

Exploring Micro-Credentials & Digital Badges



Office of the Registrar



Agenda

What are Micro-Credentials?

- Nationwide, in Arizona, Arizona Learning Mobility Collaborative

Who is interested and student benefit

University of Arizona Micro-Credentials

Digital Badges—how micro-credentials are represented

Micro-Credentials in action: the HRTS experience

Next steps—consider adding Micro-Credentials



Introductions



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University Registrar



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Graduation, Records &
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Coordinator



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The **Office of the Registrar** is responsible for the accuracy and integrity of the academic record.

Serving all students, faculty, academic units, and student support functions; the Office is charged with the implementation of academic and student policies and their alignment to state and federal regulations and accreditation standards.

The Office strives to be a leader and thought partner in creating efficient processes that are designed in a way that supports student success and service excellence.



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Micro-Credentials

What are they?

Micro-credentials **verify, validate, and attest** that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved and are endorsed by the issuing institution and designed to be meaningful and high quality.



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Credentials in the United States

1,076,356 Unique Credentials in the U.S.¹

- >441,937 are micro-credentials or digital badges

\$2.133 Trillion spent annually in the U.S. on the delivery and attainment of credentials (2022)¹

- Educational institutions spent \$1.430 trillion on educational activities, approximately 67% of total spending in the U.S.

41.9 Million U.S. adults have started college but stopped before completing a degree.²

- Adults without a college degree believe that at least one type of credential is “extremely” or “very” valuable.

In 2022, 38% of Americans completed a bachelor’s degree.⁶

45% of U.S. workers report having some form of credential other than a traditional education degree.⁷

Micro-credentials began in 2011

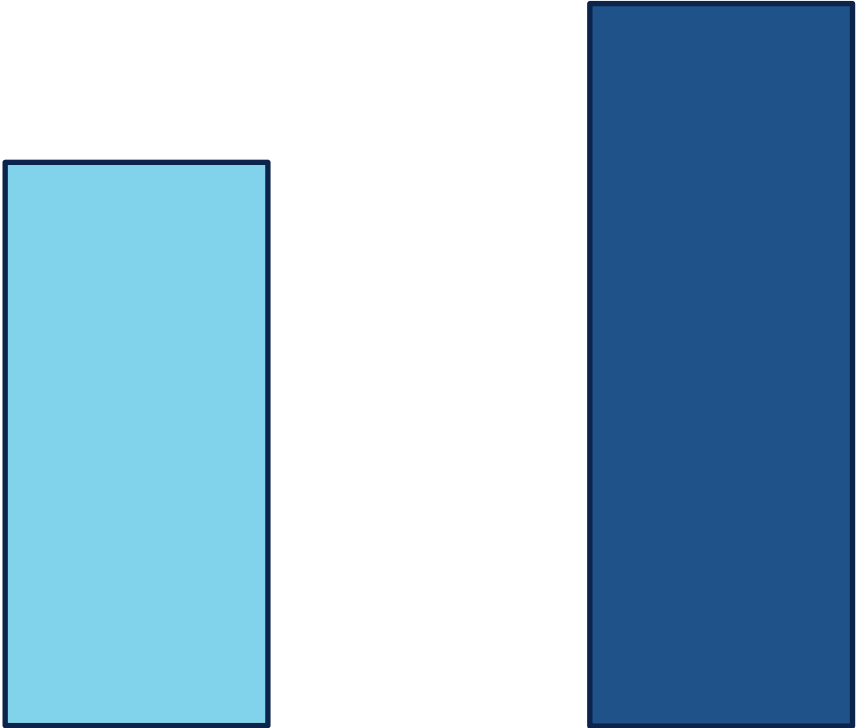
Credentials in Arizona

High School and College Degrees

Educational achievements of a sample high school class of 1000 freshmen:

High School Diploma	534
Certificate or Credential	32
Associate Degree	22
Bachelor's Degree	178

Less than half of Arizona high school graduates enroll in some form of postsecondary education.



**Arizona:
47 percent**

**National Average:
62 percent**

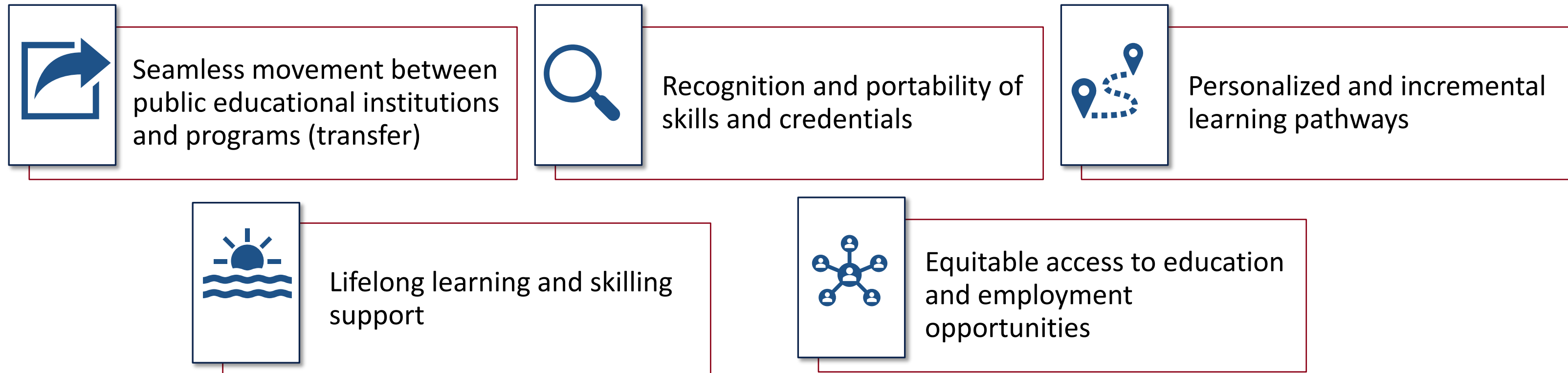
Projected Arizona Annual Shortage of Degrees: 26,300⁵



Arizona Learning Mobility Collaborative

Vision: Empower Arizonans, particularly those with the highest barriers to education and employment opportunities, to connect attained incremental credentials to educational and workplace opportunity for learning mobility.

Goals of Arizona Learning Mobility Collaborative

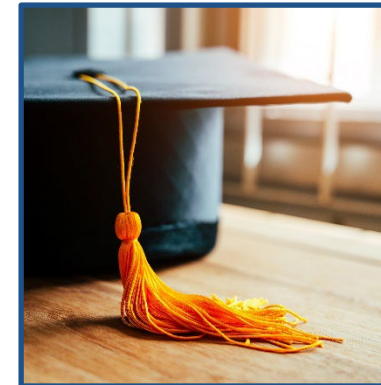


Who's Interested & Why



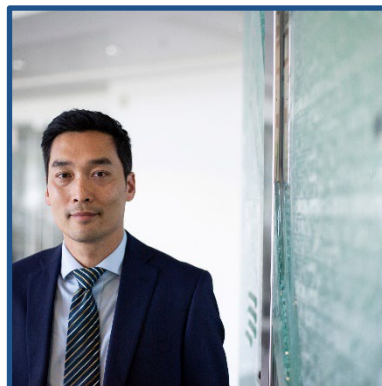
K-12

- Gamification
- CTE
- Top Performer



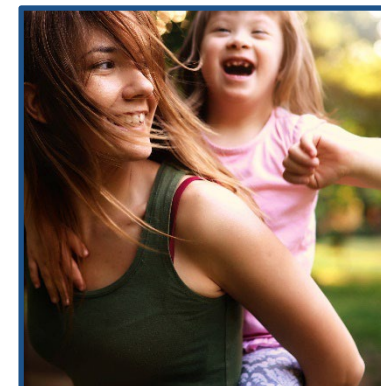
College / University Student

- Undergraduate
- Graduate



Adult & Returning Learner

- Working Professional – continuing education
- Returning Learner – return to college

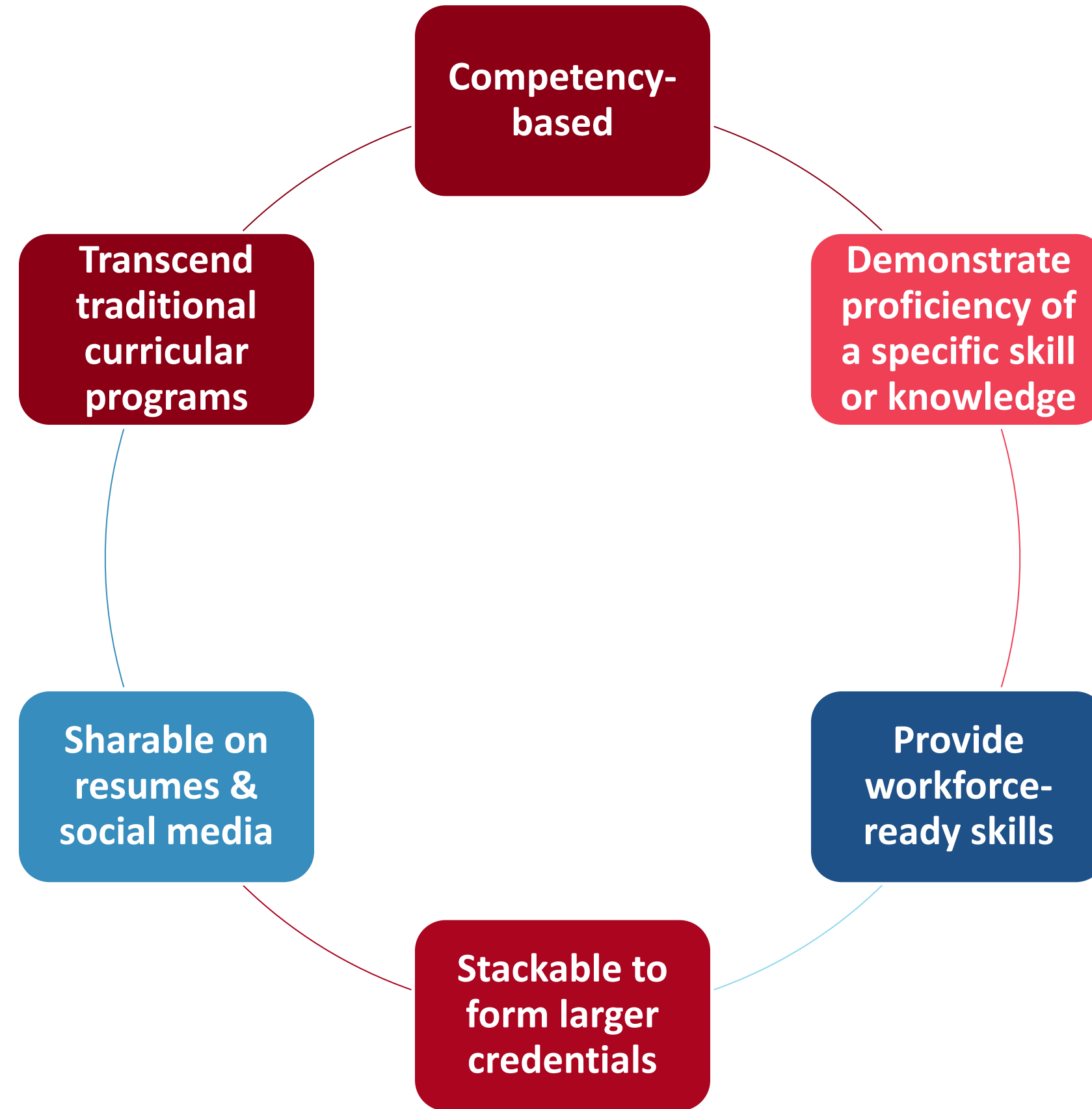


Unemployed Opportunity Seeker

- New Graduate: high school / college
- Homemaker
- Caregiver
- Laid Off
- Incarcerated
- Retired

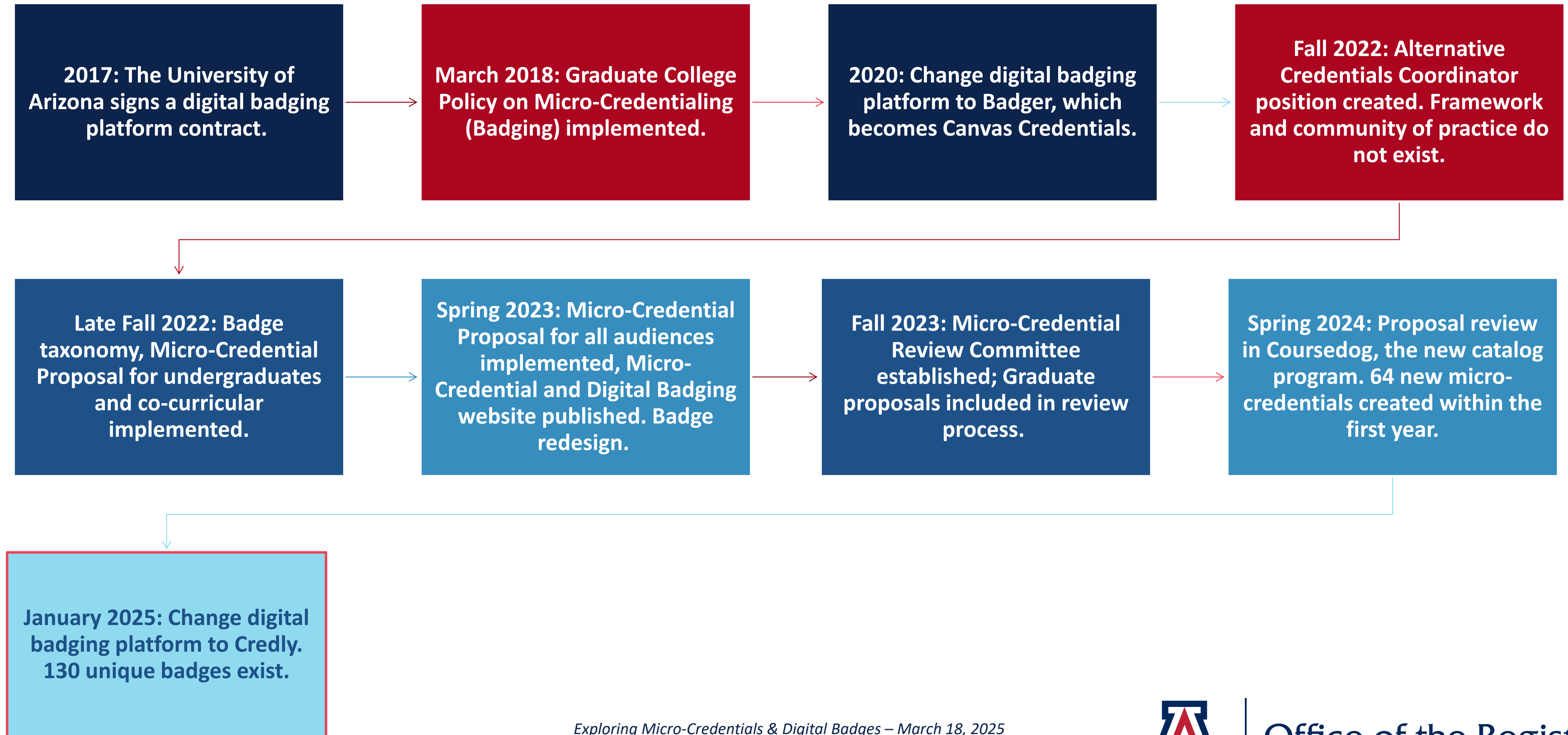


Benefits



Micro-Credentials at U of A

Timeline




Pathway Example

Pathway


Nutrition & Human Performance Series

The School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness at The University of Arizona Awards the Nutrition & Human Performance Series badge upon successful completion of Nutrition and Human Performance Aerobic Fitness Assessment, Nutrition & Human Performance Body Composition Assessment, and Nutrition & Human Performance Dietary Intake Assessment.


Earn 3 badges




Nutrition & Human Performance Series
Issued By: [University of Arizona](#)
The School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness at The University of Arizona Awards the Nutrition & Human Performance Series badge upon successful completion of Nutrition and Human Performance Aerobic Fitness Assessment, Nutrition & Human Performance Body Composition Assessment, and Nutrition & Human Performance Dietary Intake Assessment.
[View details](#)



Nutrition and Human Performance Aerobic Fitness Assessment
[View details](#) [Earn this badge](#)



Nutrition & Human Performance Body Composition Assessment
[View details](#) [Earn this badge](#)




Nutrition & Human Performance Dietary Intake Assessment
[View details](#) [Earn this badge](#)

Co-curricular Examples



First Year Experience - Blue Chip Leadership
University of Arizona



Build the Skill: Leadership
University of Arizona



Year 2 Completion - Blue Chip Leadership
University of Arizona



Build the Skill: Professional...
University of Arizona



Year 3 Completion - Blue Chip Leadership
University of Arizona



Build the Skill: Teamwork
University of Arizona



Year 4 Completion - Blue Chip Leadership
University of Arizona




Representation

BADGE in CREDLY



Erin Riesgo • You
Strategic Thinking to Influence Change &...
now • 🌐

View my verified achievement from [University of Arizona](#).

 **Master Tester** was issued...
credly.com

SHARED to LINKEDIN

Sample Badge Badge Title

Issued by [University of Arizona](#)

The Sample Badge is awarded to anyone learning about issuing or receiving micro-credentials on the University of Arizona Credly platform.

[Learn more](#) Badge Attributes

📖 Learning 📚 Foundational ⌚ Hours 💰 Free

Earn this Badge

[URL for Program Information](#)

Activities
Completed to earn the badge

Earning Criteria
👤 Earners attend onboarding virtually or through online modules and practice awarding a badge.


Skills Skills Tags 3 Required

Digital Learning Training Training Workshops

Occupations
Associated Occupations with the same skills

Training and Development Specialists
Design or conduct work-related training and development programs to improve individual skills or organizational performance. May analyze organizational training needs or evaluate training effectiveness. [Learn More](#)

Related
Available Offerings of relatedness

 **Project Harvest: Sample Trainer**



Micro-Credential Badges: The HRTS Experience

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
Human Rights Practice





ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICE PROGRAM

- Fully online, founded in 2018
- MA, BA, four graduate certificates
- Students with very varied backgrounds and goals
- Emphasis on “practice”
- Project-based and problem-based learning
- Course titles do not always reflect skills gained – e.g., “HRTS 596a: Human Rights Across Contexts”



Digital badges now offered



- [Blogpost Writing for Human Rights](#)
- [Cross Cultural Interaction for Human Rights](#)
- [International Cooperation for Human Rights](#)
- [Media Advocacy for Human Rights](#)





Awarding Badges

The first-year experience

- All four badges have been awarded within the first year
- Thus far to a total of more than 50 students, mostly grad students
- Another 30-40 likely by end of the academic year
- Different badges are earned in different ways, usually through coursework or through outside projects
- Some badges are organized around an output, some around a process



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“Blogpost Writing for Human Rights”

output-oriented badge

- Identify an actionable problem within a topic of interest in human rights.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the standard structure and purpose of blogposts/op-eds
- Apply the format to an outline and initial draft about the problem.
- Write a complete brief (750-1250 words)

Additional criterion for the badge

- Identify possible venues for publication

Has been earned through completion of the main assignment in courses

“Cross-Cultural Interaction for Human Rights”

process-oriented badge

- Initiating empathetic engagement with individuals and groups from outside their own culture
- Undertaking sustained interaction across cultural differences, through at least two modalities
- Sharing insights and ideas about human rights themes
- Brainstorming areas of potential further collaboration
- Reflecting on the experience





Student Feedback

“I'm thrilled to have earned a Human Rights Practice badge for my media advocacy work, and I've proudly added it to my LinkedIn profile.

*This credential **validates my skills and commitment** to using media to promote human rights and showcasing my dedication to positive change.”*





Student Feedback

*“Once I earned my micro-credential badges for [cross-cultural interaction], I **immediately added them to my LinkedIn.***

My micro-credential badges show the important international human rights projects that I have participated in with an official, verified certification.”





Student Feedback

*“The **digital badge** attached to my email signature in my workplace highlights my dedication to advocating for and upholding human rights principles.*”

*The **badge adds credibility** to my professional profile, demonstrating that I have undergone training and education in the human rights field.”*



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Student Feedback

“The digital badge is a great conversation starter. I currently have it in my signature for all of my email accounts, and I get the same question over and over: “What's media advocacy?”

This badge and others like it open the world of human rights to people who thought it was all NGOs and UN charters. I can tell people that they can make a difference with just their voice.”



Insights from the HRTS experience with badges so far...

Badges need to be granular enough to have clear meaning and not overlap other badges from other programs

It can be tricky to identify what activities could form an ongoing (not one-time) basis for awarding badges

Once set up, the awarding of badges is straightforward to administer

Many students appreciate receiving the badges, although their purpose and value need to be explained

Why Should You Offer Micro-Credentials?

Living the U of A Values

Preparing students with the skills and mindsets to lead in the 4th Industrial Economy.

68% of employers prefer candidates with both a college degree and a micro-credential, compared to just 14% for a degree alone.³

81% of executives, 71% of supervisors, and 59% of HR professionals agree that recognizing alternative credentials promotes hiring diverse candidates.⁴

68% of workers who have earned a credential say it has helped them progress in their career.

“Micro-credentials have been a powerful tool in demonstrating a student’s learning throughout coursework and empowering students to talk about skill development.”⁶

Digital credentials are inevitable!





Want to offer a Micro-Credential?

Let's work together to develop a
Micro-Credential program for your department!

Erin Riesgo

Alternative Credentials Coordinator

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<https://registrar.arizona.edu/badge>



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Questions?



Resources

1. <https://credentialengine.org/>
2. <https://changinghighered.com/state-of-higher-education-report-2024-lumina-gallup/>
3. Finley, A. P. (2024). *THE CAREER-READY GRADUATE WHAT EMPLOYERS SAY ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE COLLEGE MAKES*. AAC&U. <https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/open-educational-resources-oer>
4. https://shrm-res.cloudinary.com/image/upload/v1663775658/Walmart%20Skilled%20Credentials/shrm_foundation_walmart_skilled_cred_making_report_083122.pdf
5. Advancing Arizona's Economy-Investment in Workforce Development, Spring 2022; Rounds Consulting Group, Inc.
6. Mowreader, Ashley. (2024). What Does Skills-Based Hiring Mean for Higher Ed. Inside Higher Ed.
7. Ready for Success A toolkit for Adopting a Skills Mindset in Employment Practices (May 2023) SHRM.





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