

Shawnee State University

POLICY TITLE:	MICROCREDENTIALING AND NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATES
POLICY NO.:	5.44REV
ADMIN CODE:	3362-5-44
PAGE NO.:	1 OF 5
EFFECTIVE DATE:	04/17/2026
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	04/2031
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S):	PROVOST
APPROVED BY:	BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Microcredentialing is the process of issuing verification of learning, activity and accomplishments that are not transcriptable through the traditional academic process of course completion and degree attainment. Microcredentials are often verified using digital badges. Microcredentials can provide University graduates and others with a competitive advantage when seeking employment and advancement in their careers.

1.1.1 Definitions

1.1.1.1 Microcredential: An authenticated indication of learning or accomplishment issued by the University after a student demonstrates completion of appropriate requirements.

1.1.1.2 E-credential: Any digital indication of student learning, activity or accomplishment. Examples of e-credentials include digital badges.

1.1.1.3 Digital badge: An e-credential consisting of a visual symbol of accomplishment that contains verifiable data and evidence of a student's learning or accomplishment, which recipients can share with future employers, educational institutions or individuals via the internet.

1.2 Non-credit certificates are intended to allow students to pursue specific topics to supplement a degree program; gain knowledge in a chosen field of employment; earn continuing education units (CEUs) for workforce development; prepare for exams for professional certification; or for professional licensure. The Center for Lifelong Learning will offer certificates for non-credit programs.

1.2.1 Definitions

1.2.1.1 Non-credit: Used to describe programs that do not earn transcriptable credit hours at the University. Non-credit bearing

certificates are typically Certificates of Completion or Less Than One Year Technical Certificates/Short-Term Technical Certificates.

- 1.2.1.2 Certificate of Completion: A certificate of completion is a flexible award meant to convey completion of a workshop, bootcamp, or other program.
- 1.2.1.3 Less Than One Year Technical Certificate/ Short-Term Technical Certificate: Certificates awarded by a post-secondary institution for the completion of an organized program of study in less than 900 clock hours that are designed for an occupation or specific employment opportunities. These certificates should prepare students for a valid occupational license or third-party industry-recognized credential or certification, if available, related to the field of study.
- 1.2.1.4 Industry-Recognized Credential or Certification: This definition follows appropriate ODHE guidelines. Valid industry-recognized credentials or certifications include all occupational licenses and registries provided by state or national professional boards, apprenticeship completion certificates issued by the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council, and industry certifications from a valid third-party. The ODHE and Ohio Department of Education & Workforce maintain a list of approved industry certifications.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- 2.1 To provide Shawnee State University with a tool to verify student learning and co-curricular activities and accomplishments that may not be verified via transcripts.
- 2.2 To provide Shawnee State University with a tool to meet the needs of business and industry for credentialed learning.
- 2.3 To provide Shawnee State University with a tool to award completion of workshops, bootcamps, courses, and other non-credit bearing programs.
- 2.4 To provide individuals with learning opportunities to become certified in a technical or professional area or skills.
- 2.5 To provide Shawnee State University graduates with a competitive advantage when seeking employment and advancement in their careers.

3.0 DEVELOPING MICROCREDENTIALS

- 3.1 Any faculty or administrator may propose a microcredential. New microcredentials require approval by a review panel, as set forth in the accompanying procedure. Such procedures are subject to approval by the President.
 - 3.1.1 It is the responsibility of the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning to maintain and update relevant procedures for the development of microcredentials.
- 3.2 Microcredentials must, at a minimum, include the following elements.
 - 3.2.1 Description: The learning activity or accomplishment to be authenticated.
 - 3.2.2 Criteria: The requirements that must be completed in order to earn the microcredential.
 - 3.2.3 Mode of Issuance: The technological platform to be utilized to issue and verify the microcredential.
 - 3.2.4 Evidence: Demonstration of how the criteria have been met.
 - 3.2.5 Expiration: The length of time that the microcredential remains valid.
- 3.3 All intellectual property including academic works created through the development of a microcredential will be subject to Board of Trustees Policy 2.10Rev., Copyright, Patents and Research for University Personnel.

4.0 DEVELOPING NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATES

- 4.1 Any faculty or administrator may propose a non-credit certificate. New non-credit certificates require approval by the review panel as set forth in the accompanying procedure. Such procedures are subject to approval by the President.
 - 4.1.1 It is the responsibility of the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning to maintain and update relevant procedures for the development of non-credit certificates.
- 4.2 Non-credit certificates must, at a minimum meet the following elements.
 - 4.2.1 Description: The learning activity or accomplishment to be authenticated.
 - 4.2.2 Program Outline: Minimum number of contact hours defined, program objectives and outcomes clearly defined, pathway to current degree programs defined when applicable, aligned to requirements set forth by certification agency when applicable.

4.2.3 Mode of Completion: The requirements that must be completed to earn the non-credit certificate.

4.2.4 Expiration: The length of time that the non-credit certificate remains valid.

4.3 All intellectual property including academic works created through the development of a certificate will be subject to Board of Trustees Policy 2.10Rev., Copyright, Patents and Research for University Personnel.

5.0 ISSUING MICROCREDENTIALS

5.1 Any student enrolled at Shawnee State University is able to participate in non-credit bearing, non-transcriptable learning activities that can be verified with a microcredential. In addition, non-credit bearing, non-transcriptable microcredentials may be offered to the general public to provide for business and industry needs. Certain microcredentials may include specific eligibility requirements.

5.2 Candidates for a microcredential must meet all criteria for that microcredential as certified by the sponsoring department, office, or division. The sponsoring department, office, or division must work with the Center for Lifelong Learning to ensure reporting, verification, and issuance of the microcredential.

5.3 The Center for Lifelong Learning is responsible for verifying and issuing microcredentials.

6.0 ISSUING NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATES

6.1 Non-credit bearing certificates may be offered to students and the general public to provide for credentialed learning and a competitive advantage when seeking employment and career advancement. Certain certificates may include specific eligibility requirements.

6.2 The initiating department, office or division is responsible for all aspects of delivery of the certificate, and must work with the Center for Lifelong Learning to ensure reporting, verification, and issuance of the certificate.

6.3 The Center for Lifelong Learning is responsible for verifying and issuing non-credit Certificates and Certificates of Completion.

7.0 MODIFYING OR DECOMMISSIONING MICROCREDENTIALS

7.1 Significant changes to existing microcredentials in purpose or scope require approval from the microcredential review panel.

7.2 The microcredential review panel will have the authority to decommission microcredentials if the microcredential no longer aligns in purpose or scope with the original approved microcredential, or if the sponsoring department, division, or office is incapable of administering the microcredential.

8.0 MODIFYING OR DECOMMISSIONING NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Significant changes to existing non-credit certificates in purpose or scope require approval from the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning.

History

Effective: 04/22/22

Revised: 04/17/26

Applicable Procedures: [5-44-1-Procedures for Developing a Microcredential or Non-Credit Certificates](#)

INFORMATION ONLY

PROCEDURE TITLE:	DEVELOPING A MICROCREDENTIAL OR NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATE
PROCEDURE NO.:	5.44:1
RELATED POLICY:	5.44
PAGE NO.:	1 OF 4
RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR(S):	VPAEM
EFFECTIVE DATE:	04/22/2022
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APPROVED BY:	PRESIDENT

1.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 1.1 Microcredentialing is the process of issuing verification of learning, activity and accomplishments that are not transcriptable through the traditional academic process of course completion and degree attainment. Microcredentials are often verified using digital badges. Microcredentials can provide University graduates and others with a competitive advantage when seeking employment and advancement in their careers.
- 1.2 Candidates for a microcredential must meet all criteria for that microcredential as certified by the sponsoring department, office, or division.
- 1.3 Non-credit certificates are intended to allow students to pursue specific topics to supplement a degree program; gain knowledge in a chosen field of employment; earn continuing education units (CEUs) for workforce development; and/or prepare for exams for professional certification or for professional licensure. The Center for Lifelong Learning will offer certificates for non-credit programs.

2.0 NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE MICROCREDENTIAL/ELECTRONIC BADGE

- 2.1 A department, office or division indicates a desired microcredential by filling out the online Notice of Intent to Issue Microcredential/Electronic Badge form (see Appendix A). Filling out the Notice of Intent will result in the following offices being alerted to assist in the development of the Microcredential:
 - 2.1.1 Associate Provost
 - 2.1.2 Information Technology Services (ITS)
 - 2.1.3 Marketing and Communication
 - 2.1.4 Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)

- 2.1.5 Center for Lifelong Learning
- 2.1.6 Director of Workforce Development
- 2.2 Badge Development Template
 - 2.2.1 The initiator develops the microcredential utilizing the Badge Development Template (Appendix B).
 - 2.2.1.1 It is recommended that the initiator consult with the TLC regarding learning objectives, assessments, and evidence.
 - 2.2.1.2 It is recommended that the initiator consult with Marketing and Communications regarding design considerations for the digital badge(s).
 - 2.2.1.3 It is recommended that the initiator consult with Workforce Development regarding industry demand considerations for the digital badge(s).
 - 2.2.2 The initiator submits the Badge Development Template to the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning.
 - 2.2.3 The Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning convenes a review panel consisting of the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning, Associate Provost of Academic Affairs, and the Director of Workforce Development (Review Panel). Following approval by the Review Panel, the Center for Lifelong Learning will work with ITS and Marketing and Communications to advertise, display and make available the new microcredential.
 - 2.2.4 In the event the Review Panel does not approve the proposed microcredential, rationale will be provided to initiator. Resubmission of the microcredential is permitted.
 - 2.2.5 The initiating department, office or division is responsible for all aspects of delivery and verification of the microcredential including eligibility, criteria, evidence and awarding.
- 3.0 NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATE
 - 3.1 A department, office or division indicates a desired certificate by filling out the online Notice of Intent to Issue Certificate form (Appendix C). Filling out the Notice of Intent will result in the following offices being alerted to assist in the development of the certificate:

- 3.1.1 Associate Provost
 - 3.1.2 Marketing and Communication
 - 3.1.3 Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)
 - 3.1.4 Center for Lifelong Learning
 - 3.1.5 Director of Workforce Development
 - 3.1.6 Student Success Center
- 3.2 Non-Credit Certificate Development Template
- 3.2.1 The initiator develops the certificate utilizing the Certificate Development Template (Appendix D).
 - 3.2.1.1 It is recommended that the initiator consult with the TLC regarding learning objectives, assessments, and evidence.
 - 3.2.1.2 It is recommended that the initiator consult with Workforce Development regarding industry demand considerations for the certificate(s).
 - 3.2.1.3 It is recommended that the initiator consult with the Student Success Center regarding third party certification testing.
 - 3.2.2 The initiator submits the Certificate Development Template to the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning.
 - 3.2.3 The Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning convenes a review panel consisting of the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning, Associate Provost of Academic Affairs, and the Director of Workforce Development (Review Panel). Following approval by the Review Panel, the Center for Lifelong Learning will work with the Student Success Center and Marketing and Communications to advertise, display and make available the new certificate.
 - 3.2.4 In the event the Review Panel does not approve the proposed certificate, rationale will be provided to initiator. Resubmission of the certificate is permitted.
 - 3.2.5 The initiating department, office or division is responsible for all aspects of delivery of the certificate, and must work with the Center for Lifelong Learning to ensure reporting, verification, and issuance of the certificate.

- 3.2.6 The Center for Lifelong Learning is responsible for all aspects of reporting, verification, and issuance of the certificate.

History

Effective: 04/22/22

Appendix A:

Notice of Intent to Issue Microcredential/Electronic Badge

Microcredentialing is the process of issuing transportable verification of learning, activity and accomplishments that are not transcriptable through the traditional academic process of course completion and degree attainment. Microcredentials are often verified using digital badges. Institutions of Higher Education are increasingly utilizing microcredentials to provide their graduates with a competitive advantage when seeking employment and advancement in their careers.

Candidates for a microcredential must meet all criteria for that microcredential as certified by the sponsoring department, office, or division. The initiating department, office, or division is responsible for delivery of and verifying all aspects of the microcredential including eligibility, criteria, evidence and awarding.

Initiator:

Department, Office or Division:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Name of Badge:

Anticipated Start Date for Issuing Badge:

Briefly Describe the Badge Being Proposed:

Appendix B:

Badge Development Template

Section 1: Considerations for Designing Badges

Making a Meaningful Badge:

The focus for developing an electronic badge should be on clearly identifying the competencies the earners will obtain or build upon by earning the badge. When developing a badge, the focus should be on equipping the earners with the competencies that will be the most beneficial for them. These benefits should be clearly defined and easily understandable for potential earners. Please take the following points into consideration:

- Badge steps should be clearly defined, clearly related to the purpose of the badge, and measurable.
- Specific goals and objectives should be clearly stated.
- Badges should be focused on specific outcomes.
- Assigned tasks or Steps should be divided into attainable units of information.
- The time allocated to a badge should be reasonable and not intimidate potential earners. Badges taking longer than 6 months of effort should consider being broken up.

Badge Creation Pitfalls:

To assist you in creating badges that are highly detailed, effective, and valuable for your earners, there are a number of approaches that should be avoided.

- Avoid linking out to external websites for the majority of your badge content.
- Avoid providing the earner with a wide variety of activities for a single step.
- Avoid having rigorous criteria that must be adhered to, while leaving the submission guidelines open-ended.
- Avoid creating badges that have unrealistic expectations for badge steps.
- Badges should not be issued for credentials that are already provided via a student transcript (i.e.: awarding badges for completing an existing course).

Section 2: Designing Badge Content

During the badge design process, your content will be divided into three parts: Badge Basics, Steps and Criteria, and Graphics. This document will walk you through the steps required to design each of those sections.

Badge Basics: The first step is to prepare some basic information about the badge: Badge Title, Award Eligibility, General Description, Award Date and Expiration Date. Use the information below to help you establish these items for your badge.

Badge Title: Create a title for your badge that is reflective of the general skills, knowledge and competencies that the earners will be working to develop. The title should be meaningful, interesting and clearly understood by potential earners. Typically, the title consists of 2 to 3 words. *Do NOT use titles that correlate to a course offering.*

- *Examples:*

- *Information Literacy*
- *Personal Leadership*
- *Essential Career Skills*
- *Community Service*

General Description: This brief description is intended as a general overview of badge content. Do not go into specific details about the actual steps/objectives included in the badge, rather provide some information that will give prospective earners an idea of what competencies they will need to demonstrate in order to earn the badge. The general description should answer the following questions:

- What is this badge about?
- How will this badge be earned?
- Why is this badge important?
- Is there evidence of need?
- What skills are demonstrated by obtaining this badge?
- Is there a cost to the earner associated with earning this badge?
- *Example: The Information Literacy Badge recognizes students who have demonstrated their skill at finding and evaluating information in a wide variety of formats from scholarly and non-scholarly sources. Analyzing information sources for strengths and weaknesses is a critical skill of information literacy that is important for academic work at Shawnee State and in future employment. Using resources offered by the Clark Memorial Library, students will develop critical information literacy and library research skills as they work with a subject area specialist to pursue their own unique research question and produce a critical annotated bibliography.*

Estimated Time to Complete: How long will it take for the learner to complete the badge? If there are other considerations or restrictions regarding timeline for badge completion, describe those here.

Expiration Date: Specify the length of time that the badge remains valid. If the badge does not have an expiration date, please write "none." It is expected that most badges will have no expiration date.

Steps and Criteria: This section of the Badge Development Template will help you work through the process of outlining the individual steps and criteria for your badge. The steps in the badge should be specific and meaningful to the overarching competency that is being acquired or developed by the earner. Each badge can have a total of 12 steps (but most badges will likely not need all 12). Each step has 6 components:

- **Step Number:** Number the badge's steps in the order in which they should be completed.
- **Step Title:** The step title should be concise and accurately reflect the competency being developed. If developing multiple badge steps that have similar titles, consider adding a specific differentiator (i.e. - Step 1, Step 2) as a prefix to the step title.
- **Objective:** A single statement that describes the importance or relevance of the step. It is recommended that your objective be written utilizing the SMART method (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-based).
- **Embedded Content (optional):** Each step can display some form of embedded content for the earner to view. Indicate the link or filename for the embedded content here.

- **Assignment:** The actual assignment the earner will be required to complete in order to successfully complete the step and progress toward earning the badge. The assignment description should be clear, concise, logically sequenced, and describe the entire process necessary to complete the step.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluation criteria should articulate the initiator's expectations for measuring an earner's demonstration of the competency being acquired. It should identify ways to measure the thoroughness or completeness of the assignment, while providing ample opportunity for feedback and remediation of the earner's work. If the student is required to provide evidence of completion of the assignment, a description of what constitutes appropriate evidence should be noted here.

Graphics: Once the content has been developed, it is time to determine the visual look of your badge. While each badge should be unique, badges issued and verified by Shawnee State University will have a degree of uniformity. As such, it is important to consult with a graphic designer in the office of Marketing and Communications to assist you in developing a badge that is both individual and appropriately Shawnee-branded.

While it is anticipated that most initiators will have little graphics design experience and will leave most of the design up to graphics artists in the Marketing and Communication office, initiators with a graphics design background may wish to do some of the design themselves. Please be aware if you are developing your own design that the graphics must conform to the following specifications:

- Graphics must fit into a 200x200 pixel square
- Graphics must conform to uniform Shawnee-branding specifications (see above)
- Icon must be white
- Background must be transparent
- All graphics files must be .png

Section 3: Badge Development Template Form

1. Initiator:

- Name**
- Email**
- Phone**

2. Responsible Department or Office: _____

3. Badge Title:

4. General Description and Rationale:

- What is this badge about?**
- How will this badge be earned?**
- Why is this badge important?**
- Is there evidence of need?**
- What are the skills that demonstrated by obtaining this badge?**
- Is there a cost to the earner associated with earning this badge?**

5. **Estimated Time to Complete:** _____

6. **Expiration Date (if applicable):** _____

7. **Steps (repeat as needed for all steps in earning the badge):**

- Step Number:
- Step Title:
- Objective:
- Assignment:
- Evaluation Criteria:
- (Optional) Upload sample instructional materials:

8. **Graphics (insert a link or embed graphic here):**

Signatures:

Initiator

Date

Signatory Authority for Responsible Department, Office or Division

Date

Appendix C:

Notice of Intent to Issue Non-Credit Certificate

Non-credit certificates are intended to allow students to pursue specific topics to supplement a degree program; gain knowledge in a chosen field of employment; earn continuing education units (CEUs) for workforce development; and/or prepare for exams for professional certification or for professional licensure. The Center for Lifelong Learning will offer certificates for non-credit programs.

The initiating department, office or division is responsible for all aspects of delivery of the certificate, and must work with the Center for Lifelong Learning to ensure reporting, verification, and issuance of the certificate. The Center for Lifelong Learning is responsible for all aspects of reporting, verification, and issuance of the certificate.

Initiator:

Department, Office or Division:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Name of Certificate:

Anticipated Start Date for Issuing Certificate:

Briefly Describe the Certificate Being Proposed:

Appendix D

Non-Credit Bearing Certificate Development Template

1. Initiator:

- a. Name
- b. Email
- c. Phone

2. Responsible Department or Office: _____

3. Certificate Title:

4. General Description and Rationale:

- a. What is this certificate about?
- b. How will this certificate be earned?
- c. Is there evidence of need among learners and industry?
- d. Does this certificate lead to obtaining a valid Industry Recognized Credential?
- e. Is there a cost to the earner associated with earning this certificate?

5. Estimated number of hours to Complete: _____

6. Expiration Date (if applicable): _____

7. Steps (repeat as needed for all steps in earning the certificate):

- Step Number:
- Step Title:
- Objective:
- Assignment:
- Evaluation Criteria:
- (Optional) Upload sample instructional materials:

Signatures:

Initiator

Date

Signatory Authority for Responsible Department, Office or Division

Date

