MICROCREDENTIAL
Development Handbook

Lethbridge College

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WHAT ARE MICROCREDENTIALS?

Microcredentials encompass a wide variety of bite-sized learning experiences that may stand alone or be stacked into credentials that are acknowledged with digital badges. These badges contain detailed, verifiable information about the badge award, including information about the issuer and the learner, criteria for earning the badge, and more. The learner collects these badges and may share them via social media, websites, links and printed certificates.
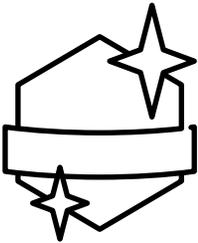
HOW MICROCREDENTIALS WORK

The microcredential learning experience is different than enrolling in a diploma, certificate or degree program, right from the first click.
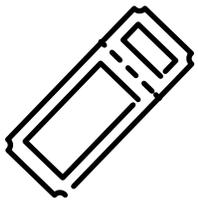
1. ENROLL

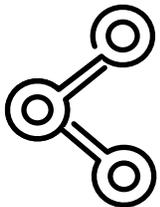Learners self-enroll online and quickly gain access to courses with the opportunity to begin learning in minutes.

2. COMPLETE

Learners complete microcredential courses in less time than typical courses.

3. SHARE

When criteria have been met, completion of microcredentials is acknowledged with digital badges that can be immediately shared by learners on resumes, portfolios, and social media.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS

A comprehensive microcredential system will provide learners with flexible pathways to credentials. Learners have the freedom to navigate pathways as they choose the learning topics and experiences that fit them best. Microcredentials may share common elements, providing multiple opportunities for learners through system design.
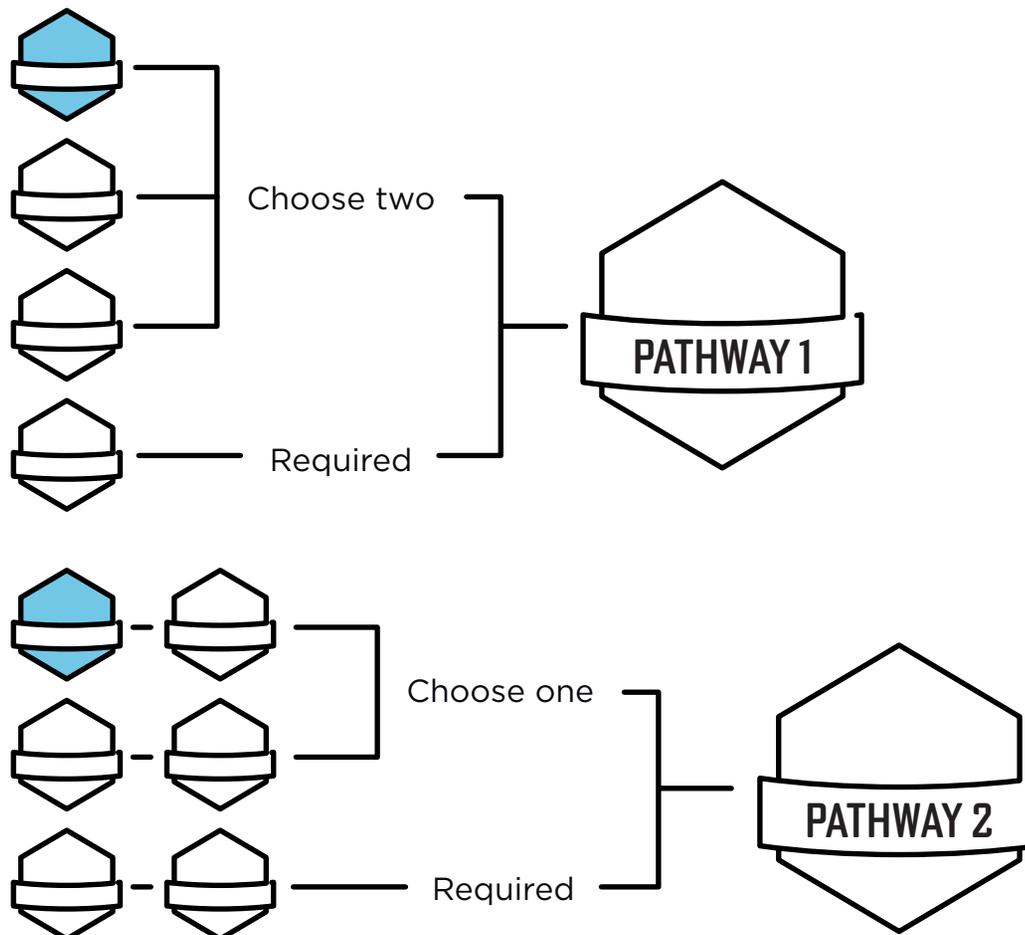
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR MICROCREDENTIALS

FLEXIBLE

Learners learn what they want, when they want, at their own pace and an affordable price
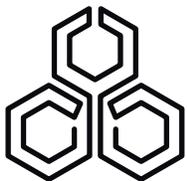
TANGIBLE

Provides learners with tools and strategies that can immediately be transferred to use in professional settings

RELEVANT

Well-researched, based on recent innovations and focus on in-demand topics

ENGAGING

Meets learners' needs with interesting and appealing design for learning

THE VALUE OF MICROCREDENTIALS

FOR LEARNERS

Immediacy | Enroll, start and complete most courses in only a few hours

Time-sensitive | Only spend time learning what you want to learn

Affordable | Explore new professional and personal interests without committing to an entire program of study

Flexible | Take any combination of individual mini-courses, or pursue completion of a pathway

Share | Display to professional communities and prospective employers

FOR VIEWERS

Recruit | Identify and select potential employees with initiative and specific skill sets

Train | Identify high-quality, affordable, flexible learning opportunities for upskilling and reskilling

Network | Identify individuals and organizations with common interests

FOR ENDORSERS

Partner | Build and showcase partnerships with Lethbridge College

Promote | Learning opportunities and recommendations

Support | Demonstrate support for ongoing career development

FOR ISSUERS

Culture | Cultivate an environment of learning and innovation both within and beyond Lethbridge College

Collaborate | Development & implementation of learning opportunities in alignment with institutional goals

Learn | Analytics on learner progress available to instructors and administrators

4 STEPS TO HIGH QUALITY MICROCREDENTIALS

STEP 1: PLAN
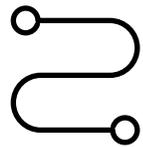
Microcredentials can provide enhanced learning pathways for students, employees and the community, and may also contribute to marketing and program development. Take some time to consider the purpose and audience for your microcredentials to plan for success.

STEP 2: DEVELOP

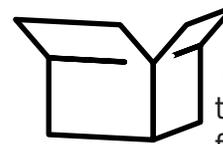Lethbridge College has developed a variety of resources, processes and templates to help design teams quickly produce high quality resources that align to the purpose and audience of the microcredential.

Click to check out these Toolkits:

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT FRAMEWORK *guide*

THE PROJECT BLUEPRINT

STEP 3: DELIVER

Microcredentials can be designed for a range of facilitation models. Whether the experience is self-directed or highly facilitated, student progress is monitored and feedback collected from your learners during delivery.

STEP 4: REFLECT AND REVISE

All experiences offered to learners should be periodically reviewed to ensure that the content remains current, they are working properly, and are fulfilling the intended purpose. This is an opportunity to re-examine if further development is warranted or adjustments to the design are required.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MICROCREDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

If your organization, team, or program is interested in developing microcredentials, consider the following questions:

- Who is your target audience?

- Is there evidence of current or projected demand for this microcredential?

- What is the primary purpose for developing the microcredential?

- Does a similar microcredential exist already?

- What is the scope of the project? Is it a single experience or a coordinated bundle of experiences?

- Is the content suited to be broken into smaller content pieces?

- What are the implications of building a microcredential?

- How might delivery of microcredentials impact existing credit and non-credit programs?

- Is there an opportunity to collaborate with an expert or employer to develop the microcredential?

- What resources are available for development and maintenance?
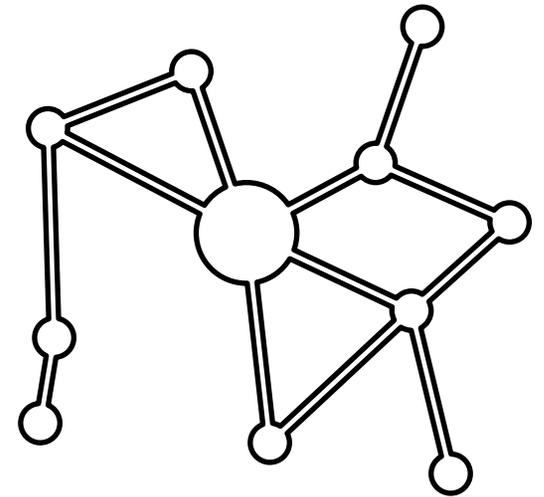
QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES WITH MICROCREDENTIALS

Standards for high-quality microcredential learning experiences are similar to those used for online course design. Essential considerations for online delivery include the following:

Designed to be completed in a shorter period of time than typical courses, focusing on one or two competencies or outcomes

Designed from a Curriculum Alignment Framework that aligns outcomes, competencies, learning activities and assessments

Completion of course activities and assessments results in acquisition of skills and resources that can be immediately applied in professional settings

Rigour is evident through opportunities for higher-order thinking at the appropriate level of expectation for the given context

Content is free of bias related to age, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, or disability

Content demonstrates respect for and acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples, their territories and their history

Credible and relevant information sources are used to design learning resources, activities, and assessments

Tools and processes are used to ensure consistency in assessment

Designed to meet Accessibility Standards and in compliance with principles of Universal Design

SYSTEM DESIGN FOR MICROCREDENTIALS

Delivery of microcredentials differs from other learning experiences in that learners have more autonomy to "choose their own adventure." Systems that allow learners to navigate microcredentials independently require multiple platforms designed to work in conjunction with one another.

Generally, a microcredential system will require a website to communicate availability and context for microcredentials as well as an enrolment platform, a learning management system (LMS) to deliver online learning experiences, and a digital badge platform to award digital badges (either manually or automatically) based on completion requirements in the LMS, where learners store and manage their records.

The digital badge platform is compliant with Open Badges 2.0 specifications

Explicitly stated outcomes or competencies, badge criteria, pathway opportunities, course beginning/end dates, badge details, anticipated time commitment required, and information about the facilitator and/or degree of facilitation are communicated on multiple platforms

The use of badges, icons, text, images and naming conventions orients learners across platforms

Orientation to technologies used in the system is included and support is available for learners
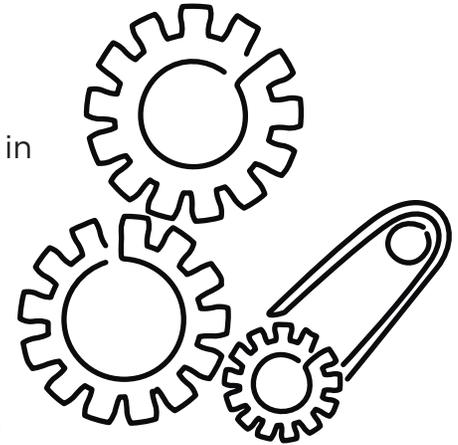
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READY TO GET STARTED? CONTACT US!

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TEACHING, LEARNING AND INNOVATION