

## **Academic Administrative Process 4.11**

### **Micro-credentials Program and Process**

#### **Vision**

To be a leader in rigorous and purposeful micro-credentials that are aligned with 21st century competencies, thereby raising the academic profile of our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

#### **Mission and Goals**

By offering micro-credentials and digital badges, the University will:

- Create opportunities for more customized learning experiences.
- Support student employability by aligning achievements with professional competencies and industry standards.
- Develop programs that are stackable (allowing learners to earn a series of smaller credentials as they progress toward their final goal).
- Develop a continuing education market for upskilling working professionals.

#### **About Micro-Credentials**

A micro-credential program allows students to gain relevant skills that enable them to distinguish themselves, academically and professionally. A digital badge is a type of micro-credential that allows students to show specific skills that they have gained through coursework or other formal learning experiences at Lewis. They are dynamic credentials that can be shared in social networks and professional contexts, including LinkedIn, resumes, e-portfolios and more.

A digital badge is an icon but it is not a static image. It is clickable and houses information such as the issuing institution, the date earned, the criteria required to earn the badge and the evidence that shows that a student has met the required criteria.

Lewis has historically offered certificate programs and Continuing Education Units (CEU) to students and other constituencies. This micro-credential program enables programs to offer pre-existing certificates and CEUs as digital badges.

#### **Benefits**

While hundreds of individuals might earn the same badge, each badge is unique due to its verifiable metadata. Metadata includes information regarding the issuing institution, date of

issuance, criteria for earning and evidence that the learner has met the criteria. Evidence is supporting information such as: the learner's work, rubrics, course information, peer or expert endorsement, narratives, documents, videos, etc. Evidence can be uploaded or shared via a link. Each program will require a distinct piece of evidence that will be embedded in its badge.

Micro-credentials allow students to gain knowledge and skills in areas that are important to them. Because micro-credentials are small programs, they are easier to add as a compliment to a major or minor. This will attract new or returning students seeking to refresh their knowledge and learn new skills.

Micro-credentials and digital badges at Lewis are aligned with the competencies of 21st century workforce, including critical thinking, professionalism, intercultural fluency, digital technology and more. These programs are specifically designed to better equip students with the skills that employers demand and to help students to communicate those skills in the right setting.

### **Approval Process**

Lewis's micro-credential program is administered by the School of Graduate, Professional, and Continuing Education. While the School provides administrative support for the creation and awarding of micro-credentials, the curricula and programs are developed and approved by academic departments and colleges.

- All digital badges connected to credit bearing degree and non-degree programs must be approved through the faculty governance and program development process.
- Non-credit badges require approval of the academic department, dean, Micro-credential Committee, and provost.

The Lewis University Micro-credential Committee is a faculty-led representative body that provides support to faculty and staff who are proposing, developing, and implementing micro-credential programs. Members of the committee support program development, review proposals, and track student enrollment in micro-credential programs.

### **Submit a Proposal**

Proposals for micro-credential programs must first be approved by the academic department and college dean. Programs that will consist of new courses or curricula require approval by the college Educational Policy Committee or Graduate Council.

### **Step 1: Determine if micro-credentials are the right solution**

Ensure that you are able to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the purpose that your micro-credential will serve?
2. Does your micro-credential fall under one of the following broad categories as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers?
  - Career management
  - Critical thinking/problem solving
  - Digital technology
  - Global/intercultural fluency
  - Oral/written communications
  - Professionalism
  - Leadership
  - Teamwork/collaboration
3. Does your proposed micro-credential result in a skill that is relevant in the workforce? How do you know?
4. Will your micro-credential be credit bearing and tied to a degree, concentration, or certificate that has already been approved by governance?
5. Who is your audience?
  - Do you plan to recruit current students and/or at-large students?
  - Will your micro-credential be credit bearing and tied to a degree, concentration, or certificate that has already been approved by governance?
  - Will your micro-credential be non-credit? If so, will it only be open to currently registered students, or will it be developed for an external audience?
  - Micro-credentials developed for external audiences as CEUs or professional development programs will have a registration fee that will vary by program. Credit bearing programs will not have a registration fee.
    - The micro-credential committee and SGPCE will support you in the development of the fee structure for non-credit programs.
    - Fee structures for current non-degree programs may be impacted by becoming micro-credential programs.
6. How do you know there will be interest in this micro-credential?
7. How will you promote the micro-credential to your audience?

## **Step 2: Develop your micro-credential and submit your proposal**

To submit a proposal, use the Micro-Credential Proposal Form linked here.

All proposals need to be approved by the department chair and Dean before a proposal is submitted.

Note: Your proposed program may be subject to EPC or Grad Council review at the college level if it requires the creation of a new credit bearing course or program.

## **Step 3: University-level review**

When the proposal is submitted, the Micro-credential Review Committee will review the proposal and provide feedback, including any recommended revisions. If revisions are recommended, please work with the School of Graduate, Professional, and Continuing Education to make the suggested changes.

## **Step 4: Program Delivery**

Once the program is an approved micro-credential, a digital badge will be created specifically for your program. Students will be able to enroll in the program and the badge will be awarded through SGPCE. Registration for the badge and confirmation of completion will be required before the badge is awarded.

## **Step 5: Assessment of Student Learning and Program Effectiveness**

### **Student Learning**

- It is the responsibility of academic departments to conduct assessment of student learning for their micro-credential program. To aid in this effort:
  - All micro-credential programs will be designed with measurable student learning outcomes.
  - These will be mapped to university-wide and program student learning outcomes.
- Assessment of micro-credential programs will be integrated into regular academic and co-curricular program assessment and program review processes.

### **Program Effectiveness**

- The School of Graduate, Professional, and Continuing Education will collect data that will track the effectiveness of the micro-credential program:
  - Student survey – completed when the micro-credential is awarded
  - Number who declare a micro-credential
  - Completion rates and stop outs

- Number who claim badges
- Badge sharing data