



Executive Policy Chapter 5, Academic Affairs
Executive Policy EP 5.231, Micro-Credentials
Effective Date: XXXX 2024
Prior Dates Amended: N/A
Responsible Office: Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy
Governing Board of Regents Policy N/A
Review Date: XXXX 2027

I. Purpose

- A. To establish a definition, taxonomy, and broad guidelines for the development and issuance of micro-credentials.
- B. To identify campus responsibilities in the creation of policies and practices designed to ensure academic standards and consistent practice in development and issuance of micro-credentials

II. Definitions

Definitions of all degrees and certificates offered by the University of Hawai'i System are provided in EP 5.205.

A. General Definitions:

1. **Credential:** A credential is a general term that can be used to describe a degree, certificate, or other form of institutional-based acknowledgment.
2. **Micro-Credential:** A micro-credential is a small unit of study that provides specific competencies that contribute to the needs of communities, industries, and students. Micro-credentials have stand-alone value and may satisfy components of other micro-credentials or credentials (certificates, minors, or degrees) through assessment or recognition of prior learning. Micro-credentials may be issued for credit, non-credit, or other recognized and assessed prior learning achievements. Those that bear credit are of a lesser scale than degrees, majors, minors, certificates, and concentrations. All micro-credentials include an assessment based on clearly defined standards and measurable learning outcomes. Micro-credentials awarded by the University of Hawai'i meet the standards required by the issuing UH campus.



3. **UH Recognized Micro-Credential:** UH recognized micro-credentials are those eligible for digital badging through the UH System and are managed within a coordinated framework. Recognized micro-credentials are validated learning achievements that support workforce development goals.

3.4. **Digital Badge:** A digital badge is the digital representation of an achievement, including but not limited to an earned micro-credential. The relationship of a digital badge to a micro-credential is similar to the relationship of a diploma to an earned degree. Digital badges are verifiable through embedded meta-data and meet Open Badges standards, which ensures portability and legibility across various platforms that adhere to these standards.

B. Hierarchy of Micro-Credentials

As micro-credentials are intended to recognize various levels of learner skills, the following hierarchy has been established:

1. Awareness - Requires the learner to demonstrate foundational knowledge related to a skill set.
2. Proficiency - Requires application and analysis of the target skill set.
3. Mastery – Requires a demonstrated ability to evaluate or create based on accomplished level of ability.

C. Categories of Digital Badges

1. Participation - Not a micro-credential but can be badged.
2. Skill - Badge issued for non-credit workforce training or professional development micro-credentials issued by UH.
3. Association - Badge issued for achievement of a micro-credential related to a third-party learning experience (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment, industry-issued badge or micro-credential).
4. Academic Achievement – Badge issued for a credit-bearing micro-credential.

III. Executive Policy

- A. The authority to approve new instructional programs is detailed in [RP 5.201, Instructional Programs](#), and [EP 5.201, Approval of New Academic Programs and Review of Provisional Academic Programs](#), while the authority to award degrees and certificates is governed by [EP 5.101, Authority to Award Degrees and Certificates for Programs Authorized by the Board of Regents](#). As micro-



credentials are skill-based and may be awarded irrespective of course completion or the earning of credits, they are not classified as instructional programs under UH policy.

- B. Micro-credentials shall be developed by faculty, according to procedures established by each campus. It is the purview and responsibility of each campus to develop and implement procedures for the creation of new micro-credentials. Each campus shall be responsible for ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of its micro-credential offerings through appropriate processes of assessment and evaluation.
- C. Chancellors/Provost have the authority to approve the creation of micro-credentials and the issuance of digital badges and may delegate this authority to the chief academic officer or other designee at their campus, who is responsible for adhering to accreditation requirements.
- D. The Office of the Vice President for Information Technology, in collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy, provides system-level coordination of recognized micro-credentials offered across the UH campuses. Recognized micro-credentials are vetted to determine alignment with workforce development strategic initiatives, facilitate stackability of micro-credentials offered throughout the UH system, and coordinate systemwide data management. Recognized micro-credentials are eligible for digital badging, designed and issued through the UH System enterprise-level digital badging process.
- ~~D.E.~~ Micro-credentials may be embedded in existing courses within the curriculum. Micro-credentials issued for credit may be constructed in such a manner that will allow students to be eligible for federal financial aid. Academic departments may include micro-credentials as part of a degree program, allowing for the micro-credential to count within students' Course Program of Study (CPOS), thereby facilitating transfer between UH institutions. In such cases, campuses shall follow the terms of [EP 6.204, Student Financial Assistance Program](#).
- ~~E.F.~~ It is expected that micro-credentials, as defined and covered under this policy, will not require significant resources. Any prospective micro-credentials requiring significant resources require approval of the Board of Regents, as specified in [RP 5.201](#).
- ~~F.G.~~ As micro-credentials are linked to competencies and need not consist of sets of credit-bearing courses, they may provide campuses with opportunities to



reach previously untapped markets of students. While each campus retains the purview to establish its own admissions policies and practices for micro-credentials, each campus must abide by the terms of [RP 5.211, Admissions](#), which establishes parameters for the admission of students into academic programs.

G.H. Micro-credentials may be stackable, which means that they can be accumulated over time in a structured sequence or pathway leading to a higher-order credential. Each campus shall determine criteria and processes for the incremental stacking of micro-credentials, including how they might lead to a credential.

H.I. Each campus shall be responsible for recording student enrollment and achievement data for its micro-credential offerings in a central repository, as well as reporting out on those data points, as required by institutional accrediting bodies and/or UH leadership. Each campus shall be responsible for adhering to the U.S. Department of Education Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment Rule reporting requirements, as applicable.

IV. Delegation of Authority

There is no policy specific delegation of authority.

V. Contact Information

Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy
Telephone: (808) 956-6897
Email: ovpas@hawaii.edu

VI. References

[RP 5.201](#), Instructional Programs
[EP 5.201](#), Approval of New Academic Programs and Review of Provisional Academic Programs
[EP 5.205](#), Academic Programs Definitions and Guidelines

Approved:

David Lassner

Date



President