



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 60.13, **Microcredentials.**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Health Sciences Center Operating Policy and Procedure (HSC OP) is to delineate approval of and criteria to award a microcredential at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) ensuring that microcredentials maintain a consistent level of rigor and are uniformly awarded in accordance with this policy and its related guidelines. This HSC OP applies to all TTUHSC campus locations.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed in May every two years (E2Y) by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Integrated Learning (AAIL), Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee, and Academics Council.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Background

The integration of microcredentials at TTUHSC is aimed at elevating the visibility and marketability of TTUHSC learners, highlighting their knowledge and skill sets. Concurrently, this initiative seeks to foster increased engagement in campus initiatives and career advancement among learners, faculty, staff, alumni, clinicians, preceptors, and university community partners.

2. Definitions

- a. ***Learner:*** An inclusive term that encompasses a variety of target audiences, including those who are taking part in the educational process whether it be a microcredential or a full degree program. TTUHSC welcomes learners to learn new competencies and skills whether they are currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students, residents, alumni, faculty, staff, preceptors, or individuals in the community who seek opportunities to enhance their current skills to secure future opportunities and advance their careers or advance their knowledge in subject matters.
- b. ***Competency:*** Learnable, measurable, and/or observable knowledge and skill sets gained.
- c. ***Microcredential:*** A microcredential is a competency-based form of skills validation that represents a unit of learning. A microcredential can be awarded in the form of a digital badge or digital certificate. A TTUHSC microcredential must be based on formative and summative assessment best practices, be aligned to industry or post-graduate needs, and culminate in a reflective learning and/or skill development experience. A microcredential has a clear purpose of preparing recipients for the workforce, helping them stand out to experiential placements and employers, bridging to larger credentials or learning pathways, supporting life-long learning opportunities for professionals, and enhancing professional skills through continuing education.
- d. ***Digital Badge:*** A digital badge serves as an electronic representation of one or more microcredentials, visually presented online and embedded with metadata providing contextual information about the learning experience. They are easily managed, verified, and shared online, guided by a competency statement, and linked to participant learning outcomes.

The design of the digital badge, including shape and color, is standardized by a style guide developed by AAIL. Upon meeting the competencies, the badge is electronically issued and linked to the sponsoring institution and evaluation criteria.

- e. *Microcredential or Digital Badge Proposal:* A comprehensive document outlining the conceptualization and criteria for a prospective new badge, necessitating the successful fulfillment of a task or experiential learning endeavor leading to the acquisition of a defined goal, skill, knowledge, or competency. This proposal includes detailed elements such as associated artifacts, reflections, and rubrics, strategically incorporated to validate and showcase the mastery of specific outcomes. Proposals can be submitted [here](#) for consideration.
- f. *External Microcredentials:* Credentials designed and administered by external organizations or vendors (e.g., CITI, Lynda badges, Microsoft, Google Certification, and CISCO certification) with value to TTUHSC learners and team members may be integrated into TTUHSC microcredential programs.

3. **Roles and responsibilities**

Departments/Schools/Centers/Units who wish to develop a microcredential will work with the Division of Academic Affairs and Integrated Learning (AAIL) to submit a proposal to facilitate the application, assessment, and design process. Microcredentials aligned to an existing program, course, or experience will be developed by the unit in consultation with AAIL and must include appropriate assessment requirements. Supporting documentation for a new microcredential will include the demonstration of a clear purpose and benefit, criteria for earning the microcredential, articulation of career competencies/skills, evidence of importance to employers, clear links between the learning outcomes and learning activities and plans for assessment of the learning evidence.

Microcredentials aligned to a program, course, or experience that does not yet exist but would traditionally require approval through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and/or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, must still follow that approval process before the microcredential can be designed and issued ([HSC OP60.11](#)). This process applies to any microcredentials that are designed to be stacked together to award academic credit.

4. **Fees**

Fees associated with a microcredential must be clearly outlined within the proposal submitted to the AAIL. Proposed fees should encompass all costs associated with the development, implementation, and administration of the microcredential program. In addition to the proposed fees, there will be a badge processing fee assessed for each microcredential. This badge processing fee is designed to cover the expenses related to the creation and maintenance of digital badges, as well as the administrative tasks involved in awarding learners their badges upon successful completion of the microcredential requirements.

5. **Right to change policy**

TTUHSC reserves the right to change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy in whole or in part at any time.