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### **New ANSI Accreditation Program to Improve Quality of U.S. Workforce**

**Washington, DC, June 18, 2007** – In response to calls from government and industry for a national system to better protect the public from under-qualified or unqualified workers, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has announced its intent to launch an accreditation program for the organizations that issue demand-based education and training certificates to U.S. workers.

Certificates indicate that an individual has attended a course, passed a test or reached a specific standard of knowledge; they are typically issued by community colleges and universities, employers, independent for-profit education programs, and professional and trade associations.

A recognized leader in the accreditation of third party programs, ANSI will partner with educators, industry and government experts to develop the standards of quality and procedural requirements upon which the new accreditation program will be based.

“The quality of certificate programs in the United States varies widely,” explained Lane Hallenbeck, ANSI vice president of accreditation services. “It is becoming increasingly difficult for consumers, employers, government agencies and others who rely upon a skilled workforce to identify which certificates are legitimate.”

A 2005 report from the U.S. Department of Education indicates that nearly nine million adults receive support from their employers to pursue degree, diploma or certificate programs. According to [survey results](#) published by IES, the national center for education statistics, the number of postsecondary institutions that offered certificate programs designed to be completed entirely through distance education more than doubled between 1998 and 2001.

However, there is no nationwide regulation or monitoring consistently applied to all bodies that offer certificates – nor is there a nationally recognized set of criteria to qualify for any specific credential. The number of certificates that can be obtained via the Internet with virtually no requirement for training, experience or other qualifications is also growing rapidly.

“Consumers and employers in both the private and public sectors need to be able to distinguish between qualified workers and those with fraudulent qualifications,” added Dr. Roy Swift, ANSI program director, personnel certifier accreditation program. “This is becoming an increased threat to health, safety and security because the three largest growing areas for certificates are healthcare, construction and homeland security.”

An exploratory meeting hosted by ANSI last month in Washington, DC, began to define the accreditation program’s core elements, and identify issues and requirements that will need to be addressed during its development. Participation included educators; representatives of the construction, engineering, manufacturing industries; and stakeholders from the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, Labor and Defense, along with the Food and Drug Administration and the Office of Personnel Management.

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ANSI has formed an advisory panel to assist in designing the accreditation system so that it addresses the needs of U.S. stakeholders, identifies and responds to existing gaps, and reflects best practices in certificate program development and operation. Interested parties from the education and credentialing communities, consumer organizations, industry and government are invited to join the panel. For additional information, contact Dr. Roy Swift ([rswift@ansi.org](mailto:rswift@ansi.org); 202.331.3617).

ANSI is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance U.S. global competitiveness and the American quality of life by promoting, facilitating, and safeguarding the integrity of the voluntary standardization and conformity assessment system. Its membership is comprised of businesses, professional societies and trade associations, standards developers, government agencies, and consumer and labor organizations. The Institute represents the diverse interests of more than 125,000 companies and organizations and 3.5 million professionals worldwide.

The Institute currently administers accreditation programs for standards developers, product and personnel certification bodies, and the registrars of quality and environmental management systems. ANSI is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), the official U.S. representative to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and, via the U.S. National Committee, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

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