

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

SESSION:

Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

Financial Impact Yes No

Included in Budget Yes No

TO: Academic Council

DATE: 28 November, 2023

FROM: Chris Hall, Director, Continuous Learning

SUBJECT: Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings and Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference

MANDATE

Under the Policy Framework and the University's Act and By-laws, Academic Council is responsible for approving Academic Policy and to make recommendations to the Board on "the establishment and terms of reference of committees to exercise the Academic Council's delegated authority" under By-law no. 2. The Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees have a mandate of maintaining the academic standards set by Academic Council and to serve as deliberative bodies for academic policy instruments.

We present the attached amended Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings for approval by Academic Council. We also present Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference for recommendation for approval to the Board of Governors.

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION

That pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the amended Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings, which supersedes the existing Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy. Further, that Academic Council hereby recommends the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference for approval by the Board of Governors.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

The current Policy on Continuing Education Programs was initially implemented in 2016 and subsequently revised in March 2019. During the period spanning from March 2019 to 2023, the Continuous Learning Department was established to oversee all Not-for-Academic-Credit offerings at the university. This consolidation brought various Not-for-Academic-Credit offerings, such as Nuclear

industry training, Management Development Center initiatives, and Summer Camps, under the purview of Continuous Learning.

Within the same timeframe, micro-credentials and digital badging gained wider acceptance within the sector, and the government launched funding for new micro-credential offerings (through the Micro-Credential Challenge Fund) as well as OSAP for Micro-credentials. Ontario Tech integrated micro-credentials into University policies, including:

- Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy
 - Approved by the President on July 19, 2021.
- Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy
 - Amendment approved by Academic Council on September 27, 2022.

The proposed changes to the Policy incorporate updated language within the sector noted above and aligns our Micro-Credential and Continuous Offerings Policy with our approved Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy (IQAP). The IQAP’s purpose is to inform and guide undergraduate and graduate program development and changes.

As part of these updates the current Micro-credential committee becomes part of the Micro-Credential and Continuous Learning Offerings Committee. The terms of reference changes are needed to align with the IQAP and Policy change proposals. See table below for highlighted summary of the documents:

Current Policy and Terms of Reference	Amended Policy and Terms of Reference
<p>The IQAP requires that all micro-credentials, including both Not-for-academic credit and For-Academic Credit micro-credentials must be reviewed by the <u>appropriate micro-credential committee</u> to assess whether a proposed micro-credential aligns with the University's standards and requirements for micro-credentials. The Micro-Credential Committee's role is to assess micro-credentials to ensure that they meet the requirements set out in the micro-credentials policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Was the micro-credential developed to meet strong evidence of need by industry and/or the community? 2) Does the micro-credential meet the requirements to be eligible for OSAP funding? 3) Are there authentic assessments with a rubric related to specific learning outcomes? 	<p>This requirement does not change, but the policy establishes that the appropriate committee is the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. This committee is created by merging the Not-for-academic credit Micro-credentials Committee with the Continuing Education Committee. The role of the committee in relation to micro-credentials remains un-changed.</p>

<p>For-Academic Credit micro-credentials are approved in accordance with the IQAP in addition to being reviewed by the appropriate micro-credential committee. The IQAP provides the following direction:</p> <p>13. 2 All modifications to existing degree programs, including the introduction of the option to complete a portion of the program to receive a Micro-credential, will be subject to approval by the unit’s Faculty Council(s) and subsequent review and approval by the appropriate Academic Council standing committee (USC or GSC) or approval by Academic Council where appropriate, in accordance with prescribed procedures. In addition, major modifications to programs will also be subject to review by the provincial Quality Council.</p>	<p>For-Academic Credit micro-credentials are approved in accordance with the IQAP in addition to being reviewed by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. IQAP requirements to bring for-academic credit items to the academic governance bodies remain unchanged.</p>
<p>All Not-for-Academic Credit programs, including Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials, require approval by the Continuing Education Committee, as stipulated in the Policy on Continuing Education Programs, after review by the Not-for-academic credit Micro-credentials Committee.</p>	<p>This requirement does not change, but the policy establishes that the appropriate committee is the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. This committee is created by merging the Not-for-academic credit Micro-credentials Committee with the Continuing Education Committee. This also streamlines the approval process for Not-for-academic credit micro-credentials.</p>

This package includes two documents:

1. For Approval: The Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings, which will supersede the current Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy and Continuing Education Programs policy.
2. For Recommendation: The Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference, which will combine the current Continuous Learning Committee and Not-For-Academic Credit Micro-credential Committee into a single committee responsible for approving For-Academic-Credit Micro-credentials (focusing on ensuring that approved micro-credentials meet the definition of a micro-credential) before, and in no way replacing, regular approval processes as defined in the IQAP. The committee will also approve all not-for-academic credit offerings as defined in the policy, reporting yearly to Academic Council.

CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL PATH

Policy

- ✓ ALT (Written Consultation): November 2023
- ✓ Online Consultation: November 2023
- ✓ Undergraduate Studies Committee (Deliberation)
- ✓ Graduate Studies Committee (Deliberation)
- Academic Council (Approval)

Terms of Reference

- ✓ ALT (Written Consultation): November 2023
- ✓ Online Consultation: November 2023
- ✓ Undergraduate Studies Committee: 21 November 2023
- ✓ Graduate Studies Committee: 28 November 2023
- Academic Council (Recommendation for Approval): 28 November 2023
- Board of Governors (Approval): 30 November 2023

NEXT STEPS:

- The Terms of Reference will be presented to the Board of Governors for approval.
- After approval of the Policy and Terms of Reference, the Policy will be added to the Policy Library.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings
- Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference



Classification Number	ACD TBD (previously LCG 1126)
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Approval Date	DRAFT FOR APPROVAL
Review Date	TBD
Supersedes	Non-Degree Programs, Diplomas and Certificates, March 2010; Section 6, Quality Assurance Handbook, June 2011 Continuing Education Programs Policy, March 9, 2016 (editorial amendments February 2020) Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Micro- credentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy, July 2021

Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings

PURPOSE

1. The University encourages the development of new learning opportunities to address the wide range of academic and professional needs within our community. This Policy applies to Continuous Learning Offerings hosted at the University and serves to provide a framework to facilitate their development and implementation, as well as ensure their alignment with the University’s strategy and brand.
2. This policy also provides the framework for the University’s recognition, integration and use of Digital Badges, Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials branded and/or issued by Ontario Tech University.
3. Where applicable, For-Credit offerings, including Micro-credentials, will follow the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and all associated policies and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

4. For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Academic Unit: a department or unit whose operation is preponderantly teaching and whose nature reflects the existence of a demonstrably coherent field of knowledge.

Continuous Learning Department: the administrative and central professional development unit of the University supporting Faculty and Academic Unit development of alternative credentials, non-credit programming, corporate training, and new approaches for the community to access continuous learning opportunities.

Continuous Learning Offering: such as but not limited to programs, courses, workshops, and micro-credentials focused on professional development and life-long learning. This includes career-oriented programming, upskilling, and custom corporate training. Among others, Continuous Learning students may be post-secondary applicants who require additional support prior to admission, graduates, individuals who are unemployed and seeking training for employment purposes, individuals who wish to transition in their current employment or improve their career prospects, corporate and government employees, and individuals who are interested in post-secondary courses but not admitted to a degree program.

Continuous Learning Student: means a student registered in a Continuous Learning Offering.

Certificate Program: a stand-alone program of study consisting of a prescribed set of not-for-credit courses.

Digital Badge: the validated digital image and its associated metadata that documents when, where, and how an accomplishment, skill, quality, interest, micro-credential, or other stackable credential was assessed.

For-credit: a course or designation of achievement which use existing requirements or are developed to meet the requirements of a degree or diploma program that includes a measure of the relative weight of the course or designation toward the fulfillment of diploma or degree requirements.

Horizontal Stacking: refers to the stacking or grouping of articulated skills with little or no explicit hierarchical order. Corequisite learning is the norm with micro-credentials, but prerequisites may be required in some instances.

Micro-credential: a designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community. They have fewer requirements and are of shorter duration than a qualification and focus on learning outcomes that are distinct from diploma/degree programs. It may be a sub-component of a for-credit course, diploma, certificate or degree offering.

Not-for-Credit: a course or designation which does not use the requirements nor is it developed to meet the requirements of a diploma or degree program. A not-for-credit course that includes a measure of the relative weight of the course or designation toward the fulfillment of diploma or degree requirements and is assessed as such, may be approved for use toward the fulfillment of diploma or degree requirements with approval of the Academic Unit.

Stackable Credential: combines related assessed skills to accurately reflect an accumulated body of knowledge, skills and abilities.

Stacking: the practice of assembling or compiling associated skill sets.

Value-Added Stacking: combines the concepts of horizontal and vertical stacking while allowing for additional, non-related evidence of mastery to be added.

Vertical Stacking: the stacking of units of study in an explicit hierarchical order guided by prerequisite accomplishments

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

5. This Policy applies to all Continuous Learning Offerings, including Digital Badges, Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, alternative credentials and Stackable Credentials issued by Ontario Tech University.
6. This Policy does not apply to For-credit offerings, including Micro-credentials, which follow the IQAP and all associated policies and procedures, except where necessary to provide a framework for their review by the Continuous Learning Committee.
7. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of this Policy.

POLICY

8. Framework for Continuous Learning Offerings

- 8.1. Continuous Learning Offerings fall into a number of categories including:
 - Certificate Programs;
 - Short courses, workshops;
 - Professional development programs;
 - Not-for-Credit courses;
 - Not-for-Credit micro-credentials;
 - Customized training offered to organizations;
 - Camps for children and young teens;
 - Other offerings, comprised of Not-for-Credit courses including those offered in partnership with Academic Units and external organizations.
- 8.2. Separate from Continuous Learning Offerings, Continuous Learning as a business unit may be contracted by other units (internal or external) to deliver offerings, or perform particular business functions, through its platforms and resources. These would be subject to relevant organizational policies and/or governance processes.

9. Admissions

- 9.1. Admission and progression requirements for all Continuous Learning Department developed, Not-for-Credit offerings, including Micro-credentials, Digital Badges and Stackable Credentials, will be determined by the Continuous Learning Department.
- 9.2. Admission requirements for a Continuous Learning Certificate Program developed in partnership with an Academic Unit will be determined by the Academic Unit, in consultation with the Continuous Learning Department.
- 9.3. Admission requirements for a short course, workshop, or Not-for-Credit Micro-credential developed in partnership with an Academic Unit will be determined by the Academic Unit, in consultation with the Continuous Learning Department.
- 9.4. Admission requirements for a For-Credit Micro-credential, Digital Badge and Stackable Credential will be determined by the Academic Unit that developed it, in accordance with the IQAP.

10. Appeals

- 10.1. The Deputy Provost will have the delegated authority to conduct Appeals and determine the outcome of Appeals related to Continuous Learning Students in accordance with the Continuous Learning Appeal Procedures. The Office of the Deputy Provost will establish and oversee appeal Procedures for Continuous Learning Students.

11. Certificate Programs

- 11.1. Upon successful completion of a Certificate Program, participants will receive a Certificate from the University.
- 11.2. All new Continuous Learning Certificate Programs, including new categories of credentials, programs and courses, must be developed in accordance with the Continuous Learning Offerings Development Protocol and Quality Assurance Guide (Appendix A.)
- 11.3. All Certificate Programs must be approved by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee and reported for information to Academic Council annually.
- 11.4. All Certificate Programs will be subject to periodic review as determined by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee.
- 11.5. Two or more certificates, building on each other for more in-depth knowledge or specialization, may be stacked into a more advanced vertical stacking certificate.
- 11.6. Two or more certificates, usually in complementary areas, to broaden one's skills and knowledge across different but related domains, may be stacked into a broader horizontal stacking certificate.
- 11.7. Micro-credentials may stack with other micro-credentials or courses to a Certificate Program, provided the Certificate Program is developed according to the applicable procedures. Where Micro-credentials are stacked into a higher order credential, there may be additional requirements.

12. Short Courses, Not-for-Credit Courses, and Workshops

- 12.1. Upon completion of a short course, Not-for--Credit course or workshop, participants may receive a certificate of completion.
- 12.2. All short courses, Not-for-Credit courses, and workshops must be developed according to the course development policies and procedures established by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. All information must be reported to Academic Council annually.
- 12.3. All short courses, Not-for-Credit courses and workshops will be subject to periodic review as determined by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. Regular reviews should take place every three years to ensure the content is current and aligned with ever-changing user needs.

13. Digital Badges, Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials

- 13.1. Proposals for new Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials or for changes to existing Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, badges, or Stackable Credentials must be reviewed and approved by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. The

development and approval of For-credit offerings must be in accordance with the University's IQAP.

- 13.2.** The approval processes for Micro-credentials are presented in the Governance flowchart for Micro-credentials, (Appendix C)
 - 13.3.** To be considered a Micro-credential any Not-for-Credit programming must adhere to the requirements of having a meaningful assessment of the associated competencies and be developed in association with an employer, in response to regulatory changes for a profession or in response to changing legislation. Similarly, where evidence exists that a competency can benefit a large section of those seeking employment, such as enduring skills or commonly used technology or software, then the requirement for a single specific employer may be waived.
 - 13.4.** All Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, even those which build into certificates or higher order Micro-credentials should represent the mastery of a specific competency. Mastery can not be assessed through the use of fill-in-the-blanks, true/false questions or multiple choice though these may be used throughout programming to allow learners to gauge their understanding of the material.
 - 13.5.** Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials may be delivered face-to-face, online, hybrid, by distance, or through a combination of these methods. They may also be used to articulate specific competencies demonstrated within academic courses. The Continuous Learning Department is responsible for submitting all OSAP Micro-credential approval requests and for any reporting requirements required by the ministry for these Micro-credentials..
 - 13.6.** Prior to the development of a Micro-credential, Digital Badge, or Stackable Credential any business unit seeking to develop a Not-for-Credit Micro-credential should formalize the responsibilities of all parties with respect to development and delivery of the credential, issuing of badges, the learning management system to be used, technical support for learners, AODA compliance and others.
 - 13.7.** Not-for-academic credit Stackable Credentials may or may not require prerequisite qualifications. This will be dictated by the approach (i.e., Horizontal, Value-Added, or Vertical Stacking) taken to create the credential.
 - 13.8.** The Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee monitors the ongoing quality assurance of any Not-for-Credit Digital Badge, Micro-credential, or Stackable Credential developed. Regular reviews of the competencies and assessments should occur approximately every three years to ensure the skills are aligned with ever changing user needs.
- 14. For-Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials**
- 14.1.** For-Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials are awarded on the basis of assessments approved via the University's IQAP and may be standalone or included as part of a Diploma or Degree Program.
 - 14.2.** All For-Credit Micro-credentials must be endorsed by the Continuous Learning Department and Micro-credentials Committee to ensure they meet the specific requirements associated with a Micro-credential.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

15. This Policy will be reviewed as necessary, at minimum every three years. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

16. This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

17. Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy and related procedures
Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference

***Appendices follow on next page**

Appendix A Continuous Learning Offering Development Protocol and Quality Assurance Guide

Note that these protocols are currently in draft and will be finalized by the committee.

All Continuous Learning Offerings are developed according to the following.

Define Objectives: Clearly articulate the goals and objectives of the offering.

Identify Stakeholders: Identify the key stakeholders involved in the offerings, such as program assistants, instructors, students, industry experts, associations, and employers.

Identify the student. Identify and describe the typical student the offering will be developed for. Ensure that the learning outcomes, curriculum and learning objectives are developed with the student's needs in mind.

Establish Program Learning Outcomes

Design Curriculum and Learning Outcomes: Develop a well-structured and relevant curriculum that aligns with the program objectives. Define clear and measurable learning outcomes that indicate what learners should be able to do or know upon completion of the offering.

Assessment and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the offerings (where applicable). This may include methods such as formative and summative assessments, learner feedback surveys, and program evaluations. Regularly review and analyze the data collected to identify areas for improvement. Ensure learning outcomes are met.

Continuous Improvement: Encourage a culture of continuous improvement by incorporating feedback and data into offering enhancements. Regularly review and update the curriculum, instructional methods, and learning resources to ensure they remain current and relevant.

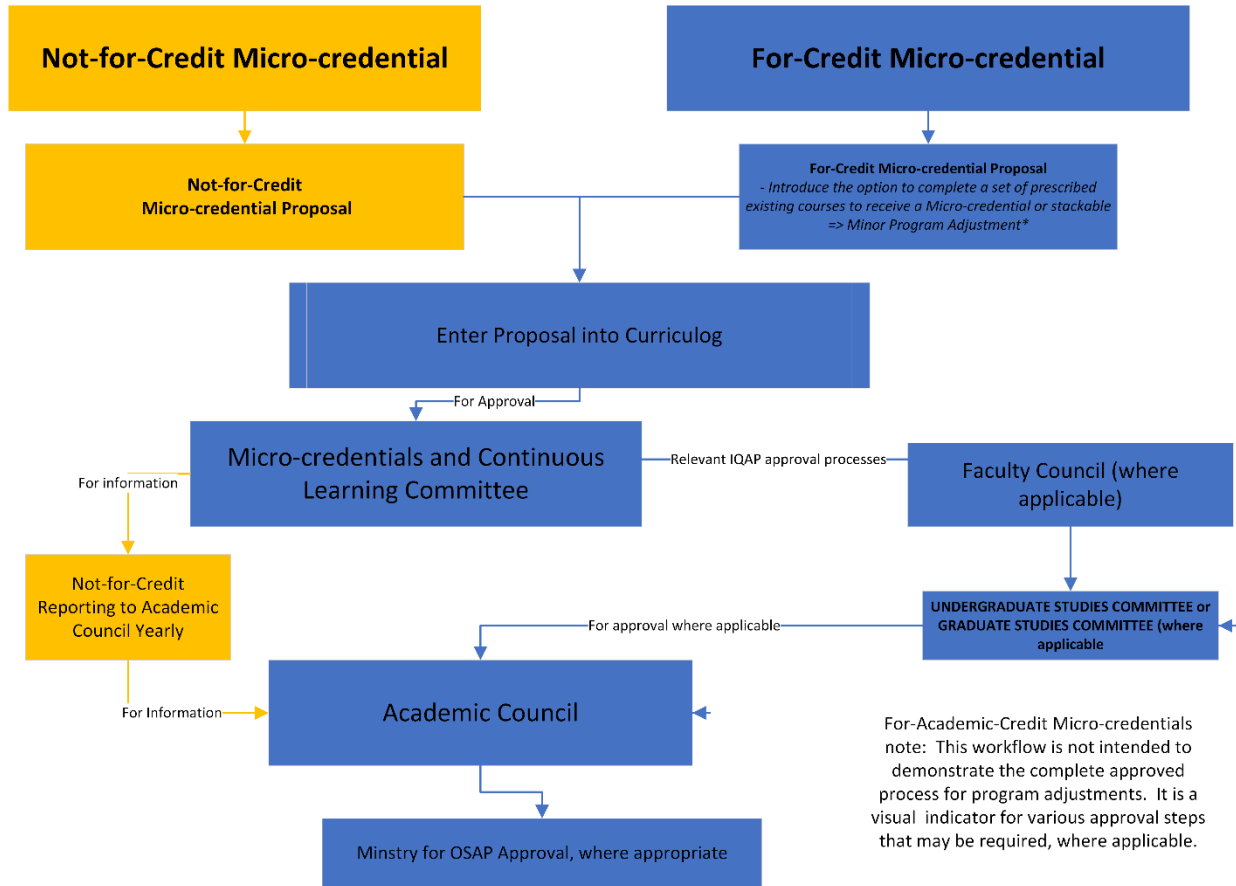
Program Review and Accreditation: Consider seeking accreditation or recognition from relevant accrediting bodies or industry associations. This can help validate the quality and credibility of the offerings.

Compliance and Legal Considerations: Ensure that the offerings comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. This may include adherence to privacy regulations, intellectual property rights, and accessibility standards.

Communication and Transparency: Clearly communicate details, expectations, and assessment criteria to learners. Be transparent about the offering's benefits, limitations, and any associated costs.

Monitoring and Reporting: Implement a monitoring system to track program performance and progress towards achieving the desired outcomes. Generate regular reports to communicate the offering's effectiveness to stakeholders.

Appendix B Governance Flowchart – Micro-credentials



For Micro-credentials developed as part of a proposed new Degree or Diploma program, please refer to the New Degree/Diploma Program Governance Flowcharts on CIQE website:

[New program handbook | CENTRE FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT \(ontariotechu.ca\)](http://www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe/new-program-handbook)

Micro-credentials embedded in new programs will be sent to the Micro-credentials Committee for information after being approved by Academic Council and submitted to the Ministry for OSAP funding purposes, where appropriate.

* Minor Program Adjustment can be coupled with other curricular changes and submitted as one Major Modification if the threshold is met.

Appendix C

Curriculog link



<u>Classification Number</u>	ACD TBD (previously LCG 1126)
<u>Framework Category</u>	Academic
<u>Approving Authority</u>	Academic Council
<u>Policy Owner</u>	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
<u>Approval Date</u>	DRAFT FOR APPROVAL
<u>Review Date</u>	TBD
<u>Supersedes</u>	Non-Degree Programs, Diplomas and Certificates, March 2010; Section 6, Quality Assurance Handbook, June 2011 Continuing Education Programs Policy, March 9, 2016 (editorial amendments February 2020) Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Micro- credentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy, July 2021

POLICY ON CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Policy on Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings

PURPOSE

1. The University encourages the development of new learning opportunities to address the wide range of academic and professional needs within our community. This Policy applies to ~~all Continuing Education Programs offered or~~ Continuous Learning Offerings hosted at the University and serves to provide a framework to facilitate their development and implementation, as well as ~~insure~~ ensure their alignment with ~~UOIT's~~ the University's strategy and brand.
2. This policy also provides the framework for the University's recognition, integration and use of Digital Badges, Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials branded and/or issued by Ontario Tech University.
3. Where applicable, For-Credit offerings, including Micro-credentials, will follow the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and all associated policies and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

2.4. For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

“Continuing Education Program” means a program focused on professional development and life-long learning, ~~comprised of non-degree, non-credit courses, and offered or hosted by an Academic Unit.~~

“Academic Unit” ~~means~~ **Academic Unit:** a department or unit whose operation is preponderantly teaching and whose nature reflects the existence of a demonstrably coherent field of knowledge.

“Continuous Learning Department: the administrative and central professional development unit of the University supporting Faculty and Academic Unit development of alternative credentials, non-credit programming, corporate training, and new approaches for the community to access continuous learning opportunities.

Continuous Learning Offering: such as but not limited to programs, courses, workshops, and micro-credentials focused on professional development and life-long learning. This includes career-oriented programming, upskilling, and custom corporate training. Among others, Continuous Learning students may be post-secondary applicants who require additional support prior to admission, graduates, individuals who are unemployed and seeking training for employment purposes, individuals who wish to transition in their current employment or improve their career prospects, corporate and government employees, and individuals who are interested in post-secondary courses but not admitted to a degree program.

Continuous Learning Student: means a student registered in a Continuous Learning Offering.

Certificate Program” ~~means:~~ a stand-alone program of study consisting of a prescribed set of ~~non-degree, non-not-for~~ credit courses.

Digital Badge: the validated digital image and its associated metadata that documents when, where, and how an accomplishment, skill, quality, interest, micro-credential, or other stackable credential was assessed.

For-credit: a course or designation of achievement which use existing requirements or are developed to meet the requirements of a degree or diploma program that includes a measure of the relative weight of the course or designation toward the fulfillment of diploma or degree requirements.

Horizontal Stacking: refers to the stacking or grouping of articulated skills with little or no explicit hierarchical order. Corequisite learning is the norm with micro-credentials, but prerequisites may be required in some instances.

Micro-credential: a designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community. They have fewer requirements and are of shorter duration than a qualification and focus on learning outcomes that are distinct from diploma/degree programs. It may be a sub-component of a for-credit course, diploma, certificate or degree offering.

Not-for-Credit: a course or designation which does not use the requirements nor is it developed to meet the requirements of a diploma or degree program. A not-for-credit course that includes a measure of the relative weight of the course or designation toward the fulfillment of diploma or degree requirements and is assessed as such, may be approved for use toward the fulfillment of diploma or degree requirements with approval of the Academic Unit.

Stackable Credential: combines related assessed skills to accurately reflect an accumulated body of knowledge, skills and abilities.

Stacking: the practice of assembling or compiling associated skill sets.

Value-Added Stacking: combines the concepts of horizontal and vertical stacking while allowing for additional, non-related evidence of mastery to be added.

Vertical Stacking: the stacking of units of study in an explicit hierarchical order guided by prerequisite accomplishments

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

~~3.5.~~ This Policy applies to all ~~Continuing Education Programs offered or hosted~~Continuous Learning Offerings, including Digital Badges, Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, alternative credentials and Stackable Credentials issued by Academic Units. Ontario Tech University.

~~6.~~ This Policy does not apply to For-credit offerings, including Micro-credentials, which follow the IQAP and all associated policies and procedures, except where necessary to provide a framework for their review by the Continuous Learning Committee.

~~4.7.~~ The ~~Associate~~ Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of this Policy.

~~5.~~ ~~A Continuing Education Committee is established under this Policy. The Terms of Reference for the Continuing Education Committee are set out in Appendix A to this Policy.~~

POLICY

~~6.8.~~ Framework for ~~Continuing Education Programs~~Continuous Learning Offerings

~~6.1.8.1.~~ There are two ~~Continuous Learning Offerings~~ fall into a number of categories of ~~Continuing Education Programs at the University~~including:

- ~~a)~~• Certificate Programs; ~~and~~
- Short courses, workshops ~~and other Continuing Education Programs;~~
 - Professional development programs;
 - Not-for-Credit courses;
 - Not-for-Credit micro-credentials;
 - Customized training offered to organizations;
 - Camps for children and young teens;
 - Other offerings, ~~comprised of non-degree~~Not-for-Credit courses including those offered in partnership with Academic Units and external organizations.

~~b)~~8.2. Separate from Continuous Learning Offerings, Continuous Learning as a business unit may be contracted by other units (internal or external) to deliver offerings, or perform particular business functions, through its platforms and ~~non-credit offerings~~ focused on professional development resources. These would be subject to relevant organizational policies and/or governance processes.

~~6.2.~~ All new Continuing Education Programs must be developed in accordance with the Continuing Education Program Procedures.

~~7.~~ **Certificate Programs**

9. Admissions

~~9.1.~~ Admission to a Certificate Program and progression requirements for all Continuous Learning Department developed, Not-for-Credit offerings, including Micro-credentials, Digital Badges and Stackable Credentials, will be determined by the Continuous Learning Department.

~~7.1.9.2.~~ Admission requirements for a Continuous Learning Certificate Program developed in partnership with an Academic Unit will be determined by the Academic Unit, in consultation with the Continuous Learning Department.

~~9.3.~~ Admission requirements for a short course, workshop, or Not-for-Credit Micro-credential developed in partnership with an Academic Unit will be determined by the Academic Unit, in consultation with the Continuous Learning Department.

~~9.4.~~ Admission requirements for a For-Credit Micro-credential, Digital Badge and Stackable Credential will be determined by the Academic Unit that developed it, in accordance with the IQAP.

10. Appeals

~~10.1.~~ The Deputy Provost will have the delegated authority to conduct Appeals and determine the outcome of Appeals related to Continuous Learning Students in accordance with the Continuous Learning Appeal Procedures. The Office of the Deputy Provost will establish and oversee appeal Procedures for Continuous Learning Students.

11. Certificate Programs

~~7.2.11.1.~~ Upon successful completion of a Certificate Program, participants will receive a UOIT Certificate from the University.

~~11.2.~~ All new Continuous Learning Certificate Programs, including new categories of credentials, programs and courses, must be developed in accordance with the Continuous Learning Offerings Development Protocol and Quality Assurance Guide (Appendix A.)

~~7.3.11.3.~~ All Certificate Programs must be approved by the ~~Continuing Education~~Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee and reported for information to Academic Council annually.

~~7.4.11.4.~~ All Certificate Programs will be subject to periodic review as determined by the ~~Continuing Education~~Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee.

~~11.5.~~ Two or more certificates, building on each other for more in-depth knowledge or specialization, may be stacked into a more advanced vertical stacking certificate.

~~11.6.~~ Two or more certificates, usually in complementary areas, to broaden one's skills and knowledge across different but related domains, may be stacked into a broader horizontal stacking certificate.

11.7. Micro-credentials may stack with other micro-credentials or courses to a Certificate Program, provided the Certificate Program is developed according to the applicable procedures. Where Micro-credentials are stacked into a higher order credential, there may be additional requirements.

8.12. Short Courses, Not-for-Credit Courses, and Workshops, and Other Continuing Education Programs

8.1. Admission to a short course, workshop or other Continuing Education Program will be determined by the Academic Unit.

8.2.12.1. Upon completion of a short course, Not-for-Credit course or workshop or other Continuing Education Program, participants will receive a letter/certificate of completion from the Academic Unit.

8.3.12.2. All short courses, Not-for-Credit courses, and workshops must be approved by the Continuing Education developed according to the course development policies and procedures established by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee and reported for. All information must be reported to Academic Council annually.

8.4.12.3. All short courses, Not-for-Credit courses and workshops and other Continuing Education Programs will be subject to periodic review as determined by the Continuing Education Committee Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. Regular reviews should take place every three years to ensure the content is current and aligned with ever-changing user needs.

13. Digital Badges, Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials

13.1. Proposals for new Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials or for changes to existing Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, badges, or Stackable Credentials must be reviewed and approved by the Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee. The development and approval of For-credit offerings must be in accordance with the University's IQAP.

13.2. The approval processes for Micro-credentials are presented in the Governance flowchart for Micro-credentials, (Appendix B)

13.3. To be considered a Micro-credential any Not-for-Credit programming must adhere to the requirements of having a meaningful assessment of the associated competencies and be developed in association with an employer, in response to regulatory changes for a profession or in response to changing legislation. Similarly, where evidence exists that a competency can benefit a large section of those seeking employment, such as enduring skills or commonly used technology or software, then the requirement for a single specific employer may be waived.

13.4. All Not-for-Credit Micro-credentials, even those which build into certificates or higher order Micro-credentials should represent the mastery of a specific competency. Mastery can not be assessed through the use of fill-in-the-blanks, true/false questions or multiple choice though these may be used throughout programming to allow learners to gauge their understanding of the material.

- 13.5. Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials may be delivered face-to-face, online, hybrid, by distance, or through a combination of these methods. They may also be used to articulate specific competencies demonstrated within academic courses. =The Continuous Learning Department is responsible for submitting all OSAP Micro-credential approval requests and for any reporting requirements required by the ministry for these Micro-credentials..
- 13.6. Prior to the development of a Micro-credential, Digital Badge, or Stackable Credential any business unit seeking to develop a Not-for-Credit Micro-credential should formalize the responsibilities of all parties with respect to development and delivery of the credential, issuing of badges, the learning management system to be used, technical support for learners, AODA compliance and others.
- 13.7. Not-for-academic credit Stackable Credentials may or may not require prerequisite qualifications. This will be dictated by the approach (i.e., Horizontal, Value-Added, or Vertical Stacking) taken to create the credential.
- 13.8. The Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee monitors the ongoing quality assurance of any Not-for-Credit Digital Badge, Micro-credential, or Stackable Credential developed. Regular reviews of the competencies and assessments should occur approximately every three years to ensure the skills are aligned with ever changing user needs.

14. For-Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials

- 14.1. For-Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials are awarded on the basis of assessments approved via the University's IQAP and may be standalone or included as part of a Diploma or Degree Program.
- 14.2. All For-Credit Micro-credentials must be endorsed by the Continuous Learning Department and Micro-credentials Committee to ensure they meet the specific requirements associated with a Micro-credential.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9.15. This Policy will be reviewed as necessary ~~and~~, at ~~least~~minimum every three years. The ~~Quality Assurance Policy Analyst~~Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- ~~10.~~ University of Ontario Institute of Technology Act, 2002, S.O. 2002, c. 8, Sch. 0
16. This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

- ~~11.~~ Continuing Education Program Procedures (to be developed)

APPENDIX A

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

17. Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy and related procedures

1. Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference

~~The Continuing Education Committee is responsible for approving, assessing and monitoring all Continuing Education Programs offered or hosted by the university. In reviewing and approving new Continuing Education Programs, the Committee takes responsibility for ensuring the academic quality of the proposal and the adequacy of the plan for resources to support it. The Committee will be responsible for reporting all new Continuing Education Programs for information to Academic Council.~~

2. Membership

~~The membership of the Committee will be comprised of:~~

- ~~● Associate Provost (Chair)~~
- ~~● Dean of Graduate Studies, or delegate~~
- ~~● Dean of each Faculty, or delegate~~
- ~~● Registrar's Office representative~~

~~Quality Assurance Office representative (non-voting)*~~ **Appendices follow on next page**

Appendix A: Continuous Learning Offering Development Protocol and Quality Assurance Guide

Note that these protocols are currently in draft and will be finalized by the committee.

All Continuous Learning Offerings are developed according to the following.

Define Objectives: Clearly articulate the goals and objectives of the offering.

Identify Stakeholders: Identify the key stakeholders involved in the ~~certificate programs~~offerings, such as program assistants, instructors, students, industry experts, ~~associations~~associations, and employers.

Identify the student. Identify and describe the typical student the offering will be developed for. Ensure that the learning outcomes, curriculum and learning objectives are developed with the student's needs in mind.

Establish Program Learning Outcomes

Design Curriculum and Learning Outcomes: Develop a well-structured and relevant curriculum that aligns with the program objectives. Define clear and measurable learning outcomes that indicate what learners should be able to do or know upon completion of the offering.

Assessment and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the ~~certificate programs~~offerings (where applicable). This may include methods such as formative and summative assessments, learner feedback surveys, and program evaluations. Regularly review and analyze the data collected to identify areas for improvement. Ensure learning outcomes are met.

Continuous Improvement: Encourage a culture of continuous improvement by incorporating feedback and data into ~~offering program~~enhancements. Regularly review and update the curriculum, instructional methods, and learning resources to ensure they remain current and relevant.

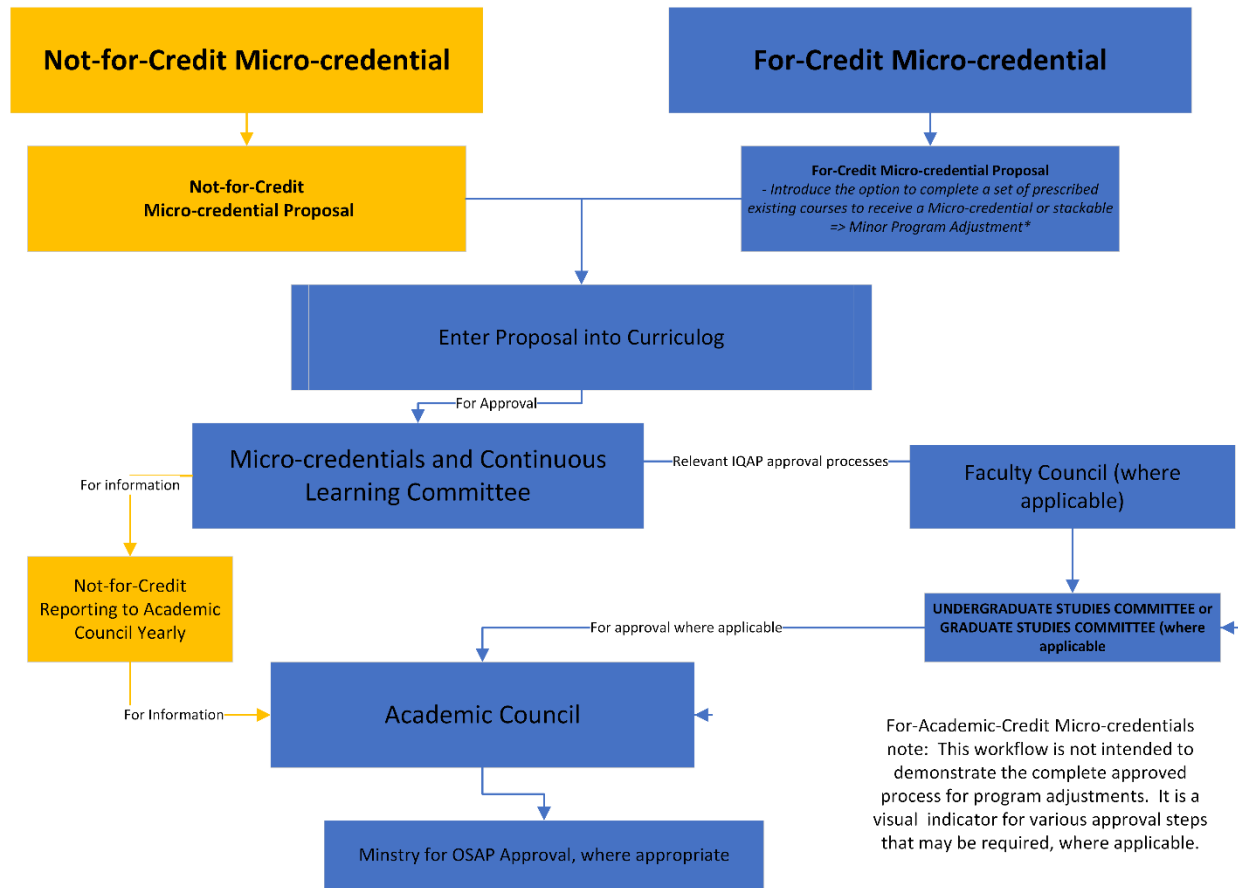
~~Program~~ Review and Accreditation: Consider seeking accreditation or recognition from relevant accrediting bodies or industry associations. This can help validate the quality and credibility of the ~~certificate programs~~.offerings.

Compliance and Legal Considerations: Ensure that the ~~certificate programs~~offerings comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. This may include adherence to privacy regulations, intellectual property rights, and accessibility standards.

Communication and Transparency: Clearly communicate ~~the program~~details, expectations, and assessment criteria to learners. Be transparent about the ~~program's~~offering's benefits, limitations, and any associated costs.

Monitoring and Reporting: Implement a monitoring system to track program performance and progress towards achieving the desired outcomes. Generate regular reports to communicate the ~~program's~~ offering's effectiveness to stakeholders.

Appendix B: Governance Flowchart – Micro-credentials



For Micro-credentials developed as part of a proposed new Degree or Diploma program, please refer to the New Degree/Diploma Program Governance Flowcharts on CIQE website:

[New program handbook | CENTRE FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT \(ontariotechu.ca\)](#)

Micro-credentials embedded in new programs will be sent to the Micro-credentials Committee for information after being approved by Academic Council and submitted to the Ministry for OSAP funding purposes, where appropriate.

* Minor Program Adjustment can be coupled with other curricular changes and submitted as one Major Modification if the threshold is met.

Appendix C

Curriculog link



Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee Terms of Reference

Ontario Tech University encourages and facilitates the development and implementation of Continuous Learning Offerings. The University is also committed to creating, recognizing, integrating and using high-quality Digital Badges, Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials to support learning by all members of the Ontario Tech University community.

The Micro-credentials and Continuous Learning Committee is a forum for collaborative discussions regarding the development and use of these programs and credentials bearing the Ontario Tech University name.

The Committee's responsibilities include the following:

- Providing a forum for strategic discussion and guidance for the Continuous Learning Department.
- Recommending new Continuous Learning offerings to meet the needs of the market and local community.
- Recommending new categories of Continuous Learning offerings to develop.
- Approving, assessing, and monitoring all Continuous Learning Offerings hosted by the University and taking responsibility for academic quality and the adequacy of the resources required to support them.
- Reporting all new Continuing Learning offerings, Not-for-Credit Digital Badges, Micro-credentials and Stackable Credentials for information to Academic Council.
- Providing input, feedback, advice and written recommendations on the quality assurance as it pertains to the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials.
- Assessing and approving all Digital Badges, Micro-credentials, and Stackable Credentials offered by Ontario Tech University and ensuring the adequacy of the resources required to support them.
- Defining a consultation process to include multiple academic and administrative units when discussing cross-institutional initiatives.
- Ensuring currency with existing or forthcoming legislation regarding Micro-credentials.
- Ensuring engagement with industry and/or community partners where appropriate.
- Promoting offerings to members of the University and broader communities, including students, staff, faculty, alumni, and external partners.
- Establishing, overseeing, and periodically reviewing the academic, admissions, and scholarship procedures, guidelines, and directives that apply to Continuous Learning, with revisions and updates to Academic Council as required; and
- Reviewing and recommending to Academic Council changes to academic, admissions, and scholarship policy that apply to Continuous Learning.

Accountability

The Committee is accountable to the Provost.

Membership

The membership of the Committee will be comprised of:

- Deputy Provost (Chair)
- Associate Vice-President, Planning and Strategic Analysis or equivalent
- Director, Continuous Learning or equivalent
- Dean, School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, or Designate
- Two Deans of Faculties, or Designates (rotating every 2 years)
- Registrar, or Designate
- President Appointee
- Director, Teaching and Learning Centre, or Designate
- Manager, CIQE, or Designate (non-voting)
- Continuous Learning staff member (non-voting, secretary)

Meetings

The Committee will meet quarterly or as needed, determined by the Chair and according to the volume of business.

Quorum

Quorum is achieved when the majority of members (or their Designates) are present. The Committee shall seek to operate by consensus.

Reporting

Discussions, recommendations, and decisions will be recorded at every meeting in the meeting notes. A copy of the meeting notes will be provided to the Chair, the Senior Leadership Team, and committee members following each meeting.