Webinar Logistics

- Please submit questions at any time through the Q&A feature in your Zoom toolbar.

- The recording and presentation slides will be emailed to registrants and posted on the CGS website and YouTube channel after the live event.

- You are welcome to use the chat to discuss the webinar with your fellow attendees.

Microcredentials and the Master's Degree: Project Overview

- 18-month project sponsored by ETS to examine the relationship between emerging post-baccalaureate microcredentials and the master's degree.

- Conducted 6 focus groups in October of 2022 including graduate deans, higher education administrators, continuing education/extension, national employer groups, and workforce experts.

- Fielded a Graduate Dean Survey, Program-level Survey, and Employer Roundtable Survey

- Incorporated new questions into the NACE *Recruiting Benchmarks Survey*

- Conducted 20+ Zoom interviews to inform case studies

- Held a project convening in June 2023 with over thirty attendees from diverse stakeholder groups with the report published in January 2024.

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Project Overview: Research Questions

- What role do graduate badges and certificates play in initial hiring decisions of employers?

- What role do graduate certificates play in reskilling and upskilling the current workforce?

- If master's degrees remain an employer preference for job entry or promotion, what skill set does the degree signal that shorter-term credentials don't provide?

- What vehicles exist or can be developed that ensure quality and relevance of post-baccalaureate certificates and degrees to future workforce needs?

CGS COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

2023 CGS Graduate Certificate Surveys

Methodology

- Graduate Dean Survey
  - Polling conducted between January and February 2023.
  - 211 graduate deans responded.
- Program-level Survey
  - Sent to graduate deans to forward to certificate directors in March.
  - 298 program directors responded.

Highlights

- Certificate programs operate largely in a master's ecosystem
- Certificate programs are common in certain fields and have a mixed relationship with master's education
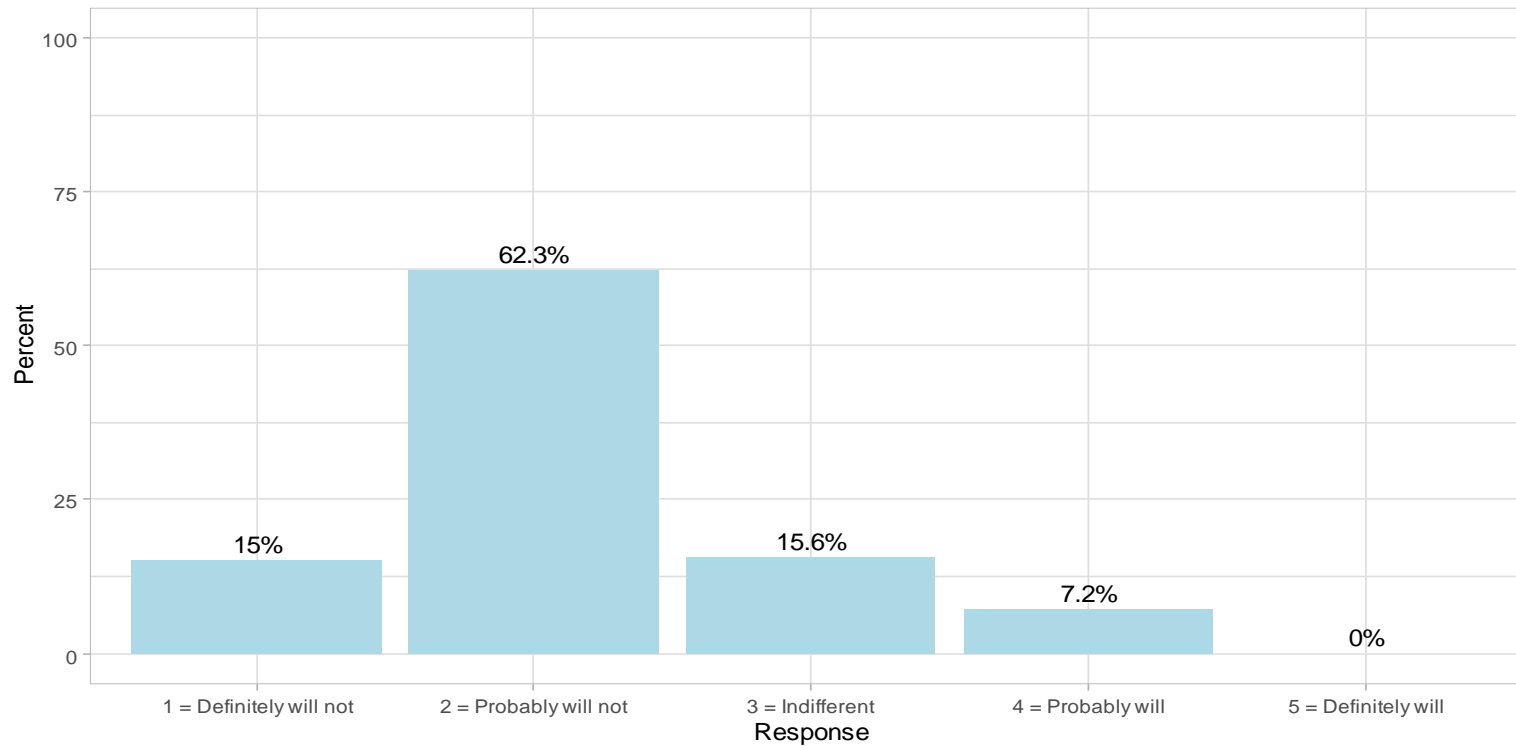
What were the project's key findings?

1. Postbaccalaureate certificates are best understood as part of a larger ecosystem that includes graduate degrees, instead of as an alternative to degrees.
2. Many programs are new and have small enrollments.
3. Departments and programs remain the drivers of program creation.
4. Assessing microcredential quality remains a question, particularly balancing quality with speed.
5. "Stacking" certificates is still in the development phase at many institutions.

A blended ecosystem

How likely do you believe it is that certificates will replace the graduate degree as the certificate of choice for employers?

Bar chart (y-axis: Percent, x-axis: Response):
- 1 = Definitely will not: 15%
- 2 = Probably will not: 62.3%
- 3 = Indifferent: 15.6%
- 4 = Probably will: 7.2%
- 5 = Definitely will: 0%

"A graduate certificate to me signals the student has gained a new skill or understanding of a specific subject/topic at a deeper level than undergrad. A master's degree implies increased knowledge of a topic/subject but also includes further development of skills like critical thinking, problem-solving etc."
– Graduate Dean Respondent

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Master's Degrees *and* Certificates

- Allows learners to customize their master's degree to fit a specific career pathway

- Modify or update a master's degree to earn a promotion or pay raise

- Can also help master's degree recipients broaden their career pathways to more options.
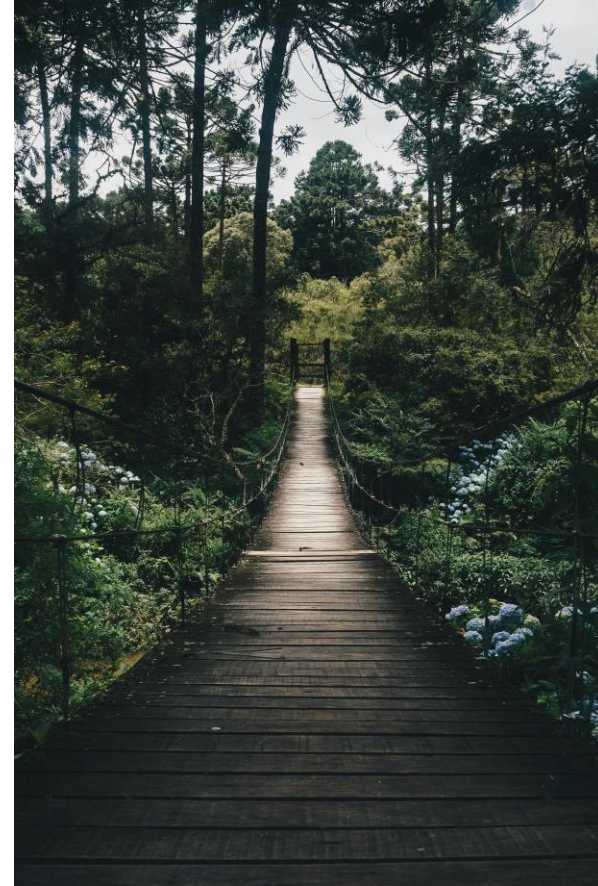
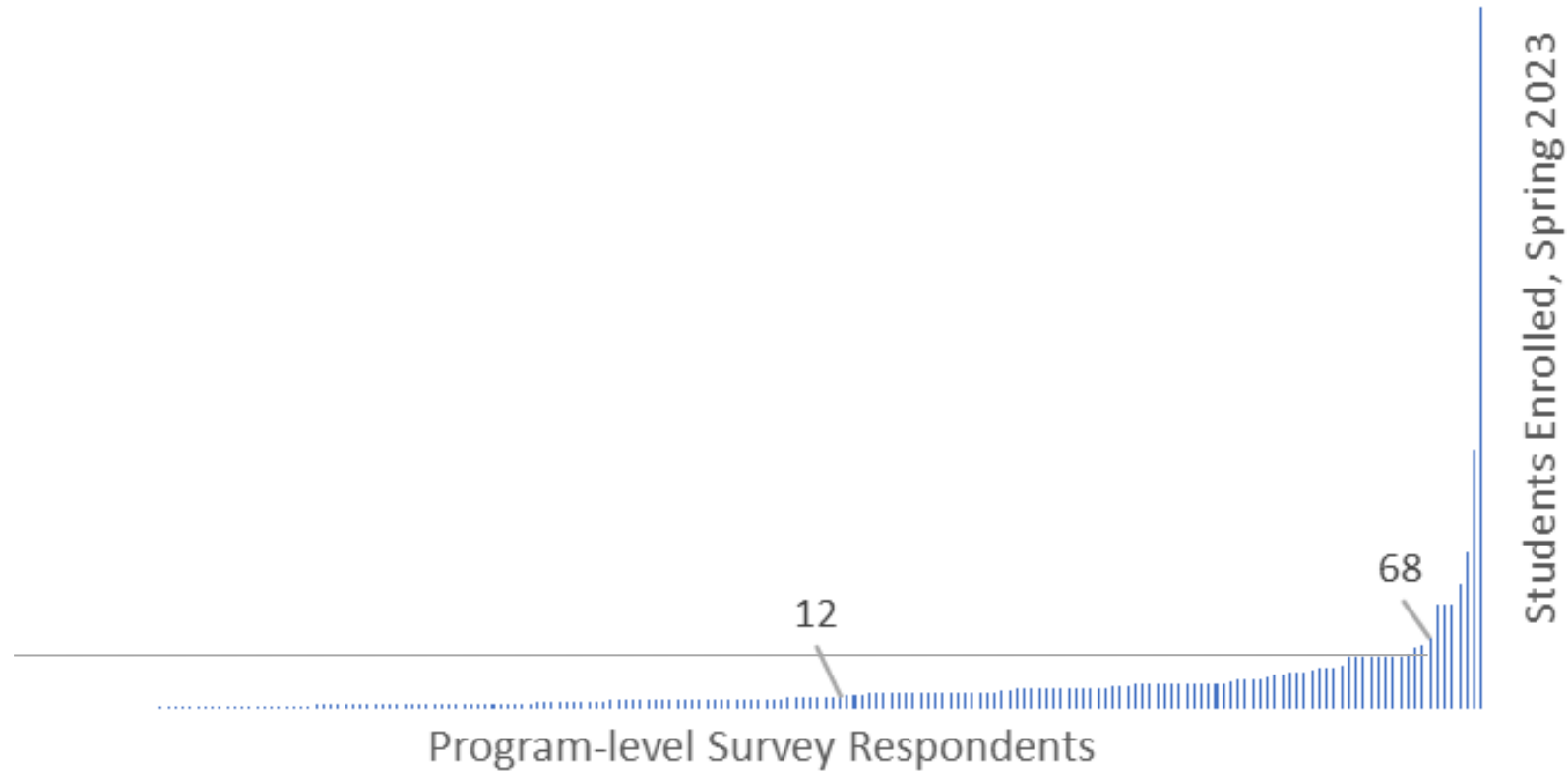**CGS** COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

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Program sizes are small

Certificate program enrollment, Spring 2023
n=196

Source: (CGS, 2023, Program-Level Survey)

Why are program sizes small?

- It was recently launched
- It is part of an employer partnership that has a capped cohort
- It is an embedded certificate in a small master's program
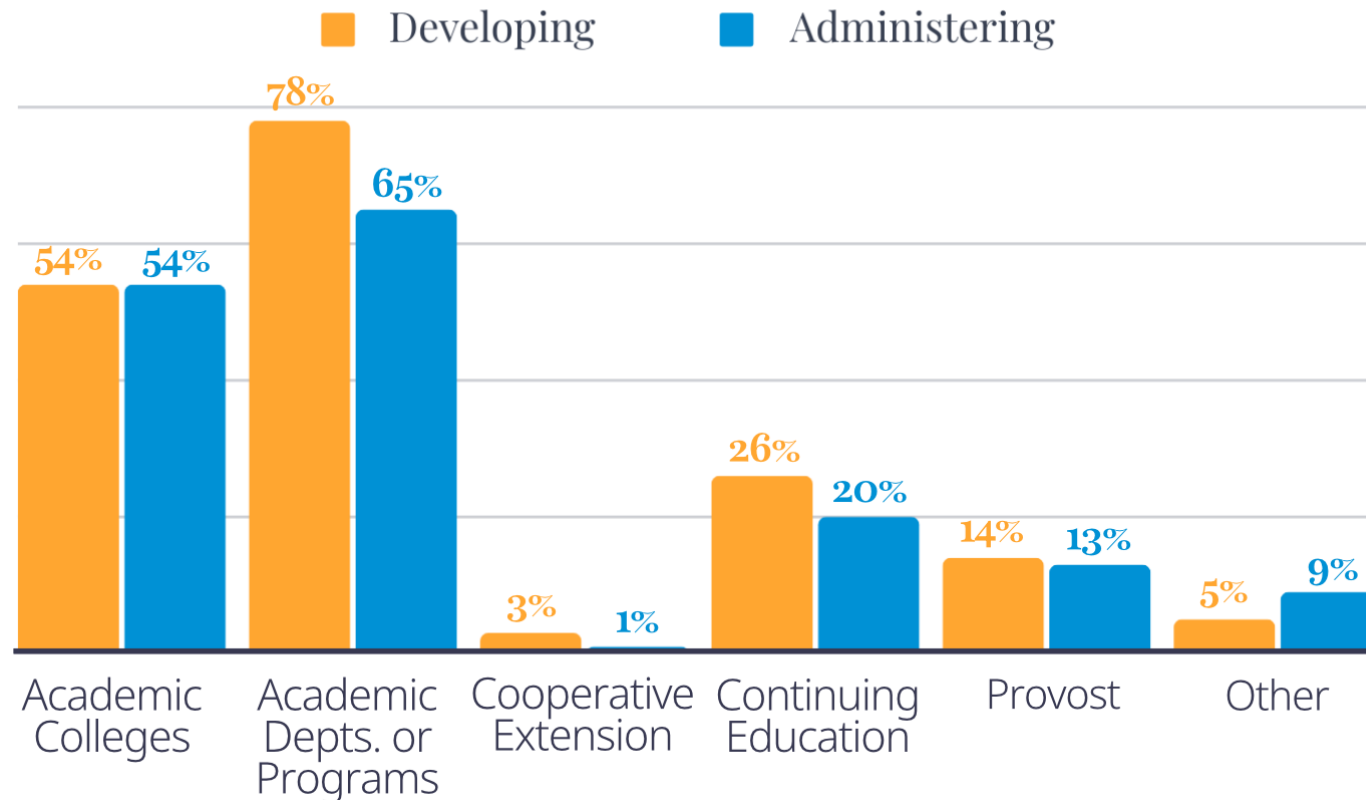- …and some "I don't know, but we hope enrollment will grow."

What were the project's key findings?

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Program Development and Administration

Which units on your campus are responsible for developing and administering these transcripted, credit-bearing postgraduate certificates?

Source: 2023 CGS Graduate Certificate Survey – Dean Survey, Items 11 and 12.

Guiding Values and Principles

- Be student centered
- Take a collaborative approach – both within and without the university community
- Be responsive to industry, workforce needs, and learner demand
- Be flexible – avoid rigid policies and procedures; build offerings that create opportunities for all
- Have clear, transparent policies and procedures written in accessible language
- Be high quality
- Promote equitable access to meaningful work

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Program Review and Quality Assurance

How often does institution review the quality and content of graduate certificate offerings?
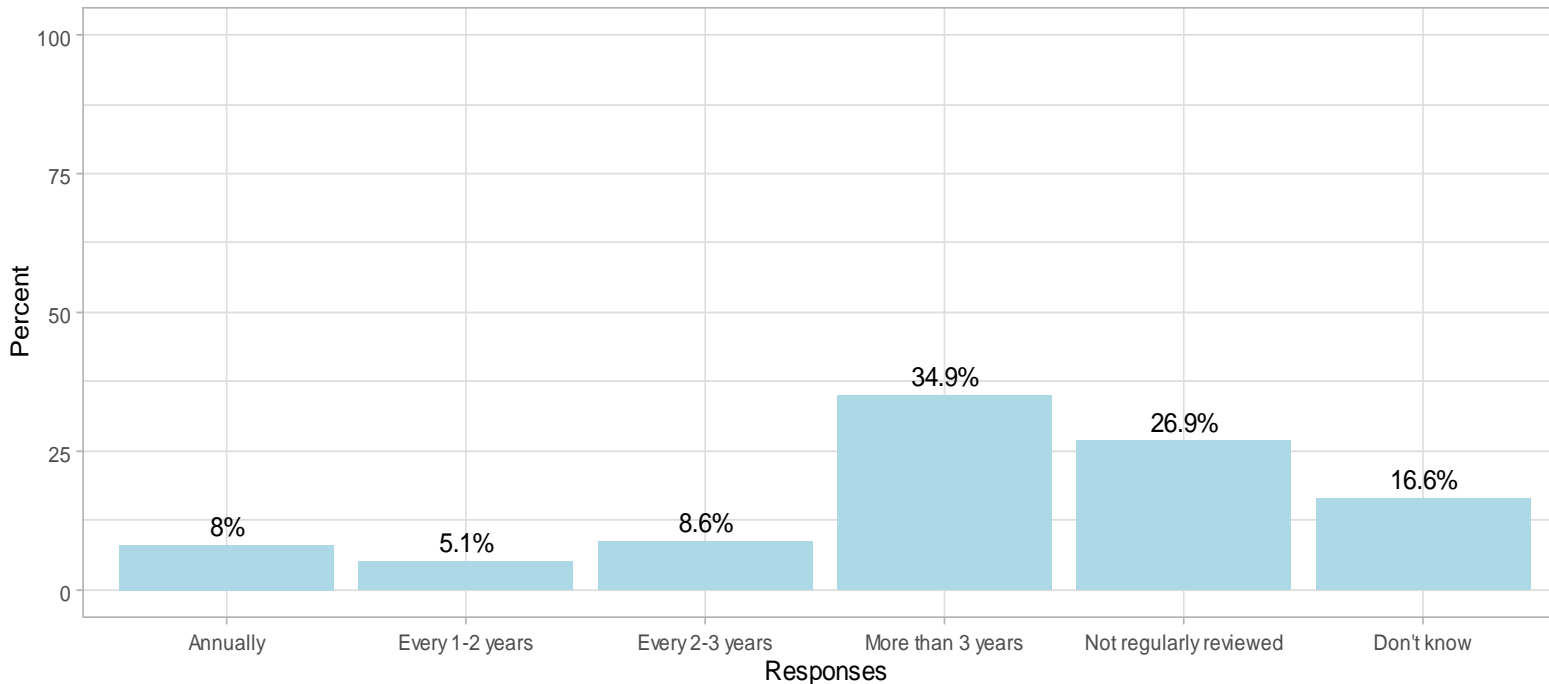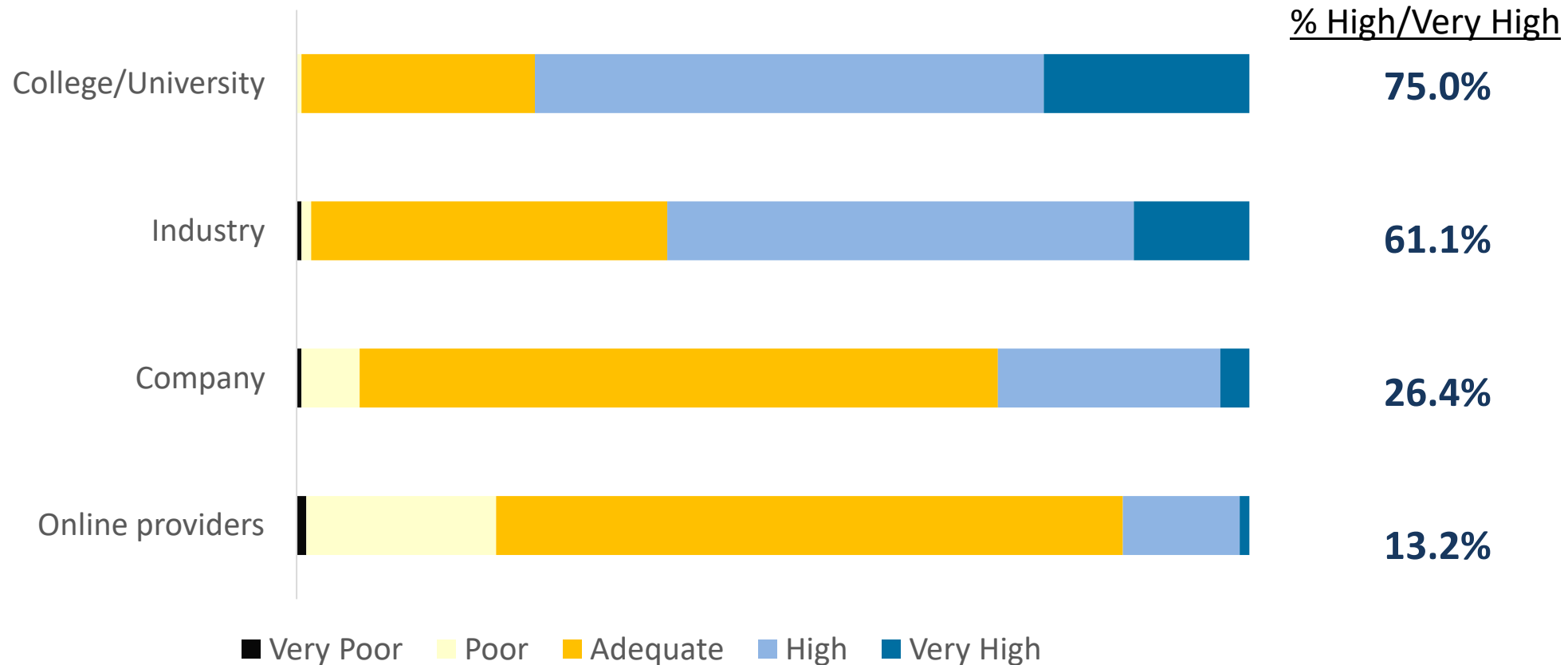

Data points that are used to evaluate the curriculum and the quality of certificates:

- Student learning outcomes assessment (16.7%)
- Size of enrollment (15.9%)
- Faculty qualifications (13.7%)
- Completion rates (11.9%)
- Career outcomes (6.5%)
- Employer satisfaction (2.3%)

Source: 2023 CGS Graduate Certificate Survey – Dean Survey, Items 20 and 22.

Higher education & industry/associations are seen as being of higher quality than others.

% High/Very High

Category	% High/Very High
College/University	75.0%
Industry	61.1%
Company	26.4%
Online providers	13.2%

Legend: ■ Very Poor ■ Poor ■ Adequate ■ High ■ Very High

Source: (NACE, 2023, Recruiting Benchmarks)

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

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How do certificates relate to degrees in the new graduate ecosystem?

Is it "stackable"?

No	49%
Yes, but this is an ancillary objective	45%
Yes, this is the sole purpose of the certificate	7%
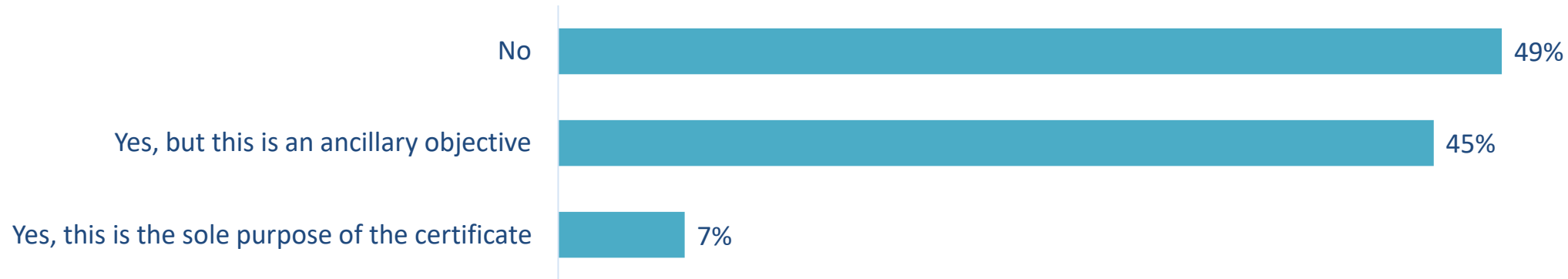
How does the acquisition of this certificate relate to the admission to a related graduate degree program?

- It has no effect (51.5%)
- It has a simplified admissions process (41.2%)
- It guarantees admissions to another program (7.3%)

Source: 2023 CGS Graduate Certificate Survey – Program Survey, Items 4.

CGS COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Thank you!

Matthew Linton
(mlinton@cgs.nche.edu)
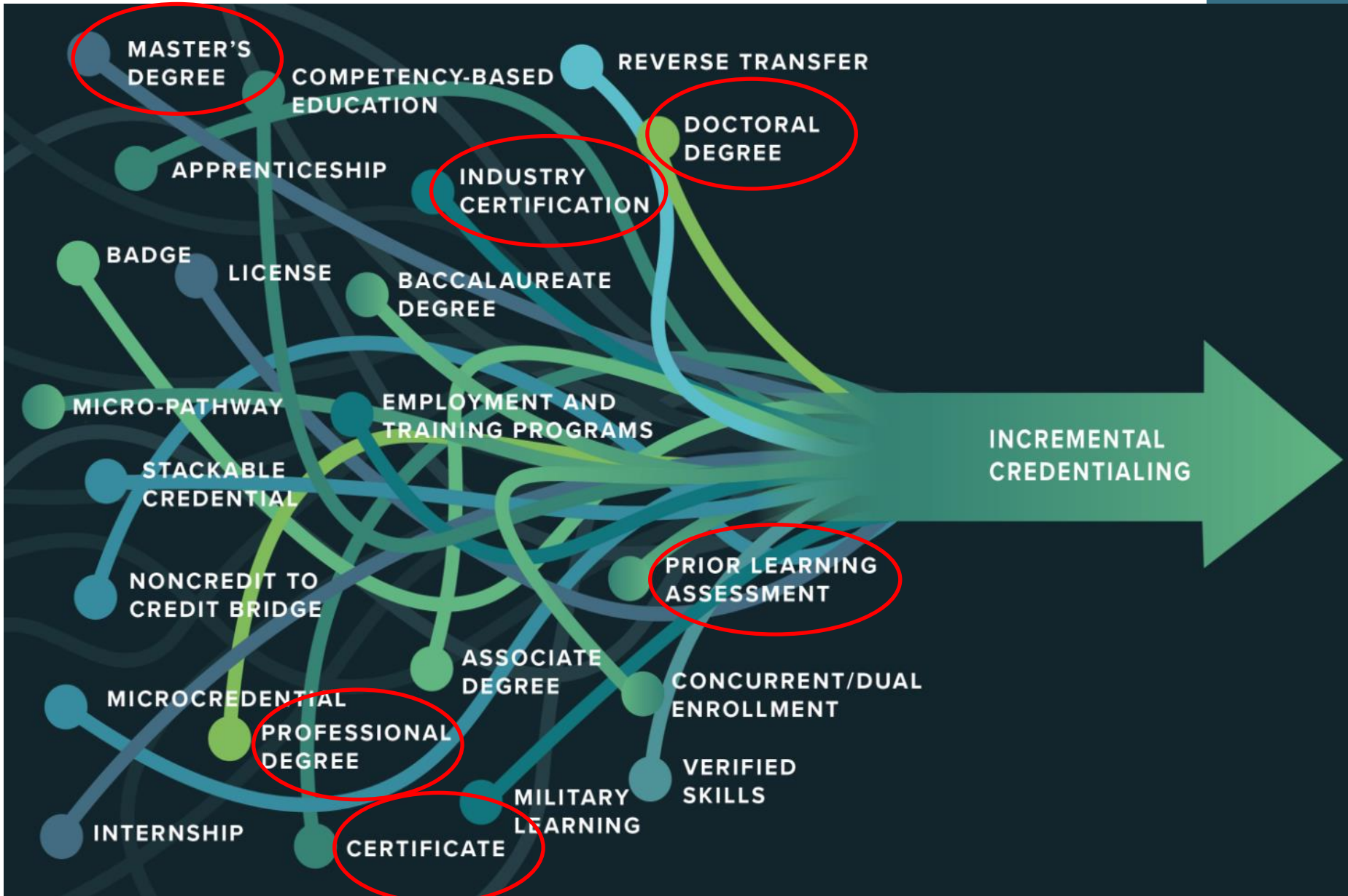
What are Incremental Credentials?
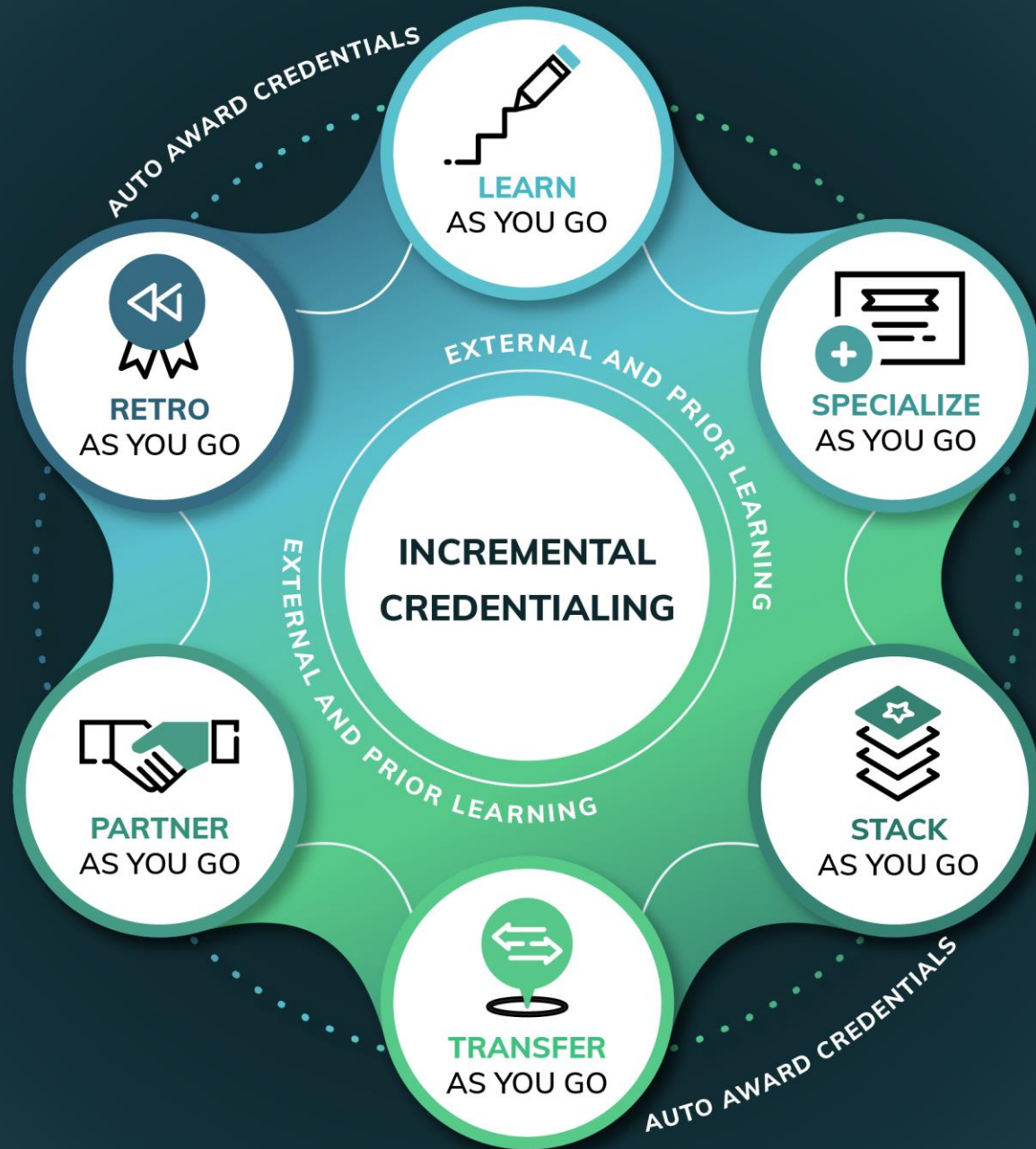
Incremental Credentialing Framework

Auto-Award

Prior Learning

LEARN AS YOU GO

Incremental credentials prepare individuals for upskilling, reskilling, or developing new skills in specific workplace or academic areas. They stand on their own, whether connected or unconnected to a degree.

Examples:
- Reading, Writing, and Communication
- Analytical Skills: reading research, statistics, interpreting results
- Conducting Research
- Missing pre-requisites

Non-credit or credit Microcredentials, Badges
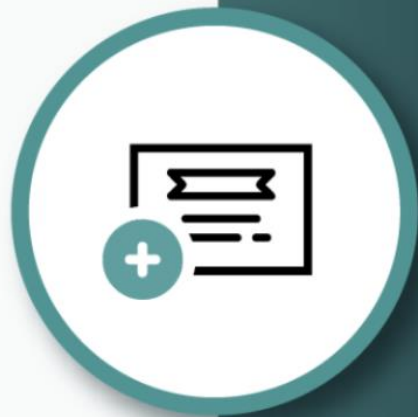
SPECIALIZE AS YOU GO

Incremental credentials are obtained for specializations that add to a degree or broaden an employment pathway (could be credit or non-credit); may not necessarily be planned as part of the pathway.

Examples:
- Skills development for workplace advancements (e.g., online teaching)
- Specialized licenses, certifications, or other recognized specializations (e.g., SHRM certification)
- Additional majors, minors, or cognates (e.g., data analytics for public policy)

Microcredentials, Certificates of Advanced Studies

STACK AS YOU GO

Incremental credentials add together or stack into larger credentials including degrees, which are strategically planned into credentialing pathways.

Examples:

- A graduate certificate added to a microcredential, along with a few more courses, becomes a master's degree (e.g., a graduate certificate in urban planning, plus a microcredential in sustainable development, plus additional courses stack into a master's in community and economic development)

- ABD becomes a credential representing doctoral courses completed minus the research/dissertation

Microcredentials, Certificates of Advanced Studies

TRANSFER AS YOU GO

Incremental credentials are designed to transfer across institutions, organizations, or the workplace. They can be a cost-sharing mechanism across the board (students cross-register to another institution for a specialty not offered at the home institution; training relationships prepare people for employment and advancement).

Examples:
- Bachelor's level to master's level (e.g., a certificate in human resources management goes toward a bachelor's degree and is part of a transfer pathway into a master's degree)
- Transfer programs: 4 + 2 Programs, 5th Year Programs, Masters-to-Doctorate (Master's is completed at end of coursework, Doctorate at end of some additional courses + dissertation)
- Graduate certificate shared across partner institutions

Microcredentials, Certificates of Advanced Study, Degrees

PARTNER AS YOU GO

Incremental credentials prepare for and embed field-expected credentials for work, developed in conjunction with business/industry partner(s), as well as work-related credentials are accepted into credentialing pathways.

Examples:
- Evaluate workplace learning, training, licenses or certifications and embed within a credential pathway (e.g., Employee Relations: Managing Employees in a Dynamic Work Environment (SHRM) is evaluated by ACE for 2 credits at the graduate level)
- Gain industry approval for awarding professional certification as part of the academic programming (e.g., Master's in Safety & Occupational Health Applied Sciences - students gain Certified Safety Professional status at Keene State)
- Work with certifying organizations to offer programming (e.g., American Bankers Association for certificates in Risk Management)

Microcredentials, Licenses & Certifications, Certificates of Advanced Study, Degrees

RETRO AS YOU GO

Incremental credentials are awarded for learning already acquired but not yet credentialed.

Examples:
- Create credentials at key attrition points (e.g., analyze which courses learners complete and do not complete and develop a credential capture what has been learned; ABD students are provided a credential)
- Create a self-designed credential that captures learning already acquired (e.g., degree audit against criteria set for credentials)
- Review industry or partner certifications for graduate credit (e.g., The Academy at Bank of America, hospital-based advanced nursing certifications)
- Prior learning is evaluated for graduate credit or program requirements (e.g., SUNY Empire up to 12 credits toward Adult Learning program, Wilmington University uses portfolio within beginning graduate program)

Waiving of program requirements, Microcredentials, Badges, Certificates of Advanced Study, Degrees

Examples of Incremental Credential Developments at the Graduate Level

- Noncredit microcredentials
- Embedding industry certifications into degree and certificate programs
- Adding skills badges to degree programs
- Offering incremental credentials of various types at the graduate level that may be unrelated to degree completion (stand-alone)
- Developing modules or units (course sequences) of important specializations which can be taken individually or applied toward a master's degree
- Prior learning assessment at the graduate level
- College-wide graduate level policy changes (e.g., counting microcredentials toward degree program credits)

Panel: New Credentials on the Ground

Graham L. Hammill, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School, University of Buffalo

Kristen Vanselow, Assistant Vice President, Innovative Education and Partnerships, Florida Gulf Coast University

Stephen E. Schmid, Strategic Program Development Consultant, Universities of Wisconsin

1. What is UW-Milwaukee/UW System doing in incremental credentials in your graduate–level programs?
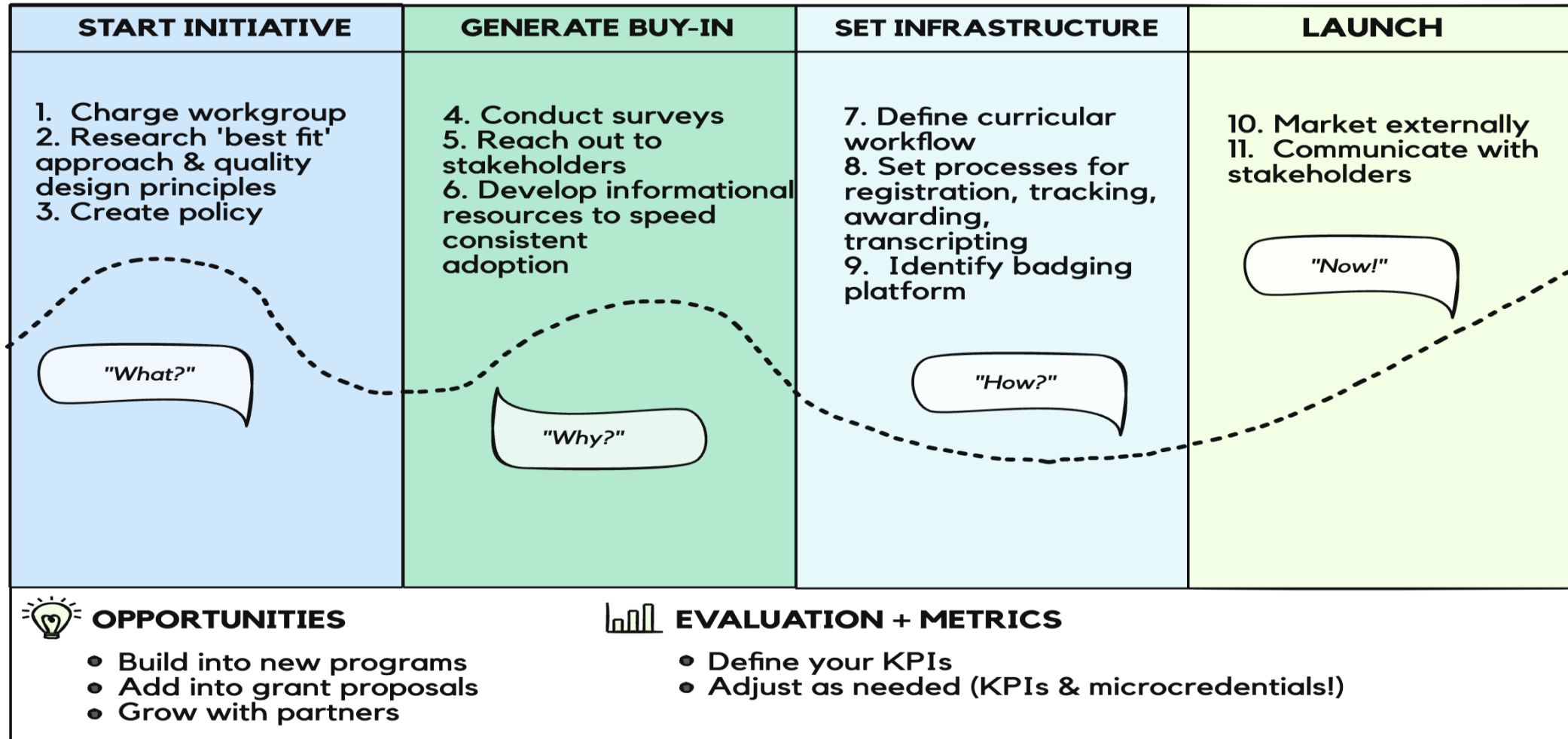
UWM's Policy Approach

Policy:
https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/faculty/3393R1-Microcredentialing%20Policy%20Proposal.pdf

Faculty Toolkit:
https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/current_projects/microcredentials/microcredentials-toolkit/

Adapted from SUNY:
https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/microcredentials/

6 – 12 credits

Undergraduate and Graduate

Limits on transferability

Lean process, design for minimal administrative work

Focus on competencies

Needs Assessment Results
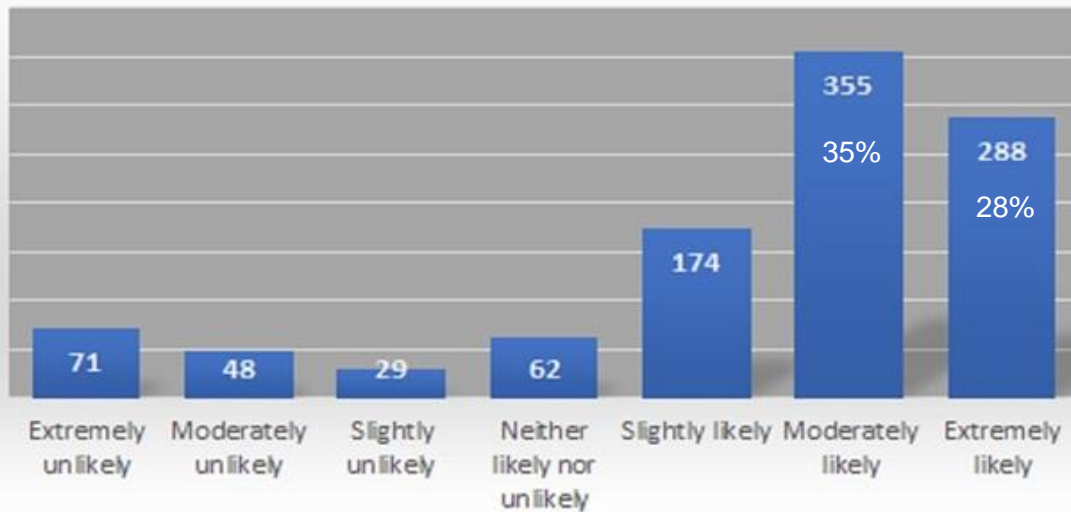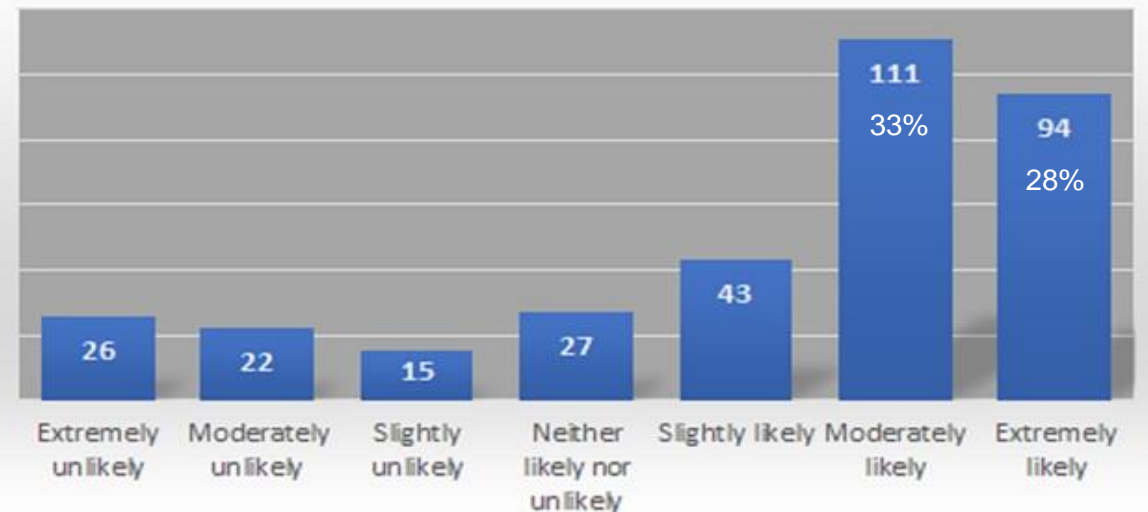
If you were just searching for post-baccalaureate education, how much of a benefit do you think microcredentials would be to **you**? (graduates only)

Perceived benefit for post-baccalaureate education searchers

No benefit	13
Very little benefit	45
A moderate amount of benefit	178 — 53%
Very beneficial	102 — 30%
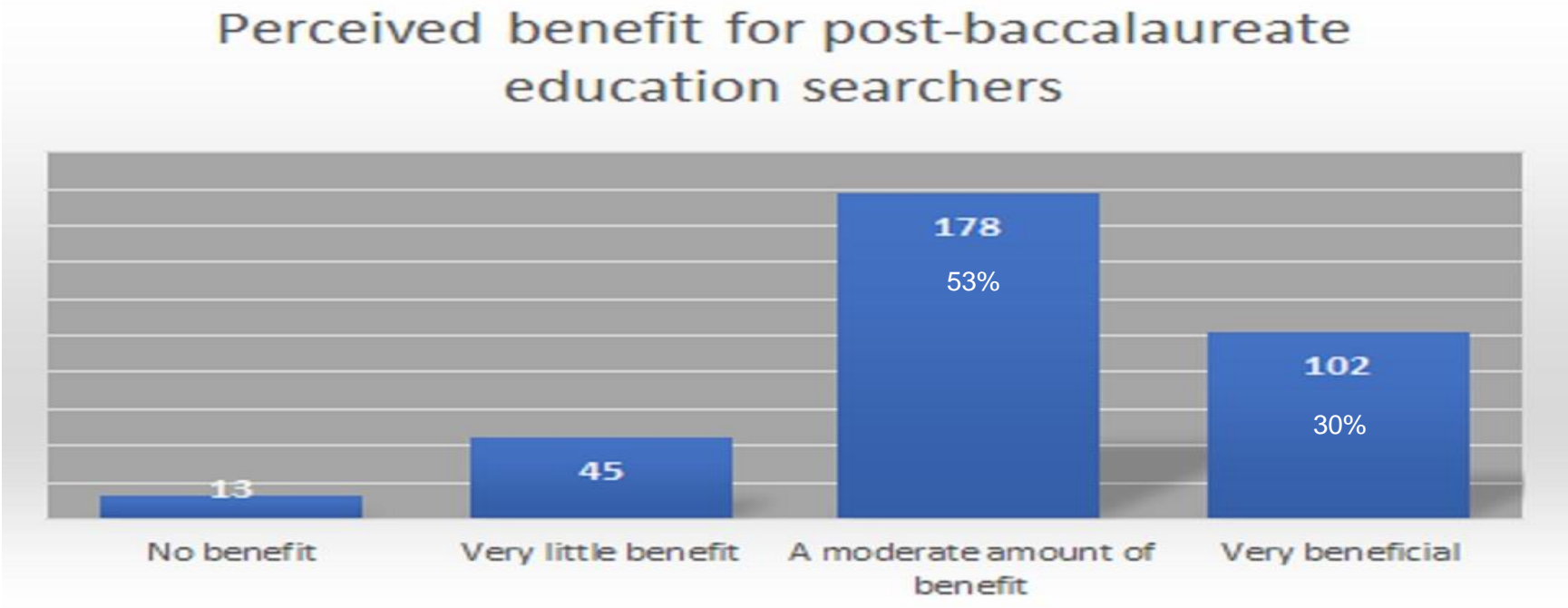
How appealing do you think microcredentials would be to **future undergraduate students / future graduate students** if offered?

Undergraduates

Graduates

Appeal of microcredentials to future students

609
59%

303
30%

13   83   17

No appeal   Slightly appealing   Moderately appealing   Very appealing   No opinion

Appeal of microcredentials to future students

186
55%

101
30%

9   37   5

No appeal   Slightly appealing   Moderately appealing   Very appealing   No opinion
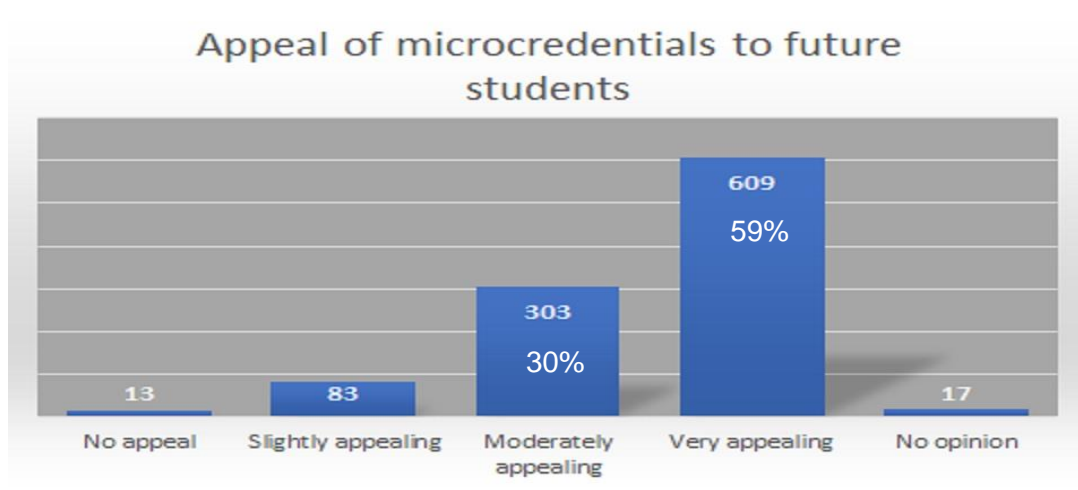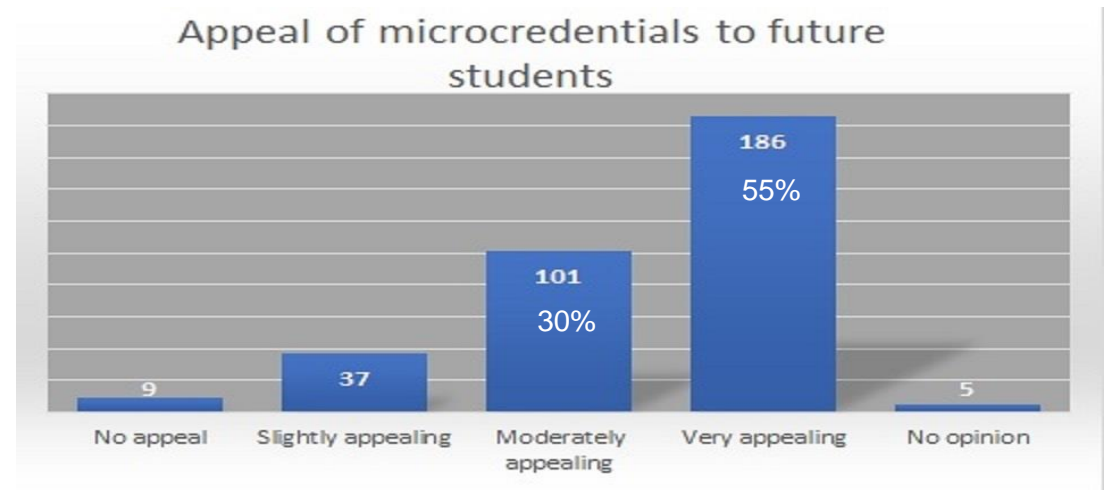
2. **What does UWM/UW System have on the drawing board around incremental credentials?**

What's in planning?

What's being considered?

On the Drawing Board

- UWM has 24 microcredentials in the academic approval pipeline for fall 2024 (Grad and UG). ~40% are Grad.

  - Plans are to see at least 10 more developed and approved by fall 2025 (Grad and UG)

- Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare
- 3 stackable microcredentials in Translation
- 4 in stackable microcredentials in Non-profit Management Suicide Prevention
- AI for K-12
- Environmental Policy
- Conservation & Environmental Sciences
- Python
- Climate Change

- Biological Sciences
- Digital Arts & Culture
- Understanding Autistic Individuals
- Essential Statistics in Applied Contexts
- Instructional Design
- Peace Education in Schools & Communities (CCEP)
- Antiracist Education (CCEP)
- Professional Presentation
- Building Teams
- American Sign Lang

On the Drawing Board

- UWM's Career Pathways Initiative (targeting high employer demand areas)

    UWM recognizes that learning increasingly

    1. Is interwoven with careers across an employee's lifespan;
    2. Occurs in a short format, such as microcredentials;
    3. Blends formal and informal learning, credit and noncredit; and
    4. Is powered by strategic partnerships.

- Initiative currently focused in three areas:
    - School of Continuing Education
    - Strategic Partnerships
    - Microcredentials

HERA Microcredentials

- The Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA) is a collaborative of 17 southeastern Wisconsin public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities, and a network of community and economic development partners.

  - HERA established a microcredentials website that provides a user-friendly search tool for locating short, focused credentials designed to provide in-demand skills, knowledge, and experience offered by participating colleges and universities. UWM has populated this website with its noncredit and for credit offerings.

  - HERA is currently creating an AI module aimed at leadership-level personnel in community organizations. Faculty from UWM, the NMDSI, Milwaukee School of Engineering, and Waukesha County Technical College are collaborating on developing the contents. This offering is intended to be assessed for credit at UWM.

Higher
Education
Regional
Alliance

BRIDGING THE GAP

Welcome to HERA's microcredential catalog website! This website provides you with a user-friendly search tool for locating short, focused credentials designed to provide in-demand skills, knowledge and experience offered by participating colleges and universities. Available programs can be located using a variety of filters and search terms, and each program can then be accessed by a simple click. While there is no cost for using this tool, participating institutions may charge a fee for their programs. You are encouraged to ask your employer about available educational assistance or matching programs.

This catalog website is just one of the many ways that HERA is closing the talent gap for organizations in southeast Wisconsin!

Filters (tip: what these filters mean)

Audience	Any
Format	Any
Topic	Any
Duration	Any
Institution	Any

OR

Keyword Search (tip: how to use this catalog)

Enter Keyword

Search

UW System Microcredentials

1. Microcredential development in different stages of shared governance development at numerous UW institutions.

2. UW System Online Growth Strategic Planning Initiative identified microcredentials targeting local– and regional–market skills gaps.

   - Develop workforce pathways that are shareable across all UW institutions

   - Increase the number of microcredentials serving identified workforce needs

   - Increase the number of online professional graduates in online programs for high–demand areas

3. What are key challenges and successes you are seeing around incremental credentialing at your institution/system?

Microcredential Challenges/Needs

Challenges	Needs
Determining whether/how to develop microcredentials	Guidance on gauging institutional fit, capacity, support
Generating student & employer awareness	Guidance on marketing plan & employer relationships
3rd party providers:	An evaluation framework
- As competition	Market research focused on areas of institutional strength
- As incorporated into an IHE's curriculum	Innovative support strategies at the state level
Lack of federal financial aid	

Florida Gulf Coast University

- **Southwest Florida's Regional, Comprehensive University**
- **26** years new

FGCU by the Numbers

16K	64	26	7
Students Enrolled	Undergraduate Programs	Master's Programs	Doctoral Programs

FGCU
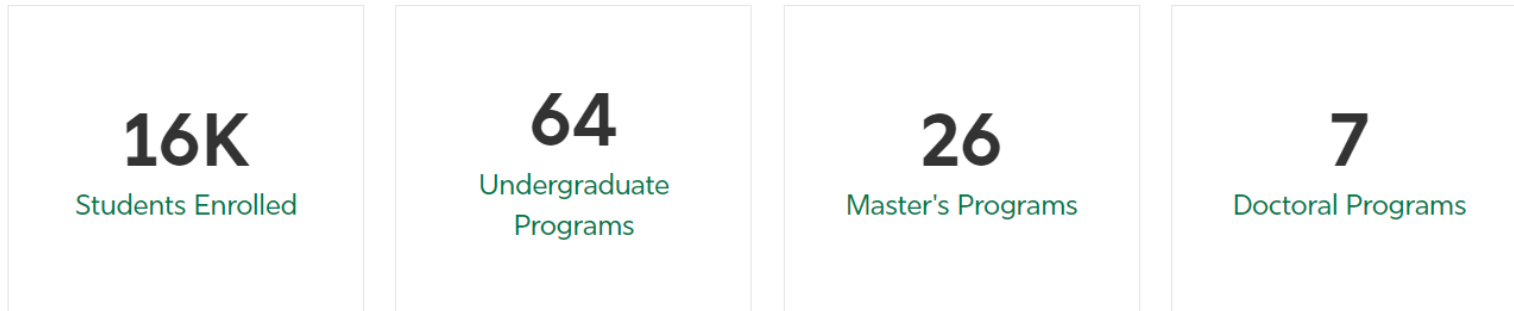
Graduate level Micro-credentials

Micro-credential

represents mastery of a specific competency (something you know or are able to do)

Digital Badge

a visual emblem that validates the competency, making it visible to employers and others

Graduate level Micro-credentials

Metadata: Direct Understanding of Value

Each badge contains Metadata providing detailed information beyond what a self-reported resume or a traditional transcript would show.

FGCU

Graduate level Micro-credentials

FACULTY MEMBER
COURSE WORK and
GRADE

| STUDENTS TAKE THE COURSE |

| QUALIFIER: B or Above Achievement |

TRANSCRIPT

| REGISTER FOR THE DIGITAL BADGE |

FACULTY MEMBER AND
INDUSTRY
REPRESENTATIVES

| COMPLETE ASSESSMENTS |

| MEET CRITERIA |

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

DIGITAL BADGE

Florida
Gulf Coast
University
INSTRUCTIONAL
TECHNOLOGY
ESSENTIALS

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW

FGCU

ESOL Endorsement for K-12 Teachers with a Previous Bachelor's Degree

Non-Credit Courses Leading to
Endorsement and Digital Badge

1. Complete Enrollment Form for Continuing Education
2. Enroll in single course or series of 5 non-credit courses
3. Earn a professional development certificate for each non-credit course
4. Meet threshold to continue toward the micro-credential option

Demonstrate Mastery of Competencies within the Micro-credential (assessed in partnership with school district representatives)

FGCU

Florida Gulf Coast University
CONTINUING EDUCATION & SKILLS ACADEMY

Graduate level Micro-credentials

Florida Gulf Coast University — MARIEB COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES — School of Nursing

FGCU PREPARES STUDENTS THROUGH A MICRO-CREDENTIAL/ DIGITAL BADGE IN BECOMING A NURSE EDUCATOR

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), a regionally accredited, comprehensive state university, prepares students to excel and innovate and is a proud to offer this opportunity.

Through an innovative plan, FGCU offers students enrolled in one of the following Nursing Graduate programs the opportunity to earn a micro-credential/digital badge:

- DNP Nurse Practitioner Program
- DNP Nurse Anesthesiology Program
- Post-BSN, Non-degree graduate students

Successful completion of the following courses will provide students with the basic knowledge, skills, and attributes of a nurse educator.

NGR 6712 Foundations of Nursing Education

This course provides an exploration of nursing education within a broad context related to history, philosophy and the principles of adult-learning theory.

NGR 6710 Teaching & Assessment Strategies for Nursing Education

This course emphasizes the attainment of nurse educator competencies in developing and implementing teaching and assessment strategies used in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings to enhance the achievement of learner outcomes.

NGR 6713 Design & Evaluation of Nursing Curricula

This course emphasizes the attainment of nurse educator competencies in developing and implementing teaching and assessment strategies used in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings to enhance the achievement of learner outcomes.

Students will be able to:

1. Create learning environments that facilitate student development, socialization, learning, and achievement of desired learning outcomes (NLN Competencies I, II).

2. Utilize a variety of evidence-based teaching and assessment and evaluation strategies in all domains of learning (NLN Competencies III, VII).

3. Develop program outcomes and curricula to prepare students to function effectively in the healthcare environment (NLN Competency IV).

4. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning (NLN Competency VI).

HOW CAN YOU EARN A DIGITAL BADGE AT FGCU IN ESSENTIALS FOR A NURSE EDUCATOR?

1. **REGISTER** for the following 3 course sequence
   1. NGR 6712 Foundations of Nursing Education (Earn a grade of "B" or better)
   2. NGR 6713 Design & Evaluation of Nursing Curricula (Earn a grade of "B" or better)
   3. NGR 6710 Teaching & Assessment Strategies for Nursing Education (Earn a grade of "B" or better)

2. *(After completing the courses)* **DEMONSTRATE** the mastery of competencies through passing the required badge assessment *(separate from the course grades)* and EARN a digital badge in Essentials for a Nurse Educator.

3. **SHOWCASE** your achievement on your social media platforms.

4. **Not a current graduate student at FGCU?** Learn how to apply at FGCU Graduate Admissions.

WHAT IS A DIGITAL BADGE?

- **Badge** is a term used to describe a wide range of digital credentials related to knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, accomplishments, and experiences (International Council for Open and Distance Education - ICDE, 2019).

- **In today's job market,** employers are looking for direct and clear evidence of skills and competencies when selecting candidates to fill position vacancies. When candidates include digital credentials on their resume and application, this enables employers to quickly identify and examine verified skills and competencies to assist in more effectively hiring the right people into the right jobs.

- **According to LinkedIn,** individuals with digital credentials get viewed six times more often that those without during the job application. Digital badges are an innovative way for students to communicate with prospective employers separate from the traditional transcripts and resume.

DIGITAL BADGES HELP YOU:

▶ Stand out to employers

▶ Focus on workplace relevant competencies

▶ Showcase your achievements

▶ Build your personal brand

▶ Grow your professional network

▶ Target specific job opportunities

▶ Market yourself for potential jobs

▶ Build confidence in job interviews while talking about your digital badges

Graduate level Certificates- Stack into Degrees

Nurse Educator Post-baccalaureate Certificate

Program Requirements

Required Courses (17 credits)

NGR 6701 Academic Role Nurse Educator (3)

NGR 6710 Teach & Assess Strat for Nsg Ed (3)

NGR 6711L Adv Clin Pract for Nurse Educ (2)

NGR 6712 Foundations of Nursing Educ. (3)

NGR 6713 Design&Eval of Nurs Curricula (3)

NGR 6941L Nurse as Educator Practicum (3)

MSN Program Requirements

Required Courses in the Major (38 credits)

NGR 6002 Advanced Health Assessment (3)

NGR 6002L Adv Health Assessment Practice (1)

NGR 6141 Advanced Pathophysiology (4)

NGR 6172 Pharmacotherapeutics (4)

NGR 6701 Academic Role Nurse Educator (3)

NGR 6710 Teach & Assess Strat Nsg Ed (3)

NGR 6711L Adv Clin Pract for Nurse Educ (2)

NGR 6712 Foundations of Nursing Educ. (3)

NGR 6713 Design&Eval of Nurs Curricula (3)

NGR 6718 Testing & Eval in Nursing Educ (1)

NGR 6811 Advanced Nursing Research (3)

NGR 6941L Nurse as Educator Practicum (3)

NGR 6942 Nurse Educator Capstone (4)

NGR 6945L Clinical Specialty Practice (1)

TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED: 38 HRS

FGCU

Graduate level Certificates- Stack into Degrees

Entrepreneurship Post-baccalaureate Certificate Required Courses (12 credits)
ENT 6248 Opportunity and Lean Launch (3)
ENT 6415 New Venture Capital (3)
ENT 6441 New Venture Launch (3)
ENT 6628 Mindset and Differentiation (3)

M.S. in Entrepreneurship Program Requirements
1. Required Courses in the Major (18 credits)
ENT 6248 Opportunity and Lean Launch (3)
ENT 6415 New Venture Capital (3)
ENT 6441 New Venture Launch (3)
ENT 6606 MVP Design and Development (3)
ENT 6628 Mindset and Differentiation (3)
ENT 6455 Venture Metrics and Growth (3)

2. Restricted Electives in the Major (12 credits)
Students, in conjunction with their advisor, select electives from those offered in the graduate catalog that are not restricted to those programs or colleges.
TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED: 30 HRS

FGCU

Non-credit to Credit through PLA/CPL

ESOL Endorsement for K-12 Teachers with a Previous Bachelor's Degree

Curriculum Alignment

Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Non-native Speakers

Trends and Takeaways

- As illustrated by Holly and Nan, microcredentials have so much potential!
- Institutions (i.e., faculty) are still at varied points in their perspectives re microcredentials, yet they are the driving forces
- <u>Tremendous benefits</u>
  - Nimble sensitive to emerging workforce demands
    - Examples from MSU (need existing structure)
  - Access to graduate education
    - Works best if institution makes them eligible for financial aid
  - Low risk was to test proof of concept for new academic programs
  - Way to ensure there are component advocates for interdisciplinary degrees.
    - Matt referred this to pathway signaling, "interdisciplinary light."
- <u>Important question to be addressed: Quality</u>
  - Extremely important because *NACE, 2023* data indicate that microcredentials offered by higher education are viewed as having the highest quality
  - Likely not the traditional academic measures such as enrollment, completion, etc.
  - Rather employer satisfaction and student career outcomes, whether taken as stand-alones or subsumed within a degree.
  - Gainful Employment Requirements will require evidence.

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