

**SUNY New Paltz Microcredential Policy**  
**Implemented March 8, 2019**  
**Approved by Faculty Senate March 6, 2019**

In accordance with the SUNY policy, the aim of the SUNY New Paltz Microcredential Policy is to provide an opportunity for students to enhance and extend their academic experience by earning microcredentials that verify, validate and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. Such microcredentials must be developed through established faculty governance processes and designed to be meaningful and high quality.

**I. Types of Microcredentials**

SUNY New Paltz recognizes two types of microcredentials which are covered by this policy.

- A. Curricular Microcredentials.** Curricular microcredentials involve one or more credit-bearing courses and may combine credit-bearing courses and non-credit-bearing activities. These microcredentials must be reviewed and approved through the regular process of curriculum approval for their level (graduate or undergraduate).
  - 1. Curricular microcredentials may encompass credit-bearing clusters of courses and/or segments within credit-bearing courses that add up to fewer than 24 credit hours (or 360 contact hours).
  - 2. Curricular microcredentials may be within a single disciplinary area or interdisciplinary.
  - 3. A curricular microcredential may be recorded on an academic transcript, on a co-curricular transcript, and/or represented by a digitally verifiable badge.
  
- B. Competency badges.** Competency badges document the attainment of one or more discrete, assessable skills. They may be offered as components of one or more courses or through one or more non-credit-bearing experiential learning activities, or a combination thereof.
  - 1. Competency badges are not recorded on the academic transcript, but may be represented by a verifiable digital badge on a co-curricular transcript or other online platforms (e.g., LinkedIn).
  - 2. The digital badge must be clearly identified as a competency badge and must state the competency(ies) attained.

Microcredentials that are not covered by this policy include:

- A. Participation badges.** Participation badges document that a student has participated in a workshop, training, or co-curricular activity external to a course. These badges are not covered by this policy, except that any digital badge awarded by academic units and/or Student Affairs solely for participation must clearly indicate that it only documents participation, with a description of the activity. Participation badges are not recorded on the academic transcript, but may be recorded on the co-curricular transcript.
  
- B. External Credentials.** Credentials designed and administered by external organizations or vendors (e.g., Lynda badges, Google Certification, and CISCO certification) may be of value to SUNY New Paltz students and may be made available or required as part of some programs on campus. These are not, in and of themselves, SUNY New Paltz credentials and, as such, are not covered by this policy. However, external credentials may be incorporated into course requirements or into a microcredential (e.g., while SUNY

New Paltz does not award CITI credentials, a research methods course might require students to demonstrate CITI credentials or a microcredential might require students to complete CITI credentials).

## **II. Principles**

- A. The SUNY principles should guide the proposal and review of curricular microcredentials and competency badges:
  - 1. Academic quality is paramount and faculty governance participation is required.
  - 2. Microcredentials are initiated locally, developed, and approved according to local campus policies and procedures, consistent with campus mission and strategic goals.
  - 3. Microcredentials designed to meet market needs should be informed by current data from appropriate markets and align with relevant industry/sector standards.
  - 4. Microcredentials can provide opportunities for industry/education connections and partnerships.
  - 5. Microcredentials are inherently more flexible and innovative.
  - 6. Microcredentials should be portable (have value beyond the institution).
  - 7. Microcredentials should be stackable (multiple microcredentials lead to credit-bearing coursework, a more advanced badge or a registered certificate or degree).

## **III. Requirements for Microcredentials**

- A. General Requirements
  - 1. Anyone who is eligible to take the required credit or non-credit courses/programs or engage in the co-curricular activities may earn a microcredential. At the discretion of the faculty, the eligibility requirements might include a minimum GPA or other criteria for matriculated students, and/or an application process for non-matriculated students.
  - 2. Microcredentials are awarded upon successful completion of the specific requirements for that credential.
  - 3. Curricular microcredentials and competency badges should have clear, measurable outcomes, assessments aligned to the outcomes, and evidence of mastery of the outcomes through reliable and valid assessments.
  - 4. Non-credit-bearing components of a microcredential may not be converted into academic credit. Only credit-bearing microcredentials may be stacked for credit.
  - 5. Microcredentials and/or their components may or may not be transferable to other campuses.
  - 6. Microcredential proposers should consult with their chair, dean, and/or other appropriate administrators about resource and enrollment management issues necessary to support a new microcredential.
- B. Specific Requirements for Curricular Microcredentials
  - 1. Curricular microcredentials must contain a minimum of one credit hour (15 contact hours) of coursework with a specific area of focus or concentration.
  - 2. A minimum grade of C- is required in all courses taken for the microcredential with an overall GPA of 2.0 for the microcredential program unless a higher minimum grade and/or GPA is specified.
  - 3. Credits earned for microcredentials may be used toward minors, majors, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, certificates and/or advanced certificates subject to degree/program requirements and college requirements.
  - 4. Proposals for curricular microcredentials must articulate the number of transfer credits that may be accepted.

C. Specific Requirements for Competency Badges

1. The unit(s) coordinating a competency badge proposal is(are) responsible for articulating the standards for the badge together with the criteria for assessing achievement of the competencies.

**IV. Approval Process**

A. Curricular Microcredentials

1. Undergraduate curricular microcredentials of fewer than nine credit hours must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. Proposals of nine or more credit hours must be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and the SUNY New Paltz Faculty Senate.
2. All graduate curricular microcredentials must be approved by the Graduate Council.
3. Curricular microcredentials that combine undergraduate and graduate coursework must be approved at both levels.
4. For curricular microcredentials that include non-credit-bearing experiential learning activities arising out of Student Affairs, Student Affairs must be involved in the review and approval:
  - a. A non-voting ex-officio representative from Student Affairs will participate in deliberations of the Curriculum Committee and/or the Graduate Council, according to the level(s) of the proposal.
  - b. The VP for Student Affairs must sign as one of the approvers of the proposal.
5. Curricular microcredentials may be stacked toward courses or programs (e.g., advanced certificates, graduate degrees, undergraduate degrees, certificates, minors)\*. Plans to stack microcredentials towards a program or degree should be articulated in the proposal and may impact IV.A.1 and IV.A.2 above.
6. The curricular microcredential approval process does not replace the process for the approval of any new courses or programs that might be related to the microcredential.

B. For Competency Badges

1. For competency badges arising out of academic divisions, the approval is at the dean level, which should, where available and appropriate, involve a division-level governance body review (e.g., Liberal Arts & Sciences Senate).
2. Competency badges arising out of the Student Affairs division must be approved by the Vice President (or designee).
3. For competency badges that involve both academic and Student Affairs divisions, the approval process for both divisions must be satisfied.

## Appendix - Definitions

**Advanced certificate:** A certificate program composed of graduate-level courses only.

**Award:** The degree or certificate granted for completion of an academic program - e.g., Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.).

**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 the sponsoring institution and evaluation criteria.

**Certificate:** A credential issued by an institution in recognition of the completion of a curriculum other than one leading to a degree. A certificate 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. Certificates typically contain 24 or more undergraduate credits, but fewer credits than a degree program. All credits must be applicable toward a degree program at the issuing institution. Non-credit certificates need no external approval and must be identified as such.

**Competency:** Learnable, measurable and/or observable knowledge and skill sets gained.

**Competency Badge:** A credential that documents the attainment of one or more discrete, assessable skills. They may be offered as components of one or more courses or through one or more non-credit-bearing experiential learning activities, or a combination thereof.

**Contact hour:** One contact hour is equivalent to a 50-minute class session of scheduled instruction.

**Credit:** A unit of academic award applicable towards a degree offered by the institution. One credit hour is equated to 15 contact hours of academic instruction.

**Curricular microcredential:** A microcredential program that involves one or more credit-bearing courses, including programs that may combine credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing activities.

**Curriculum or program:** The formal educational requirements necessary to qualify for certificates or degrees. A curriculum or program includes general education or specialized study in depth in a particular field, or both.

**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.

**Microcredential:** A credential that verifies, validates, and attests that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved through credit-bearing and/or non-credit-bearing activities.

**Stackable microcredential:** One of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build towards a certificate or degree program.