

# Credential As You Go

## Priority 1 Feasibility Research: Student Survey Summary

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This report summarizes descriptive analyses of questionnaire data collected from students pursuing incremental credentials developed as part of the *Credential As You Go* initiative’s incremental credential feasibility study. This component of the overarching research design is designated as *Priority 1* for the effort, funded by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The *Priority 2* efficacy study is documented in separate reports. This research was designed and executed by Evaluand LLC (Reston, VA) under a subaward by Empire State University, the IES Credential As You Go grantee and an institution of the State University of New York (SUNY) system.

## Methods

A total of 19 higher education institutions partnering on the Credential As You Go project were invited to include their students in the questionnaire study, potentially examining more than 150 incremental credentials developed under the IES grant. Student feedback survey responses were ultimately collected considering a total of 26 new credentials among institutions that ultimately participated in this phase of the project research.

One institution was without a designated contact established for data collection when outreach started in the spring of 2024, so was omitted from the initial list. Six institutions ultimately agreed to distribute the questionnaire—five using a link to an online form hosted by the Credential As You Go research team; one (University at Buffalo) adopting the instrument to their internal survey system.

In all cases, the recruitment email and link were distributed by an identified institutional contact via email to past and current students enrolled in new incremental credentials. At least two reminder emails were sent by each institution following the initial invitation. The following table details the number of invitation emails distributed by each institution, the dates those emails were distributed and when data were downloaded or delivered to Evaluand. Also included are the number of response records in the raw data set, the number ultimately determined to be valid completes, and the valid response rate calculated based on that number.

Institution	Survey Invitations	Date of Distribution	Data Available	Responses	Valid Completes	Valid Response Rate
Pitt Community College	126	8 Jul 2024	9 Aug 2024	65	44	34.9%
Red Rocks Community College	12	9 Jul 2024	9 Aug 2024	3	3	25.0%
Colorado State University Fort Collins	37	11 Sep 2024	2 Oct 2024	9	5	13.5%
University at Buffalo	313	1 Jul 2024	26 Sep 2024	24	13	4.2%
Wake Technical Community College	698	7 Jan 2025	30 Jan 2025	17	12	1.7%
Metropolitan State University of Denver	100 <sup>1</sup>	7 Jun 2025	NA	0	0	0.0%
Totals	1280+			118	77	5.99%

<sup>1</sup> The MSU Denver distribution count is an estimate from the project’s institution contact.

## Results

Results are presented in tabular form for each item by institution. Outputs in this report avoid the use of cross tabulations common to this type of data. Practices to protect respondent identity require that data in cells reporting numbers (typically) fewer than five be suppressed; omitted from the table to avoid inadvertent disclosure of individual data by inference (e.g., for a student of a specific age, gender and race/ethnicity pursuing a particular credential). Given the relatively small number of respondents for institutions across this study, a large volume of suppressed cells was anticipated so the decision was made to present the results in simple tables.

Results follow, organized by the institution participating in the questionnaire study. However, inherent program differences and varying response rates make the results inappropriate for comparisons among institutions.

### Pitt Community College

Responses to the online questionnaire for this institution are shown in the following table. A total of 126 students were invited to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire was counted as “Submitted” if data were reported by the online form. The record was tagged as the respondent “Opted out” if they actively declined to participate by indicating that preference on the form. Submissions that were not sufficiently completed were categorized as “Abandoned,” leaving the remainder “Complete” for analytic purposes. Note however that valid n counts reported in tables may not be the same across items, as respondents were allowed to leave items blank.

Category	Out of 126
Submitted	65
Opted Out	2
Abandoned	19
Complete	44

*Which credential or credentials have you completed or are currently involved in? Select those that apply to you from the list below, marking the option that best describes your progress.*

Incremental Credential	Status			
	Completed it	Currently working on it	Not working on it, still plan to complete	Not working on it, do not intend to complete
Certified Professional Coder (CPC)	0	37	6	0
Certified Coding Specialist (CCS)	0	15	3	2
Certified Coding Specialist - Physician Based (CCS-P)	0	11	3	4

*From what information sources did you learn about the incremental credentials marked above? Mark all that apply.*

Information Source	
Traditional Media Ad	3
Social Media Ad	6

Information Source	
Traditional Media News	2
Social Media News	4
Social Media Comments	2
Coworker or Colleague	5
Employer or Supervisor	2
Friend or Relative	10
Academic Advisor	4
Higher Ed Online Information	15
High School Counselor	0
Higher Ed Admissions Staff	1
Other Agency Advisor	1
Paid Consultant	0
Veterans Benefits Rep	0
Higher Ed Orientation Event	0
Other	5

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” include the following: <sup>2</sup>

- “Past medical interest reviewing online information”
- “Web search”
- “A vision of a new career”
- “Credentialing agency websites”
- “Continuing education course schedule”

*We would like to know why you chose the incremental credentials you noted above. For each consideration on the list below, please mark if it is (A) a reason you chose to pursue your incremental credentials; and (B) an actual result you realized from doing so, whether or not you expected it. Mark Column A and/or Column B for all that apply to you; leave any blank any that did not matter to you.*

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Become Employed	31	0
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	21	0
Get a Promotion	17	0
New Job, Different Employer	22	0
New Job, Different Field	28	0
Better Job Security	26	0
Start Own Business	14	0
Explore Success in College	10	1
Work Toward a Degree	11	0
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	26	0
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	19	0
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	10	0
Other	4	1

<sup>2</sup> All open-ended item responses in this report are presented verbatim and without editing (e.g., including incorrect spelling).

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “Chose this credential” include the following:

- “Not sure yet”
- “I am looking for a field of work that better helps me and my spouse with family planning”
- “Personal vision”
- “Stability in career”

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “As a result of this credential” include the following:

- “Not In the career I pursued, unable to pass the CPC exam”

The questionnaire included four items about how the incremental credential relates to other aspects of the respondent’s education:

- *Are you currently thinking of pursuing any incremental credentials in addition to the ones you identified above? If Yes, please describe (content and institution).*
- *Did you transfer to this institution from another in order to pursue your incremental credentials?*
- *Are you planning on transferring from this institution to a different one? If Yes, in about how many months do you expect to transfer?*
- *Did you receive a Pell Grant while pursuing your incremental credentials?*

Results are presented in the following table.

<b>Response</b>	Thinking of pursuing other credentials?	Transferred to this institution?	Planning to transfer from this institution?	Receive a Pell Grant?
Yes	9	4	1	1
No	31	39	43	40
Did not answer	4	1	0	3
Valid n	44	44	44	44

Open-ended responses elaborating on credentials that might be pursued include the following:

- “Nursing”
- “Additional coding credentials, PCC”
- “I might get more credentials in the medical coding field”
- “Hope to transition into inpatient coding”
- “Cancer Registrar”

*What was it about your incremental credential(s) that you understand makes them more attractive to you than other options you might have selected to reach your education and employment goals? Check all that apply.*

<b>Feature</b>	What makes this incremental credential more attractive than other options?
Can be earned instead of traditional degree	24
Can be earned in addition to traditional degree	10
Develop or enhance specific skills	24
Can be earned for a specialty area	12
Can be combined with other credentials	4
Can be transferred to another institution	2
Can be awarded for previous experience	7
Focuses on skills and understandings for a particular job	20
Takes less time than traditional degrees	23
Is offered by employers	0
Is more affordable than traditional degrees	20

Demographic data of respondents is presented in the following five tables, illustrating the age; self-identified ethnicity, race, and gender; and military service status.

<b>Age</b>	
Less than 20 years	1
20-29 years	6
30-39 years	10
40-49 years	8
50-59 years	10
60-69 years	5
Did not answer	4
Valid n	44

<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Not Hispanic or Latina/Latino	38
Hispanic or Latina/Latino	0
Did not answer	6
Valid n	44

<b>Race</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Black or African American	16
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	23
More than one race	1
Did not answer	4
Valid n	44

<b>Gender</b>	
Prefer not to answer	2
Male	1
Female	39
Did not answer	2
Valid n	44

<b>Military Status</b>	
Never served in the military or reserves	40
Currently enlisted	0
Served in the past	2
Did not answer	2

## Red Rocks Community College

Responses to the online questionnaire for this institution are shown in the following table. A total of 12 students were invited to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire was counted as “Submitted” if data were reported by the online form. The record was tagged as the respondent “Opted out” if they actively declined to participate by indicating that preference on the form. Submissions that were not sufficiently completed were categorized as “Abandoned,” leaving the remainder “Complete” for analytic purposes. Note, however, that valid n counts reported in tables may not be the same across items, as respondents were allowed to leave items blank.

<b>Category</b>	Out of 12
Submitted	3
Opted Out	0
Abandoned	0
Complete	3

*Which credential or credentials have you completed or are currently involved in? Select those that apply to you from the list below, marking the option that best describes your progress.*

<b>Incremental Credential</b>	<b>Status</b>			
	Completed it	Currently working on it	Not working on it, still plan to complete	Not working on it, do not intend to complete
Early Childhood Assistant Teacher Certificate - Apprenticeship	0	1	0	0
Early Childhood Director Certificate - Apprenticeship	0	1	0	0
Early Childhood Education Certificate - Apprenticeship	0	0	0	1
Early Childhood Teacher Certificate - Apprenticeship	0	2	0	1
Infant/Toddler Early Childhood Teacher Certificate - Apprenticeship	0	0	0	1
Paraprofessional Educator Certificate - Apprenticeship	0	0	0	1

From what information sources did you learn about the incremental credentials marked above? Mark all that apply.

Information Source	
Traditional Media Ad	0
Social Media Ad	0
Traditional Media News	0
Social Media News	0
Social Media Comments	0
Coworker or Colleague	0
Employer or Supervisor	2
Friend or Relative	0
Academic Advisor	1
Higher Ed Online Information	0
High School Counselor	0
Higher Ed Admissions Staff	0
Other Agency Advisor	0
Paid Consultant	0
Veterans Benefits Rep	0
Higher Ed Orientation Event	0
Other	0

We would like to know why you chose the incremental credentials you noted above. For each consideration on the list below, please mark if it is (A) a reason you chose to pursue your incremental credentials; and (B) an actual result you realized from doing so, whether or not you expected it. Mark Column A and/or Column B for all that apply to you; leave any blank any that did not matter to you.

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Become Employed	1	0
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	3	0
Get a Promotion	3	0
New Job, Different Employer	1	0
New Job, Different Field	1	0
Better Job Security	2	0
Start Own Business	1	0
Explore Success in College	1	0
Work Toward a Degree	2	0
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	1	0
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	1	0
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	1	0
Other	0	0

The questionnaire included four items about how the incremental credential relates to other aspects of the respondent's education:

- Are you currently thinking of pursuing any incremental credentials in addition to the ones you identified above? If Yes, please describe (content and institution).
- Did you transfer to this institution from another in order to pursue your incremental credentials?
- Are you planning on transferring from this institution to a different one? If Yes, in about how many months do you expect to transfer?
- Did you receive a Pell Grant while pursuing your incremental credentials?

Results are presented in the following table.

<b>Response</b>	Thinking of pursuing other credentials?	Transferred to this institution?	Planning to transfer from this institution?	Receive a Pell Grant?
Yes	0	3	0	0
No	3	0	3	3
Did not answer	0	0	0	0
Valid n	3	3	3	3

*What was it about your incremental credential(s) that you understand makes them more attractive to you than other options you might have selected to reach your education and employment goals? Check all that apply.*

<b>Feature</b>	What makes this incremental credential more attractive than other options?
Can be earned instead of a traditional degree	3
Can be earned in addition to traditional degree	0
Develop or enhance specific skills	3
Can be earned for a specialty area	1
Can be combined with other credentials	0
Can be transferred to another institution	0
Can be awarded for previous experience	1
Focuses on skills and understandings for a particular job	0
Takes less time than traditional degrees	1
Is offered by employers	0
Is more affordable than traditional degrees	1

Demographic data of respondents is presented in the following five tables, illustrating the age; self-identified ethnicity, race, and gender; and military service status.

<b>Age</b>	
Less than 20 years	0
20-29 years	0
30-39 years	1
40-49 years	2
50-59 years	0
60-69 years	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	3

<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Not Hispanic or Latina/Latino	3
Hispanic or Latina/Latino	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	3

<b>Race</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Black or African American	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	3
More than one race	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	3

<b>Gender</b>	
Prefer not to answer	0
Male	0
Female	3
Did not answer	0
Valid n	3

<b>Military Status</b>	
Never served in the military or reserves	3
Currently enlisted	0
Served in the past	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	3

## Colorado State University Fort Collins

Responses to the online questionnaire for this institution are shown in the following table. A total of 37 students were invited to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire was counted as “Submitted” if data were reported by the online form. The record was tagged as the respondent “Opted out” if they actively declined to participate by indicating that preference on the form. Submissions that were not sufficiently completed were categorized as “Abandoned,” leaving the remainder “Complete” for analytic purposes. Note, however, that valid n counts reported in tables may not be the same across items, as respondents were allowed to leave items blank.

<b>Category</b>	Out of 37
Submitted	9
Opted Out	0
Abandoned	4
Complete	5

Which credential or credentials have you completed or are currently involved in? Select those that apply to you from the list below, marking the option that best describes your progress.

Incremental Credential	Status			
	Completed it	Currently working on it	Not working on it, still plan to complete	Not working on it, do not intend to complete
Certificate in Design Thinking	1	2	1	1

From what information sources did you learn about the incremental credentials marked above? Mark all that apply.

Information Source	
Traditional Media Ad	0
Social Media Ad	0
Traditional Media News	0
Social Media News	0
Social Media Comments	0
Coworker or Colleague	0
Employer or Supervisor	0
Friend or Relative	0
Academic Advisor	4
Higher Ed Online Information	4
High School Counselor	0
Higher Ed Admissions Staff	0
Other Agency Advisor	0
Paid Consultant	0
Veterans Benefits Rep	0
Higher Ed Orientation Event	0
Other	0

We would like to know why you chose the incremental credentials you noted above. For each consideration on the list below, please mark if it is (A) a reason you chose to pursue your incremental credentials; and (B) an actual result you realized from doing so, whether or not you expected it. Mark Column A and/or Column B for all that apply to you; leave any blank any that did not matter to you.

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Become Employed	2	0
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	2	0
Get a Promotion	2	0
New Job, Different Employer	2	0
New Job, Different Field	3	0
Better Job Security	3	0
Start Own Business	1	0
Explore Success in College	2	2
Work Toward a Degree	3	1

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	4	2
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	4	1
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	2	0
Other	3	1

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “Chose this credential” include the following:

- “It made more sense to get a 12 credit certificate than 9 credits for focus electives.”
- “the classes were fun and engaging so I decided to take more”
- “I was seeking additional design practice and practicum to enhance an engineering degree. I was hoping it would provide an outlet for tinkering.”

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “As a result of this credential” include the following:

- “perfected skills before I needed them in other classes, learned skills I never thought to be useful or important, found new ways of thinking and solving problems”

The questionnaire included four items about how the incremental credential relates to other aspects of the respondent’s education:

- *Are you currently thinking of pursuing any incremental credentials in addition to the ones you identified above? If Yes, please describe (content and institution).*
- *Did you transfer to this institution from another in order to pursue your incremental credentials?*
- *Are you planning on transferring from this institution to a different one? If Yes, in about how many months do you expect to transfer?*
- *Did you receive a Pell Grant while pursuing your incremental credentials?*

Results are presented in the following table.

Response	Thinking of pursuing other credentials?	Transferred to this institution?	Planning to transfer from this institution?	Receive a Pell Grant?
Yes	2	0	0	0
No	3	5	5	5
Did not answer	0	0	0	0
Valid n	5	5	5	5

Neither respondent indicating that they were thinking of pursuing another credential completed the open item to provide details.

*What was it about your incremental credential(s) that you understand makes them more attractive to you than other options you might have selected to reach your education and employment goals? Check all that apply.*

<b>Feature</b>	What makes this incremental credential more attractive than other options?
Can be earned instead of a traditional degree	0
Can be earned in addition to traditional degree	4
Develop or enhance specific skills	5
Can be earned for a specialty area	4
Can be combined with other credentials	0
Can be transferred to another institution	0
Can be awarded for previous experience	2
Focuses on skills and understandings for a particular job	3
Takes less time than traditional degrees	1
Is offered by employers	0
Is more affordable than traditional degrees	0

Demographic data of respondents is presented in the following five tables, illustrating the age; self-identified ethnicity, race, and gender; and military service status.

<b>Age</b>	
Less than 20 years	1
20-29 years	3
30-39 years	0
40-49 years	1
50-59 years	0
60-69 years	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	5

<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Not Hispanic or Latina/Latino	5
Hispanic or Latina/Latino	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	5

<b>Race</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Black or African American	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	5
More than one race	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	5

<b>Gender</b>	
Prefer not to answer	0
Male	2
Female	3
Did not answer	0
Valid n	5

<b>Military Status</b>	
Never served in the military or reserves	5
Currently enlisted	0
Served in the past	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	5

## University at Buffalo

Responses to the online questionnaire for this institution are shown in the following table. A total of 313 students were invited to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire was counted as “Submitted” if data were reported by the online form. The record was tagged as the respondent “Opted out” if they actively declined to participate by indicating that preference on the form. Submissions that were not sufficiently completed were categorized as “Abandoned,” leaving the remainder “Complete” for analytic purposes. Note, however, that valid n counts reported in tables may not be the same across items, as respondents were allowed to leave items blank.

<b>Category</b>	Out of 313
Submitted	24
Opted Out	3
Abandoned	8
Complete	13

*Which credential or credentials have you completed or are currently involved in? Select those that apply to you from the list below, marking the option that best describes your progress.*

<b>Incremental Credential</b>	<b>Status</b>			
	Completed it	Currently working on it	Not working on it, still plan to complete	Not working on it, do not intend to complete
Developmental Experiences	2	0	2	5
Three-Minute Thesis: Communicating Research to Broad Audiences	2	0	2	4
Inclusive Launch Foundry	1	0	0	6
Pharmacy Summer Institute Leadership, Mentoring and Skills Program	0	0	0	6
Research Ethics: Recognizing Inequities in Biomedical Research	3	0	1	5
Pathway to the PhD – Preparing for Success	2	1	3	5

From what information sources did you learn about the incremental credentials marked above? Mark all that apply.

Information Source	
Traditional Media Ad	1
Social Media Ad	1
Traditional Media News	0
Social Media News	0
Social Media Comments	1
Coworker or Colleague	0
Employer or Supervisor	2
Friend or Relative	0
Academic Advisor	2
Higher Ed Online Information	3
High School Counselor	0
Higher Ed Admissions Staff	2
Other Agency Advisor	0
Paid Consultant	0
Veterans Benefits Rep	0
Higher Ed Orientation Event	3
Other	3

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for include the following:

- “Weekly emails from UB”
- “I am a Student Engagement Ambassador”
- “email”

We would like to know why you chose the incremental credentials you noted above. For each consideration on the list below, please mark if it is (A) a reason you chose to pursue your incremental credentials; and (B) an actual result you realized from doing so, whether or not you expected it. Mark Column A and/or Column B for all that apply to you; leave any blank any that did not matter to you.

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Become Employed	6	0
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	4	0
Get a Promotion	3	0
New Job, Different Employer	3	0
New Job, Different Field	3	0
Better Job Security	5	0
Start Own Business	3	0
Explore Success in College	5	1
Work Toward a Degree	9	0
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	4	0
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	5	2
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	3	1
Other	3	0

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “Chose this credential” include the following:

- “They are/were requirements built in to programs I enrolled in at UB (PPBS as part of the mandatory summer research ethics class and voluntarily as part of my PhD journey)”
- “Improve my own performance in public speaking, feedback, understanding what employers are looking for, etc.”
- “To further my education”

No open-ended responses were provided for the response of “Other” for the “As a result of this credential” item.

The questionnaire included four items about how the incremental credential relates to other aspects of the respondent’s education:

- *Are you currently thinking of pursuing any incremental credentials in addition to the ones you identified above? If Yes, please describe (content and institution).*
- *Did you transfer to this institution from another in order to pursue your incremental credentials?*
- *Are you planning on transferring from this institution to a different one? If Yes, in about how many months do you expect to transfer?*
- *Did you receive a Pell Grant while pursuing your incremental credentials?*

Results are presented in the following table.

<b>Response</b>	Thinking of pursuing other credentials?	Transferred to this institution?	Planning to transfer from this institution?	Receive a Pell Grant?
Yes	4	0	0	0
No	9	12	13	13
Did not answer	0	1	0	0
Valid n	13	13	13	13

Open-ended responses elaborating on credentials that might be pursued include the following:

- “Different microcredentials via Coursera, such as University of Michigan.”
- “Social Justice”
- “Pharmacometric Software Series, UB; Pharmacometrics Modeling, UB; Scientific Communication, UB; Bioinformatics, COursear”
- “Teaching in Higher Education”

*What was it about your incremental credential(s) that you understand makes them more attractive to you than other options you might have selected to reach your education and employment goals? Check all that apply.*

<b>Feature</b>	What makes this incremental credential more attractive than other options?
Can be earned instead of a traditional degree	2
Can be earned in addition to traditional degree	9
Develop or enhance specific skills	10

<b>Feature</b>	What makes this incremental credential more attractive than other options?
Can be earned for a specialty area	5
Can be combined with other credentials	3
Can be transferred to another institution	0
Can be awarded for previous experience	3
Focuses on skills and understandings for a particular job	6
Takes less time than traditional degrees	4
Is offered by employers	0
Is more affordable than traditional degrees	1

Demographic data of respondents is presented in the following five tables, illustrating the age; self-identified ethnicity, race, and gender; and military service status.

<b>Age</b>	
Less than 20 years	1
20-29 years	8
30-39 years	2
40-49 years	0
50-59 years	0
60-69 years	0
Did not answer	2
Valid n	13

<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Not Hispanic or Latina/Latino	11
Hispanic or Latina/Latino	2
Did not answer	0
Valid n	13

<b>Race</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	4
Black or African American	3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	5
More than one race	0
Did not answer	1
Valid n	13

<b>Gender</b>	
Prefer not to answer	0
Male	6
Female	7
Did not answer	0
Valid n	13

<b>Military Status</b>	
Never served in the military or reserves	13
Currently enlisted	0
Served in the past	0
Did not answer	0
Valid n	13

## Wake Technical Community College

Responses to the online questionnaire for this institution are shown in the following table. A total of 698 students were invited to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire was counted as “Submitted” if data were reported by the online form. The record was tagged as the respondent “Opted out” if they actively declined to participate by indicating that preference on the form. Submissions that were not sufficiently completed were categorized as “Abandoned,” leaving the remainder “Complete” for analytic purposes. Note, however, that valid n counts reported in tables may not be the same across items, as respondents were allowed to leave items blank.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Out of 698</b>
Submitted	17
Opted Out	1
Abandoned	4
Complete	12

*Which credential or credentials have you completed or are currently involved in? Select those that apply to you from the list below, marking the option that best describes your progress.*

<b>Incremental Credential</b>	<b>Status</b>			
	Completed it	Currently working on it	Not working on it, still plan to complete	Not working on it, do not intend to complete
Bookkeeping: Intuit QuickBooks Certified User Online	3	0	1	2
Certified Bookkeeper AIPB Using Intuit QuickBooks Online	1	0	1	3
Cisco Certified Network Professional CCNP	0	0	0	2
Microsoft Office 365/Office 2019 for Office Administration	0	0	1	2
Computer Technology Basics for Digital Literacy	3	1	0	1
AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate	0	0	2	1
CompTIA Certified Cybersecurity Analyst CySA+	1	0	0	2

Incremental Credential	Status			
Data Analytics for Business Professionals	3	0	0	2
Red Hat Certified System Administrator (RHCSA)	0	0	1	2
Web Programmer Using Python and Django	1	1	0	1

From what information sources did you learn about the incremental credentials marked above? Mark all that apply.

Information Source	
Traditional Media Ad	1
Social Media Ad	2
Traditional Media News	0
Social Media News	0
Social Media Comments	1
Coworker or Colleague	0
Employer or Supervisor	0
Friend or Relative	1
Academic Advisor	2
Higher Ed Online Information	8
High School Counselor	1
Higher Ed Admissions Staff	1
Other Agency Advisor	0
Paid Consultant	0
Veterans Benefits Rep	0
Higher Ed Orientation Event	2
Other	2

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for include the following:

- “Wake Propel Initiative Program”
- “Other stuff”

We would like to know why you chose the incremental credentials you noted above. For each consideration on the list below, please mark if it is (A) a reason you chose to pursue your incremental credentials; and (B) an actual result you realized from doing so, whether or not you expected it. Mark Column A and/or Column B for all that apply to you; leave any blank any that did not matter to you.

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Become Employed	5	2
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	3	2
Get a Promotion	3	0
New Job, Different Employer	2	0
New Job, Different Field	3	1
Better Job Security	6	1
Start Own Business	3	0
Explore Success in College	2	2
Work Toward a Degree	4	1

	Chose this credential to...	As a result of this credential was able to...
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	5	2
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	5	5
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	0	0
Other	2	3

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “Chose this credential” include the following:

- “Get learning practice”
- “wanted to refresh some of my skills and add more skills”

Open-ended responses provided for the response of “Other” for “As a result of this credential” include the following:

- “Nothing happened. Couldnt pass the test that was actually not even what the course was for. So I never got credentialed.”
- “Be more efficient at my current position”
- “Overcome tech intimidation”

The questionnaire included four items about how the incremental credential relates to other aspects of the respondent’s education:

- *Are you currently thinking of pursuing any incremental credentials in addition to the ones you identified above? If Yes, please describe (content and institution).*
- *Did you transfer to this institution from another in order to pursue your incremental credentials?*
- *Are you planning on transferring from this institution to a different one? If Yes, in about how many months do you expect to transfer?*
- *Did you receive a Pell Grant while pursuing your incremental credentials?*

Results are presented in the following table.

Response	Thinking of pursuing other credentials?	Transferred to this institution?	Planning to transfer from this institution?	Receive a Pell Grant?
Yes	7	0	0	2
No	5	11	10	9
Did not answer	0	1	2	1
Valid n	12	12	12	12

Open-ended responses elaborating on credentials that might be pursued include the following:

- “Yes I am currently doing the medical billing and coding certification. I have completed medical terminology, medical billing and am currently finishing my last class medical coding.”
- “RedHat and Cisco CCNP/CCNP”
- “AWS from WTCC”
- “Computer science, such as programming/databases”

- “Pilot's license”
- “Perhaps something related to graphics at some point”

*What was it about your incremental credential(s) that you understand makes them more attractive to you than other options you might have selected to reach your education and employment goals? Check all that apply.*

<b>Feature</b>	<b>What makes this incremental credential more attractive than other options?</b>
Can be earned instead of a traditional degree	8
Can be earned in addition to traditional degree	8
Develop or enhance specific skills	10
Can be earned for a specialty area	7
Can be combined with other credentials	4
Can be transferred to another institution	1
Can be awarded for previous experience	3
Focuses on skills and understandings for a particular job	9
Takes less time than traditional degrees	7
Is offered by employers	3
Is more affordable than traditional degrees	7

Demographic data of respondents is presented in the following five tables, illustrating the age; self-identified ethnicity, race, and gender; and military service status.

<b>Age</b>	
Less than 20 years	0
20-29 years	1
30-39 years	3
40-49 years	1
50-59 years	4
60-69 years	2
Did not answer	1
Valid n	12

<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Not Hispanic or Latina/Latino	10
Hispanic or Latina/Latino	1
Did not answer	1
Valid n	12

<b>Race</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Asian	2
Black or African American	3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	5
More than one race	0

<b>Race</b>	
Did not answer	1
Valid n	12

<b>Gender</b>	
Prefer not to answer	1
Male	2
Female	8
Did not answer	1
Valid n	12

<b>Military Status</b>	
Never served in the military or reserves	11
Currently enlisted	0
Served in the past	0
Did not answer	1
Valid n	12

## All Participating Institutions

A broader perspective on students' decision making regarding incremental credentials is available by considering totals across all participating institutions for those items. The following tables provide that, tallying valid responses from all five study schools for each topic that bears on students' planning and decision making relating to incremental credentials.

Responding students reported on the information sources from which they learned about the incremental credentials in which they enrolled. Results are presented in the following table, with responses ranked from most to least popular option and ignoring any "Other" responses. (Those are included in individual institution summaries.)

<b>Information Source</b>	
Higher Ed Online Information	30
Academic Advisor	13
Friend or Relative	11
Social Media Ad	9
Employer or Supervisor	6
Traditional Media Ad	5
Coworker or Colleague	5
Higher Ed Orientation Event	5
Social Media News	4
Social Media Comments	4
Higher Ed Admissions Staff	4
Traditional Media News	2
High School Counselor	1
Other Agency Advisor	1
Paid Consultant	0
Veterans Benefits Rep	0

Students completing the questionnaire also shared the reasons they selected their incremental credentials. Results follow, again ordered from the most to least popular response, setting aside “Other” responses.

	Chose this credential to...
Become Employed	45
Better Job Security	42
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	40
New Job, Different Field	38
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	34
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	33
New Job, Different Employer	30
Work Toward a Degree	29
Get a Promotion	28
Start Own Business	22
Explore Success in College	20
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	16

Respondents similarly reported their perceptions of results that they realized from pursuing the incremental credential of their choice, whether or not they necessarily expected it when making their enrollment decision. Results for that question are listed in the following table, again in order of popularity; “Other” responses omitted.

	As a result of this credential was able to...
Learn New Things for Their Own Sake	8
Explore Success in College	6
Work Toward Non-degree Credential	4
Become Employed	2
Earn Better Pay in Current Job	2
Work Toward a Degree	2
New Job, Different Field	1
Better Job Security	1
Be First in Family to Get a Credential	1
Get a Promotion	0
New Job, Different Employer	0
Start Own Business	0

Totals across all schools distributing the student questionnaire are presented in the following table, again in response to the four items relating incremental credentials to other postsecondary education decisions:

- *Are you currently thinking of pursuing any incremental credentials in addition to the ones you identified above? If Yes, please describe (content and institution).*
- *Did you transfer to this institution from another in order to pursue your incremental credentials?*

- *Are you planning on transferring from this institution to a different one? If Yes, in about how many months do you expect to transfer?*
- *Did you receive a Pell Grant while pursuing your incremental credentials?*

	Thinking of pursuing other credentials?	Transferred to this institution?	Planning to transfer from this institution?	Receive a Pell Grant
Yes	22	7	1	3
No	51	67	74	70
Did not answer	4	3	2	4

Open-ended responses elaborating on credentials that might be pursued are provided in the school-level summaries, above.

Lastly, students were asked what features made their incremental credential more attractive to them than other options they might have selected to reach education and employment goals. Responses are summarized in the following table, in order from most to least popular response.

Feature	
Develop or enhance specific skills	52
Focuses on skills and understandings for a particular job	38
Can be earned instead of traditional degree	37
Takes less time than traditional degrees	36
Can be earned in addition to traditional degree	31
Can be earned for a specialty area	29
Is more affordable than traditional degrees	28
Can be awarded for previous experience	16
Can be combined with other credentials	11
Can be transferred to another institution	3
Is offered by employers	3

## Considerations

Results looking across this component of the Credential As You Go Priority 1 feasibility study offer a few useful insights into how learners engage with and perceive incremental credentials developed under the Credential As You Go initiative. Some features of the innovative credentials implemented among participating institutions are certainly more compelling to students than others, as are some of students' motivations for choosing particular credential offerings.

Appealing aspects of these incremental credentials tend to focus on skill-building (developing or enhancing job-specific skills) or on benefits associated with time and cost. Viewed broadly, however, these data illustrate motivations among students related in very immediate ways to employment—getting, keeping, changing, or advancing in a career. This is likely influenced by the nature of the credentials prioritized for development under Credential As You Go, but suggests that incremental credentials occupy a niche in the postsecondary education marketplace that is pragmatic about how education relates to employment.

That said, few students surveyed reported tangible benefits from pursuing their credentials (e.g., new employment or promotions), suggesting a need to enhance alignments among credential design, instructional support, and market relevance for employers. Most students are learning about credential offerings through college or university online resources or advisors; very few from sources outside of their institution of higher education. This proposes that opportunity exists to engage more actively with employers to directly coordinate communication, outreach, and marketing strategies.

The diversity of program areas addressed by the credentials considered here—and of demographics among respondents—illustrates that incremental credentials potentially appeal to a wide range of learners, many of whom are nontraditional students. (Note, for example, the prominence of students 30-59 years of age represented for some of the institutions in the study.) This highlights the importance of tailoring credential pathways to be flexible, accommodating a variety of needs even beyond affordability and connections to workforce outcomes.

Tempting as it is to look at the summarized data for these schools and credentials, it is more important to note the substantial differences among them. Institutions vary in terms of first principles and assumptions driving the design of their credential offerings—tightly aligned, industry-defined certifications; fast-track certificates for entry into high-demand fields; add-on microcredentials to complement graduate degree programs. Each orientation is itself a potential differentiator, even before details of a particular credential are defined. The resulting complexity means it is inappropriate to make generalized statements from these results about “incremental credentials” broadly. Instead, these results should inform questions that drive both ongoing research and future development of incremental credentialing initiatives.



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