Professional Organizations in Instructional Design and Technology: A Comparative Analysis

AECT • Online Learning Consortium • UPCEA • Quality Matters

Prepared for presentation at the AECT International Convention, Chicago, November 2026 | AECT and Quality Matters data current as of 16 October 2026; OLC and UPCEA data as of 17 September 2026.

Sources: each organization's public website and IRS Form 990 filings retrieved through ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer (AECT EIN 52-0885990; OLC EIN 26-1970287; UPCEA EIN 41-6030721; Quality Matters EIN 46-5503339), plus contemporaneous trade reporting.

Question / Sub-topic	AECT	Online Learning Consortium (OLC)	UPCEA	Quality Matters (QM)	Commentary & Summary
Question 1 — Target audience for membership, membership size, growth, and overall organizational health					
1a. Who the organization is for	• "Instructional designers, educators and business professionals who provide leadership in the area of Educational Technology research and application" (AECT's own words). • Center of gravity is academic: IDT faculty, doctoral students, and academically-oriented practitioners. • Members in colleges and universities, the Armed Forces, industry, museums, libraries and hospitals; all 50 states plus international. • Structural tells: a Graduate Student Assembly, three Springer research journals, a Research & Theory Division, an Early Career Symposium. • Founded 1923 — the oldest professional home for the field of educational communications and technology.	• "A collaborative community of higher education leaders and innovators" advancing quality digital teaching and learning. • Online learning administrators, instructional designers, faculty and faculty developers, quality and assessment staff. • Accelerate convention is marketed across K-12, higher education and corporate L&D — broad sector reach. • Founded 1999 as the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) with Alfred P. Sloan Foundation funding; independent nonprofit since 2008; renamed OLC in 2014.	• "The online and professional education association." Deans, administrators, marketing professionals, program directors, instructional designers, directors. • Organized around units and budgets, not research specialties: five focus areas — Leadership in Online Learning; Professional & Continuing Education; Credential Innovation; Marketing, Enrollment & Student Success; Research & Consulting. • Headquartered at One Dupont Circle, Washington DC — higher education's association row; signals a policy and advocacy orientation. • Founded 1915 as the National University Extension Association — chronologically the oldest of the four, though founded for university extension rather than for educational technology.	• A quality assurance standards body and training provider, not a membership association in the conventional sense. Mission: define and maintain quality assurance in online learning. • Serves organizations across four sectors — higher education, K-12, continuing and professional education, and course publishers / education service providers — each with its own rubric. • The people inside them: instructional designers, faculty, faculty developers, QA coordinators, department chairs, online administrators. • Began inside the MarylandOnline, Inc. consortium; built on a 2003 FIPSE grant from the U.S. Department of Education; became a standalone nonprofit in 2014. Annapolis, MD; staff work fully virtually.	• Four organizations, four theories of what a professional body is. AECT sells scholarly identity; OLC sells practitioner capability; UPCEA sells enterprise strategy; QM sells a standard. • QM is the outlier — closer to an accreditor or standards body than a learned society. Its governance runs through a board and three advisory councils rather than through elected member constituencies. • Only AECT is built around individual scholarly identity. The other three are built around institutional subscriptions. • Founding dates: UPCEA 1915, AECT 1923, OLC 1999, QM 2003 as a program within MarylandOnline and 2014 as an independent nonprofit. UPCEA and AECT are legacy associations adapting to digital learning; OLC and QM were born from it.
1b. Primary membership unit and internal structure	• Individual membership is the core product; institutional membership is a supplementary partnership program. • Eleven Divisions plus a Graduate Student Assembly and one SIG (Education in the Health Professions), each with its own elected board. • Important change: under the board structure adopted 20 March 2025, divisions no longer each hold a seat on the AECT Board of Directors. The board is now President, President-elect, Past President, Treasurer, Board Secretary, Ethics Officer, a single Division Representative, two At-large members, and the CEO ex officio. • Divisions remain the main route to elected leadership and continue to	• Institution-first. Organizational membership extends to every full-time employee. • A $195 individual membership exists, but the model is campus-level subscription plus professional development sold to the people those subscriptions cover. • No division, chapter or network structure. Community is organized by event and by program cohort (IELOL, certificate cohorts, Mastery Series).	• Institutional only. No general individual membership; dues buy unlimited professional memberships. • Nine Networks, five geographic Regions, and two institution-seat Councils (Chief Online Learning Officers; Credential Innovation). • Each institution designates one Institutional Representative, one Alternate Representative, and one Chief Online Learning Officer for the Online Leadership Roundtable.	• Institution-first subscription covering all faculty and staff. An individual option exists but is explicitly a fallback for people whose institution does not subscribe. • The organizing role is the QM Coordinator — each subscriber designates one (up to two), trained free, who champions implementation and tracks usage. • One special interest group: the QM Instructional Designers Association (QM IDA). No divisions, chapters, regions or networks beyond it. • Three advisory bodies (Academic Advisory Council, K-12 Advisory Council, International Strategy Council) plus a volunteer corps organized by	• The unit of membership drives everything downstream — who pays, who shows up, and what networking looks like. • AECT's division structure still gives an individual a fast path to elected leadership, but the March 2025 restructure consolidated eleven divisional board seats into one Division Representative. Divisional influence at board level is narrower than it was, and that is worth acknowledging before an AECT audience rather than glossing. • UPCEA's networks and regions give a whole staff a low marginal cost to participate, but they are affinity groups without governance power.

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	shape convention programming and awards, but divisional voice at board level is now consolidated into one shared representative. • Divisions span Culture, Learning & Technology; Design & Development; Distance Learning; Emerging Learning Technologies; International; Learner Engagement; Organizational Training & Performance; Research & Theory; Systems Thinking & Change; Teacher Education; Technology Integrated Learning.			role: coordinators, facilitators, peer reviewers, master reviewers, program reviewers, research colleagues. • An independent layer of state and regional QM consortia (QM Ohio, OKQM, Maryland) runs its own meetings — functionally similar to AECT's affiliates.	• OLC and QM both price institutionally without building an institutional community structure — though QM's role-based volunteer corps partly compensates. • Even after the restructure, AECT remains the only one of the four where members elect the leaders of their sub-communities.
1c. Membership size and growth	• Does not publish a current membership count. The About page says only "members from all 50 states and internationally." • Older boilerplate on affiliate and third-party sites cites roughly 2,200 or "thousands"; this could not be verified against any current AECT source. • 1080 members, down from 1458 in September 2024. 1219 in September 2025.	• Does not publish a membership count. Public directories of organizational and corporate members exist, but no totals. • A third-party conference listing estimates roughly 2,000 attendees at Accelerate 2026 — indicative only, not an OLC source.	• The only one of the four to publish a number: "nearly 10,000 individuals strong and counting" (dues schedule page). • Separately describes CORe as offering access to "15,000+ educators, leaders, and colleagues" — likely including non-members; the two figures do not reconcile. • Use approximately 10,000 individuals across member institutions as the defensible figure.	• Publishes cumulative historical claims rather than current counts: "more than 1500 colleges and universities" have joined the QM community; "more than 60,000 education professionals" trained; "thousands" of courses certified. • Those are lifetime totals from the About page, not a current subscriber count. QM publishes no annual subscriber number. • A public, searchable directory of current member organizations exists — making QM the easiest of the four to verify institution by institution even without a headline figure. • Growth direction is better read from the financials than from any published count.	• Membership opacity is itself a finding: three of four organizations will not say how big they are. • The figures are not comparable units. UPCEA's ~10,000 are individuals covered by institutional dues; AECT's members each pay their own $225; QM's 60,000 are people trained over two decades, not subscribers. • Report any count only with its unit of measure attached, and flag the three non-disclosures explicitly. • QM's public member directory is a model the other three could adopt at no cost.
1d. Financial health (IRS Form 990)	• 501(c)(6) trade association, EIN 52-0885990. The AECT Foundation is a separate 501(c)(3), EIN 23-7328734. • FY2024: revenue $1,025,910; total assets $743,654; liabilities $110,835; net assets $632,819; surplus +$251,216. • Net assets: $20,624 (2019) → $152,353 (2020) → $284,058 (2021) → $373,021 (2022) → $381,603 (2023) → $632,819 (2024). • Concentration risk: 90.5% of FY2024 revenue was program services (dues plus convention); 8.7% contributions; 0.6% investment income.	• 501(c)(3) public charity, EIN 26-1970287. • Deficits in six of eight years from 2016 to 2023. Net assets fell from $3,305,143 (2016) to negative $683,244 (2023). • FY2023: revenue $5,962,018; expenses $6,699,312; deficit of $737,294. FY2024 revenue $5,951,961 — essentially flat. • Filed Chapter 11 Subchapter V on 20 December 2024 (Case 1:24-bk-12569, D. Mass.). Driver was disputed hotel attrition penalties on pre-pandemic contracts (~$274K Gaylord National; ~$76K Gaylord Rockies), not debt or revenue collapse. Docket activity continued into February 2026; emergence not publicly confirmed.	• 501(c)(3) public charity, EIN 41-6030721; fiscal year ends 30 June. • Surpluses in six of the eight years shown. FY2023: revenue $5,331,650; expenses $4,739,626; surplus +$592,024; net assets $2,040,680. • FY2025: revenue $7,249,374; total assets $7,033,051. Revenue roughly doubled from $3,546,848 in FY2022. • Carried $2.76M in liabilities against $4.80M in assets in FY2023, including a $500,000 unsecured note; much is likely deferred membership and conference revenue.	• 501(c)(3) public charity, EIN 46-5503339, Annapolis, Maryland. QM has filed Form 990 since FY2014; the June 2020 IRS ruling date reflects a later determination letter, not the founding. • The pandemic in one line: revenue jumped 44% in 2020 to $7,473,612 as institutions rushed online, peaked at $7,486,127 in 2021, then declined every year since. • FY2023: revenue $6,752,515; expenses $6,897,451; deficit of $144,936 — the first operating loss. FY2024 revenue $5,944,312, down about 21% from the 2021 peak. • Reserves remain strong: net assets $4,093,948 (2023), roughly seven months of operating cost; total assets $6,742,270 (2024). • Highest revenue concentration of the four — about 97% program services. Contributions were $18,554 in FY2023.	• Four distinct trajectories: AECT small but recovering (net assets up ~30-fold from a near-zero base); OLC flat and under court protection; UPCEA growing fast; QM contracting from a pandemic peak but holding the strongest reserves relative to its size. • QM is the clearest case of an organization structurally advantaged by COVID now normalizing — a useful counterweight to the OLC story. • The mechanism matters more than the numbers. AECT, OLC and QM each depend heavily on one flagship event plus a single product line; UPCEA runs four conferences plus a consulting practice. • All figures come from IRS Form 990 filings and lag 12–18 months. Verify OLC's bankruptcy status before presenting.

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				Also sells rubric workbooks (gross $293,001) and reports unrelated business income.	
Question 2 — Membership types and fees: what it costs to join and participate; individual and institutional options					
2a. Individual membership	• Regular $225. Students or Retired $125. International 1 $169. International 2 $113. International 3 $57. • Rates effective 25 March 2024. Valid one year from date of purchase, not a calendar year. • International tiers indexed to IMF GDP per capita of country of residence: Tier 1 $30,001–$40,000; Tier 2 $15,001–$30,000; Tier 3 up to $15,000.	• Individual Membership $195 per year. • A free "community membership" account also exists, but it does NOT qualify for conference or event discounts — a common and costly point of confusion.	• No general individual membership. • Emeritus / Transitional (Individual) $65 — a courtesy rate for retirees and those between institutional appointments.	• $195 per year for one rubric — Higher Education, K-12, or Continuing & Professional Education. • Includes the fully annotated web-based rubric, a printed Rubric Standards for Course Design workbook, the Self-Review tool, Course Review Management System access, PD and conference discounts, free QM IDA membership, QM Success Stories webinars and the QM Research Library. • Positioned explicitly for people whose organization is not a subscriber. The annotated rubric may not be shared with others.	• Three of four can be joined by an individual, at strikingly similar prices: AECT $225, OLC $195, QM $195. UPCEA cannot, except at the $65 emeritus rate. • The price similarity hides very different contents: AECT buys journals, OLC buys discounts, QM buys a rubric and a toolset. • QM's $195 is the best value in the study for a working instructional designer — it includes free membership in an active ID community (QM IDA). • AECT remains the only one where the individual membership is the organization's core product rather than a fallback.
2b. Institutional / organizational membership	• Institutional Partner Program, three levels: Bronze $2,500, Silver $4,500, Gold $6,500. • Sold by direct contact (aect@aect.org) rather than online checkout. • A program-level partnership and affiliation statement — it does not confer individual memberships on staff. • Current institutional members include Kennesaw State University, University of Cincinnati Online and Idaho State University.	• Priced by size and covers ALL full-time employees. • Universities and colleges by student FTE: <749 $1,200; 750–4,999 $1,700; 5,000–14,999 $1,900; 15,000–24,999 $2,300; 25,000–39,999 $2,700; 40,000–54,999 $3,500; 55,000–69,999 $4,500; 70,000+ $5,500. • Community colleges 10% less throughout ($1,080–$4,950). K-12 by teacher FTE $700–$3,000; K-12 Educational Service Center $1,250 flat. • State and Regional Offices $1,500; Non-Profit Associations $1,500; Corporations $1,250–$3,750. System pricing negotiable.	• Institutional dues by Carnegie Classification and enrollment; membership year 1 July – 30 June; unlimited roster. • Private Research $3,000–$4,900. Public Research $2,900–$4,900. Master's $1,700–$3,100. Baccalaureate / Special Focus $1,300–$2,300. Two-Year $1,200–$2,500. • Canadian $1,200–$3,100; System Office $2,900; Non-North American $980; For-Profit $3,000–$6,600. • Corporate $1,500–$3,800 by employee count; For-Profit Affiliate $3,000; Non-Profit Affiliate $980.	• Higher Education: Basic $1,925. Full — Small (1–2 online programs) $2,545; Standard (3+) $3,815. Consortium $1,925 (Small) or $2,860 (Standard) per organization. Publisher or Vendor $3,630. • All cover one organization, all faculty and staff. K-12 and System subscriptions run on their own schedules. • Basic includes the annotated rubric, Course Review Management System, My Custom Reviews, custom usage reports, two free QM Coordinator training seats and free QM IDA membership. • Full adds a license to facilitate APPQMR and Intro to QM in-house, optional IYOC/DYOC facilitation licenses, and the ability to run Official Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews. • Supplementals: QM For Students $550; IYOC facilitator license $1,100/yr (Full) or $825 (Full-Small). Essentials bundles from $4,602.75.	• OLC, UPCEA and QM all sell unlimited institutional seats on a size-based sliding scale. A mid-sized university falls in roughly the $1,900–$3,800 band at all three. • AECT's institutional product is categorically different: a sponsorship and affiliation badge, not a seat license. Worth stating plainly. • Worked example — a 20,000-student public master's institution: roughly $2,300 to OLC, $3,100–$3,400 to UPCEA, $2,545–$3,815 to QM, each covering every employee, versus $225 per person to AECT. • QM is the only one whose institutional tier changes what you are licensed to do, not merely what you pay.
2c. Terms, payment and fine print	• Card payments carry an additional 3.5% processing fee — a $225 membership is $232.88 online.	• Membership required for the member rate at conferences; institutional affiliation verified by .edu address or emailed proof.	• Each institution designates one Institutional Representative, one Alternate Representative and one Chief Online Learning Officer seat.	• Subscription runs one year from activation, not a calendar or academic year, and requires a signed Subscription Agreement before activation.	• AECT's 3.5% card surcharge and no-refund policy are unusually restrictive for a $225 product and are worth noting as friction.

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	• Check or purchase order by arrangement; no wire transfers; no refunds on dues. • All membership types and fees "subject to change pending board review and approval." • Student, Retired and International rates require documented verification of eligibility.	• Free community memberships are explicitly excluded from all discounts. • OLC keeps current IPEDS FTE data on file to help institutions identify their dues band.	• Roster positions are not available to consultants or part-time temporary employees. • Corporate employees who also hold institutional appointments may not use the institutional account for corporate gain.	• Each organization must designate a QM Coordinator (up to two) at sign-up; the account cannot be activated without one. • Member pricing requires a current, valid subscription agreement — lapsed subscribers pay non-member rates. • Fees are subject to adjustment by QM at any time on 30 days' notice. • The annotated rubric is licensed, not owned: it may not be shared outside the subscribing organization, and individual subscribers may not share it at all.	• OLC's free-community-membership trap is the most practically useful warning in this study for a prospective member. • QM's pages carry no effective dates and some appear long-standing — confirm every QM figure before publication. • QM is the only one of the four licensing intellectual property rather than selling access; that shapes its whole relationship with members.
Question 3 — Discounted annual fees for students and special groups; membership tiers					
3a. Student rates	• $125 student / retired membership — a 44% discount off Regular. • Verification required, with deadlines of 5:00pm PST on 17 August and 12 October for convention rates. • Convention student / retired member registration: $325 early bird, $425 regular, $580 late. • A Graduate Student Assembly, Foundation scholarships and internships, and the Design & Development Competition built around student teams.	• No student membership. • Accelerate offers a flat $550 student registration, requiring an application with proof of full-time enrollment and an issued discount code. • No student community structure, assembly or division.	• No student membership, no student rate, no student conference discount. • No student assembly, division or network.	• No student membership and no student rate. The $195 individual subscription is open to graduate students at full price. • "QM For Students" is not a student membership — it is a $550 supplemental subscription an institution buys to provide quality-related resources to its students. • No student conference rate, no student assembly, no graduate pipeline structure of any kind.	• The strongest single contrast in the study, and it sharpens with four organizations: three of four have no student membership at all. • AECT is the only one of the four that has built a pipeline for the next generation of the field. • For a doctoral IDT program, this alone should determine where students are sent. • It also explains part of AECT's lower revenue — a base weighted toward $125 students and $57–$169 international members cannot generate UPCEA's or QM's dues income.
3b. Other discounted categories	• Retired members share the $125 student rate. • Three GDP-indexed international tiers down to $57, plus an international convention deposit option. • A Registration + Membership bundle at a discount, but only by emailing AECT to have the option enabled. • One-day convention registration $220. Foundation-funded convention support available.	• Community colleges receive a standing 10% dues discount. • Conference: Academic / Military / Government / Non-profit member rate $995 early bird versus $1,495 general; K-12 member rate $695. • Group packages for institutional members only (5, 10 or 20 seats). • No one-day rate. No retiree rate found.	• Non-North American institution $980 flat regardless of size — the cheapest entry point. • Non-Profit Affiliate $980. Two-Year under 5,000 students $1,200. Canadian under 10,000 $1,200. Baccalaureate / Special Focus under 2,500 $1,300. • Emeritus / Transitional $65. • No one-day conference passes or partial-attendance discounts.	• Consortium pricing ($1,925–$2,860 per organization) and separate System pricing. • International non-English-speaking higher education institutions may qualify for a discounted rate on request. • Conference group discount: $75 off per person for groups of five or more registering together. • Professional development group rates: a 20-participant APPQMR group session is $3,000 member versus $3,800 non-member; most other group sessions $1,500 / $2,000. • Free QM Coordinator training (two seats per subscription); 10% Teaching Online Certificate package discount; BOGO and buy-two-get-one offers on virtual conferences.	• Each organization widens access differently — AECT by global income, OLC by sector, UPCEA by institution type and size, QM by consortium and group purchasing. • AECT's GDP-indexed international pricing remains the most equity-conscious scheme of the four. • AECT and QM both sell one-day conference access ($220 and $575 member respectively); OLC and UPCEA sell none. • QM's free Coordinator training is the only free credential-bearing training anywhere in this comparison.

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3c. Are there genuine benefit tiers?	• No. Individual categories are eligibility-based price bands, not service tiers. • A $57 International 3 member and a $225 Regular member receive identical benefits and identical voting rights. • Tiering exists only on the institutional side (Bronze / Silver / Gold).	• Yes — genuinely two-level. • Individual ($195) is a light tier: webinars, discounted pricing, awards eligibility, networking. • Organizational adds the Quality Scorecards, consulting access, the Course Review Assistant GPT, Fellows nomination, job postings and deeper discounts.	• No tiering within institutional membership. • A $1,200 two-year college and a $4,900 flagship research university receive identical benefits. • The sliding scale is an ability-to-pay mechanism, not a service ladder.	• Yes — by far the most elaborate tiering of the four, and the only one where the tier changes what you are licensed to do. • Basic versus Full is a capability gate: Full buys the right to facilitate QM's workshops in-house and to run Official Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews. • The economics are stark. A QM-managed official HE certification review runs about $1,300 member / $1,700 non-member; a subscriber-managed full official review costs $100 with membership — or $0 if a certified Course Review Manager runs it. • Further tiering by size (1–2 vs 3+ online programs) and by sector (HE, K-12, CPE, Publisher/Vendor, Consortium, System).	• Two of four gate benefits by level, and they gate the most valuable thing each owns: OLC's Quality Scorecard is institutional-only, and QM's review licence sits behind Full. • QM's tiering is the only one with a clear break-even calculation attached — an institution reviewing more than a few courses a year should be at Full. • AECT and UPCEA both treat differential pricing as equity rather than upselling, which is a defensible values position worth naming.
Question 4 — Membership benefits, differentiating free benefits from paid benefits					
4a. Free / open to non-members	• News blog and public website content; a public Job Board. • Three sponsored open-access journals: International Journal of Designs for Learning; The Journal of Applied Instructional Design; Journal of Technology-Integrated Lessons and Teaching. • Several open books, including A Code of Professional Ethics and Survey of Instructional Design Models. • The AECT Definition of the Field and the Code of Professional Ethics. • Convention attendance as a non-member at $850, or one day at $220.	• The entire Online Learning Journal — Diamond open access, no paywall, no author fees. • OLC Insights articles and the OLC Today newsletter. • Research reports, playbooks and toolkits, including the Faculty Development and GenAI Playbook (with Every Learner Everywhere). • Curated collections on Accessibility, Quality and AI. • The Industry Job Postings board; some webinars; a free (discount-less) community account.	• The Unbound journal archive. • Five blogs: The Pulse of Higher Ed; Online: Trending Now (Ray Schroeder); UPCEA Updates; From the CEO; Industry Insights. • Press releases; Government Affairs coverage and Policy Matters primers. • The UPCEA AI Hub and all three Hallmarks of Excellence frameworks. • Research report summaries; the Career Center; some sponsor-hosted webinars.	• "Elements of Quality Matters" — a free self-paced introductory course on Canvas Network, open to anyone. • All CHLOE reports, free to download, including CHLOE 10 (2025). • The published Standards list from the HE Rubric, 7th Edition, as a free PDF. The annotated rubric — the part that makes it usable — is subscriber-only. • Online Learning Webinars and Research Webinars (QM Success Stories are member-only). • Public directories of QM-Certified Courses, QM-Certified Programs and QM Member Organizations; the Bridge to Quality design guide; a free D2L master class. • Non-members may purchase PD, reviews and conference registration at non-member rates — you need not subscribe to use QM.	• All four give away more than members realize. OLC's best asset (a Q1 journal) is free to everyone; QM's most cited product (CHLOE) is free to everyone. • UPCEA and QM both give away frameworks and standards to build authority, then sell the apparatus that makes them operable — benchmarking data and consulting at UPCEA, the annotated rubric and review system at QM. • AECT gives away three open journals while keeping its two flagship Springer titles behind membership — the reverse of OLC's posture. • QM is the only one where you can transact without ever joining.
4b. Paid member benefits	• The AECT Reference Library: TechTrends, ETR&D, the Journal of Formative Design in Learning, the Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology, the Learning, Design & Technology Major Reference Work, Springer and Brill book lists, and the Educational Media and Technology Yearbook.	• Individual: free webinars; special recordings; $70 off workshops, $50 off Mastery Series, $210–$320 off ID certificates, $200 off conferences, $600 off IELOL; 20% off select publications; awards eligibility. • Organizational adds: benefits for all full-time employees; the interactive Quality Scorecard and Navigator; the Course Review Assistant GPT; OLC Consulting access; an official Quality	• "Second Opinion" — a free 30-minute consultation with UPCEA's lead consultants. • One seat each on the Council for Chief Online Learning Officers and the Council for Credential Innovation. • Member rates on custom consulting, market research and benchmarking studies.	• The fully annotated rubric — the core intellectual property and the reason most institutions subscribe. • The Course Review Management System plus My Custom Reviews for custom rubric worksheets, and Self and Internal Review tools. • The QM Research Library, curated by QM's Department of Innovation & Research.	• Each paid bundle reveals a theory of value. AECT sells access to scholarship; OLC sells discounts plus a quality framework; UPCEA sells peers, data and consultants; QM sells a licensed instrument and the system to operate it. • AECT's is the only bundle where the content library alone plausibly exceeds the dues — institutional subscriptions

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	• Discounted convention registration — $490 versus $850 early bird, a $360 saving that exceeds the $225 dues. • Eligibility to register for the Online Conference at all. • Division membership and the Higher Logic community platform. • Eligibility for board, committee, editorial and reviewer roles; awards and Foundation programs; publishing mentorship through the Center of Excellence for Publishing.	Scorecard Review; peer review of OLC journals; Fellows nomination. • Also two four-week job postings; publication promotion; the member logo; exclusive Workshop Pass pricing; deeper discounts ($100 workshops, $150–$175 Mastery Series, $350–$500 teaching certificates).	• CORe community; nine Networks; five Regions; UPlift mentorship. • Free webinars, Coffee Chats, Regional Salons and the DT&L virtual conference; member pricing on all conferences and the Digital Learning Academy. • Exclusive benchmarking studies, session slides and recordings; the member directory; Career Center posting.	• Free QM IDA membership for instructional designers, and two free seats in QM Coordinator training. • Custom usage reports so the Coordinator can track adoption; discounts on reviews, PD and conferences. • At Full level only: workshop facilitation licences and subscriber-managed official reviews. • QM AI Review Assistant (beta) — three free course evaluations per month for Full subscribers; currently Canvas-based members only.	to ETR&D and TechTrends cost multiples of $225. • QM's is the only bundle whose central benefit is a licence that lapses if you stop paying — the strongest renewal incentive of the four. • UPCEA publishes a Membership ROI Calculator; no other organization makes its value case that explicitly.
4c. Signature benefit	• The Reference Library — two Springer journals plus the Handbook and the Major Reference Work. • Nothing else in the field bundles this much peer-reviewed scholarship into a $225 membership.	• The Quality Scorecard suite — program-level, course review, Spanish-language, and the new Learning Experience Quality Standards. • Plus the institutional-only Course Review Assistant GPT. Widely adopted as an accreditation-adjacent benchmark.	• The benchmarking and consulting apparatus — the annual Benchmarking Online Enterprises study, the Hallmarks of Excellence frameworks, and access to UPCEA Research & Consulting at member rates.	• The QM Rubric and the peer-review certification process built on it. Everything else QM sells is scaffolding around that instrument. • The QM Certification Mark on a course or program is externally recognizable in a way no other product in this study is — it appears in accreditation self-studies, program marketing and state authorization documentation.	• The four organizations offer three genuinely distinct signature benefits, which supports the complements-not-substitutes reading. • The overlap matters: OLC's Quality Scorecard and QM's Rubric do the same job. These two are direct competitors in a way no other pair in this study is, and most institutions should choose one. • QM's mark carries the most external currency; AECT's library carries the most intellectual depth; UPCEA's data carries the most weight with a provost.
Question 5 — Regularly scheduled conferences, conventions and in-person events, plus special or occasional in-person events					
5a. Flagship in-person event	• AECT International Convention — AECT26, 3–7 November 2026, The Palmer House, Chicago. • Five days — the longest flagship of the four. • Prior year: 20–24 October 2025, Planet Hollywood, Las Vegas.	• OLC Accelerate — AC26, 16–19 November 2026, Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin, Orlando. • Four days. Theme: “Illuminate the Future.” • No virtual program in 2026 — the pandemic-era virtual option has been eliminated.	• UPCEA Annual Conference — 13–15 April 2027, Anaheim Marriott, Anaheim, California. • Three days. 2026: 15–17 April, New Orleans. 2028: 27–29 March, Washington DC. • Nine tracks, including a dedicated eDesign Collaborative track for instructional designers.	• QM Connect — the annual conference on quality assurance in online learning. • 2026: 26–28 October, Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Jacksonville, Florida. Three days, Monday through Wednesday. • Framing: “Impact Through Quality Connections.” Keynotes, panels and poster sessions. • All registrants receive access to recorded sessions through the attendee website.	• Four major conferences fall inside six weeks: QM Connect in late October, the AECT convention in early November, OLC Accelerate in mid-November and UPCEA's MEMS from late November. Three are their organizations' flagships; UPCEA's flagship Annual Conference sits separately in April. • On a consistent basis — early-bird, member, academic-equivalent rates — cost per day runs: AECT $490 over five days (~$98/day); OLC $995 over four days (~$249/day); QM $945 over three days (~$315/day); UPCEA $1,045 over three days (~$348/day). • AECT's convention is both the longest and by far the cheapest — a direct consequence of its academic audience and volunteer-driven programming. • The calendar collision is a genuine problem for anyone who would attend more than one, and the single most

Question / Sub-topic	AECT	Online Learning Consortium (OLC)	UPCEA	Quality Matters (QM)	Commentary & Summary
					actionable thing these organizations could fix together.
5b. Flagship registration costs	• Early bird (ends 17 Aug): Student/Retired member $325; Regular & International member $490; bundle registration + membership $715. • Regular (ends 12 Oct): $425 / $580 / $805. Late: $580 / $715 / $940. • Non-member $850. One-day $220. Add 3.5% for card payment. • Pre-convention workshops $15 before 27 October, $20 thereafter.	• Early bird through 21 Sept, then regular. General member $1,495 → $1,595; general non-member $1,695 → $1,795. • Academic / Military / Government / Non-profit: member $995 → $1,095; non-member $1,195 → $1,295. K-12: member $695 → $795. Student $550 flat. • Group packages (institutional members only): 5-person $4,600 → $5,100; 10-person $8,950 → $9,900; 20-person $17,500 → $19,200. • Add-ons: Leadership Network Symposium $595; Immersion Class half-day $345, full-day combo $595.	• Member $1,045 early (by 8 Dec 2026) / $1,145 regular (by 2 Mar 2027) / $1,270 late / $1,420 on-site. • Institutional non-member $1,445 / $1,545 / $1,670 / $1,820. • Corporate non-member $2,500 flat, $2,700 on-site. • No one-day passes or partial-attendance discounts. Full refund by 8 Dec; minus $250 through 2 Mar; none thereafter.	• Early bird (through 9 August 2026): $945 member / $1,045 non-member; single day $475 member / $525 non-member. • Regular (10 August – 21 September): $1,045 member / $1,145 non-member; single day $525 / $575. • Late (22 September – 26 October): $1,145 member / $1,195 non-member; single day $575 / $625. • Single-day registration covers Monday or Tuesday only — not Wednesday. • Group discount: $75 off per person for five or more registering together. • Fee includes breakfast all three mornings and lunch Monday and Tuesday; dinner on your own. Conference hotel rate $189 plus tax.	• The cost gap remains the study's most quotable finding, and it holds on a like-for-like basis. All early-bird member rates, academic-equivalent where offered: AECT $490 for five days; QM Connect $945 for three; OLC Accelerate $995 for four; UPCEA $1,045 for three. • AECT is roughly half the price of the next cheapest, for one to two more days. • Use these figures rather than headline rates. OLC's general member rate is $1,495, but the academic rate is the fair comparison to AECT, which has only one academic rate; and QM's $1,145 is a late rate, not an early-bird one. • QM's member / non-member spread is only $50–$100 — an order of magnitude narrower than the others. QM earns on PD and reviews, not on conference differentials. • Only AECT and QM sell single-day access ($220, and $475–$575 member depending on window).
5c. Other regular in-person events	• Pre-convention workshops, Tuesday morning only — six in 2026, 3 or 4 hours each, $15 / $20. • Early Career Symposium, hosted by the Research & Theory Division. • Design & Development Competition Phase 3 finalist presentations. • Division business meetings; university receptions; affiliate events such as the KSET luncheon.	• None — Accelerate is the only in-person national conference. • Immersion Classes and the Leadership Network Symposium are Accelerate add-ons. • OLC Innovate moved permanently virtual after 2024.	• Three additional national conferences, each three days. • MEMS (Marketing, Enrollment Management and Student Success) — next: 30 November – 2 December 2026, Orlando. • SOLAR (Summit for Online Leadership and Administration) — most recent: 29–31 July 2026, Boston. 2027 dates not published as of the data date. • Convergence: Credential Innovation, co-presented with AACRAO — most recent: 13–15 October 2026, Washington DC. 2027 dates not published as of the data date. • Plus regional in-person gatherings convened by the five regions.	• QM Regional conferences, referenced alongside QM Connect in QM's own event description. • Otherwise QM's portfolio is predominantly virtual — it is the only one of the four running more virtual conferences than in-person ones. • Independent state and regional QM consortia (QM Ohio, OKQM and others) hold their own in-person meetings, including a National QMC Meeting for QM Coordinators.	• UPCEA runs four in-person national conferences a year, of which the April Annual Conference is the flagship; AECT, OLC and QM run one each. That is the clearest structural difference in the study and explains much of the revenue gap. • QM compensates with volume of cheap virtual events rather than more in-person ones — a deliberately different cost structure. • AECT and QM both have an affiliate / consortium layer running independent regional meetings; OLC and UPCEA concentrate everything centrally.
5d. Special / occasional in-person events	• AECT International Publishing Summit — 7–11 June 2027, Royal Marine Hotel, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin, Ireland, for 75–100 scholars, editors and publishing professionals. • Two parts: Summit Convening (7–8 June) and Writing Studio (10–11 June). Intended to produce a "Dublin	• IELOL Residency Week — 3–6 August 2026 at George Washington University, Washington DC, as Phase 2 of the IELOL leadership program. • The Leadership Network Symposium (Orlando, 17 November 2026) doubles as IELOL Phase 4.	• Pre-conference executive institutes — notably the UPCEA + MIT Professional Education institute (July 2026) on data-driven strategy. • Awards ceremonies attached to each conference.	• On-site group professional development delivered at the institution — a 20-person APPQMR group session is $3,000 member / $3,800 non-member; other group sessions $1,500 / $2,000.	• AECT's Publishing Summit is the most ambitious new initiative by any of the four — an attempt to build a second flagship and diversify away from single-event dependence.

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	Declaration on Global Publishing Futures." • €1,970 (~$2,265 USD) for five days and six nights including hotel, breakfasts, lunches and two special events; convening-only option €1,275 (~$1,450). • A Summer Research Symposium is listed as "registration coming soon" with no 2026 dates.			• Face-to-face APPQMR sessions hosted by member institutions and consortia, often open to neighbouring campuses. • QM has no equivalent of AECT's Publishing Summit, OLC's IELOL residency or UPCEA's executive institutes.	• At roughly $2,265 all-inclusive it is also the most expensive single item in this study. • QM's model is the opposite: it takes training to the campus rather than bringing people to a destination, which is cheaper for the institution and lower-risk for QM. • Worth asking AECT directly whether the Summer Research Symposium is dormant or discontinued.
Question 6 — Online conferences, webinars and virtual events, including the cost and length of the "big events"					
6a. Major virtual conferences	• Next edition: AECT Online Conference 2027 — week of 5 April 2027, fully virtual. Theme: "Bridging theory and practice: Action research in Educational Technology." Includes 90 days of session recordings. Proposals due 16 November 2026; schedule posted 22 February 2027. • 2027 registration pricing not yet published. The 2026 edition (10–12 March 2026) was $195, members only — non-members had to join AECT to participate. • Practitioner-facing by design: concurrent sessions, panels, practical application sessions and a Work in Progress format for early-stage research. • All sessions on Zoom, moderated by volunteers, recorded and transcribed; presentations must meet current WCAG.	• Two. OLC Innovate — 20–22 April 2027, three days, fully virtual (permanently so since 2025). • OLC Elevate — most recent edition 4 and 6 August 2026, two non-consecutive virtual days; 2027 dates not yet announced. • Elevate is free to OLC members; non-members pay a small fee; free community memberships do not qualify. • On-demand recordings for registered attendees.	• Digital Teaching & Learning (DT&L) Conference — 3–4 February 2027, two days, virtual, free to all UPCEA members. • Descends from the University of Wisconsin's Distance Teaching & Learning conference, absorbed into UPCEA's portfolio. • Plus Regional Salons — virtual, multiple dates, free to all members.	• Three virtual conferences a year, all half-day, captioned, with recordings available for 90 days. • Policy to Practice Summit — 25 February 2027, 11:00am–4:30pm ET. $150; buy one at full price, get one at half price; institutional package of 10 for $1,000 if booked by 24 February. Open exclusively to QM and WCET members — a joint event with WCET. • Q-Up for K-12 Digital Quality — 11 March 2027, 12:30–4:45pm ET. $50. • QM Research Online Conference — 9 April 2027, 12:00–4:30pm ET. $75; buy two, get the third free. Applied research on online learning and quality assurance.	• All four run a winter or spring virtual conference as the counterweight to a fall in-person one, but the pricing philosophies diverge sharply. • AECT charged $195 in 2026 and restricted attendance to members; 2027 pricing is not yet set. OLC and UPCEA give theirs away to members. QM charges $50–$150 and opens them to non-members. • QM runs the cheapest virtual programming of the four and is the only one using a half-day conference format — a deliberate low-friction design. • QM's Policy to Practice Summit is a working model of a members-only joint event co-produced with a peer association (WCET).
6b. Recurring webinars and small-format virtual events	• AECT Webinars as a standing event category, free to members, with an archive. • Division membership meetings (for example, Learner Engagement's "Show & Tell," one hour). • Convention Countdown Live — a one-hour pre-convention orientation. • Design & Development Competition informational webinars; award and internship recordings. • Members must be logged in to see member-only events.	• Year-round webinars, free to members. • Best-In-Track Webinar Series — encore presentations of top-rated Innovate and Accelerate sessions. • Self-paced workshops and a Microlearning Library bundled with the Workshop Pass. • Informational webinars for IELOL, IDP and DEL.	• Roughly weekly webinars, free to members, hosted by Networks, committees, regions, UPCEA Research & Consulting and corporate partners, with a member-only recording archive. • Coffee Chats — informal, unrecorded, live, typically an hour or less, joined by a plain Zoom link with no registration. • Executive Briefings such as "Leadership Conversations in the Age of AI."	• QM Success Stories — monthly, member-exclusive, members presenting to members. • Online Learning Webinars — topical sessions with guest presenters, open registration. • Research Webinars — QM Research Colleagues and outside researchers, with an archive. • QM IDA Learning Exchange Webinars — several times a year, free, QM IDA members only, peer-delivered; recordings on the QM IDA Canvas site. • QM IDA Discord chats — monthly "Five Burning Questions" sessions. Plus QM Live! virtual workshops and micro-learning with OneHE.	• UPCEA's virtual cadence is the densest; QM's is the most varied in format, running from monthly member webinars to a Discord server. • AECT's virtual programming is the thinnest of the four between conventions — a real gap for a geographically dispersed membership that meets once a year. • UPCEA's unrecorded Coffee Chats and QM's Discord both buy candor that a recorded webinar cannot. Neither costs much to run.

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6c. Big-event cost and length summary	• Convention: 5 days; $325–$715 member by window; $850 non-member; $220 one-day. • Pre-convention workshops: 3–4 hours; $15 / $20. • Online Conference 2027: one week in April, virtual; pricing not yet published (2026 was $195, members only). • Publishing Summit 2027: 5 days, ~$2,265 including lodging; or 2 days, ~$1,450.	• Accelerate: 4 days; $695–$1,495 member early bird by category; $895–$1,695 non-member. • Innovate: 3 days, virtual, member discount applies. • Elevate: 2 days, virtual, free to members. • Immersion Classes: half or full day, $345 / $595. Leadership Network Symposium: 1 day, $595.	• Annual Conference: 3 days; $1,045–$1,420 member; $1,445–$1,820 institutional non-member; $2,500–$2,700 corporate. • SOLAR, Convergence and MEMS: 3 days each, member rates apply. • DT&L: 2 days, virtual, free to members. • Regional Salons, webinars and Coffee Chats: free to members.	• QM Connect: 3 days in person; $945 member / $1,045 non-member early bird, rising to $1,145 / $1,195 late; single day $475–$575 member. • Policy to Practice Summit: half day virtual; $150; QM and WCET members only. • QM Research Online Conference: half day virtual; $75. • Q-Up for K-12: half day virtual; $50. • Webinars: about one hour; free.	• Across a year at early-bird member rates, a fully engaged AECT member might spend roughly $910 on dues plus both conferences (using the 2026 Online Conference price); an OLC member roughly $1,190 on dues plus Accelerate at the academic rate; a QM member roughly $1,140 on a subscription plus QM Connect, before any professional development; a UPCEA participant effectively $0 beyond institutional dues for all virtual programming, plus about $1,045 per conference attended. • The cheapest entry to any of the four has been AECT student membership plus the Online Conference — $320 in 2026 for a year of membership and a three-day conference. Confirm the 2027 Online Conference price before repeating the figure. • QM's $50 half-day K-12 conference is the single lowest-cost event in the entire study.
Question 7 — Regular training and specific certifications promoted and offered: what they cost and how long they take					
7a. Certifications and credentials offered	• None. No certifications, certificates, badges, micro-credentials or professional designations of any kind. • No credentialing committee and no certification revenue line in its Form 990. • No evidence that any credential is in development.	• An extensive ladder. Career Certifications (portfolio-based, members only, renewable): Instructional Design Professional (IDP) and Digital Education Leader (DEL) — each $580 professional member / $530 institutional member. • Certificate Programs: Instructional Designer; Advanced Instructional Designer; Online Teaching; Advanced Online Teaching; Leadership. • Digital badges on workshop completion, plus Skills Pathways credentials for completing three workshops in a theme.	• UPCEA Digital Learning Academy, launched 4 August 2026: UPCEA-backed digital badges for instructor-led courses, and an Enterprise Leadership Certificate with two concentrations — Chief Online Learning Officer (COLO) and Professional & Continuing Education (PCE). • Aimed at leadership roles rather than instructional design practice. • Pricing and durations are not published on public pages.	• Two tracks. First, certifying the course or program: the QM Certification Mark, Foundational Design Recognition, Essentials and Preparatory recognition reviews, Program Certifications, Validation Reviews and Quality in Course Sharing. • Second, certifying the individual: QM Peer Reviewer via the Peer Reviewer Course ($220 member / $385 non-member, about three weeks online, APPQMR prerequisite); Master Reviewer Certification ($330, members only); facilitator certifications (AOFC, AFFC); a Program Reviewer Course; Rubric Update Role Reinstatement when a new edition ships. • QM Coordinator Training — free, two seats per subscription. • Teaching Online Certificate — seven workshops; $1,210 member / $1,815 non-member, or $1,089 / $1,634 with the 10% package discount; a QM Digital Credential per workshop. A K-12 NSQ-aligned version runs in parallel. • The QM Peer Reviewer credential is plausibly the most widely held individual credential in the field — QM claims 60,000+ trained.	• Three of four credential individuals; AECT alone does not. That makes AECT's position the clear outlier rather than one option among several. • The three ladders target different rungs: QM credentials the reviewer and the online teacher, OLC the instructional designer and emerging administrator, UPCEA the sitting executive. • QM's is the cheapest and fastest route to a recognized credential in this field — roughly $440 and five weeks from zero to certified peer reviewer. • AECT's answer to professional formation is mentorship, publication and service, which is a coherent philosophy — but it does mean an instructional designer seeking a portable credential has no reason to join AECT.

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7b. Courses, workshops and certificates (cost and duration)	• Pre-convention workshops only — six in 2026, 3 or 4 hours each, $15 before 27 October and $20 thereafter. • 2026 topics included camera-based HRV biosensing, creativity in learning, AI accessibility frameworks, responding to student AI use, holistic search in the age of AI, and AI for qualitative data analysis. • No credential attached. Webinars are free to members and typically one hour.	• Workshops: facilitated, mostly asynchronous, typically one to two weeks; member savings $70 individual / $100 organizational; completion earns digital badges. • Skills Pathways: three workshops in a theme earn a credential (Teaching and Learning with AI; QA & Accreditation; Course Design Strategies; Effective Online Facilitation; Supporting IDs; Accessibility; Holistic Learner Support). • Mastery Series: four-week cohort programs earning a Recognition of Expertise; member savings $50 / $150–$175. • Certificate Programs: Instructional Designer Certificate reported at $1,800 organizational / $1,960 individual / $2,180 non-member. Advanced Online Teaching Certificate is 12 weeks. • Certificate alumni may articulate into Baylor University graduate certificates.	• Digital Learning Academy in three career-stage tiers: Essential Learning (self-paced, learning labs); Professional Practice (instructor-led with badges); Enterprise Leadership (certificate programs). • Plus organizational and team learning packages and an Institutional Impact PD Bundle for 2026. • Costs and durations sit behind a request-info form in the Elevate catalog — the least transparent PD pricing of the four.	• Introduction to Quality Matters (INTRO2QM): $110 member / $165 non-member. • Applying the QM Rubric (APPQMR): $220 member / $330 non-member; two weeks asynchronous or two half-days virtual. The gateway course and prerequisite for the Peer Reviewer Course. • Improving Your Online Course (IYOC) and Designing Your Online Course (DYOC): $165 member / $220 non-member each. • Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery (TOL); Designing Quality Online Learning Research (DQOLR), three weeks online. • Group sessions: APPQMR up to 20 people $3,000 member / $3,800 non-member; most others $1,500 / $2,000. • Short QM Live! and micro-learning sessions from $55.	• OLC and QM both run transparent, extensive PD catalogues; UPCEA's is newer, aimed higher and notably less transparent. • OLC and QM workshop prices are close, and OLC is slightly cheaper for members: OLC lists $169 member / $269 non-member per workshop, against QM's $220 / $330 for APPQMR. QM's advantage is not price but the credential pathway attached — APPQMR is the prerequisite for a recognized peer reviewer certification. • OLC's own pages conflict on the member saving: the membership page claims $70 off workshops, while the $169 / $269 spread is $100. Worth noting as an OLC inconsistency rather than resolving it. • AECT's $15–$20 workshops are the best value per hour in the study but are available only at the convention and carry no credential. • Confirm UPCEA Digital Learning Academy pricing, QM subscription rates and OLC workshop list prices directly before publishing any figure.
7c. Leadership and mentoring programs	• Early Career Symposium (Research & Theory Division, one day at the convention). • Design & Development Competition — a multi-month, three-phase mentored design experience pairing student teams with mentors from other institutions; free to enter. • Center of Excellence for Publishing mentoring toward author, book series editor and journal editor roles. • AECT Foundation scholarships, internships and summer leadership participation; division and board service as explicit development pathways.	• IELOL (Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning), since 2008 — four phases over roughly 3.5 months: online July; onsite residency at George Washington University in August; online implementation to October; Leadership Network Symposium in November. • Fees: member early bird $3,025; non-member early bird $3,650; member regular $3,325; non-member regular $3,950. Travel and lodging separate. • An IELOL Global variant has run international cohorts since 2020.	• UPlift mentorship — members may serve as mentor, mentee or both. • Two institution-seat councils functioning as senior peer cohorts. • The Enterprise Leadership Certificate with COLO and PCE concentrations. • “Second Opinion” free consultations; volunteer leadership through nine Networks, five Regions and standing committees.	• No leadership institute comparable to IELOL or UPCEA's Enterprise Leadership Certificate. • The QM Coordinator role is the de facto leadership track — free training, institutional visibility, and a national peer community including a National QMC Meeting. • QM IDA names mentoring explicitly in its mission: “promote collaboration and mentorship between instructional design professionals.” • QM Research Colleagues — a scholarly affiliation working since 2013 with QM's Director of Research to track research informing the Standards. • Advisory councils (Academic, K-12, International) provide governance-adjacent service roles.	• All four run a leadership pipeline, at very different price points and career stages. • AECT's is essentially free and aimed at emerging scholars; QM's is free and aimed at campus implementers; OLC's IELOL is a $3,000+ flagship for emerging administrators; UPCEA's is embedded in membership and aimed at sitting executives. • QM's free Coordinator training is the most overlooked benefit in this study — a no-cost route to a visible institutional role. • AECT's Design & Development Competition remains the only program that deliberately mentors students across institutional lines.
Question 8 — Publications: journals, newsletters, email updates, white papers, position papers and research briefs					
8a. Peer-reviewed journals	• Three owned, published with Springer: Educational Technology Research and Development (ETR&D), bimonthly, ISSN 1042-1629 / 1556-6501, editors Fengfeng Ke and Richard West.	• One — Online Learning (OLJ), quarterly, E-ISSN 2472-5730. • Diamond open access: free to readers and authors, CC BY 4.0, authors retain copyright.	• None currently active. • Unbound: Reinventing Higher Education is no longer publishing new content, though the archive remains open.	• None. QM owns and sponsors no peer-reviewed journal. • It curates rather than publishes: the QM Research Library indexes	• With four organizations in view, AECT holds essentially all of the field's scholarly publishing infrastructure: three owned journals plus three sponsored open-access titles, against

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	• TechTrends: Linking Research and Practice, ISSN 8756-3894 / 1559-7075, interim editor Lucas Vasconcelos. • Journal of Formative Design in Learning, biannual, ISSN 2509-8039, interim editor Charles Xiaoxue Wang. • Plus three sponsored open-access journals: International Journal of Designs for Learning; The Journal of Applied Instructional Design; Journal of Technology-Integrated Lessons and Teaching.	• 2024 Journal Impact Factor 2.3; JCI 1.28 — Q1, top 13% of Education journals. Scopus CiteScore 6.1, top 3% of open-access journals in the field. • Indexed in Web of Science ESCI, Scopus, DOAJ (with Seal), ERIC and Google Scholar; LOCKSS and PKP-PN preservation.		externally published research relevant to the Standards.	OLC's one and zero each at UPCEA and QM. • This is the single clearest differentiator in the study and the strongest single argument for AECT's continued importance. • It is also an opportunity: OLC, UPCEA and QM all generate research-grade work with nowhere of their own to publish it. • One caveat to state honestly: two of AECT's three Springer journals currently have interim editors, with searches posted in July 2026.
8b. Books, reports and frameworks	• An extensive Springer list, including the Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology; Learning, Design, and Technology (Major Reference Work); the Encyclopedia of Terminology; the Educational Media and Technology Yearbook; and SpringerBriefs. • One Brill title; independently published works including Educational Technology: A Definition with Commentary and Merrill's First Principles of Instruction. • Plus the AECT Reference Library, convention proceedings and videos, the Code of Professional Ethics and the AECT Definition of the Field.	• No book program. • Reports, playbooks and toolkits — notably the Faculty Development and GenAI Playbook (2025, with Every Learner Everywhere) — plus curated collections on Accessibility, Quality and AI. • The Quality Scorecards are OLC's most widely adopted product. • The Sloan-C / Babson national online enrollment survey series is no longer published.	• No book program. • Benchmarking Online Enterprises: Insights into Structures, Strategies, and Financial Models in Higher Education — third annual edition released 17 August 2026. • A research and benchmarking studies library; three Hallmarks of Excellence frameworks (Digital Learning Enterprises, July 2026; Credential Innovation; Professional & Continuing Education); Leaders in Online Education. • Joint industry research, for example the UPCEA / Search Influence 2026 study on AI in program search.	• The Rubrics are the flagship publication: the Higher Education Rubric, 7th Edition — with Version 2.0 released 16 March 2026 adding guidance language on artificial intelligence — plus the K-12 Rubric (6th Edition), the Continuing & Professional Education Rubric and the Publisher Rubric. Standards lists are public; annotated versions are licensed. • The CHLOE Project (Changing Landscape of Online Education) — an annual national survey of chief online learning officers produced with Eduventures and Bay View Analytics; CHLOE 10 released 2025. Free to download. • The QM Research Library, curated by QM's Department of Innovation & Research, which also produces literature reviews keeping the Standards research-current — including Kay Shattuck's review of QM-related research, 2015–2023. • Rubric Standards for Course Design workbooks, sold (gross product sales $293,001 in FY2023); the Bridge to Quality design guide; Resource Center articles and a conference presentation archive.	• AECT publishes books; OLC, UPCEA and QM publish benchmarks, rubrics and reports. That tracks the audience difference exactly — scholars cite books, administrators cite benchmarks. • Two of four now publish an annual national data product: UPCEA's Benchmarking Online Enterprises and QM's CHLOE. AECT publishes none, which is the fair counterpoint to the journal argument. • The disappearance of the Sloan-C / Babson enrollment series left a vacuum that CHLOE and UPCEA's benchmarking report have between them filled. • QM's rubrics are the most widely applied documents produced by any of the four.
8c. Newsletters, blogs and news	• A staff-authored news blog, roughly monthly — deadline reminders, program announcements, editor searches and occasional research summaries. • A public job board. Member communication runs through the Higher Logic community platform and email.	• OLC Insights — articles and analysis, open to member submissions. • The OLC Today email newsletter. • OLC Updates — a bi-weekly LinkedIn newsletter carrying the industry job page. • OLC in the News.	• Five blogs: The Pulse of Higher Ed; Online: Trending Now (Ray Schroeder); UPCEA Updates; From the CEO; Industry Insights. • Press releases and a press release archive. • Government Affairs coverage and Policy Matters primers — genuine policy analysis.	• A QM email newsletter and a Resource Center of articles and resources. • QM IDA Listserv (Google Group) — carries instructional design job postings, which moved there from a standalone job board. • QM IDA Discord server — the most informal channel any of the four operates.	• UPCEA is the only one of the four producing genuine policy analysis, and it publishes at the highest frequency. • AECT and QM share the same communications gap — no newsletter, no briefs, no position papers — though QM compensates with an unusually active informal layer (listserv and Discord).

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	• No separate member newsletter or magazine distinct from TechTrends, and no white papers, position papers or research briefs published as an organization.		• UPCEA In The News; the UPCEA AI Hub; A Guide to UPCEA Resources.	• Research webinar archive and conference presentation archive. • No blog, no policy analysis and no position papers.	• For an association whose value proposition is intellectual leadership, AECT's monthly blog post is a thin regular touchpoint for a membership that meets once a year.
Question 9 — The nature of networking and collaboration opportunities among members					
9a. Formal sub-communities	• Eleven Divisions plus a Graduate Student Assembly and one SIG (Education in the Health Professions). • Each has its own mission, elected board and community space. Since the March 2025 restructure, divisions are represented collectively on the AECT Board by a single Division Representative rather than individually. • Divisions run their own meetings, awards, mentoring and convention programming.	• None. No divisions, chapters, networks or special interest groups. • Community is organized by event and by program cohort — IELOL, certificate cohorts, Mastery Series.	• Nine Networks, open to any member in any combination: Credential Innovation; Business & Operations; Community and Economic Engagement; eDesign Collaborative; Graduate; International; Marketing, Enrollment & Student Success; Online Administration; Program Planning and Implementation. • The eDesign Collaborative serves instructional designers, multimedia developers and ID team administrators. • Coordinated by a Network Senate Chair. Plus five geographic Regions and two institution-seat Councils.	• One: the QM Instructional Designers Association (QM IDA), a special interest group — free with any QM subscription, including the $195 individual. • QM IDA's mission covers professional development, community building, networking, mentoring, research-informed practice and best-practice sharing. • Three advisory councils (Academic, K-12, International) and independent state / regional consortia complete the structure. • No divisions, regions, networks or elected member governance.	• Three of four give members a permanent sub-community; OLC alone does not. • Three distinct instructional design communities now exist across these organizations: AECT's Design & Development Division, UPCEA's eDesign Collaborative Network and QM's IDA. They serve overlapping people and rarely meet. • QM IDA is the cheapest route into an ID community for a full-rate professional — free with a $195 subscription, against AECT's $225. For students ($125) and International 3 members ($57), AECT is cheaper still. • AECT's sub-communities are the only ones whose leaders are elected by members, though since March 2025 they reach the board through a single shared representative. UPCEA's and QM's are affinity groups rather than constituencies.
9b. Year-round community platform	• Higher Logic community — each division and committee has a persistent space with discussion threads, document libraries, event calendars and member directories. • This is where interaction happens between conventions.	• No persistent member discussion community was found. • my.onlinelearningconsortium.org is a member portal and store, not a forum. • OLC networking is largely synchronous and event-bound — a gap that matters more now that Accelerate has no virtual option.	• CORe (Collaborative Online Relationships) at core.upcea.edu — a 24/7 community platform described as offering “real-time access to 15,000+ educators, leaders, and colleagues.” • The backbone of year-round member interaction.	• QM IDA Discord server with topic channels, including monthly “#fiveburningquestions” chats. • QM IDA Listserv via Google Groups for networking, support, resource sharing and job postings. • QM IDA Resource Site on Canvas holding recorded Learning Exchange webinars; the MyQM portal for tools and role applications. • Informal and lightweight compared with Higher Logic or CORe — but genuinely active, and the only one of the four to advertise a Discord server publicly.	• An association's real value often lies in what happens on an ordinary Tuesday in March, not at the annual conference. • AECT, UPCEA and QM all maintain a year-round channel; OLC appears not to, which means an OLC member who cannot travel to Orlando gets substantially less than one who can. • QM reaches a younger, more informal cohort through Discord than any of the other three reach anywhere — worth noting for AECT's own student engagement.
9c. Mentoring, service and recognition	• Peer mentorship and project collaboration as named benefits; Center of Excellence for Publishing mentoring; Early Career Symposium; Foundation internships; cross-institutional student–mentor pairing in the D&D Competition.	• Volunteer pathways as proposal reviewers, awards reviewers, conference session facilitators and board service. • Recognition through Awards of Excellence, OLC Fellows (nomination requires organizational membership),	• UPlift mentorship. • Volunteer service through conference planning committees, proposal review, network and region leadership, and standing committees. • Awards since 1953 — association, regional and network-specific,	• The peer reviewer corps is QM's networking: thousands of trained reviewers serve on teams evaluating courses at other institutions. • Master Reviewers mentor new reviewers; certified facilitators deliver workshops to colleagues.	• All four offer real service pathways, but they differ in kind. AECT's and UPCEA's are elective and governance-bearing; OLC's and QM's are functional and task-bearing. • AECT's leadership-seat-to-member ratio remains the most favourable —

Question / Sub-topic	AECT	Online Learning Consortium (OLC)	UPCEA	Quality Matters (QM)	Commentary & Summary
	• Leadership positioned explicitly as a benefit — board, division board and committee service. • AECT Awards. A high ratio of leadership seats to members means a motivated member can reach a visible role quickly.	Best-In-Track Awards and an OLC Scholarship. • Organizational members are eligible for peer review of OLC journals and publications.	including the Ray Schroeder Leadership Award (2026: Nancy Coleman) and 26 MEMS award recipients in 2026.	• QM Awards, presented at QM Connect, plus QM Gives Back service activities. • Conference presenting, QM Research Colleagues affiliation and advisory council service.	the fastest route to visible national service on a CV. • QM's reviewer corps is the largest volunteer body in the study by an order of magnitude, and the only one organized around repeated collaborative work on real artifacts.
9d. Distinguishing character of the network	• Participation-based rather than service-based. The association provides structures you join and work within — divisions, committees, editorial boards — not curated matchmaking. • Publishing is the most distinctive collaboration pathway: because AECT owns or sponsors six journals plus multiple book series, members review, edit and publish together. • A strong international affiliate network (ASCILITE, EdTech Society India, HKAECT, IPTPI, ICEM, JSET, KSET, TAECT, Thai AECT), domestic affiliates (NJASL, PAECT) and student chapters.	• Institution-mediated. Because organizational membership covers every employee, networking happens as campus teams — groups attend together and work from shared frameworks. • Group conference packages of 5, 10 and 20 seats reinforce this. • Corporate members and Solution Providers are integrated through sponsorship and an endorsement program.	• The most elaborated architecture and the lowest marginal cost per person, since dues buy unlimited seats. • Corporate members are deliberately treated as partners rather than exhibitors. • Coffee Chats, Regional Salons and a member directory support informal peer benchmarking.	• Networking through shared work rather than shared interest. A QM review team is two or three trained reviewers from different institutions evaluating a colleague's course against a common rubric. • That produces a different professional relationship than a conference hallway — closer to co-authoring than co-attending. • It also scales differently: because the subscription covers all faculty and staff and the rubric is applied course by course, QM reaches far more individuals than its subscriber count suggests. • The mirror-image weakness: no mechanism for members to shape the organization. QM's community contributes labor, not governance.	• Four models of belonging. AECT: build a scholarly identity through service and publication. OLC: your institution buys a capability and a team learns together. UPCEA: your unit joins a peer network of comparable units. QM: you join a corps that does structured work on each other's courses. • None is better; they answer different questions. AECT and UPCEA reward sustained individual investment and institutional commitment respectively; QM rewards doing the work. • QM's peer review model is the most unusual of the four and the one AECT could most plausibly learn from.
Supplementary — Recent developments (news scan) and data quality					
S1. Recent news and announcements	• Verified: AECT adopted a new board structure on 20 March 2025, replacing per-division board directors with a single Division Representative plus two At-large members, and seating the CEO ex officio. Confirmed on AECT's own Leadership Structure page. • AECT has also added an “AECT Standards” page to its About section and moved the Online Conference into the main Events navigation — both new since September 2026. • The International Publishing Summit (Ireland, June 2027) is a new flagship and AECT's most significant revenue diversification attempt. • Editor-in-chief searches were posted on 30 July 2026 for both TechTrends and the Journal of Formative Design in Learning; both list interim editors. • AECT26 opens in Chicago on 3 November 2026. The 2027 Online Conference call for proposals was released 21 September 2026 with submissions due 16 November 2026.	• Chapter 11 Subchapter V filing, 20 December 2024 (Case 1:24-bk-12569, D. Mass.), driven by disputed hotel attrition penalties on pre-pandemic contracts rather than debt or revenue collapse. Docket activity continued into February 2026; emergence not publicly confirmed. • Accelerate eliminated its virtual attendance option after 2024 and confirms no virtual program for AC26. • Innovate moved permanently virtual from 2025. • Course Review Assistant GPT launched June 2025, institutional members only. New Learning Experience Quality Standards added to the Scorecard family.	• Digital Learning Academy launched 4 August 2026. • Hallmarks of Excellence in Digital Learning Enterprises released 29 July 2026. • 2026 Benchmarking Online Enterprises report released 17 August 2026 — the third annual edition. • UPCEA + MIT Professional Education executive institute, July 2026. • UPCEA / Search Influence research on AI in program search, 16 September 2026; 2026 MEMS awards the same day; Nancy Coleman received the 2026 Ray Schroeder Leadership Award on 30 July 2026.	• HE Rubric 7th Edition, Version 2.0 — effective 16 March 2026. Adds guidance language on artificial intelligence in course design and instruction; standards and intent unchanged. QM is explicit that the AI language is guidance, not policy or expected practice. The K-12 Rubric received a parallel update. • Same date: higher education certification reviews moved from a three-reviewer to a two-reviewer model — a material change to peer review economics and volunteer load. • QM AI Review Assistant in beta — built and maintained by Noodle under Noodle's terms of use, not QM's. Full subscribers get three free course evaluations per month; Canvas-based members only in beta; full release anticipated 2027. • Policy to Practice Summit co-hosted with WCET, open exclusively to members of both organizations.	• Read together, the news tells the same story as the finances: AECT reorganizing and reaching for a second flagship; OLC contracting its physical footprint under court protection; UPCEA launching products at a steady clip; QM revising its core instrument while normalizing from a pandemic peak. • All four are responding to generative AI, and all four are doing so separately. None has coordinated with another. • Four items to verify before November: current membership counts; OLC's bankruptcy status; UPCEA Digital Learning Academy pricing; and current QM subscription rates.

Question / Sub-topic	AECT	Online Learning Consortium (OLC)	UPCEA	Quality Matters (QM)	Commentary & Summary
				• Revenue has declined every year since the 2021 pandemic peak, with the first operating deficit in FY2023.	
S2. Data quality and caveats	• No published membership count. • Form 990 figures lag 12–18 months; FY2024 is the most recent available. • Revenue totals for 2019–2023 were reconstructed from ProPublica category breakdowns and are approximate; net asset figures are exact. • Dues are subject to board review and convention rates shift by registration window. Summer Research Symposium status unconfirmed. • Two versions of the AECT bylaws circulate online describing different board structures. The March 2025 structure shown here is taken from AECT's Leadership Structure page; the adopted amendment text was not located. Confirm with AECT before citing governance detail.	• No published membership count. • FY2024 expense and balance-sheet detail is not yet in structured IRS data. • Certificate prices live in the registration catalog rather than on public marketing pages — the $1,800 / $1,960 / $2,180 figures are reported and should be confirmed. • Workshop list prices ($169 member / $269 non-member) are reported from OLC's membership pages, which conflict internally on the size of the member saving. • OLC and UPCEA data in this table was gathered 17 September 2026 and has not been re-verified. • Bankruptcy status as of the presentation date must be verified. The Accelerate attendance estimate is third-party.	• Published membership figures conflict (~10,000 individuals versus 15,000+ on CORe). • FY2024 and FY2025 balance-sheet composition is not yet in public structured data. • Digital Learning Academy course prices and durations are not published. • Registration rates for SOLAR, Convergence and MEMS were not captured here — only the Annual Conference.	• No current subscriber count published. The “1,500+ institutions” and “60,000+ professionals trained” figures are cumulative historical claims from the About page, not current membership. • QM's benefits-and-fees pages carry no effective dates and some appear long-standing — confirm all subscription figures before publication. • FY2024 expense and balance-sheet detail is not yet in structured IRS data; only BMF totals are available. • Course review and PD fee schedules vary by sector and review type; figures cited here are higher education. • The AI Review Assistant is a third-party product governed by Noodle's terms, a meaningful distinction if cited.	• Every figure in this table traces to a primary source — the organizations' own websites and IRS Form 990 filings via ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer — except where noted as reported or third-party. • The four verification items above are the only ones that could materially change a conclusion. • Note that no two organizations report membership on the same basis, so any single comparative chart of size should carry a unit-of-measure footnote.