students receive unlimited career support. Graduate counselors offer resume and interview assistance, and help graduates market their new skills.

Affordability

Tuition for U.S. Career Institute courses is affordable for students. Graduates gain career skills for employability at a very low cost. They are given the option to finance tuition costs with no extra finance charges and no interest. Our low cost to value ratio makes an education attainable for more students. Also, many students qualify for assistance through the military or their employers.

A Wide Variety of Career Options

The following are certificates offered by U.S. Career Institute. A large variety of options allows students to choose the career that will best fit them.

- Accounting Services
- Bookkeeping
- Child Day Care Specialist
- Computer Essentials
- Criminal Justice
- Dental Assistant
- Certified Fitness Trainer
- Healthcare Office Manager
- Home Inspection
- Insurance Claims Adjuster
- Legal Transcriptionist
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Billing
- Medical Coding & Billing
- Medical Coding
- Medical Transcriptionist
- Office Administrator
- Paralegal/Legal Assistant
- Patient Care Technician
- Pharmacy Technician
- Veterinary Specialist
- Wedding Consulting/Event Planning

With so many options, students can examine their strengths and interests and choose a career in which they will both make money and be fulfilled. When students call to enroll, our student services department helps them go through this process to ensure that each student enrolls in the course that will best fit their needs.

Certifications

Many careers require or encourage completing board examinations for official certification. Most of these exams require applicants to attain their education through an approved institution. U.S. Career Institute writes our courses with these approval requirements in mind.

Through this effort, our graduates are eligible to sit for several board examinations administered by the NHA (National Healthcareer Association) and the NCCT (National Center for Competency Testing). A complete list of board exams and graduate requirements, refer to Exhibit A at the end of this report.

“Quality education gives our students a solid foundation for their careers and their lives. We feel privileged to help students build their futures every day—we take that honor very seriously!”

~Ann Rohr
President, U.S. Career Institute

Accreditation

Credible backing is important in any industry. Drug companies need backing from the FDA before their products are trusted in the market. Hospitals, banks, businesses and all types of schools undergo inspections or reviews to become accredited. Accreditation shows that companies meet industry standards of quality.

Quality is particularly important in the distance education sector. Distance schools are designed to help students reach more specific outcomes than traditional institutions. Students should learn skills that will help them get a career or improve their career. Because of this unique focus, distance schools are being stringently evaluated by new government initiatives, and have been closely examined for many years by accrediting agencies.

U.S. Career Institute is accredited by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC). The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency for distance education. Because of this, our curriculum, faculty, administrative procedures and policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that we continue to meet the DETC’s exceptionally high standards of quality.

How do we collect our data?

We equate our success with the success of our students. Students are evaluated throughout each course. The following student achievement measures indicate how effective our course materials and instruction are for each course:

1. *Quizzes/Exams*
2. *Successful Course Completion*: Successful course completion with a GPA of 70 or higher.
3. *Successful Completion of Hands-on Training (where applicable)*: Successful completion of 200 clock hours—on site—of hands-on training for the Introduction to Massage Therapy students.

U.S. Career Institute executives evaluate these measures and pass rates. If a significant number of students perform poorly on a particular assignment, the corresponding lesson is analyzed to determine if subject matter is properly presented. Then, appropriate revisions are made to ensure that students are given all necessary information and instruction to master the subject.

Another measure of our effectiveness is student satisfaction. The following methods return data on our students’ feelings about their education with U.S. Career Institute:

1. *Mid-course/Program Evaluation*: Student evaluations occur at the end of the third pack of lesson materials for each certificate course. A business reply is provided so the student can return the survey without incurring postage cost.

2. *End-of-course Evaluation:* Student evaluations also occur at the end of each course. A business reply envelope is provided so the student can return the survey without incurring postage cost.
3. *Graduate Survey:* Graduate surveys are sent to students between 90 and 120 days after graduation. A business reply envelope is provided so the graduate can return the survey without incurring postage cost.

U.S. Career Institute compiles the data we receive from student surveys in order to make any appropriate changes. We also report our findings to the DETC to maintain accreditation. We want to ensure that each course meets education objectives, as well as the mission of our school.

Changes may be made in the following areas:

- Curriculum
- Layout/Functionality of Course
- Data Management
- Instructional Services
- Student Services
- Pre-enrollment Services
- Graduate Services
- Other Staff Services

Each step in the evaluation process measures student satisfaction as well as our effectiveness as an institution. Through frequent evaluation, we are thus able to ensure the highest quality in education for our students.

Survey Results

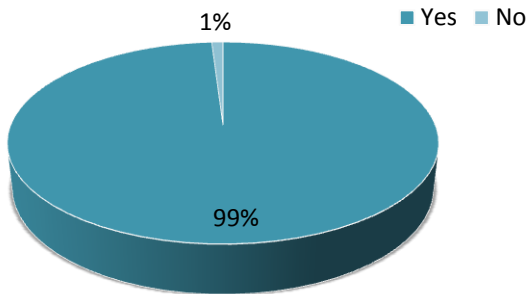
Student surveys are written by U.S. Career Institute. We focus our business and education practices on areas we think are most important to our students' success. Therefore, surveys are written to measure each of these goal areas as well. The following table shows student survey responses by percentage:

Survey Question	Percentage "Yes" Responses
Did you achieve, or will you have achieved upon completing your studies, the goals you had when you started the course or program?	94%
Would you recommend this course to a friend?	98%
All things considered, were you satisfied with your studies with U.S. Career Insitute?	99%
My materials were delivered promptly.	97%
The course was well written.	99%
The instructors were helpful.	89%
Assignments were graded promptly.	98%
The school/course encouraged me.	98%
Student Services were helpful.	92%

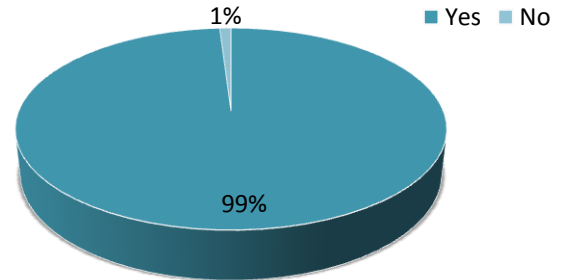
* Total Number of Surveys Received: 5,705

The following graphs show student responses to three key survey questions. These three questions are mandated by the DETC. Any DETC-accredited institution must include these results in their data. In order to maintain accreditation, results must show at least 67% “yes” answers.

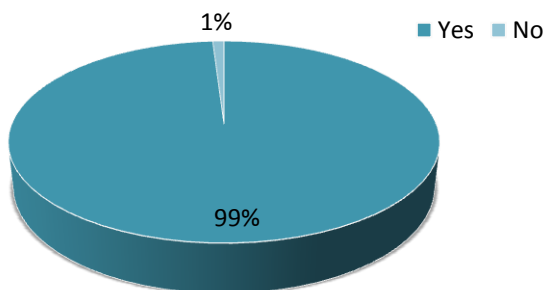
Percentage of Students Who Achieved Their Learning Goals



Percentage of Students Who Would Recommend U.S. Career Institute to a Friend



Percentage of Students Who Were Satisfied With Their Studies



Conclusions

Based on the 2010 survey results, we feel that U.S. Career Institute Certificate courses produce a high level of student satisfaction. Almost 100 percent of students responded that they were encouraged in their studies. Students also report that their courses help them meet their goals. The ultimate measurement of quality is whether our course objectives and outcomes align. According to student survey results, we largely achieved this goal in 2010.

Future Goals

U.S. Career Institute has been serving students for over 30 years. In the future, we will continue to reach for excellence in education quality. Our aim is for every student to achieve their education goals, as well as their career goals. Our certificate courses are designed with these goals in mind.

Each year, we will continue to update and improve our curriculum. Courses will offer the most current, relevant material so that students are fully enabled to perform career skills.

We will put specific emphasis on student assistance this year. Approximately 90 percent of students are pleased with our services, but we aim to assist 100 percent of students satisfactorily. After each student interaction, they should feel supported and have their questions answered. U.S. Career Institute will focus efforts on giving our students the finest service every day.

U.S. Career Institute will work to offer the most affordable and convenient methods of education for our students. We want to make an education attainable for each person we serve.

Every year, we will reevaluate each of our goals. Through our measurement processes, we gain valuable insight into students' achievement and students' satisfaction. At the end of each day, week, year, we exist for our students and we will continue to strive toward their goals as our own.

Exhibit A

The following table details the courses that prepare students to sit for certification exams, as well as the exams they are eligible for. Associations include the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) and the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT).

Certificate Received	Exam Eligibility
Medical Claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHA Certified Billing and Coding Specialist Exam • NCCT National Certified Insurance and Coding Specialist Exam
Medical Transcription	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHA Certified Medical Transcriptionist Exam
Medical Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHA Certified Medical Administrative Assistant Exam • Graduates may work with employer to gain 25 live venipuncture sticks and 10 capillary sticks along with 8-12 EKGs to sit for Certified Clinical Medical Assistant clinical certification.
Pharmacy Technician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHA Certified Pharmacy Technician Exam • Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) Exam
Patient Care Technician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates may work with employer to gain 25 live venipuncture sticks and 10 capillary sticks along with 8-12 EKGs to sit for Certified Patient Care Technician/Associate/Nurse Technician clinical certification.
Dental Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates may sit for American Medical Technologist (AMT) Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Exam after working in the field for three years and providing current proof of CPR certification.
Bookkeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCT National Registered Bookkeeper Exam
Accounting Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCT National Registered Advanced Bookkeeper Exam
Massage Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Certification Board for Therapeutic and Massage and Bodywork (NCMTMB) Certification Exams
Fitness and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Board of Fitness Examiners (NBFEE) Exam
Home Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Inspection Foundation (HIF) Certification Exam
Medical Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates may use their U.S. Career Institute course as one of the two required years' experience to sit for the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC) CPC exam.

Resources

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