

KEY QUESTIONS FOR DESIGNING MICROCREDENTIALS

Interested in designing microcredentials? Here are key considerations to get you started:



Why microcredentials?

Microcredentials provide a **detailed record** of competencies students have achieved. They often focus on **discrete skills** that encompass outcomes spanning both **non-credit** and **for-credit** offerings. They aim to recognize learning that is more attainable, diverse and affordable than a traditional 4-year degree. They are often **aligned with industry** demands to help students gain employment or advance in their careers.

- Are you seeking inclusive ways to certify academic achievement?
- Do you need to certify students for in-demand industry skills?
- Can you articulate to students the value of your microcredential?



What are your goals? Who will you serve?

Universities are seeking ways to provide **flexible and manageable** options for students to obtain verification of **relevant competencies** that align with workforce demands. Often delivered online and **intentionally designed** to provide a learner-centered experience resulting in **increased pathways** to both credit and non-credit programs for prospective and current students as well as alumni.

- Have you identified a primary student population?
- What does a student receive upon successful completion?
- How do you measure the success of your microcredentialing initiatives?



How will you ensure instructional quality?

Effective microcredentials align learning content, activities and assessments with **measurable learning outcomes** to verify that students have gained valuable skills. This in turn **distinguishes the program** from offerings available to learners at other universities and industry. The **learning experience** is enhanced when learners actively engage in a **community of inquiry** with other learners and the instructor.

- How will you ensure online course quality standards are met?
- What will students do to demonstrate knowledge and skills?
- How will you incorporate student feedback into curriculum revisions?

GETTING STARTED WITH MICROCREDENTIALS

Interested in designing microcredentials? Success starts with engaging the right people and a shared understanding of key terms to inform policies and governance.

KEY TERMS

The following list is modified from The State University of New York (SUNY):

Competency

Learnable, measurable and/or observable knowledge and skill-sets gained.

Badge

A tool that documents competencies and various learning achievements. They include embedded meta-data on the evidence of learning and link back to the sponsoring institution and evaluation criteria.

Microcredential

Credentials that are generally smaller than a minor, certificate, or degree and narrower in focus. For example, a microcredential could be three courses in length (9 credits). Microcredentials are designed to help students meet academic and career goals and to help them stand-out in a competitive job market. They are intentionally explicit about the skills and competencies mastered.

Stackable Credentials

Part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help that individual move along a career pathway and further education. For example, a 30-credit master's degree could be comprised of three 9- credit microcredentials plus a capstone course.



Who should be involved?

Microcredentials present **new considerations** for **faculty** designing learning experiences, and for **administrators** approving, tracking and documenting offerings. **Industry partners** and **students** may also be invited to help shape and provide feedback on curriculum. **Instructional designers** and **information technology** professionals also provide consultation on effective pedagogy and online delivery.

- Who will lead your initiative?
- Do you have a shared understanding of key terms to inform governance and policy decisions?
- Which stakeholders need to be engaged early?
- What is your plan for recruiting and registering students as well as providing transcripts/badges?