

UNLV CREDIT-BEARING ACADEMIC MICROCREDENTIALS GUIDELINES

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ACADEMIC MICROCREDENTIALS

What are academic microcredentials?

Academic credit-bearing microcredentials are an alternative credential that signifies student achievement and recognized with digital badges and displayed on transcripts. Credit-bearing microcredentials consist of 6 to 11 credits of university-level coursework, with an emphasis on workplace competencies for post-graduate success, re-skilling, or up-skilling. They are often short, focused credentials designed to provide in-demand skills, know-how, and experience. Microcredentials are often stackable toward a certificate and/or degree program, but require the completion of fewer credits than either a certificate or degree program.

Guiding Principles:

- Academic quality is paramount for credit-bearing microcredentials.
- Faculty/shared governance is required in microcredential design and implementation.
- Microcredentials should be designed to meet market and workforce needs.
 - Their design should be informed by current data from appropriate markets and align with relevant industry/sector standards,
 - Microcredentials also provide opportunities to connect and partner with industry and workforce stakeholders.
- Microcredentials should be documented and may be stackable and formally approved via the standard UNLV curricular approval process.
- Microcredentials should be implemented/executed in a manner that:
 - Allows them to be stood up expeditiously,
 - Allows departments/colleges to nimbly respond to emergent industry/workforce needs,
 - Maximizes student success.

1. DESIGNING, DEVELOPING, AND PROPOSING ACADEMIC CREDIT-BEARING UNDERGRADUATE MICROCREDENTIALS

Curricular Procedures

New Undergraduate Microcredentials and Changes to Existing Microcredentials

To establish a new academic undergraduate microcredential, a proposal must be prepared by the interested faculty member, submitted through Curriculog, and routed in accordance with the processes outlined on the [Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee](#) and [Academic Program Actions & Processes](#) websites. Proposals to create new microcredentials must be approved by the Dean(s) of the appropriate college(s) or school(s) and the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Proposals that duplicate existing microcredentials will not be approved. The UNLV Undergraduate Catalog will serve as the official repository for all UNLV undergraduate microcredentials.

Any changes to a microcredential, including admission requirements, academic requirements, and mode of delivery must be submitted as program change proposals in Curriculog. A microcredential change proposal is routed through the same review processes and entered into Curriculog with the same requirements as a newly proposed microcredential.

As part of the proposal process applications for new microcredential programs may also be asked to complete/provide the following items:

- If a microcredential will be offered outside of the United States, additional requirements must be met through the [Office of Educational Compliance](#).
- [Certificate Financial Aid Reporting Form](#)

Program evaluation for enrollments and completions will occur every four years. If a program is not enrolling and graduating enough students, the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs may require an action plan to increase enrollments and graduations, or may ask for the deactivation or elimination of the microcredential.

Approval by the Nevada System of Higher Education or the Board of Regents is not required for credentials/programs under 30 credit hours, unless they provide the preparation necessary to take state, national, and/or industry-recognized certification or licensing examinations.

Upon official approval of a new undergraduate microcredential or updates to an existing undergraduate microcredential, a Provost Alert will be issued to the campus community in order for the appropriate updates to be made in MyUNLV. Depending on the approval date, a new program may not be available for recruitment and admissions until the following cycle. For additional detailed information on the process for designing, developing, and creating a microcredential, please see our online guide, "So you want to create a Microcredential." (forthcoming)

ADMISSION TO UNDERGRADUATE MICROCREDENTIALS

New undergraduate admission applicants can pursue microcredential programs once they gain admission. They can gain admission through the [Undergraduate Admissions Application](#). Both non-degree-seeking and degree-seeking students may pursue microcredentials.

Students who are already admitted do not need to submit a second admission application to pursue a microcredential. However, a student who is pursuing a microcredential as a non-degree-seeking student and who desires entry to a bachelor's degree-granting program, whether the microcredential is completed in full or only partially completed, must apply for admission to UNLV using the appropriate undergraduate application, and will be held to the standard NSHE Board of Regents criteria for Transfer Students (2.5 GPA in all credits transferable from previous institutions and all credits earned while in the microcredential program).

Tuition and Standard Fees

Tuition and standard fees are established by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Board of Regents and are subject to change without notice. Please reference Chapter 7 - Tuition and Fees of the [NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual](#) for a complete listing. Students who are pursuing a microcredential while they are admitted as an undergraduate degree-seeking student, will be subject to all tuition and fees that apply to degree-seeking students. Non-degree seeking students who are pursuing a microcredential, will be subject to all of the tuition and fees that apply to non-degree seeking students. For information on the applicable tuition and fees please see the [UNLV Cashiering tuition and fees webpage](#).

FINANCIAL AID

Non-degree-seeking students who are pursuing microcredentials are not eligible for financial aid. Degree-seeking students who are pursuing microcredentials as part of their degree program may be eligible for aid.

ADVISING

Degree-seeking students who are pursuing microcredentials as part of their degree program should seek advising for microcredentials through their assigned [Academic Advising Center](#). Non-degree-seeking students who are pursuing microcredentials should seek advising through the Academic Success Center. All advising appointments should be scheduled through the [Rebel Success Hub](#). Students who are pursuing microcredentials for career upskilling or reskilling may also consult with [UNLV Career Services and Workforce Development](#) for additional guidance and support.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Microcredential-seeking students are not eligible for an F-1 student visa unless they are simultaneously enrolled in a degree program. International students are welcome to apply to and earn undergraduate microcredentials while they are also enrolled in a degree at UNLV. International students may also participate in a microcredential program if the microcredential can be completed online from their home country.

RETENTION, PROGRESSION, AND COMPLETION

Matriculating Through a Microcredential Program

Students are encouraged to engage with their assigned Academic Advising Center to familiarize themselves with the available campus resources, and to take advantage of the many types of help available at no additional charge.

Students who are already enrolled as undergraduate degree-seeking students do not need to apply for admission to a microcredential. Any undergraduate degree-seeking student who successfully

completes all of the requirements for a microcredential (e.g. two or three required classes and a minimum grade) will be awarded that microcredential.

Students who are solely matriculated in a microcredential program, may enroll in up to 8 credits during each fall and spring semester, up to 4 credits in summer session 1, and up to 7 credits each in summer sessions 2 and 3.

Students who wish to take a microcredential that includes a course with one or more prerequisites must complete any prerequisite course prior to enrolling in the microcredential.

Microcredentials Design, Prerequisites, and Course Levels

Faculty who design and develop for-credit undergraduate microcredentials should think carefully about the courses that are included in the microcredential, paying special attention to whether or not those courses have prerequisites that must be met before students begin microcredential coursework.

Microcredentials that include courses with extensive prerequisites will likely only appeal to very specific populations of students, such as those in particular majors. In general, microcredentials that seek to attract new students to majors or to appeal to a broad audience should include courses with few or no prerequisites. Microcredentials with several prerequisites necessarily assume that students have extensive background and coursework in a particular discipline. Those microcredentials would likely appeal to and help retain students in a particular major. Microcredentials that include courses with prerequisites will be required to disclose those prerequisites in a transparent manner on the Microcredentials webpage.

The courses included in a microcredential also should align with the “skill level” attained by completing the microcredentials: (1) awareness, (2) proficiency, or (3) mastery. Generally speaking, microcredentials demonstrating awareness of a competency should include lower division courses with few or no prerequisites, whereas microcredentials that demonstrate “mastery” of a competency may include upper division courses.

Credits Used Toward a Microcredential

The following conditions apply for any credits that would be used toward a microcredential:

- 1) Microcredentials generally require completion of 6 to 11 credits in undergraduate course work. Specific credit requirements vary, and students should confirm the requirements for any given microcredential by reviewing the undergraduate catalog or by checking with the advising center of the college or school that offers the microcredential.
- 2) The university policy on [catalog year](#) applies to meeting microcredential program requirements.
- 3) To receive a microcredential, individuals must be admitted as a non-degree-seeking or as a degree-seeking student
- 4) Resident credit: At least half of the credits required for the microcredential program must be taken at UNLV after the individual is admitted. Up to half of the required credits for a

microcredential may be earned in applicable transfer courses, so long as the transfer work is directly articulated to the UNLV courses required for the microcredential.

- 5) Students must complete all required coursework for a microcredential with a minimum grade of "C" before the microcredential will be awarded.
- 6) Students must complete all requirements for a microcredential within three years of starting work on the microcredential.
- 7) Microcredentials at UNLV may be "stacked." Stackable microcredentials can be accumulated in a composed sequence and lead to further certification, such as a certificate or degree. To determine which microcredentials are stackable to certificate or degrees, please consult with the advising center of the college or school that offers the certificate or degree program.
- 8) Students who complete a microcredential alone are not invited to participate in commencement ceremonies and are not considered for academic distinction. Students who complete a microcredential at the same time that they complete degree requirements will be allowed to participate in commencement when they apply to graduate from their degree program. In addition, they will be considered for academic distinction in the college or school that offers the degree program.
- 9) Credits used to meet requirements for a microcredential may also be used toward a certificate or an undergraduate degree program that the student is pursuing, provided that the credits meet academic requirements for the degree. Degree-seeking students who wish to complete a microcredential while completing degree requirements should speak to the advising center of the college or school that offers the microcredential before graduation from their degree programs.
- 10) Microcredentials are not awarded retroactively or after the conferral of a higher degree. They are only awarded to students who successfully complete all microcredential requirements following the creation of an officially sanctioned university microcredential.
- 11) Students may use credits from one microcredential toward another microcredential provided that the credits meet academic requirements for the second microcredential. However, no more than one-half of the credits required for a second microcredential program may come from a prior microcredential.

Record Keeping and Microcredential Completion

For-credit coursework taken toward undergraduate microcredential programs will be recorded on the official UNLV transcript, as will successful completion of microcredentials. No graduation application or application fee is required; microcredentials will be awarded automatically. However, students will not receive diplomas for the completion of microcredentials, nor will they be invited to participate in commencement ceremonies unless they are also completing degree programs in the same semester that they complete microcredentials.

2. DESIGNING, DEVELOPING, AND PROPOSING ACADEMIC CREDIT-BEARING GRADUATE MICROCREDENTIALS

Curricular Procedures

New Graduate Microcredentials and Changes to Existing Microcredentials

New Grad Microcredentials

To establish a new academic graduate microcredential, a new microcredential proposal (Graduate Academic Microcredential Create form) must be prepared by the interested faculty member, submitted through Curriculog, and routed in accordance with the processes outlined on the [Graduate College Curriculum](#) website. Proposals submitted to create new microcredentials will be approved by the unit curricular graduate faculty committees, Dean(s) of the appropriate college(s) or school(s), Graduate Programs Committee, the Graduate College, and the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Proposals that duplicate existing microcredentials will not be approved. The UNLV Graduate Catalog will serve as the official repository for all UNLV graduate microcredentials.

Changes to Existing Grad Microcredentials

Any changes to a microcredential, including admission requirements, academic requirements, and mode of delivery must be submitted as program change proposals in Curriculog and go through standard program change protocol. Meaning, a microcredential change proposal is routed through the same review processes and entered into Curriculog with the same requirements as a newly proposed microcredential. A microcredential may be a subset of coursework from approved existing certificates (with greater than 15 credits) or degrees.

As part of the proposal process applications for new microcredential programs may also be asked to complete/provide the following items:

- If a microcredential will be offered outside of the United States, additional requirements must be met through the [Office of Educational Compliance](#).

Working in conjunction with the Office of Program Effectiveness and the Office of Decisions Support, the program will undergo formative program evaluation annually and a 3-year summative evaluation focusing on enrollments and completions. The data and reports may be shared in Academic Innovation meetings among others. If a microcredential program is not enrolling and graduating enough students, the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs may require an action plan to increase enrollments and graduations, or may ask for the deactivation or elimination of the microcredential.

Approval by the Nevada System of Higher Education or the Board of Regents is not required for credentials/programs under 30 credit hours, unless they provide the preparation necessary to take state, national, and/or industry-recognized certification or licensing examinations.

Upon official approval of a new graduate microcredential or any updates to an existing graduate microcredential that impact admissions, Academic Effectiveness, OIT, and MyUNLV teams, a Provost

Alert will be issued to the campus community in order for the appropriate updates. Depending on the approval date, a new program may not be available for recruitment and admissions until the following cycle.

ADMISSION TO GRADUATE MICROCREDENTIALS

New graduate admission applicants can find and pursue microcredential programs listed in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [UNLV Degree Directory](#) once they gain admission. Microcredential-seeking applicants apply the same way as certificate-seeking or degree-seeking applicants. Applications are available through the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#). A \$30 application fee will be required. For more information about the admissions process, visit the [Future Students](#) page or reach out to GradAdmissions@unlv.edu or 702-895-3367.

Already admitted graduate certificate-seeking and degree-seeking students may pursue microcredentials. Students who are already admitted to an existing certificate and/or degree program will need to submit a second admission application to pursue a microcredential. However, a student who is pursuing a microcredential and who desires entry to a certificate or graduate degree-granting program, whether the microcredential is completed in full or only partially completed, must apply for admission to UNLV using the appropriate graduate admission application through the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) and will be held to the graduate college policies outlined in the graduate catalog. Graduate Coordinators will have the option to review and make decisions on each submitted applications individually or they can work with the admissions team to auto-admit students if applicants have met clearly defined admissions criteria and satisfied the minimum required GPA. For more information about the admissions process, reach out to GradAdmissions@unlv.edu or 702-895-3367.

Tuition and Standard Fees

Tuition and standard fees are established by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Board of Regents and are subject to change without notice. Please reference Chapter 7 - Tuition and Fees of the [NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual](#) for a complete listing. Students who are pursuing a microcredential while they are admitted as a graduate degree-seeking or graduate certificate-seeking student, will be subject to all tuition and fees that apply to degree-seeking students. Graduate non-degree seeking students who are pursuing a microcredential only, will be subject to all of the tuition and fees that apply to graduate non-degree seeking students. For information on the applicable tuition and fees please see the [UNLV Cashiering tuition and fees webpage](#).

FINANCIAL AID

Microcredential-seeking graduate students are not eligible for financial aid. Degree-seeking graduate students who are pursuing microcredentials as part of their degree or certificate program may be eligible for aid.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Students enrolled in solely a graduate microcredential are not eligible for a graduate assistantship.

Students in both a graduate degree program and a microcredential program are eligible to apply for and hold a graduate assistantship position.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Microcredential-seeking students are not eligible for an F-1 student visa unless they are simultaneously enrolled in a degree program. International students are welcome to apply to and earn graduate microcredentials while they are also enrolled in a degree at UNLV. International students may also participate in a microcredential program if the microcredential can be completed online from their home country. International students in F-1 or J-1 status should consult with the [International Students and Scholars Services \(ISSS\)](#) to discuss enrollment requirements specific to their legal status in the U.S.

RETENTION, PROGRESSION, AND COMPLETION

Matriculating Through a Microcredential Program

Students are encouraged to engage with their College/School graduate coordinator to familiarize themselves with the available campus resources, and to take advantage of the many types of help available at no additional charge.

Students who are already enrolled as graduate degree-seeking or certificate-seeking students need to apply for admission to a microcredential. Any graduate degree-seeking or certificate-seeking student who successfully completes all of the requirements for a microcredential (e.g. two or three required classes and a minimum grade attained) and applies for completion using the Graduate Credit-Bearing Microcredential Completion Form through the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) in order to be awarded the respective microcredential.

Students who are matriculated in a microcredential program, graduate degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, or non-degree-seeking students may enroll in up to 15 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters and up to 12 credits during the summer (no more than six credits in a single five-week term).

Credits Used Toward a Graduate Microcredential

Credits earned to fulfill requirements for a microcredential may be used toward a subsequent graduate degree at UNLV with appropriate grades and approval of the graduate degree program and the Graduate College. Typically, microcredential or certificate course credits earned before completing a graduate or professional degree, or simultaneously, may be approved to be used toward your graduate degree program. Students enrolled in a graduate or professional degree may still be awarded certificates or microcredential as long as the microcredential/certificate course credits were taken prior to the completion of the graduate or professional degree. Microcredentials are a great way for students to take some classes, earn a credential, and confirm that they would like to pursue an area of study before enrolling in the full graduate program.

Credits earned to fulfill requirements for a UNLV microcredential/certificate may also be used simultaneously or toward a subsequent microcredential(s) with appropriate grades and approval of the graduate certificate or degree program, the department, and the Graduate College. Approval is not guaranteed. The age of the transfer work under consideration may also be a factor in the decision as to whether or not the coursework is applicable. Please note that if students have already earned a graduate degree at UNLV and have met the microcredential requirements, they will not be eligible to receive the microcredential retroactively. Students must either need to complete the microcredential first, or earn it concurrently with their degree. Please see the [Grad Catalog](#) for specific microcredential requirements.

The following conditions apply for any credits that would be used toward a graduate microcredential:

1. Microcredentials generally require completion of 6 to 11 credits in graduate course work. Specific credit requirements vary, and students should confirm the requirements for any given microcredential by reviewing the graduate catalog or by checking with their graduate coordinator of the college or school that offers the microcredential.
2. The university policy on [catalog year](#) applies to meeting microcredential program requirements.
3. To receive a graduate microcredential, individuals must be admitted as a graduate microcredential-seeking student.
4. Transfer credit: Transfer credits are not guaranteed. The age of the transfer work under consideration may also be a factor in the decision as to whether or not the coursework is transferable. Students must submit a Transfer Credit Request Form, available on the Additional Forms tab in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#), in order to request the transfer of coursework from other institutions.
5. Students must complete all required coursework for a microcredential with a minimum grade of "B" before the microcredential will be awarded.
6. Students must complete all requirements for a microcredential within three years of starting work on the microcredential. Students must adhere to the continuous enrollment policy as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.
7. Microcredentials at UNLV may be "stacked." Stackable microcredentials may be accumulated in a composed sequence and may lead to further certification, such as a certificate or degree. To determine which microcredentials are stackable to certificate or degrees, please consult with the graduate coordinator of the college or school that offers the certificate or degree program.
8. Students who are matriculated in a microcredential program, graduate degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, or non-degree-seeking students may enroll in up to 15 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters and up to 12 credits during the summer (no more than six credits in a single five-week term).
9. If students have already earned a graduate degree or certificate at UNLV and have met the microcredential requirements, they will not be eligible to receive the microcredential retroactively. Students either need to complete the microcredential first, or earn it concurrently with their certificate or degree. Please note microcredentials are not awarded retroactively or after the conferral of a higher certificate or degree. They are only awarded to students who successfully complete all microcredential requirements following the creation of an officially sanctioned university microcredential.
10. Students may use credits from one microcredential toward another microcredential provided that the credits meet academic requirements for the second microcredential and that no more than 3 credits that are used to fulfill the requirements of another graduate microcredential can

- count towards the requirements of another microcredential.
11. Substituting credits within an existing microcredential will not be accepted generally and will require both program and graduate college approval.
 12. Credits used to meet requirements for a microcredential may also be used toward a certificate or a graduate degree program that the student is pursuing, provided that the credits meet academic requirements for the degree. Certificate-seeking and degree-seeking graduate students who wish to complete a microcredential while completing degree requirements should speak to their graduate coordinator of the college or school that offers the microcredential before graduation from their degree program.
 13. Students must submit Plan of Study Parts I and II in their [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) portal. Programs must appoint a faculty advisor upon admitting the student. If a faculty advisor is not appointed at the time of admission, the advisor will default to the graduate coordinator as the pro tem advisor until a permanent advisor is identified. The student must have that respective form approved in order for the Plan of Study Parts I and II to be initiated or submitted.
 14. Students who complete a microcredential alone are not invited to participate in commencement ceremonies but are required to apply for completion using the Graduate Credit-Bearing Microcredential Completion Form through the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) up to one semester prior to the intended semester of completion. Students will be awarded a digital badge on their transcripts if they have successfully completed all requirements of the microcredential. Students who complete a microcredential at the same time that they complete degree or certificate requirements will be allowed to participate in commencement when they apply to graduate from their degree program.

Record Keeping and Microcredential Completion

Credit-bearing coursework taken toward graduate microcredential programs will be recorded on the official UNLV transcript (via [digital badges](#)), as will successful completion of microcredentials. A graduation application and fee is required for those students completing a microcredential in conjunction with a degree or certificate. For students only enrolled in a microcredential, they will neither submit a graduate application nor pay a graduation fee. Instead, these micro-credential seeking only students will submit the Graduate Credit-Bearing Microcredential Completion Form once meeting program requirements successfully. Students will receive a certificate of completion approximately 60-90 days after completion of program requirements and submitting the Graduate Credit-Bearing Microcredential Completion Form.

Graduate Students Taking Undergraduate-Level Courses

If a graduate student enrolls in undergraduate-level course(s) in their graduate career (under a graduate non-degree-seeking or graduate degree- or certificate-seeking or microcredential-seeking program), the undergraduate course enrollment will be marked as “cross-career” on the student’s official transcript and those course will not contribute to earned credits or graduate GPA.

- If graduate students need undergraduate-level courses to show as earned credit on their transcript for employment or educational reasons, they must submit and pay for an undergraduate non-degree seeking application through the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and register for those courses in an undergraduate career.

- If a graduate student takes undergraduate courses in their graduate career and needs them changed to reflect earned credit at a later date, they will be required to submit and pay for an undergraduate non-degree seeking application through the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in order for the coursework to be moved.