

MICRO-CREDENTIALS GUIDE

MADE FOR YOU!



ALAMO
COLLEGES
DISTRICT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE	3
Purpose.....	3
Glossary.....	4
I. ABOUT MICRO-CREDENTIALS	5
About	5
Benefits	6
Stacking and Pathways	6
II. HISTORY OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS.....	9
Origins.....	9
State Credential and Workforce Initiatives	9
Progression.....	10
III. AWARDING MICRO-CREDENTIALS	11
About	11
Digital Badges.....	11
Professional Certificates	15
Other Verified Credentials.....	16
IV. TRAINING AND SUPPORT	17
Micro-Credential Training	17
The Skills Lab: Your Resource for Support.....	18
Badge Practitioner Community of Practice	19
V. DEVELOPING MICRO-CREDENTIALS.....	20
Process for Developing Micro-Credentials.....	20
VI. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS	23
Internal Collaboration.....	23
External Partnerships.....	24
VII. WHAT'S NEXT?.....	25
Acknowledgements.....	26

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

PURPOSE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE IS TO:

1. Create clarity. Enable all faculty and staff to engage.
2. Accelerate innovation. Provide guidance and remove barriers for all colleges.
3. Increase credentials of value. Enable greater access to all learners to support economic mobility.
4. Sustain and scale. Help all colleges advance.
5. Achieve the vision. Meet the Chancellor's Charges.

GLOSSARY

CERTIFICATION:

A credential that signals acquired competency in a specified skill set or knowledge base that can be demonstrably measured against accepted standards by way of examination or other assessment. Certifications are typically limited in duration by renewal requirements through additional training ([Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)).

DIGITAL BADGE:

Validated indicator of skills gained through micro-credentials ([Educause](#)).

INDUSTRY-BASED CERTIFICATION:

A credential assessed by an independent, third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies, resulting in a time-limited award that is nationally recognized and applicable to a specific occupation ([Texas Workforce Investment Council](#)).

LICENSE:

A credential awarded by an authorized governmental entity following the successful completion of a program of study and/or examination that entitles the holder to operate a business or exercise a particular profession within a specified jurisdiction. Licenses are subject to renewal ([Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)).

MICRO-COURSE:

A short (10-15 hours), non-credit learning experience that focuses on a single in-demand skill and results in a micro-credential (Skills Lab, Alamo Colleges Online).

MICRO-CREDENTIAL:

Short, focused credentials that provide in-demand skills and experiences ([SUNY](#)).

MICRO-PATHWAY:

Two or more stackable credentials that lead to jobs in high-growth sectors and a path to a degree ([Education Design Lab](#)).

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS AWARD:

A sequence of courses that allows students to obtain high in-demand skills or improve their current skills (Alamo Colleges District).

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE:

A credential recognizing the successful completion of a program of study offered by an authorized academic institution or non-academic third-party, such as an independent education and training provider ([Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)).

I. ABOUT MICRO-CREDENTIALS

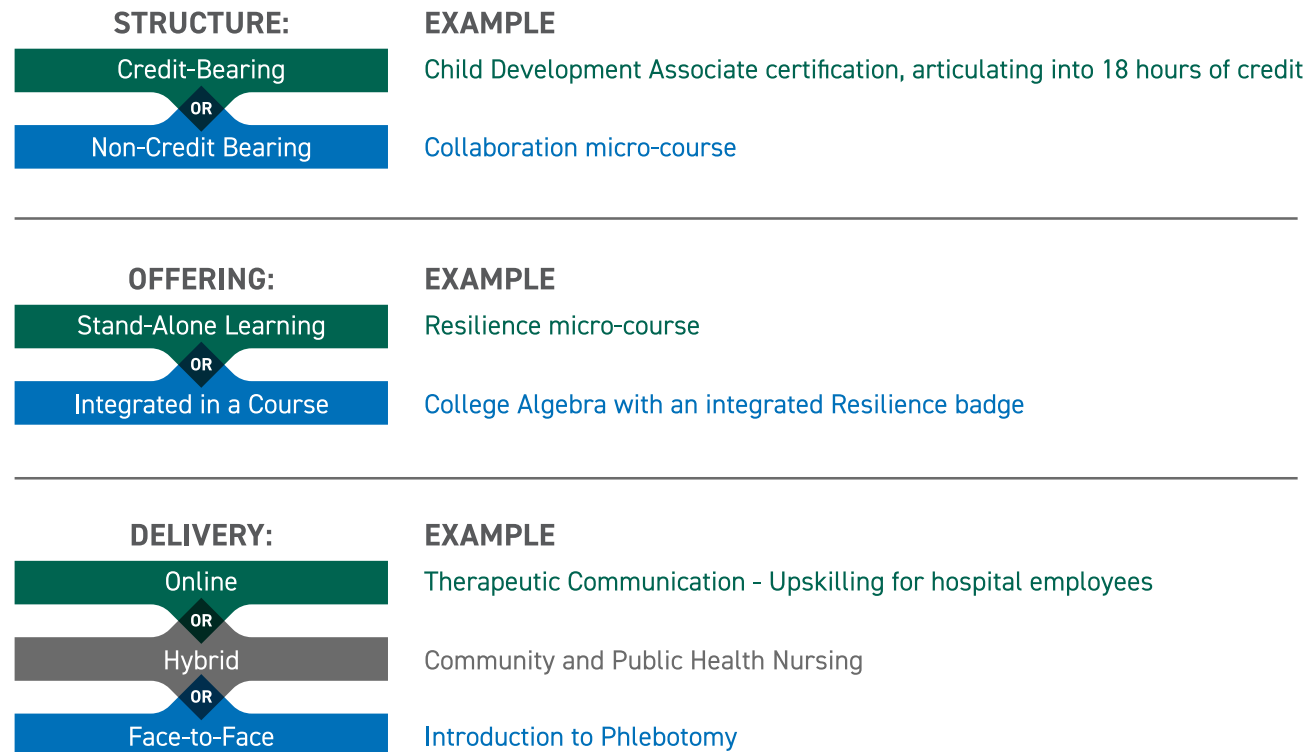
ABOUT

Micro-credentials are short, focused credentials that provide in-demand skills and experiences (SUNY). They can be structured, offered, delivered, and stacked in a variety of ways.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL:

Short, focused credentials that provide in-demand skills and experiences (SUNY).

MICRO-CREDENTIALS CAN VARY BY STRUCTURE, OFFERING, AND DELIVERY:



BENEFITS

Micro-credentials offer the following benefits when backed by reputable institutions:

FOR LEARNERS:

1. Allow for flexible, rapid learning
2. Document sharable evidence of in-demand skills
3. Provide a faster path to a family-sustaining wage through stacking skills
4. Facilitate greater competitiveness in the job market
5. Increase social and economic mobility

FOR EMPLOYERS:

1. Articulate in-demand skills of prospective employees
2. Can help employers better recruit, retain, and upskill workers
3. Offer a solution for bridging growing skills gaps in the workforce

STACKING AND PATHWAYS

Micro-credentials can be stacked and combined with other educational experiences in pursuit of career advancement, credentials, and degrees.

Micro-courses differ from other micro-learning experiences that may focus on multiple skills and competencies across a single topic and may take longer to complete.

EXAMPLE:

Economic and Workforce Development offered a career management micro-course with the credential awarded in partnership with Northeast Lakeview College.

EXAMPLE:

Northwest Vista College offered Collaboration micro-courses to Alamo Promise scholars.

Micro-pathways provide learners with a visible career progression and flexible on- and off-ramps along the learning journey with intent to stack into credit programs. Preparing a learner for the “first living wage job” in a career path and making visible the progression of skills needed for future roles is the primary function of a micro-pathway.

MICRO-COURSES:

Short (10-15 hours estimated learner completion time per micro-course), non-credit learning experience that focuses on a single in-demand skill and results in a micro-credential (Skills Lab, Alamo Colleges Online).

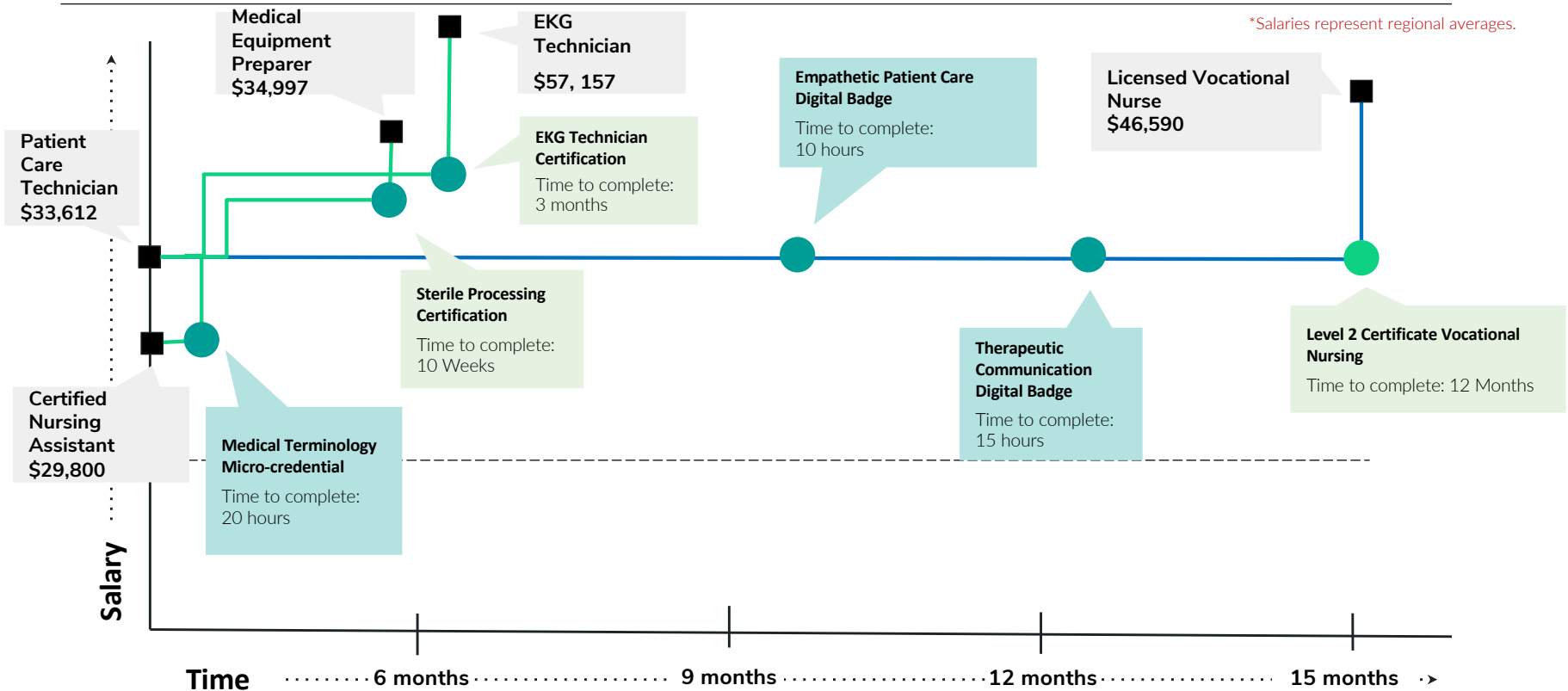
MICRO-PATHWAYS:

Two or more stackable credentials that lead to jobs in high-growth sectors and a path to a degree ([Education Design Lab](#)).

EXAMPLE:

Nursing micro-pathways (see below)

Example: Nursing | Micro-pathway [3 - 15 months]



Alamo Colleges District also offers career pathways, which are pathways that align to Alamo Institutes, six institutes designed to relate to and support guided pathways. These include:

- Creative & Communication Arts
- Business & Entrepreneurship
- Health & Biosciences
- Advanced Manufacturing & Logistics
- Public Service
- Science & Technology

RESOURCES

- » [Micro-Credential Insight Briefs](#)
- » [Alamo Institutes](#)
- » [Community College Growth Engine Fund, Cohort III](#)

II. HISTORY OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS

ORIGINS

The creation and prioritization of micro-credentials in Alamo Colleges District was the result of the Chancellor's Charge, state credential and workforce initiatives, and each college's mission.

CHANCELLOR'S CHARGES

Alamo Colleges District strategic initiatives on micro-credentials were based on the initial [charges from the Board of Trustees to the chancellor](#) between 2021 and 2023.

Chancellor's Charge, 2021-2022:

- Increase the emphasis on micro-credentials by increasing the number of student-earned verified digital badges that articulate in-demand marketable skills by 59% from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022.
- Develop and increase the number of and implementation of micro-pathways for careers in Health and Biosciences from 0 to 5 in 2021-2022.

Chancellor's Charge, 2022-2023:

- Increase the number of student-earned verified micro-credentials (including digital badges) that articulate in-demand marketable and technical skills by 42% from 2,119 in 2021-2022 to 3,000 in 2022-2023.
- Develop and increase the number of and implementation of micro-pathways for careers in Information Technology from 1 to 4 in 2022-2023.

To achieve the Chancellor's charges, Alamo Colleges Online invested significant human and financial resources toward building and supporting each college's internal capacity to offer a robust set of micro-credentials.

STATE CREDENTIAL AND WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) 2022-2030 strategic plan, [Building a Talent Strong Texas](#), states:

- **60% of Texans ages 25-64 will receive a degree, certificate, or other postsecondary credential of value by 2030.**
- **550,000 students will complete postsecondary credentials of value each year.**

In 2022, the [Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#) was developed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and THECB. This strategic framework's guidance on mapping skills and credentials aligns with Alamo Colleges District's credentials of value.

PROGRESSION

Alamo Colleges District began its micro-credentialing journey in 2018 and has experienced rapid growth in recent years.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL TIMELINE

- **2018:** **Employer partnerships began with Tee Up the Skills.** A yearlong pilot on digital badge initiatives with Education Design Lab, Northwest Vista College, and Northeast Lakeview College. HEB and Accenture provided employer guidance and input throughout the process.
- **2019:** **Employer partnerships expand with UpSkillsSA!** A proof of concept for business-to-business partnerships to leverage marketable skills training and academic certificates in high-demand, high-wage areas. Alamo Colleges District received grant funding in partnership with Palo Alto College and Goodwill Industries San Antonio.
- **2020:** **Digital badge micro-courses begin.** A non-credit micro-course with completion leading to a Career Management badge launched in partnership with Economic Workforce Development. Badge Coach training begins.
- **2021:** **Course+ Badge training initiative.** Badge Specialist training, also known as Course+ Badge, expands to all colleges. Skills Bundle, a set of micro-courses that award employability skills digital badges, is developed and piloted.
- **2022:** **Skills Lab is formed.** The Skills Lab works with the colleges and employers to expand micro-credential offerings for learners. A suite of healthcare marketable skill micro-courses are developed in partnership with the colleges, Economic Workforce Development, Continuing Education, Alamo Colleges Online, and a large local employer. The Lab receives and completes two grants from THECB to accelerate micro-credentials and micro-pathways in Nursing and Allied Health Professions.
- **2023:** **Micro-credential offerings increase.** Alamo Colleges District joins the Community College Growth Engine Fund (CCGEF) and offers a variety of micro-credentials at all five colleges, expanding the opportunities for learners to increase their economic and social mobility. A second spring of micro-pathway development, this time for IT careers, is completed in summer 2023.

RESOURCES

- » [Charges from the Board of Trustees](#)
- » [Building a Talent Strong Texas](#)
- » [Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)

III. AWARDING MICRO-CREDENTIALS

ABOUT

MICRO-CREDENTIALS CAN BE AWARDED VIA:

Digital Badges **OR** Professional Certificates **OR** Other Verified Credentials

RESPONSIBILITIES

As issuers of micro-credentials, the Alamo Colleges District and its five colleges are responsible for aligning to state sponsored initiatives, such as TEHCB's Building a Talent Strong Texas, and reporting and tracking credentials of value within an enterprise-wide system using streamlined, integrated data collection processes. Employer engagement is recommended, and documented strategic employer validation should be considered prior to offering and awarding micro-credentials.

DIGITAL BADGES

Digital badges are the visible evidence for those who are granted micro-credentials. They are one method to represent completion. As Educause notes, "Badges represent micro-credentials in the way that a diploma represents a degree."

They ARE:

- Evidence of a demonstrated skill
- An image and metadata, aligned to standards

They ARE NOT:

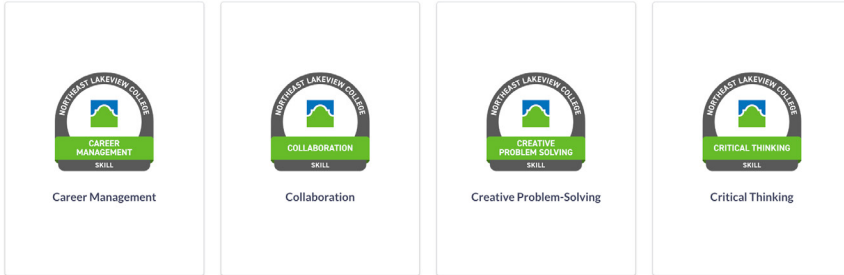
- Simply a digital sticker
- A participation ribbon

DIGITAL BADGES:

Validated indicator of skills gained through micro-credentials ([Educause](#)).

EXAMPLES:

Northwest Lakeview College 9 BADGES



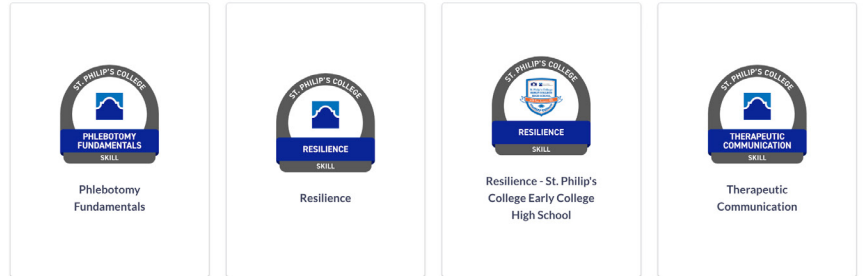
San Antonio College 17 BADGES



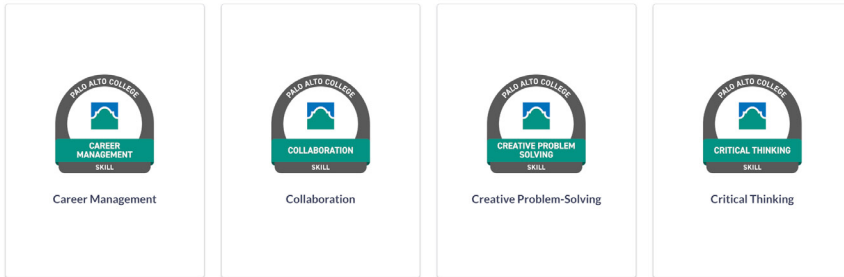
Northwest Vista College 10 BADGES



St. Philip's College 16 BADGES



Palo Alto College 8 BADGES



STANDARDS

Badges are aligned with Open Badge technical standards and use metadata, as explained in the graphic below from [Open Badges](#).

WHAT ARE OPEN BADGES?

OPEN BADGES

Data & Information **Inside**

Alignment	Expiration Date
Badge Criteria	Issued Date
Badge Description	Issuer
Badge Name	JSON-LD
Digital Signature	Recipient
Evidence	Verification

Open Badges is the world's leading *format* for digital badges. Open Badges is not a specific product or platform, but a type of digital badge that is verifiable, portable, and packed with information about skills and achievements.

Open Badges can be issued, earned, and managed by using a **certified Open Badges platform**.

Want to build new technologies to issue, display, or host Open Badges? The **Open Badges standard** is a free and open specification available for adoption.

This image is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE

Learners who demonstrate a skill-level proficiency through some form of assessment of 80% or higher are eligible to receive a badge. In micro-courses, this requires a grade of 80% or higher, though only skills assessments are graded. In courses that have a digital badge embedded in them, 80% or higher must be achieved on all skill assessments. Beyond this, badges are awarded based on considerations like the type of badge, modality of the learning experience, and credentialing regulations specific to disciplines.

TRANSCRIPTING

Digital badges for micro-credentials are uploaded to students' AlamoEXPERIENCE transcripts periodically. Other micro-credentials, such as professional certificates, are not yet documented at this time. Micro-credentials including digital badges may also live in different systems including, but not limited to, comprehensive learner records, digital wallets, digital backpacks, and e-portfolios.

OWNERSHIP

Digital badges belong to the badge-earner rather than to the institution. All digital badges are awarded through Alamo Colleges District-approved badge vendor sites to learners' accounts, known as their digital backpacks. Badge vendor sites are enterprise systems that track data on learner use. Learners can then share these badges on e-portfolios and social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook).

BADGE DESIGN - DIGITAL BADGE TAXONOMY

Alamo Colleges District has created a [Digital Badge Taxonomy](#) to create alignment and promote visibility of digital badging efforts across the colleges. The taxonomy serves as a structured framework for scaling badge offerings and seeks to:

- Expand the types and levels of verified evidence provided to learners.
- Publish a framework that encourages college autonomy while maintaining a consistent learner and employer experience.
- Provide colleges a consistent method of measuring data related to skills and micro-credentials.

The taxonomy is used as a design guide when creating micro-credentials that award digital badges as evidence.

BADGE ACTIVATION

In order to activate and award badges, faculty and staff can either complete a Badge Coach or Badge Specialist training (discussed in the following section) or work with another staff member who is certified to award the badge.

RESOURCES

- » [Alamo Colleges District Badges Homepage](#)
- » [Alamo Colleges District Digital Badge Taxonomy](#)
- » [Digital Badges: FAQs for Learners](#)
- » [Course+ Badge Activation Request](#)
- » [Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)
- » [Open Badges](#)

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

Alamo Colleges District provides industry-based professional certificates that are online and on-demand. They are short-term, self-paced courses that can take fewer than 12 months to complete and are issued by industry-leading organizations, such as Meta, Google, IBM, and Intuit. Current offerings are available through Coursera as part of Alamo Colleges District's [Upskill program](#) to the community at large, students, alumni, and other specific populations.

EXAMPLE:

[UpSkill professional certificates](#) (see below)



Data Science and Analysis

Acquire in-demand skills to unlock your potential in data analytics.



IT, Cloud Computing, and Cybersecurity

Kickstart your career in cybersecurity, IT, or application development.



Marketing, Sales, and Project Management

Build job-ready skills for the high-growth fields of business marketing, tech sales, and project management.



Software Development and Product Design

Get professional training needed to get on the fast track in the software development and product design fields.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES:

A credential recognizing the successful completion of a program of study offered by an authorized academic institution or non-academic third-party, such as an independent education and training provider ([Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#))

OTHER VERIFIED CREDENTIALS

Micro-credentials can also be offered through licensure and certification exams, practicums and internships, prior learning assessments, and industry partnerships. All verified credentials must follow best practices.

CERTIFICATION:

A credential that signals acquired competency in a specified skill set or knowledge base that can be demonstrably measured against accepted standards by way of examination or other assessment. Certifications are typically limited in duration by renewal requirements through additional training ([Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)).

LICENSE:

A credential awarded by an authorized governmental entity following the successful completion of a program of study and/or examination that entitles the holder to operate a business or exercise a particular profession within a specified jurisdiction. Licenses are subject to renewal ([Tri-Agency Strategic Framework for Work-Based Learning](#)).

INDUSTRY-BASED CERTIFICATION:

A credential assessed by an independent, third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies, resulting in a time-limited award that is nationally recognized and applicable to a specific occupation ([Texas Workforce Investment Council](#)).

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS AWARD:

A sequence of courses that allows students to obtain high in-demand skills or improve their current skills (Alamo Colleges District).

IV. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The Skills Lab offers resources to support the colleges, faculty, and staff in launching, growing, and refining micro-credentials.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL TRAINING

In 2020, Alamo Colleges Online staff developed training for faculty and staff that focused on how to award, facilitate, and create micro-credentials. In 2023, the Badge Practitioner Community of Practice reviewed and approved a plan for a micro-credential training pathway. Trainings in this pathway include the following:

TRAINING	DESCRIPTION	TIME	DELIVERY
Badge Coach	An introduction to micro-credentials at Alamo Colleges District and how to facilitate a pre-designed learning experience that awards a digital badge	3-4 hours	Hybrid
Badge Specialist	How to create and integrate skill assessments for an existing Alamo Colleges digital badge via a competency-based learning experience into a course	15 hours over 9 weeks	Hybrid
Micro-Credential Creator (forthcoming)	How to create a competency-based micro-credential that awards a digital badge	12 hours over 8 weeks OR accelerated	Hybrid In person
Micro-Pathway Designer (forthcoming)	How to design a learning pathway that includes stackable micro-credentials that connect learners to employment in high-growth careers	TBD	TBD

Participating faculty and staff receive professional development digital credentials upon successful completion of each training. These trainings prepare faculty and staff to facilitate, develop, and implement micro-credentials.

All available training is facilitated by the Alamo Colleges Online Skills Lab and is regularly offered.

THE SKILLS LAB: YOUR RESOURCE FOR SUPPORT

The Skills Lab supports faculty and staff in preparing to facilitate, design, and offer micro-credentials and micro-pathways. The Skills Lab serves as a strategic partner and guide for faculty and staff, an innovation hub for everything related to micro-credentials, and a capacity-builder to enable more faculty and staff to offer and scale micro-credentials. Support includes consultations, technical and administrative services, employer collaboration, and the trainings listed above.

CONSULTATIONS

The Skills Lab offers internal consultations to faculty and staff about micro-credential development and external consultations to employers and community partners interested in skills training.

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Skills Lab manages key elements of the micro-credential process. Services include:

Capacity-Building for Faculty and Staff:

- **Hosting** digital badges.
- **Supporting the awarding** of micro-credentials.
- **Administering** the back end processes and procedures.
- **Tracking** data (e.g., learner surveys, total number of learners, credentials received, earner rate).

Supporting the Colleges, District, and External Community

- **Serving** as a hub for internal partnerships.
- **Facilitating** micro-credential trainings.
- **Creating** micro-credentials, learner supports, and other resources.
- **Collaborating** with employers and educational partners.

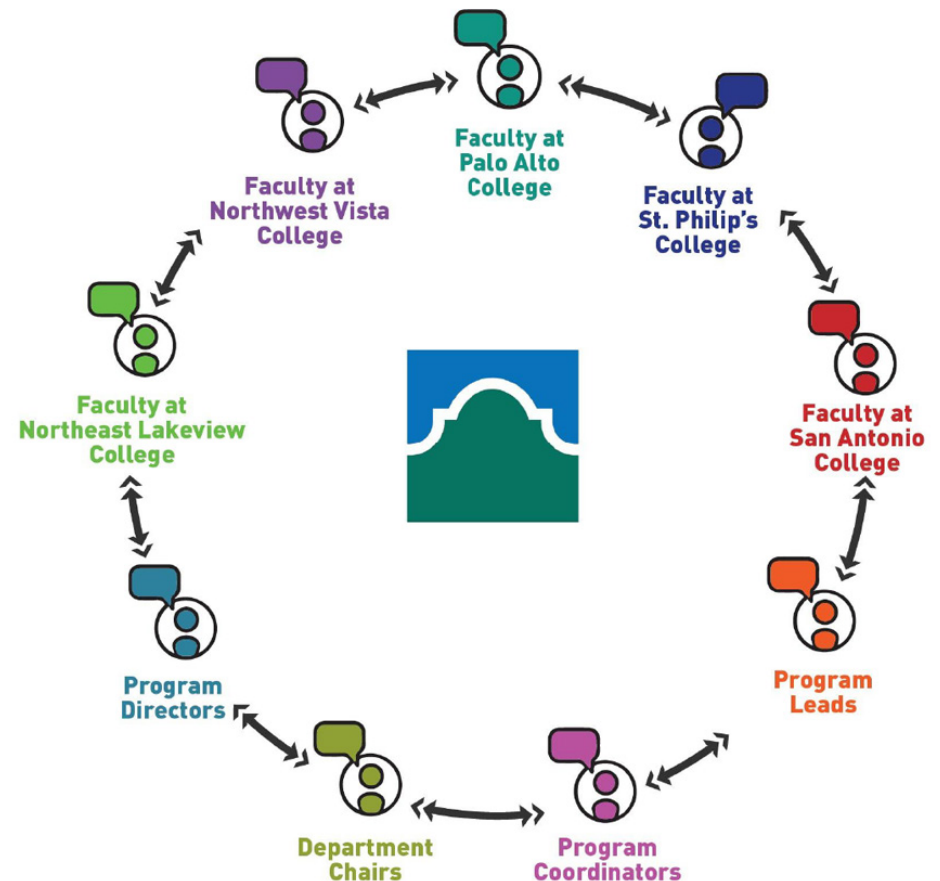
BADGE PRACTITIONER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Badge Practitioner Community of Practice (COP) is a thought leader and a practitioner support group for Alamo Colleges District faculty and staff who award digital badges. It was started organically with faculty and staff who completed the Badge Coach or Badge Specialist training and launched officially in fall 2020. It is open to any faculty or staff who have completed any of the micro-credential trainings listed above.

The COP convenes to share ideas, mine best practices, and inform decisions related to micro-credentials across Alamo Colleges District. It is led by a faculty member in a rotating one-year position, supported by the Skills Lab.

COP members are asked to:

- Participate in two synchronous events per semester.
- Participate in discussion forums.
- Give constructive feedback to proposed frameworks and initiatives.
- Be an ambassador for digital badges.



RESOURCES

» [Community of Practice Brief](#)

V. DEVELOPING MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Alamo Colleges District seeks to refine, define, and standardize the process for micro-credential development across the colleges while supporting flexibility for each college and their respective business and industry partners.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING MICRO-CREDENTIALS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Alamo Colleges District applies five guiding principles in the development of all credentials of value:



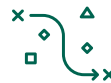
VALUE:

Equip learners for successful jobs and further learning



QUALITY:

Are assessed by credentialed faculty and trainers



APPROACH:

Incorporate skill assessments that are aligned to competency frameworks



COLLABORATION:

Include cross-college and external partner engagement



INDUSTRY ALIGNED:

Represent in-demand skills as validated by industry research and/or industry partners

STEPS TO DEVELOP A MICRO-CREDENTIAL

Faculty and staff work collaboratively with the Skills Lab, which provides guidance and support as faculty and staff develop the micro-credential. Faculty and staff complete the following steps to develop the micro-credential and are encouraged to work closely with industry partners throughout this process.

STEPS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF	DESCRIPTION	TIME
1. Take the training.	Complete trainings: a. Badge coach b. Badge specialist c. Micro-credential creator (forthcoming)	a. 3-4 hrs b. 15 hrs c. 12 hrs
2. Consult with the Skills Lab. (optional)	Share your idea with the Skills Lab, which will offer guidance on any items needed to complete the request. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g., evidence, competency framework verification of industry-readiness 	1 hr/ variable
3. Complete initial criteria.	Ensure initial criteria is met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Alignment: Determine which in-demand skills learners will gain through the micro-credential. • Competency Framework: Select an existing competency framework for the new micro-credential to be based on and/or aligned to. • Related Existing Offerings: Identify relevant and related micro-credential offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal check: Review current Alamo Colleges District listings. If a related offering already exists, determine if the existing offering meets your needs. - External check: Review Credential Engine, state approved skills repository, and industry partner sites. 	4-8 hours
4. Submit proposal form.	Submit the New Micro-Credential Proposal form to the Skills Lab to confirm dean's support. Skills Lab review: Affirms initial criteria are met.	Variable Two weeks
5. Create skill assessments.	Identify or create skill assessments aligned to the defined competencies.	Variable
6. Submit activation request.	Submit an activation request to the Skills Lab, which activates the micro-credential and adds it to the Alamo Colleges District listing. Announcements of new micro-credentials are regularly shared District-wide.	15 minutes

OWNERSHIP AND ADAPTING ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT'S CREDENTIALS

All micro-credentials and badges created by Alamo Colleges District faculty and staff will be owned by Alamo Colleges District. These credentials and the content created in them are not proprietary to the faculty and/or staff member(s).

Each college and faculty member has the ability to slightly adapt existing micro-credentials to their particular need by:

- using different or modified skills assessments and/or
- giving different assignments.

In order to maintain the integrity and consistency of micro-credentials once they have been approved, key content, frameworks, and competencies cannot be changed unless warranted by a significant shift in industry standards.

ADOPTING EXTERNALLY DESIGNED CREDENTIALS

Alamo Colleges District units, colleges, and respective departments may adopt and integrate existing micro-credentials from external vendors. The same initial criteria for design (e.g., duplication check, competency framework, industry alignment) should be used to determine whether to adopt a credential (e.g., Google IT Support Certificate). The ability of the externally designed credential to be integrated into existing enterprise systems (e.g., learning management, student information system) must be considered. In many instances, approval from IT Security will be required if student data will be stored or shared as part of using content and systems of externally designed credentials.

RESOURCES

- » [Alamo Colleges District Badges Homepage](#)
- » [Credential Engine](#)
- » [Badge Activation Request](#)

VI. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Internal collaboration and external partnerships play key roles in expanding learners' opportunities to earn micro-credentials.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

Faculty and staff can collaborate to expand the number and reach of micro-credential offerings for our learners:

- **Within Colleges:** Faculty and staff within and across different departments can work together to create a micro-credential proposal.
- **Across Colleges:** Faculty and staff across colleges can communicate about plans, share ideas, identify ways to coordinate, and consider how to adopt and/or build on existing offerings and resources.

The Skills Lab, as an integrated support service unit, is focused on developing and advancing internal collaboration within and across the colleges as well as external partnerships with employers and the community.

FACILITATING COLLABORATION

Alamo Colleges District recognizes that collaboration occurs when faculty and staff have information about existing and potential initiatives, an opportunity to work together, and the space and resources to effectively collaborate.

To this end, Alamo Colleges District is taking the following steps to better enable collaboration:

Information. Alamo Colleges District will provide:

- An up-to-date repository of all micro-credentials across the District.
- Training opportunities about how to facilitate, integrate, and develop a micro-credential.

Opportunity. Alamo Colleges District will:

- Share new initiatives and opportunities for the colleges to engage.
- Provide regular updates of progress and new offerings.

Space and Resources. Alamo Colleges District will:

- Hold information sessions at each college and across the District.
- Convene faculty and staff to discuss and prepare for micro-credential development.

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Alamo Colleges District recommends that the colleges consider engaging the following external partners:

- **State and National Initiatives:** There are a variety of ways to connect to new and established initiatives that can help the colleges build out their repertoire of offerings and enhance their understanding.
- **Industry and Community Partners:** The colleges can coordinate on methods and approaches of working with industry and community partners to improve and streamline efforts. The colleges and District can learn from each other best practices for working with external partners to gain ideas and expand reach across the region.
- **Local Agencies:** The colleges can coordinate with local agencies on initiatives and local training needs.
- **Other Postsecondary and Workforce Institutions:** Alamo Colleges District can partner with other institutions to ensure that its micro-credentials will be accepted at their institutions and vice versa.

As Alamo Colleges District expands its work with external partners, steps will need to be taken to refine its approach. The use of service-level agreements will be important to clearly define roles and responsibilities of external partners, identify points of contact, and establish metrics for success for the college/department and its employer partner. Questions will arise that will need to be addressed, including:

- How do we best educate external partners on the value and role of micro-credentials and digital credentials?
- How do we codify service agreements with external partners?
- How do we best communicate and coordinate across partnerships?
- How do we ensure equity of opportunity for colleges to work with external partners?

VII. WHAT'S NEXT?

Additional resources on how to implement and scale micro-credentials are underway and will be shared as they become available. This guide is Version 1.

As micro-credential work continues to grow and rapidly expand, the guide will be updated to incorporate new efforts and details.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was developed under the leadership of the Pathways Leadership Council (PLC) subcommittee:

Dr. Tammy Pérez – Chair, Dean for Academic Success, Northeast Lakeview College

Dr. Lucas Dowden – Chief Online Learning Officer and Associate Vice Chancellor, Alamo Colleges Online

Dr. Yolanda Reyes Guevara – Interim Dean of Student Success/Director of Enrollment, Northwest Vista College

Patrick Lee – Interim Vice President of Academic Success, Palo Alto College

Amber O’Casey – Online Learning Coordinator, Alamo Colleges Online

During the development process, a draft was shared with nearly 100 members of the Alamo Colleges District community through in-person and virtual sessions to collect feedback and facilitate discussion. The draft was revised based on the feedback provided by faculty, staff, and leadership from each college.

This guide was prepared by [StrategyForward Advisors](#) a strategy and policy firm committed to transforming postsecondary education so learners can achieve their goals. The process was led by Dr. Julie Johnson, with contributions from Dr. Colleen Pawlicki of Troy Street Professional Services on editing and Andy Sherman of Can of Creative on design.