

SUNY Niagara Microcredential Policy

I. Purpose

In accordance with State University of New York (SUNY) policy, SUNY Niagara offers microcredentials to recognize the attainment of specific skills, competencies, and knowledge that support student success, workforce preparation, and lifelong learning. Microcredentials provide focused learning opportunities that allow students, employees, and community members to acquire competencies aligned with regional workforce needs and emerging industries.

Microcredentials may function as standalone credentials or as stackable components that contribute to the completion of academic certificates or degree programs. Through the development and implementation of microcredentials, SUNY Niagara seeks to support regional workforce development priorities, recognize student mastery of targeted competencies, and expand flexible educational opportunities for adult learners and working professionals. Microcredentials may also strengthen partnerships with employers and community organizations while enhancing students' competitiveness in the labor market.

SUNY Niagara's microcredential offerings reflect the College's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education that supports career advancement, transfer pathways, and regional economic development.

II. Types of Microcredentials

SUNY Niagara recognizes two primary categories of microcredentials: credit-bearing and non-credit microcredentials.

Credit-Bearing Microcredentials

Credit-bearing microcredentials consist of a defined set of credit-bearing coursework designed to support mastery of specific skills or competencies. These microcredentials include clearly defined learning outcomes, aligned assessments, and graded academic coursework. Credit-bearing microcredentials may stack into existing certificate or degree programs and must be developed and approved through established curriculum governance procedures.

Credit-bearing microcredentials include a minimum of two courses and generally range from six to fifteen credit hours. Upon successful completion, students will receive transcript notation.

Non-Credit Microcredentials

Non-credit microcredentials recognize the attainment of professional or technical competencies through non-credit learning experiences. These credentials may be offered through Workforce Development initiatives, continuing education programs, professional development activities, or partnerships with industry.

Non-credit microcredentials document mastery of clearly defined competencies and are represented through certificates rather than academic transcript notation. While non-credit microcredentials do not carry academic credit, they may serve as pathways into credit-bearing programs through credit for prior learning or other approved articulation mechanisms.

All non-credit microcredentials must include clearly defined learning outcomes, measurable assessments, and verifiable evidence of competency attainment. Recognition of participation alone does not constitute a microcredential.

III. Guiding Principles

All SUNY Niagara microcredentials are developed in accordance with SUNY system principles and institutional governance procedures. Microcredentials must maintain high standards of academic quality and rigor and must be developed through appropriate faculty governance processes.

Microcredentials should align with regional workforce needs and relevant industry standards and should support students' ability to obtain employment or advance within their professions. Whenever possible, microcredentials should provide stackable pathways that contribute to the completion of certificates or degree programs.

Microcredentials are intended to be portable and flexible and may be delivered through online, hybrid, or in-person instructional modalities. Development of microcredentials should involve consultation with relevant stakeholders, including employers, advisory boards, alumni, and community partners, in order to ensure alignment with evolving workforce needs.

IV. Eligibility and Participation

Microcredentials may be earned by matriculated students, non-matriculated students, adult learners, alumni, industry professionals, and other community members who meet the eligibility requirements established for a specific credential.

Eligibility requirements may include minimum grade point averages, completion of prerequisite coursework, or approval by the academic program offering the microcredential. Students must apply to enroll in a microcredential so that participation, persistence, and completion can be tracked by the College.

V. Academic Requirements

Coursework completed as part of a microcredential must meet established academic standards. Unless otherwise specified by the academic program, students must achieve a minimum grade point average of **2.0** in coursework applied toward the microcredential.

For credit-bearing microcredentials, at least fifty percent of required coursework must be completed at SUNY Niagara in order to satisfy residency requirements.

Courses that require prerequisites must adhere to existing institutional prerequisite policies. Any substitutions for required courses must be approved by the academic program offering the microcredential.

Courses previously completed as part of a degree program may be applied toward a microcredential when appropriate and when approved by the academic program.