

Operational Area	Academics and Research
Responsible Executive	Chief Academic Officer
Responsible Office	Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development
Effective	October 1, 2025

Micro-Credentials and Digital Badging Policy

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. **Authority:** C.R.S. § 23-54-102, et seq. (2025) authorizes the Trustees of Metropolitan State University of Denver ("MSU Denver" or "University") to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs. The Trustees retain authority to approve, interpret, and administer policies pertaining to University governance. The Trustees authorize the President of MSU Denver to approve, administer, and interpret policies pertaining to University operations.

B. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to allow digital badging at MSU Denver for approved micro-credentials in order to increase the visibility and marketability of MSU Denver students, their knowledge, and their skillsets while also incentivizing increased participation in campus initiatives by students, faculty, staff, alumni, and University community partners. Under Pillar II of the university's 2030 strategic plan goals, "MSU Denver will further develop and maintain [...] micro-credentials, badges and other flexible 'on- and off-ramps,' [...]" This policy will contribute to the implementation of this objective. In addition, the goal of this policy is to maintain consistency across badges earned at MSU Denver, establish a common, university-wide custodian, and create procedures to ensure that badges earned at MSU Denver are recorded for the foreseeable future.

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C. **Scope:** This policy applies to all electronic badges awarded by MSU Denver. This policy does not preclude other forms of recognition or awards. If uncertainty exists, contact the Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development Office.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Responsible Executive:** Chief Academic Officer
- B. **Responsible Administrator:** Vice Provost
- C. **Responsible Office:** Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development
- D. **Policy Contact:** Vice Provost, 303-615-1116
- E. **Additional Roles and Responsibilities:**
 1. **The Office of Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development:** will administer the University's Badging Program, oversee the University Badging Committee, and implement the administrative considerations of the University Micro-Credentialing and Badging Policy.
 2. **The Office of Innovative and Lifelong Learning:** will assist in the development of noncredit academic micro-credentials through the administration and development of noncredit continuing education courses.
 3. **University Badging Committee:** will assist in the management of the badging program. Membership of the committee is defined below in the Procedures section.
 4. **The Office of the Registrar:** will be a collaborating body for the University Micro- Credentialing and Badging Policy and will work with the Office of Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, Policy Development, and the Badging Committee to implement the policies and procedures set forth.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. MSU Denver academic departments and other University units may create, design, and award micro-credentials, signified by digital badges, which are associated with MSU Denver. These may be awarded to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other community partners for either the completion of specific experiences or achievements, or for the demonstration of specific competencies.

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These achievements and competencies can be associated with the completion of academic activities, campus activities, or initiatives. Digital badges will be awarded via an electronic platform and can be incorporated into a student's professional online presence and e-portfolio, such as LinkedIn

- B. Like academic majors, minors, and certificates, micro-credentials are not in themselves credit bearing but can be made up of components that include credit or non-credit courses and learning experiences. Likewise, micro-credentials, in themselves, cannot be used to fulfill certificate, degree, or program requirements and will not be listed on a student's transcript. However, micro-credentials can be paired with existing credited learning, stackable credentials, and other learning options. For example, a micro- credential may be defined as being constituted by a course component, a full course, or set of courses. These courses with academic credit will be listed on the student's transcript and can also be applied to other program requirements, such as the major, minor, or General Studies. Transfer courses and credits accrued through prior learning may be used to demonstrate competencies as part of a micro-credential, dependent on the competencies and type of artifact required for the specific micro-credential.
- C. Academic departments and University units may offer micro-credentials in partnership with external entities. All badges associated with MSU Denver shall follow the approval process of this policy and associated digital badges must follow University brand standards. Badges with no affiliation with MSU Denver or its academic programs may forgo the University approval process but cannot utilize any University branding.
- D. Any badges associated with MSU Denver that were created before the adoption of this policy must follow the approval process within one year of the implementation of this policy.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Digital Badge:** An electronic emblem that serves as evidence of an individual's completion of a Micro-Credential and represents competencies related to a specific topic or topics. Digital badges can include meta-data on the evidence of learning and link to both the sponsoring institution and evaluation criteria.
- B. **Micro-Credential:** A short program of learning focused on the gaining and evaluation of demonstrated competencies, specific skills, or knowledge related to a topic. Micro- Credentials can be related to other credentials associated with MSU Denver.

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- C. **Micro-Credential with Academic Credit:** Any Micro-Credential in which any of the demonstrated competencies related to a specific topic or topics are part of an academic program or course, for example a specific course or assignment.
- D. **Micro-Credential without Academic Credit:** Any Micro-Credential in which the demonstrated competencies related to a specific topic or topics are not part of any academic program or course. Micro-Credentials without Academic Credit include those where the demonstrated competencies coincide with noncredit programs managed by Innovative & Lifelong Learning.
- E. **Demonstrated Competency:** A learnable, measurable, and/or observable knowledge or skill-set gained through completion of a Micro-Credential.
- F. **Academic Departments:** Academic units as defined by the MSU Denver Curriculum Manual.
- G. **Artifact:** An item of proof needed to substantiate the completion of a Micro-Credential in order to earn a badge. Certain digital badges may limit the artifacts that are acceptable as evidence for a potential badge.
- H. **Activity:** a task, goal or experience required to earn a badge.
- I. **Micro-Credential/Badge Proposal:** A written plan for a potential new badge that requires the completion of a task, goal or experience, including associated artifacts and rubrics to demonstrate mastery of specific outcomes.
- J. **Coordinating Body:** A provider of record-keeping services for earned digital badges.
- K. **Custodian:** A provider working with social media platforms to ensure badges are viewable by a broad social media audience.
- L. **Rubric:** A written set of standards regarding which tasks, goals, and experiences are acceptable for the conferral of a badge. A rubric may also limit the types of artifacts that are acceptable to serve as proof of completion of tasks, goals, and experiences.
- M. **Electronic Platform:** A third party software site or program utilized by the University to create and award digital badges, such as Canvas or Credly.
- N. **Stackable Credential:** part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications. Stackable credentials help an individual move along a career pathway and/or further their education.

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V. PROCEDURAL PROCESSES

- A. The Office of Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development will administer the University's Badging Program by developing specific procedures for collecting micro-credential/badge proposals and publication of MSU Denver micro-credential programs. They will also work with units offering badges and micro-credential program managers to guarantee consistency in appearance of digital badges, and the collection of rubrics and other badging records. Deadlines related to the University's Badging Program, such as deadlines for proposal submission and updates to the Micro-Credential and Digital Badge Bulletin, will be published in the University's Academic Calendar.
- B. The Micro-Credential Program Manager will submit a Micro-Credential/Badge proposal that minimally includes the following:
 - 1. A designated Micro-Credential program manager, either by position or department.
 - 2. The electronic platform for the digital badge, such as Canvas or Credly.
 - 3. Details about the purpose and scope of the credential (including whether it requires courses, or parts of courses, with academic credit).
 - 4. A list of measurable outcomes (competencies, skills, experiences, or knowledge) or achievements associated with the credential.
 - 5. A list of artifacts that must be submitted by the individual pursuing the Micro-Credential in order to demonstrate mastery of the articulated outcomes and the realization of the credential, and a description of the mechanism for creating and submitting the artifacts. For example, a project completed for a class associated with the Micro-Credential, a written reflection on an experience or achievement, or observation of an oral presentation.
 - 6. A description of how artifacts will be assessed in alignment with the articulated outcomes, or an evaluation tool such as a rubric.
 - 7. Except for Micro-Credentials without academic credit where all of the competencies are assessed in noncredit courses through Innovative and Lifelong Learning: A letter of support from the administrator or office committing resources to ensure the success of the program. For example, proposals from Academic Departments should include letters of support from their Dean or the Dean's designee, while proposals from non-academic departments should include letters of support from the appropriate head of that unit.

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- C. For Micro-Credentials with Academic Credit: Academic departments and units can propose a micro-credential by submitting a proposal to the University Badging Committee. Any creation of or changes to curriculum will follow the university's curriculum process outlined in the Curriculum Manual and must be approved before inclusion on a proposal for a micro-credential.
- D. For Micro-credentials without academic credit where all of the competencies are assessed in noncredit courses through Innovative and Lifelong Learning: Academic departments and/or university units can propose a micro-credential in association with the Office of Innovative and Lifelong Learning through their established procedures. Any changes to noncredit courses will follow the Metropolitan State University of Denver Noncredit Continuing Education Course Guidelines. Approved proposals will be presented to the Badging Committee as an information item.
- E. For all other Micro-Credentials without Academic Credit: Academic departments and/or University units planning to offer Micro-Credentials shall submit proposal to the Office of Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development in conjunction with the University Badging Committee for approval.
- F. The University Badging Committee will consist of representatives drawn from the following areas:
 - 1. The Vice Provost or their designee will serve as chair. The Vice Provost will vote only in the event of a tied vote. The chair will be responsible for calling meetings and setting agendas for those meetings. The chair will also report decisions to applicants.
 - 2. The Office of Innovative and Life-long Learning will have a voting representative to be selected by that office.
 - 3. The Office of Online Learning will have a voting representative to be selected by that office.
 - 4. The Office of Student Affairs will have a voting representative to be selected by the office.
 - 5. The Office of the Registrar will have a voting representative to be selected by the office.
 - 6. The remaining positions will be filled by members of the faculty. Those members will be selected from the ranks of the Faculty Senate--one representative from each Academic Subdivision of the Faculty Senate. Should there not be a Senator available from each Academic Subdivision of the Faculty Senate, members may be selected from the faculty at large.

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- 7. Additional Ex-Officio committee members can be appointed by the committee chair as needed for the benefit of the committee's work and can include faculty, staff, students, or outside parties.
- 8. The members of the committee will select one member to serve as the secretary for the committee. That member will be responsible for recording minutes from the meeting and decisions made in those meetings.

G. The University Badging Committee will review proposals for inclusion of all necessary proposal components as listed in section 2 of this policy, appropriate Micro-Credential category (for example, Micro-Credential without academic credit), quality, consistency, potential duplication with existing Micro-Credentials, and possible conflicts or impacts on other academic or University units. The committee will automatically reject proposals that are incomplete or duplicate existing Micro-Credentials.

H. Approved proposals will be filed with the Office of Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development and will be published in the Micro-Credential and Digital Badge Bulletin, available on the University website. MSU Denver Micro-Credential programs must be published in the bulletin before they may be awarded to students.

- 1. The bulletin will be public so that MSU Denver students, faculty and staff, community members, and other interested parties can learn about available Micro-Credentials at MSU Denver.
- 2. The bulletin will clearly demarcate the following categories of Micro-Credentials: Micro-Credentials with academic credit, Micro-Credentials without academic credit, and Micro-Credentials without academic credit where all of the competencies are assessed in noncredit courses through Innovative and Lifelong Learning.
- 3. The bulletin will include details about the purpose and scope of the credential, measurable outcomes associated with the credential, and details about the activities required for the credential (including a list of for-credit courses and their prerequisites, if applicable).
- 4. While all MSU Denver micro-credentials/badges will be published in the bulletin, programs and related information can also be published on specific department or unit websites and promotional materials.

I. The Micro-Credential Program Manager, or their designee, manages the Micro-Credential program by:

- 1. Serving as the contact for additional information regarding the Micro-Credential.

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2. Verifying the accuracy of the Micro-Credential description, measurable outcomes, associated artifacts, and rubrics in the digital platform.
3. Maintaining records of who is pursuing a Micro-Credential, either within the digital platform or through some other mechanism.
4. Evaluating the submitted artifacts for demonstration of mastery of the articulated outcomes.
5. Awarding of digital badges for those who complete the Micro-Credential program.

VI. RELATED INFORMATION

- A. [MSU Denver Digital Badging & Micro-Credentials Webpage](#)
- B. [MSU Denver Innovative and Lifelong Learning Webpage](#)
- C. [MSU Denver Brand Central](#)

VII. POLICY HISTORY

- A. **Effective:** October 1, 2025
- B. **Revised:** 2025 -updated with technical changes: Responsible Administrator to Vice Provost position and update micro-credentialing software systems used.
- C. **Original Enactment Date:** September 29, 2022
- D. **Review:** This policy will be reviewed every three years or as deemed necessary by University leadership.

VIII. POLICY APPROVAL



Janine Davidson, Ph.D.
President, Metropolitan State University of Denver



**President's
Policy Statement
University Policy Library**

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N/A

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