



TO: SUNY Cortland Faculty Senate  
FROM: Educational Policy Committee  
DATE: March 31, 2023  
RE: Microcredential Policy

The Educational Policy Committee is forwarding the attached Microcredential Proposal to the Faculty Senate for review and approval.

In accordance with SUNY Board of Trustee policy, SUNY Cortland has developed the policy framework for awarding of microcredentials in an effort to “verify, validate, and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved adding to a student’s career aspirations” ([SUNY Microcredential](#)). A SUNY Cortland Microcredential task force was created among various campus areas to draft the enclosed microcredential policy. The Educational Policy Committee edited the proposal, vetted it to the campus community, and revised the policy based on campus feedback.

An implementation group will be convened to resolve the questions related to tracking and awarding microcredentials, along with the cost of non-credit bearing microcredentials once a policy has been approved. All micro-credential programs will be vetted by the CCRC, which will develop specific guidance based on these policies. The first implementation of this policy will be extended to current students, with the possibility of extending micro-credential offerings to non-students in a few years.

### **Microcredential Policy**

Microcredentials are smaller academic units that represent and verify achievement in specific knowledge, skills, or competencies. The SUNY Trustees’ policy defines the four major elements of SUNY microcredentials as:

- Competency based;
- Endorsed by the issuing campus;
- Developed through faculty governance;
- Meaningful and high quality.

The following policy defines the types of microcredentials offered at SUNY Cortland and the required review for establishing a campus microcredential.

### **SUNY Cortland Microcredential**

#### 1. Credit Microcredentials

- a. Involve at least one credit bearing opportunity.
- b. May include non-credit experiences or requirements in conjunction with credit bearing.
- c. Have a clear student learning outcome or outcomes and curricular map to demonstrate how the required experiences provided the opportunity for achievement in the Student Learning Outcome(s) (SLO).
- d. Must include assessment that documents demonstrated achievement of the SLO(s).
- e. Credit hours are determined by contact hours per SUNY Policy (e.g., 15 contact hours for one credit hour)
- f. Interdisciplinary microcredentials are acceptable and encouraged.
- g. May not duplicate or be named the same as a minor, concentration, major, or program.
- h. Minimum 2.0 GPA requirement within the microcredential courses.
- i. Not eligible for pass/no credit.
- j. Residency requirement: all credits for the microcredential must be taken at SUNY Cortland.

#### 2. Non-credit Microcredentials

- a. Not credit-bearing.
- b. Generally have a narrower scope than the credit-based microcredentials focused on a specific skill or competency.
- c. Have a clear student learning outcome or outcomes (e.g., the skills/competencies), demonstrate how the experience will provide the opportunity for achievement, include assessment that documents demonstrated achievement in the SLO.
- d. Interdisciplinary microcredentials are acceptable and encouraged.
- e. May be embedded in credit-bearing courses or other campus activities.

### **Development and Approval for Microcredentials**

As required by SUNY policy, Microcredentials must be approved through the established faculty governance processes and therefore go through the SUNY Cortland Curriculum process.

As with all curricular development, microcredentials should emerge from the expertise, experience and knowledge of the faculty and staff of SUNY Cortland.

Proposals must include:

- relevance to our mission and priorities;
- student learning outcomes and how these will be assessed;
- methods of delivery;
- resources required and how those will be accessed (verified by Chair and Dean);
- evidence demonstrating need and justifying anticipated enrollment;
- department/center/office housing the microcredential; and
- how departments will ensure academic integrity in the delivery of the microcredential.

Procedures for proposing a microcredential will be outlined in the [Curriculum Change Guide](#).

Levels of Curriculum Review

- Credit-bearing go through Level 2
- Non-credit microcredentials are Level 1
- If originating and housed outside of Academic Affairs, the VP for the relevant area will have the equivalent of Dean approval

Microcredentials are not required to go through SUNY and NYSED curricular review.

If a department would like a higher level of academic credential, they can submit a certificate for official SUNY/NYSED credential.

### **Student Admission to Microcredential**

Students will be allowed to apply for a microcredential in a process similar to the declaration of a major or minor. The department housing the microcredential will approve the application.

### **Applying Microcredentials to Other Academic Credentials**

Credit bearing microcredentials can be applied to majors, degrees, concentrations, or minors with appropriate approval and as those credentials allow. Stacking of credit bearing microcredentials should be designed purposely and articulate the relationship of SLOs into a larger credential.

Non-credit experiences may not be converted into academic credit.

SUNY Cortland does not guarantee the transfer of microcredentials to other institutions or contexts.

## Glossary

The following list provides the SUNY community with a common taxonomy around micro-credentials, building on the quality work of the Lumina Foundation and others.<sup>[1]</sup> Note: This list may be expanded or revised over time.

- **Badge:** use of digital technologies to represent competencies and various learning achievements; electronic badges should include meta-data on the evidence of learning and link back to sponsoring institution and evaluation criteria.
- **Certificate:** a credential issued by an institution in recognition of the completion of a curriculum that usually represents a smaller domain of knowledge than established degrees. Credit bearing certificates must be approved by SUNY and registered with the State Education Department. These certificates typically contain fewer credits than a degree program. All credits must be applicable toward a degree program at the issuing institution. Noncredit certificates need no external approval and must be identified as such.
- **Certification:** mastery of or competency in specific knowledge, skills or processes that can be measured against a set of accepted standards, usually established by a recognized entity such as NYSED in the case of licensure requirements or an industry organization such as Microsoft.
- **Competency:** Knowledge and behaviors that lead people to be successful  
Learnable, measurable and/or observable knowledge and skill-sets gained;
- **Degree:** title given by an institution (usually a college or university) that has been granted the authority by a state, a recognized Native American tribe, or the federal government to confer such credentials. A degree represents satisfactory accomplishments within an accepted body of knowledge.
- **Student Learning Outcome:** that which a learner is expected to know, understand, or be able to do after successful completion of a planned process of learning.
- **Skills:** Specific learned abilities that allow a person to perform a given job/task successfully
- **Stackable Credential or Career Pathway:** 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.