

## Cover sheet/Resolution

Whereas, the SUNY Trustees adopted policy in January 2018 regarding microcredentials, which endorsed the work and recommendations outlined by their Microcredentials Task Force; and

Whereas, the Open Academy was awarded a SUNY Transformational Fund grant for the purpose of developing and launching a microcredential program.

Whereas, the SUNY Microcredential policy requires campuses to create a local policy and procedures for the review and approval of microcredentials as a type of curriculum at the campus through their faculty governance structures; and,

Whereas, over half of SUNY campuses currently offer a microcredential program; and

Whereas, the creation of microcredentials is part of ESF's Strategic Plan (Pillar 1, Theme 1, Goal 8; Pillar 1, Theme 2, Goals 1 and 2; Pillar 2, Theme 2, Goal 3); and

Whereas, a [survey conducted by UPCEA and StraighterLine](#) showed that 76% of respondents said microcredentials that indicate knowledge or skills and can stack toward larger credentials would increase their interest in pursuing an undergraduate degree. Therefore,

Be it resolved, that the policy draft developed by the Open Academy be further refined in consultation with department chairs, academic administration, faculty, and other stakeholders, and

Be it resolved, that a revised version of the Microcredential Policy be approved by the Academic Affairs Committee and Academic Governance, and adopted by the college.

## Background

ESF is establishing Microcredentials, a new type of locally reviewed academic program shorter in duration than Degrees or Certificate/Advance Certificate programs (as recognized by NYSED and MSCHE) designed to be a unique educational experience that provides the learner with a set of skills, competencies, and/or certifications specific to professional needs and developed in collaboration with leaders within the field and/or other stakeholders. Microcredentials create pathways for current and potential students as well as industry professionals to enhance their education, develop relevant industry skills, and advance in their careers. The flexible nature of Microcredentials enables ESF to rapidly respond to regional and state priority occupations and new and emerging industries.

### All ESF microcredentials must meet the following requirements:

- Microcredentials should be developed in partnership or regular engagement with business and industry, K-12 partners, and/or community partners. Small focus groups to review the initial outline and provide guidance and to consult throughout development are essential.
- Microcredentials should deliver sufficient skills, knowledge, and experience that allows learners to obtain or advance in a job within a significant/priority industry for the region or state.
  - Microcredentials for currently enrolled ESF students should offer skillsets complementary to their major that help them stand apart in the job market and/or recognize mastery of complex skills to support their professional goals.
  - Microcredentials for non-matriculated learners should offer skillsets complementary to their field of interest that help them stand apart in the job market and/or recognize mastery of complex skills to support their ability to progress in a job or continue their education.
  - Microcredentials may serve as a pathway to related ESF certificates and degrees.
- Existing students and non-matriculated students complete an application to sign-up for a microcredential so that their persistence and completion can be followed, and to ensure that successful completion is recognized in real time through the award of a digital badge and transcript notation.
- Microcredentials should align with ESF mission and strategic goals.
- To ensure academic quality, Microcredentials should be developed following similar procedures as other academic programs using the new Microcredential Proposal Form, and will be reviewed and approved through the Initiating Department, Academic Affairs Committee, and Academic Governance, and the Provost following standard curricular change processes.

- To ensure alignment to the workforce, supportive documentation demonstrating collaboration with business/industry, K-12 partners, or community organizations needs to be included (letter of support, feedback from 5-year review report, etc.) with the Microcredential Proposal Form.
- Microcredentials should be meaningful and of high quality, with clear, measurable learning standards, outcomes, and assessments aligned to the outcomes.
- Evidence of skills and competencies mastered should be clearly documented with **shareable artifacts** for students to demonstrate their expertise to prospective employers, those hiring for internship opportunities, and other academic institutions.
- All microcredential programs should undergo regular assessment and evaluation in line with other academic programs within the issuing department.
  - The schedule for this regular assessment will be asked for in the microcredential proposal form, and programs that do not report completion of the evaluation may be subject to restricted enrollment until completion.
- No course may be applied to a microcredential that was completed more than three years prior to the learner's microcredential application. Departments may determine any length requirement under maximum as specific disciplines deem necessary.
- Microcredentials are covered under SUNY's Seamless Transfer policy. For transfer outside of SUNY, courses in credit-bearing microcredentials will be considered according to the receiving institutions' transfer policies.

## Types of Microcredentials

### Credit-Bearing microcredential:

- A credit bearing microcredential may stack into one or more existing academic certificates and/or degrees and can also stack together with other microcredentials in a series that all stack to a certificate or degree.
  - The certificate or degree to which the microcredential stacks will be identified on the microcredential proposal form.
- Credit microcredentials have learning outcomes, assessments, and result in shareable student work artifacts.
- Students who earn credit-bearing microcredentials receive a notation on their transcript upon completion and receive a digital badge.
- Credit-bearing microcredentials must be a minimum of two courses and must contain a minimum of six credits and no more than 15 credits. *Note: Financial aid (Part-Time TAP B) for microcredentials at community colleges and technology colleges, capped at 11 credits per semester.*
- Credit-bearing microcredentials may also bundle coursework with internships (credit or non-credit) or bundle coursework with the work needed to test for industry or professional certifications.

- Credit-bearing microcredential naming conventions may not resemble certificate or degree program names that have been approved by NYSED.

### Non-Credit microcredential:

- A non-credit microcredential is a professional and/or educational development opportunity for students or community partners, often for those who already have degrees, who are seeking specialized skills, and/or who are part of a group needing a specific skillset.
- Non-credit microcredentials consist of specific substantial learning experience(s), which lead to attainment of multiple discrete, assessable skills and/or competencies.
- Non-credit microcredentials have learning outcomes, assessments, and result in shareable student work artifacts.
- Non-credit microcredentials may be used to advance an existing non-credit curriculum, assessing it to stack into an existing certificate or degree program via the award of academic credit by evaluation process or an articulation agreement.
- Non-credit microcredentials will be graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.
- While recognition of participation, community building or soft-skill development alone can be essential components of the student experience, those things are not, by definition, microcredentials.
- “Quick” training that can be delivered in a few hours or a few days is generally considered continuing education or executive education, not a microcredential.
- Non-credit microcredential naming conventions may not resemble certificate or degree program names that have been approved by NYSED.

### Enrollment and completion

- Anyone is eligible to take a credit or non-credit microcredential. However, should an instructor wish to list eligibility requirements such as a minimum GPA, they should do so on the Microcredential Proposal form.
  - There may be cases where a course in a given microcredential has a pre-requisite. For non-matriculated students, consideration for advanced standing should be afforded based on experience, education, or applicability of award of credit by evaluation.
- To be eligible to receive a credit-bearing microcredential, a minimum GPA of 2.0 in all of the microcredential courses must be attained unless a higher GPA requirement is stated on the Microcredential Proposal Form.
- To be eligible to receive a non-credit microcredential, the student must have attained a Satisfactory grade in all component parts of the microcredential.
- To receive a credit bearing microcredential from ESF, at least 60 percent of the credit hours must be earned at this college.

- Microcredentials are awarded upon successful completion of its specific requirements through badges, completion certificates, and/or are displayed on the ESF transcript.
  - At completion of the microcredential program, the student will apply for the awarding of their specific microcredential.
- A badge features a specially designed icon and signifies the completion of an approved microcredential. It verifies and validates that specific objectives have been met by linking to evidence of mastery of specific skills, competencies, or objectives.
  - The evidence should be publicly accessible (e.g. a digital portfolio) and contain artifacts that illustrate that the learner has met an objective of the microcredential program.
- Badges can be displayed within professional social media or visually added to a resume, and also serve as a digital transcript containing microcredential metadata.