LER Engagement and Implementation Tool

This tool has been developed for colleges and universities that are ready to establish or grow a learning and employment record (LER) system to support skills-based learning and hiring. Use this tool to determine your current stage of development across the categories identified. Colleges and universities in the effective practice stage of development are best positioned to empower underserved adult learners.

To maximize this tool, begin with each category (e.g., faculty engagement and development) then review the LER foundation description for that category to determine the optimal practice. Use the proceeding stages (e.g., new/emerging) to pinpoint your current level of implementation.

Please also refer to *Rethinking Community College Systems for a Skills-Based Talent Ecosystem: A Playbook for Learning and Employment Records* for examples and key strategies that will help you succeed.

		LER STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT: SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEM			
		LER Foundation	**New/Emerging**	**Developing**	**Effective Practice**
			Has general understanding and information on digital credentials with demonstrated system interest	Acknowledges the role of skills-based learning for lifelong postsecondary pathways. Begins to develop standard policies and procedures	Has broad and deep understanding of digital credentials and uses them as tools to align and demonstrate learning and experiences across the talent ecosystem
Faculty Engagement and Development	**Learning Evaluation**	To enable skill to skill matching, postsecondary courses and programs must be assessed using frameworks shared across the education and employment ecosystem	Academic programs are mapped to outcomes, and credit is awarded using competency-based assessments	Has policies and procedures to receive, review, and assess learning from other postsecondary providers, including transfer and military	Has the ability to demonstrate skill mastery and gaps using frameworks shared across the education and employment ecosystem, both awarding skills-based credit and recognizing skills-based achievements
	Curricular Flexibility	Worker-learners and employers want choice, affordability, and efficiency; the ability to capture incremental learning is fundamental to providing individualized training without redundancies of time and cost	Awareness and access to technology and training to adapt programs across modes of delivery, scheduling and training cycles, and credit options	Incentives and support to rightsize learning as microcredentials, badges, short-term certificates, and noncredit options	Are able to create and implement custom training across credit formats, time cycles, and modes of delivery based on identified skills gaps
Workforce Partnerships		Establishment of trust based on shared understanding and expertise will accelerate collaboration and adoption of LERs.	PULSE Program-aligned advisory boards are aware and interested in competency frameworks to better align training with workplace needs; faculty and hiring managers explore and adopt competency frameworks for cross walking between learning and work experience.	PARTNERSHIPS Sector partnerships have a regular meeting cadence and work together to identify occupational demand, remove barriers to training (e.g. clinical placements in health care, equipment needs for training in manufacturing), and explore and invest in effective training models	PIPELINES Tight alignment between faculty, employers, and sectors supports direct-hire pipelines, custom training options, and incumbent worker upskilling pathways; the community supports a developmental, human-centered approach to the employment ecosystem (K–12, social services, regional workforce agencies, and training providers)

		LER Foundation	New/Emerging	Developing	Effective Practice
Student Support		Closing skill gaps depends on engaging an inclusive, diverse pool of worker-learners and is a core principle of LERs	Awareness of student mobility and lifelong learning patterns; early conceptions of incorporating and extending access and attainment initiatives for underrepresented minority (URM) and adult students to all worker-learners	Efforts to rethink recruitment, enrollment, academic advising, academic support, student services, and career coaching enable seamless on- and off-ramps for worker-learners	Student support structures and processes center skills to support custom credential to career pathways for worker-learners
Data	**Standardization**	LERs depend on the ability to issue and consume digital credentials using standardized data	Awareness of national frameworks and competency models. Established processes for human validation	Engagement with employers to adoption of common standards. Testing/coding of skills across LMS, SIS, HRIS/talent management systems	Utilization and refinement of a credential wallet across the talent ecosystem (industry/region/employers)
	Sharing	Data sharing agreements are complex and political and pose high risk to an LER solution; building partnerships, trust, and legal protections are necessary and time-consuming but fundamental to trust	Engage ecosystem partners and initiate data sharing agreements (K–12, postsecondary, labor/workforce, industry organizations, employers)	Establish data governance policies, structures, and work cadence	Have active LER pilots that allow individuals to share LERs from community colleges to employers, including a feedback loop back to identify effectiveness of training and gaps for improvement
Technical Capacity	**Systems**	Trust and use of LERs will depend on verification, security, sovereignty (user-ownership), and portability of data-rich digital credentials	Awareness of interoperability standards; research on LMS and SIS specifications, limitations, and procurement horizons	Engagement with employers to define technical specifications for verification services and wallet providers. Exploration of API integration between LMS, SIS, and HRIS with external credential services (e.g., badges)	Utilization and refinement of LER across talent ecosystem (industry/region/employers)
	Digital Readiness	LERs depend on technological trust and knowledge from individual faculty and staff	Personnel have access to and incentives to use digital tools and develop proficiency using them	Roles and responsibilities include expectations of technical proficiency	Units integrate automation for standardized tasks (e.g., credit awards for known experiences) to optimize human efforts for customized needs
Infrastructure, Policies, and Processes		Driving purpose of LERs is to be a vehicle to align education and experience achievements with workforce needs	States/systems engage questions of purpose (e.g., what learning does the state pay for? Where is learning happening? How do we connect citizens to quality learning?) (see Alabama Talent Triad)	State/system identifies and prioritizes policies, processes, structures, governance, and shared investments to meet objectives	Operation of new structures and utilization of data informs and refines the alignment of workforce pipelines