WORKFORCE SKILL VALIDATOR QUALITY RUBRIC

The Education Design Lab Skill Validator Quality Rubric was developed to help individuals and organizations design and evaluate workforce skills validators for quality, accessibility, and potential to increase equity.

Method and Analysis

Quality skills validation methods can take a variety of forms, from assessments to skills demonstrations or performance evaluations. Each of these methods contains two important components: a source of evidence and a method of evaluation. The Workforce Skill Validator Quality Rubric is designed to be inclusive of sources of evidence and methods of evaluation to invite innovation and expand access in the skills validation field.

To determine the evaluation criteria, we initially conducted a comprehensive review of existing evaluation methods for similar tools such as non-degree credentials and digital badges. We also explored the indicators in tools including:

- 1EdTech's Trusted Apps Security Practices and Accessibility Rubrics,
- W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and
- Western Governors University (WGU) Third Party Certificate and Certification Review (publication pending)

We then calibrated these with the Education Design Lab Skills Validation Network's assessment criteria as well as evaluation tools used in the design of the Lab's existing XCredit Assessments.

Through this analysis, we determined a set of quality indicators that are inclusive of best practices in the field and tailored to skills validation use cases in particular.

Use of this Rubric

The indicators in this rubric are meant to be aspirational: in other words, a perfect score is not necessarily the desired state. Rather, skill validators can meet a minimum threshold of quality to be useful for stakeholders. At the same time, the indicators can provide guidance for how to continuously improve the skill validator to meet the needs of the intended audience.

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In addition to helping individuals and organizations evaluate skill validators for quality, accessibility, and potential to increase equity, the Workforce Skill Validator Quality Rubric can potentially be used to:

- **Define a set of quality criteria** for the skills validation field
- **Provide guidance for designers** on how to improve skill validators over time to meet the needs of their intended audience
- Curate and publish a list of **skill validators that meet a minimum threshold of quality** to be useful for opportunity seekers and other stakeholders
- **Continuously improve skill validators** created and used by Education Design Lab and its partners

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Rating Scale

3 - Exemplary: Exceeds Criteria

2 - Adequate: Meets Criteria

1- Insufficient: Does Not Meet Criteria

I. VALUABLE

A skill validator is **VALUABLE** when it provides meaningful insight or feedback that meets stakeholder needs.

Criteria		Rating (3, 2, or 1)	Improvements to make
Relevant			
a	Measures skills that are in high demand in the workforce or have potential for high demand in the future		
b	Measures key professional or personal competencies that directly correspond to the demands of the workforce		
c	Length of time to validate skill is feasible for **opportunity seekers**		
d	Aligns to the experiences of **opportunity seekers** to the extent possible		
e	Demonstrated skill expected to transfer to real world workplace situations		
Value of Results			
f	Results provide new insights or confirmation of skills, ability or knowledge in a way that supports goals and interests of **stakeholders**		
g	Validator can be customized or tailored to the use case or individual in some way that makes the experience or results more relevant to their specific context, enhancing the connection between the **opportunity seeker** and the outcomes		

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II. RIGOROUS

A skill validator is **RIGOROUS** when it is scientifically sound, with proven reliability (consistent results) and validity (measures what it is supposed to measure), ensuring results that are trustworthy and accurate.

Criteria		Rating (3, 2, or 1)	Improvements to make
Reliability and Validity			
a	Validator measures what it is intended to measure		
b	Validator aligns with a competency framework which clearly defines the skills and criteria for success		
c	Results from the validator are consistent over time, between raters, etc.		
d	An evaluation and improvement process is in place to address issues affecting validity or reliability over time		
e	Methodology for development and deployment is documented clearly and in detail, and meets industry best practices		

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III. DATA SECURITY AND TRANSFER

A skill validator is **SECURE** when it ensures that the data and results are kept confidential and safe, respecting the privacy of the opportunity seeker, building trust and encouraging honest responses.

	Criteria	Rating (3, 2, or 1)	Improvements to make
	User Authentication		
a	Processes are in place to verify the identity of test-takers such as Multi-factor authentication (MFA), single sign-on (SSO) protocols and/or differentiation between email address		
	Privacy		
b	The documented policy is presented to users, and their personal data is only used to validate skills. If data will be shared with or hosted by any third parties, this information is disclosed to the user.		
c	Results are kept confidential and secure		
	Fidelity of Results		
d	HTTPS encryption is in place to protect data in transit to ensure that information cannot be intercepted or tampered with, protecting an individual and their work from an external influence		
e	When applicable, question and answer choices are randomized, time limits are in place, browsers are locked and/or proctoring solutions are used to minimize opportunities for cheating		
	Data Encryption and Secure Storage		
f	Sensitive information related to users and their responses are encrypted and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access or data breaches		

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g	All communication between validator and users encrypted to prevent interception or tampering		
	Security Audits and Updates		
h	Regular security audits are used to identify and fix vulnerabilities		
i	A formal incident response plan is in place and any breaches are reported to the institutions and mitigated in an acceptable time frame		
	Interoperability and Data Ownership		
j	User maintains access to data in perpetuity, regardless of platform		
k	User can select, package and share results with a recipient, controlling the sharing of all data		
l	Adheres to common standards or protocols that facilitate data exchange, ensuring that information is structured and formatted in a consistent manner that is compatible, standardized and preserves functionality as data moves between systems, ensuring that information retains its meaning and usefulness across different contexts or applications		
m	Distributed using open standards to ensure credentials can be easily transferred and recognized across different organizations and platforms.		

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IV. ACCESSIBLE/ EQUITABLE

A skill validator is **ACCESSIBLE** when it can be used by a wide range of people, regardless of ability, technology access or language proficiency, ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunities.

A skill validator is **EQUITABLE** when it is designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that provides a fair and unbiased experience for all participants, regardless of their background, identity or circumstances, ensuring that all individuals have the same opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

	Criteria	Rating (3, 2, or 1)	Improvements to make
	Universal Design for Learning		
a	Aligns with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines to the extent possible		
b	Instructions are free of wordiness, irrelevant information, unusual words or colloquialisms individuals may not understand, particularly those with cognitive or learning disabilities or limited English proficiency		
c	Any supplementary materials/resources are either included or easily accessible (regardless of location, SES, etc)		
d	A meaningful, robust process to mitigate bias that includes one or more review cycles, including revisions and action steps is in place.		
	Compliance		
d	Allows for common conditions for all learners taking the assessment		
e	Compliant with established standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)		
	Cost		
f	Free or low-cost, making it broadly accessible to as		

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	many users as possible		
Inclusive Content and Bias Mitigation			
g	Content will be familiar to opportunity seekers from diverse cultural, gender, linguistic, and other groups		
h	Reflects a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, ensuring that no group is unfairly advantaged		
Fair Evaluation Criteria			
i	Consistent and objective, avoiding subjectivity or favoritism, ensuring results are based on competency and not influenced by personal biases or stereotypes		
j	Scoring criteria are clear and unambiguous		

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