

Kindling the Flame

Recertifying made easy through emerging electronic media

IF YOU'VE NEVER considered obtaining an ASQ certification, you should know there is a positive correlation between holding a certification and earning potential. According to the 2013 QP Salary Survey, a supplier quality engineer who holds a Six Sigma Black Belt certification earns an average of 26.2% more than his uncertified counterpart.¹ While this income premium varies by position and certification type, it's obvious that, in general, holding a certification generates more earning potential.

As a certification holder, I understand obtaining a certification is only half of the battle—retaining it is the other half. Certain ASQ certifications, such as quality process analyst and quality technician, are designated as vocational. After candidates meet the minimum experience and educational requirements and pass the multiple-choice exam, they retain these

as lifetime achievements without further requirements.

Other certifications, however, such as calibration technician and reliability engineer, are considered professional certifications, and they require recertification every three years by obtaining a minimum number of recertification units (RU) within the respective body of knowledge (BoK).²

A quality professional can obtain RUs through various means and under several categories such as employment, meetings, publishing and others. But with the explosion of online training available through websites and programs such as iTunes U, YouTube and edX, it's easy to obtain RUs at no cost and without leaving your home or office.

Online earning

Under the category of professional de-

velopment, you can earn RUs by attending an ASQ division conference or similar training events. Online events, such as webinars, also are acceptable, and they're useful learning tools because the speakers can share graphics, videos and other content with a group over the internet. Organizations often will record their webinars and archive them on their web-

sites for future on-demand viewing, and you can easily find them through online searches (see Table 1).

Another way to accrue RUs is by taking courses offered by a college or technical organization, either in person or online. To qualify for RUs under this category (courses for student credit), the course must apply to at least one area of your certification's BoK or be considered job enhancing. Recently though, a new course format emerged: massively open online courses (MOOC).

MOOCs are university-level courses with no admission requirements, offered entirely online and almost always free to students. Harvard and many other world-class universities have created MOOCs that cover a broad range of subjects, including numerous science, technology and business courses (introduction to computer programming, mechanical behavior of materials and supply chain fundamentals).

MOOCs typically include a video-based lecture series, periodic quizzes, assignments and forums that allow students and faculty to interact and evaluate their work. You can find MOOCs on sites such as edX, Coursera and Canvas Network. If you haven't tried this fascinating learning opportunity, you're missing out on a rapidly developing educational trend.

Watch and learn

The category of electronic media allows you to earn RUs at home, and it's somewhat of a catchall for audio books, training videos and other digital content that directly apply to a certification's BoK. Two media outlets—YouTube and



Organizations with online webinar libraries / TABLE 1

Organization	Topic examples
Engineering News-Record	Construction, contract negotiation and project management
Stanford Center for Professional Development	Decision making, risk management and human-computer interaction
Cisco WebEx	Business leadership, agile management and cloud computing
American Institute of Steel Construction	Metallurgy, welding and fastening systems
Engineering for Change	Renewable energy, emerging technologies and sustainability

Quality-related channels / TABLE 2

Organization	Topic examples
MIT OpenCourseWare	Math, physics, computer science and economics
National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning	Chemistry, electronics, technology, metallurgy and design
Yale Courses	Engineering, finance, psychology and statistics
Columbia Business School	Business law, entrepreneurship, public policy and global finance
Eli the Computer Guy	Networking, web design, mobile technologies and ecommerce

iTunes—are great sources for content related to the quality profession.

With more than a billion unique users every month and 300 hours of new video content uploaded every minute,³ YouTube is a behemoth among websites. Assuming you don't live in a cave, you already know it's the world's preeminent video library, and beyond all those videos of

electronic media is the iTunes Store, available through Apple's iTunes software. Within the iTunes Store, users can access millions of digital media files including informational podcasts or content on iTunes U directories.

While podcasts (formatted as audio or video files) mostly consist of news, entertainment and edutainment, the dili-

learning institutions around the world. Today, iTunes U boasts more than 75,000 lectures from more than 800 institutions on a wide spectrum of diverse topics.

Socrates is often attributed as saying, "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel."⁴ Likewise, one of the primary goals of ASQ's certification program is to encourage the continual growth of quality professionals through career-long learning, and now more than ever, this learning is just a click away. **QP**

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cats and people falling down, there's a vast amount of educational and training content that's perfect for certification holders looking to stock up on electronic media RUs.

Some users prefer searching YouTube's various channels for RU-worthy content. You can start with the education channel and move through subheadings such as law, medicine and languages. Table 2 highlights instructional channels that may be relevant to quality professionals.

Another juggernaut in the world of

gent seeker can find expertly produced podcast episodes on language learning, public speaking, curriculum development and much more.

iTunes U was established by Apple specifically to house and distribute podcasts created by universities and

REFERENCES AND NOTE

1. Max Christian Hansen, "Certifiably Valuable," *Quality Progress*, December 2013, pp. 45-51.
2. See asq.org/cert/recertification for complete details on the recertification process.
3. Aaron Davis, "Digital World; You Are the Music," *Exploration.io*, <http://exploration.io/2014-youtube-statistics>.
4. "Socrates Quotes," *Thinkexist.com*, <http://tinyurl.com/socratesedu>.



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WHY CERTIFY?

Watch ASQ TV's video, "Why Certify?" to learn about the benefits of becoming certified, as well as the impact it had on a Six Sigma Black Belt's career. Watch it at <http://videos.asq.org/why-certify>.