FORKAIA® × STEALTH · JOINT RESEARCH PAPER · VOL I

JUNE 2026 · FIRST EDITION · CC BY 4.0

One score. Two sides of the same labor market.

A joint methodology paper documenting the shared credentialing layer between Forkaia® and STEALTH. How the same 300–850 work-readiness index serves student credentialing on one side and distributed-studio contributor evaluation on the other.

Forkaia® Research · STEALTH Research · jointly authored

The credential connection.

Forkaia® and STEALTH operate on opposite sides of the same labor market. The credential layer is the bridge.

Forkaia® and STEALTH are sister organizations that share founding ownership but operate independently in market. Their connection is most visible in one place: the credential layer.

On the **Forkaia® side**, the Forkaia® Score is a 300–850 work-readiness index issued to undergraduate students completing Parallel Career Education programs. The Score reflects the quality of a student's verified work experience inside one of 700+ Forkaia®-affiliated portfolio companies (which are the same companies operated by STEALTH).

On the **STEALTH side**, the same Score serves as the ranking and observability mechanism for distributed contributors operating inside the workspace. STEALTH contributors who repeatedly produce institutional-grade output earn higher Scores over time and become eligible for higher-stakes task assignments and operating-partner roles.

The credential is the same. The Score is the same. The underlying methodology is the same. The two organizations are operating one credentialing system across two adjacent labor markets.

This paper documents that joint architecture for the first time.

The shared methodology.

A 300–850 index with five weighted components. Identical across both organizations.

The five components

COMPONENT	WEIGHT	WHAT IT MEASURES
1. Project completion rate	25%	Percentage of assigned tasks/projects completed against deadline and acceptance criteria.
2. Supervisor evaluation	25%	Quality of work product as judged by the supervisor (founder, operator, or program lead). Rubric-driven, not impressionistic.
3. Peer collaboration	15%	Quality of collaboration with other team members. Measured by peer feedback + interaction signal in the workspace.
4. Self-direction	20%	Initiative beyond assigned scope. Ability to identify what needs doing without being told.
5. Output quality	15%	Craft of finished work. Audit-quality, measured by random sampling.

Score banding

- **300–579 · Developing.** Foundational level. Most students/contributors enter at 450–550.
- **580–669 · Competent.** Reliable performer. Suitable for most production tasks.
- **670–739 · Strong.** Excellent contributor. Eligible for high-stakes assignments. ~25% of active population.
- **740–799 · Exceptional.** Top decile. Operating-partner candidate territory. ~7% of active population.
- **800–850 · Elite.** Top 1%. Reserved for category-defining contributors. ~1% of active population.

Calibration

The Score is calibrated against a baseline of all credentialed individuals across both Forkaia® and STEALTH populations. Currently ~12,000 individuals. The baseline is refreshed quarterly to prevent drift. Calibration methodology is documented in the supplementary appendix (separate document available at forkaia.com/score).

Why one system serves both.

The two labor markets look different from the outside. From the inside, they are the same market with different lifecycle phases.

The argument for shared credentialing rests on a single observation: a Forkaia® student doing real work inside a portfolio company in their junior year is operating in exactly the same labor market as a 28-year-old distributed contributor doing the same work in the STEALTH workspace. The difference is enrollment status, not capability.

Three benefits of unification

1. Talent pipeline continuity. A Forkaia® student who graduates with a strong Score does not need to re-establish credibility to continue contributing through STEALTH. The credential carries forward. The student → distributed contributor → operating partner pathway becomes seamless.

2. Cross-side calibration. Combining the two populations produces a calibration baseline of ~12,000 individuals — far larger and more diverse than either organization could calibrate against independently. This produces more reliable Score banding and reduces idiosyncratic bias.

3. Network effect for the credential. The Forkaia® Score becomes more valuable as a portable signal the more employers and studios recognize it. A unified single-issuer credential (instead of separate Forkaia and STEALTH credentials) is the strongest play for external adoption.

Governance separation

Although the methodology is shared, governance is separate. Forkaia® operates the credential issuance on the student side. STEALTH operates the same credential's use on the distributed-contributor side. Cross-licensing terms are documented in the joint operating agreement (internal document).

Trademark structure

The "FORKAIA® SCORE" mark is being filed in this trademark round (Round 2, June 2026) with joint-use designation. See the STEALTH Trademark Round 2 Brief for filing details.

Open questions.

Three things we genuinely do not know yet.

1 · Does the Score predict long-term economic mobility?

Our hypothesis is that Score is correlated with 5-year and 10-year career earnings outcomes for students, and with 3-year operating-partner conversion for distributed contributors. We do not have enough longitudinal data to test this yet. We commit to publishing the first longitudinal analysis in 2028, by which time we will have 4 years of post-graduation data on the earliest Forkaia® students.

2 · Does the Score generalize beyond the Forkaia/STEALTH ecosystem?

The Score has been calibrated against ~12,000 individuals within our combined ecosystem. We do not yet know whether the calibration generalizes to other distributed-studio or apprenticeship environments. The Distributed Studio Index (DSI) participation outreach is the first test of this — if other studios adopt the Score methodology, generalization becomes measurable.

3 · How do we prevent gaming?

Any scoring system creates incentives. Some of those incentives improve the underlying behavior (good); some game the metric without improving the underlying capability (bad). We are documenting observed gaming patterns and will publish a "What we have seen" paper in late 2027. We expect the Score methodology to evolve as we learn.

About this paper

This paper is jointly authored by Forkaia® Research and STEALTH Research, the institutional research functions of Forkaia® and STEALTH respectively. Both organizations share founding ownership but operate independently in market.

Citation

> Forkaia® Research & STEALTH Research. (2026). *One Score, Two Sides of the Same Labor Market: The Joint Credential Layer.* forkaia.com/research · stealth1000.com/research

License

Contact

Forkaia® side: support@forkaia.com · STEALTH side: support@stealth1000.com