

Draft Micro-Credential Policy

PROPOSED BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY MICRO-CREDENTIAL POLICY

SUNY has issued a policy to allow local campuses to develop and issue micro-credentials for our learning programs. This document proposes the Binghamton University policies for the development and approval of micro-credentials. SUNY directs that micro-credentials are competency-based, meaningful and of high quality, endorsed by the issuing campus and developed through faculty governance procedures. <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic-affairs/microcredentials/SUNY-Micro-Credential-Policy-Summary.pdf>

What is a micro-credential?

Micro-credentials verify, validate, and attest specific skills and/or student demonstrated competencies. They are generally shorter than degrees or certificates, and can be implemented through local campus approval procedures. They may incorporate classes within the typical semester schedule or use shorter or more flexible options. They may be made up of credit-bearing courses (and additional experiences) and appear on a student's transcript, or they may be not for credit. In either case, they are generally associated with a digital badge that includes evidence of student learning or demonstrated competency.

Here are several examples of micro-credentials offered at the University at Buffalo, which has been issuing micro-credentials for several years:

Credit-bearing:

Undergraduate – Crime and Justice in a Diverse Society – three courses

Graduate – Digital Composition – two online courses leading to a mastery of foundational skills in professional writing and digital communication.

Non-credit-bearing:

Global Dexterity – multi-dimensional learning experiences including hands-on experience with a new culture, group reflection sessions and written work

Responsible Research – completion of a semester long six workshop series on the responsible conduct of research

Binghamton micro-credentials:

Binghamton micro-credentials have a clear purpose of preparing students for the workforce, helping students stand out to employers, bridging to larger credentials and supporting life-long learning opportunities for professionals. Each micro-credential has a demonstrated relationship to at least one the NACE competencies of critical thinking/problem solving, oral/written communications, teamwork/collaboration, digital technology, leadership, professionalism/work ethic, career management, and global/intercultural fluency. <https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

There are two types of micro-credentials – credit-bearing and non-credit:

Credit-bearing micro-credentials consist of completion of coursework – generally at least two courses but not more than 12 credits – and may also require additional experiences. The micro-credentials will be transcribed. They will also be associated with digital badges issued by Binghamton University through Credly Acclaim <https://www.youracclaim.com/> which requires submission of evidence that the bearer has attained the learning objectives of the micro-credential.

Non-credit micro-credentials are typically smaller learning opportunities which will earn badges issued through Credly Acclaim. The digital badges are high quality learning experiences that provide demonstrated value for recipients.

Only programs approved by this policy are authorized to use the Binghamton University badge.

Approval process:

The high quality and relevance of Binghamton micro-credentials is assured through a review process approved by Faculty Governance (Faculty Senate). Help in developing strong proposals will be offered by an Office of Micro-Credentials initially located in the Center for Learning and Teaching. A committee of faculty and instructional design professionals will review proposals that have successfully gone through the regular School, College or unit curriculum approval procedures. Credit-bearing micro-credentials proceed through an internal approval process involving review by the Graduate Council (if at the graduate level) and the Faculty Senate process for internally approved items (EPPC and FSEC review). Non-credit micro-credentials can be implemented after local unit and Office of Micro-Credential review.

Any additional fees beyond tuition associated with credit-bearing micro-credentials are subject to the normal fee review processes. It is possible that non-matriculated students can participate in credit-bearing micro-credentials at the discretion of and according to the policies of the originating units. Fees for non-credit bearing micro-credentials must be included in the proposal submitted to the Office of Micro-Credentials.

Implementation issues:

Proposing departments and programs are responsible for establishing criteria for the micro-credentials, advising students, tracking progress, qualifying instructors, and evaluating evidence for badges and for transcribing (credit-bearing).

Supporting documentation for proposal approval includes demonstration of a clear purpose and benefit, articulation of NACE learning objectives, evidence of importance to employers, clear links between the learning outcomes and learning activities and plans for assessment of the learning evidence for the digital badge.

Additional implementation issues, such as support and incentives for micro-credential development, details of tracking systems, qualification for non-BU instructors, issuance and design of non-credit micro credentials that may stack into credit-bearing experiences and issuance and design of micro-credentials that may stack toward larger certificates and degrees will be determined after the basic policy is approved. Interdisciplinary micro-credentials are encouraged and may result in additional issues.

PROPOSED MOTION:

Micro-credentials at Binghamton are a collection of courses and experience that help students develop and document professional skills and competencies. Credit-bearing micro-credentials appear on a student's transcript and both credit-bearing and non-credit micro-credentials result in issuance of a digital badge including evidence of the competencies achieved. Credit-bearing micro-credentials have a maximum size of 12 credits and normally involve at least two courses, in addition to other required experiences in some cases. Non-credit micro-credentials are typically smaller experiences but must demonstrate high quality and value added for the recipient.

Both types of micro-credentials go through review processes before submission to the Office of Micro-Credentials for an approval process that involves faculty. Credit-bearing micro-credentials proceed through the regular internal review process of Graduate Council for graduate level micro-credentials and review by the EPPC and FSEC of the Faculty Senate.