Understanding and Assessing Professional Credentials and Training

There is a wide variety of data protection credentials in the marketplace, with differing requirements and features. These credentials may also be subject to varying levels of third-party oversight and validation (accreditation). Understanding these differences will help organizations and individuals choose the right credential for the task at hand.

This chart, based on a survey of the global marketplace*, provides a quick reference to the different types of credentials and their component parts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>TRAINING CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>CERTIFICATE PROGRAM</th>
<th>PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>LICENSE</th>
<th>Factors to consider when assessing an organization offering credentials:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRAINING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMENYES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMENYES</td>
<td>• Does the training simply teach you how to take the test?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENT: An exam with a set score for passing or failing</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMENYES</td>
<td>• Does the exam assess experience and competence, or merely retention of knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCREDITATION: An assessment by a third party of the quality and integrity of the credential (i.e., ISO 17024)</td>
<td>SOMENYES</td>
<td>SOMENYES</td>
<td>SOMENYES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>• Does the credential have independent accreditation from a third party?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUING EDUCATION: An ongoing education requirement, after the initial training and assessment</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>• Does the credential require ongoing education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOBTASK ANALYSIS: A study of the skills and knowledge used by actual practitioners of the credentialed field</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>• Is the credential based on real-world job requirements or simply a test of knowledge?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ARE IMPORTANT?

• Is the credentialing body for profit or not-for-profit?
• Is the credential local, regional, or global in scope? How broadly is it recognized and understood?
• Does the credentialing body offer continuing education for the credential?
• Does the credentialing body offer connection to a broader professional community?

WHY IS ACCREDITATION IMPORTANT?

An independent accreditation of a credential provides a high degree of assurance as to the substance and integrity of a certification program.

WHAT IS A “JOB TASK ANALYSIS” (JTA)?

A formal process to determine what professionals in a particular field do, under what conditions, and with what levels of knowledge and skill. A “JTA” is a requirement for accreditation under ISO 17024.

*Sources:
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium
Institute for Credentialing Excellence
U.S. Federal Trade Commission
U.S. Department of Labor
EU Commission’s Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion