



**KENNESAW STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

## **MICRO-CREDENTIAL GUIDE**

*Last updated July 12, 2021*

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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Micro-credential Guide is to provide a foundation for understanding and developing micro-credentials at Kennesaw State University. This is a living document and will continue to evolve as micro-credentials become commonplace on campus. This guide is designed as a resource to be used by faculty and staff throughout the micro-credential process.

### DIRECTORY

For questions related to micro-credentials, please contact the appropriate person below.

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## MICRO-CREDENTIALS OVERVIEW

### DEFINING MICRO-CREDENTIALS

In the simplest terms, micro-credentials are a micro-sized bit of education in a specific field or skill and are traditionally awarded in a digital format. Micro-credentials recognize a learner's successful completion of educational activities that lead to professional skills and competencies. These skills and competencies are often not explicitly reflected on an institutional transcript. Additionally, micro-credentials can be earned in a shorter timeframe than traditional academic credit and can be granted for any kind of learning initiative.

### MICRO-CREDENTIALS VS TRADITIONAL CREDENTIALS

It is important to distinguish the difference between micro-credentials and traditional academic credentials, or items included on a transcript or diploma. While both types of credentials recognize achievements by learners, their purposes and process are distinct for two primary reasons.

First, KSU's accrediting body, SACS COC, is only concerned with credit-granting activities that result from course seat-time. Conversely, micro-credentials focus on the experience and competency associated with a skill and are not always time dependent.

Second, micro-credentials provide a platform for learners to recognize achievements that are novel and/or career focused. Transcripts and diplomas, on the other hand, are constrained to completed programs and courses, and grades. Micro-credentials allow learners to translate their entire learning experience in a meaningful, targeted way.

### MICRO-CREDENTIALS AT KSU

Kennesaw State University micro-credentials will be available across the institution. Student can earn micro-credentials to reflect their co-curricular experiences. Faculty can use micro-credentials to highlight career-focused elements of their courses, training programs, and extracurricular activities (career prep, speaker series, international, etc.), connecting in-classroom learning with real-world credentials. Faculty and staff will also have the ability earn micro-credentials to reflect professional development.

### OVERSIGHT OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Micro-credentials are sponsored and issued by Kennesaw State University, and the institution must retain oversight of them to protect their integrity and value. A team of campus units and individuals, detailed below, are integral to the success and oversight of micro-credentials.

#### ***Micro-Credential Coordinator***

The Micro-Credential Coordinator organizes micro-credential review across campus, oversee the resulting micro-credential Inventory, or digital publication of all micro-credentials, and Badgr site, or open access system built to award micro-credentials. The coordinator also provides data reports on awarded micro-credentials.

#### ***Micro-Credential Committee***

The Micro-Credential Committee (MCC) evaluates proposed micro-credentials for alignment with the taxonomy, inclusion in the Inventory, and appropriate rigor with respect to assessment. Members are charged with enforcing an institutional strategy for tagging and data collection.

The MCC is composed of faculty and staff representatives from units across campus that are active with micro-credentials. The committee is led by a chair, who is responsible for coordinating the committee and assigning members to a given micro-credential for review.

***Micro-Credential Executive Administrator***

The Micro-Credential Executive Administrator is an individual who is responsible for the final approval step for micro-credentials. This individual, like the MCC, should ensure the proposed micro-credential is reflective of KSU value and rigor.

***Department of Career Planning and Development***

The Department of Career Planning and Development collaborates with Issuers to identify and articulate the skills and competencies associated with micro-credentials that are valued by employers and industries.

***Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing***

The Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing (StratComm) assists with the image development for micro-credentials. This image is visible on Badgr and the Inventory.

***Division of Student Affairs***

The Office of Student Life assists units with the development Souvenirs through Owl Life events, series, and other engagement pieces.

**TAXONOMY OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS**

KSU supports four types of micro-credentials. Each type is distinguished by the level of activity required by the learner to obtain the micro-credential.

**Souvenirs** document participation and are best suited for engagement in extra-curricular activities, attendance at one or more events, or active membership in a KSU organization. Participation should be meaningful and value adding for the participant but reflection or a tangible submission from participants not necessary. As a unique type of micro-credential, souvenirs are covered in further detail later in this document.

**Ribbons\*** document introduction to skills and competencies gained from opportunities for personal, career, and professional development. Ribbons should demonstrate learning, but not mastery, and involve practicing skills and competencies in a simulated environment.

**Badges\*** document skills and competencies that have professional and career value. Learner activities should demonstrate mastery of skills and competencies and take place in professional environments. Badges require some artifact to be submitted and assessed by Grantors before being awarded.

**Digital Certificates** show a learner is qualified and capable of employing a collection of competencies or industry standards in professional environments. Multiple pre-defined badges may be combined together to create a Digital Certificate.

\*Both Ribbons and Badges allow learners to pursue distinction, or special recognition. Distinction criteria is determined by the grantor at the time a micro-credential is proposed.

**Table: Kennesaw State University Taxonomy of Micro-credentials**

	SOUVENIR	RIBBON	BADGE	DIGITAL CERTIFICATE
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practiced</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Demonstration of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competent</li> <li>• Skilled</li> <li>• Demonstration of mastery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified</li> </ul>
<b>Learner Activity</b>	Awareness, Attendance, Physical or Virtual Presence	Demonstration of specific skill, vocabulary, or knowledge in simulated or non-authentic environments	Demonstration of specific skill or competency applicable in professional environments	Demonstration of a collection of competencies or industry standards
<b>Assessment</b>	Attendance record	Submission evaluated by an expert for quality or completeness	Submission evaluated by an expert for quality. Should be uploaded to Badgr as Evidence.	Submission evaluated by an expert for quality. Should be uploaded to Badgr as Evidence.
<b>Special Recognition</b>		Distinction option	Distinction option	
<b>Metadata Required</b>			Learner-made artifacts	Learner-made artifacts or multiple stacked badges
<b>Approval Required</b>	Owl Life	Micro-Credential Committee	Micro-Credential Committee	Micro-Credential Committee

## MICRO-CREDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### CONSIDERATIONS

Micro-credentials are skills or competencies that are complementary or additional to traditional education. While developing a micro-credential consideration should be given to what audience the credential is for and what skill level will be accomplished upon completion. Necessary resources should also be taken into account. If developing a Ribbon, Badge, or Digital Certificate, it may be helpful to consult the [MCC Checklist](#), located in the Appendix of this guide, which is used by MCC members during the review process.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE

#### ***Description***

Each micro-credential should have a brief description that introduces the purpose and competencies or skills. It is best practice for the description to be written in complete, grammatically correct sentences, and be no more than 75 words.

#### ***Earning Criteria***

The earning criteria should describe what a learner must do to earn the micro-credential. The criteria should be a rigorous observable demonstration of the skill or competency described and should be the complete process for earning. For example, if a learner must respond to prompts about a campus event, attending the event and the written response should be included in the earning criteria. If a distinction option is available, include what must be done to earn distinction. It is best practice for the earning criteria to be written in complete, grammatically correct sentences.

#### ***Skills***

Skills can increase a micro-credential's value in the job market by conveying the job skills it represents. Badgr has partnered with Emsi to provide a database of available skills to associate with a micro-credential. Each skill affiliated will link to related job information in the micro-credential's Badgr page. Skills for Ribbons, Badges, & Digital Certificates should be identified in partnership with the Department of Career Planning & Development.

#### ***Tagging Conventions***

Tags allow data analysis of micro-credentials by topic and other areas of interests. Each micro-credential will automatically have two tags:

1. Taxonomy Tag (#Souvenir, #Ribbon, #Badge, #DigitalCertificate)
2. Issuer Tag

If a ribbon or badge has a distinction option for learners, an additional #Distinction tag will automatically be added to the micro-credential.

Additional tags can be added to allow learners to isolate micro-credentials based on the subject matter. These tags should be thoughtfully selected and used with a specific purpose in mind. Tags will also be created if a micro-credential aligns with a NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) skill. NACE skills are different from the skills outlined above.

## LIMITATIONS

Under no circumstances should micro-credentials be used as a requirement for a student to graduate from a program of study.

At time of launch (July 2021) Badgr is not integrated with D2L. If developing a stand-alone credential outside of a course and/or Owl Life, additional consideration may be needed on how learners will engage with the learning activity and submit artifacts.

## MICRO-CREDENTIAL APPROVAL PROCESS

### USE OF CURRICULOG

Curriculog is the online process tool used to submit, review, and approve micro-credential proposals in the traditional process, or the process for Ribbons, Badges, and Digital Certificates. Using Curriculog, proposals are automatically routed to each party involved in the review process. Additionally, Curriculog is a transparent system, allowing individuals to view where proposals are in the approval process and reference completed proposals. Users can login to Curriculog using their KSU ID (without @kennesaw.edu) and KSU password.

### PROCESS DETAILS & PARTICIPANTS

There are two processes for developing micro-credentials. Approval for Ribbons, Badges, and Digital Credentials mimics the academic curriculum process for KSU; this process is referred to the “traditional process.” Souvenirs are exempt from the traditional process and are instead required to collaborate with the Division of Student Affairs and Owl Life. Details for the traditional process are outlined below, while the [Souvenir approval process](#) is outlined later in this document.

**Step Zero:** The traditional process should begin with a member of an Issuer identifying an opportunity for a micro-credential based on the nature of the learning and relevance to potential audiences. This member of the Issuer should contact the Department of Career Planning and Development to discuss career skill tags that are associated with the micro-credential.

**Step One: Originator.** The member of an Issuer proposing the micro-credential should complete and submit a New Micro-Credential form in Curriculog. In addition to the questions in the form, the Earning Criteria Template should be attached to the proposal for review.

**Step Two: Initial Review.** The micro-credential coordinator and a member from the Department of Career Planning and Development review the proposed micro-credential. The coordinator checks that the form is filled out correctly and attachments are included. The DCPD representative ensures appropriate career skill tags are indicated.

**Step Three: Department Chair/Director.** The department chair or division director reviews and approves the proposed micro-credential for alignment with department/division objects and mission.

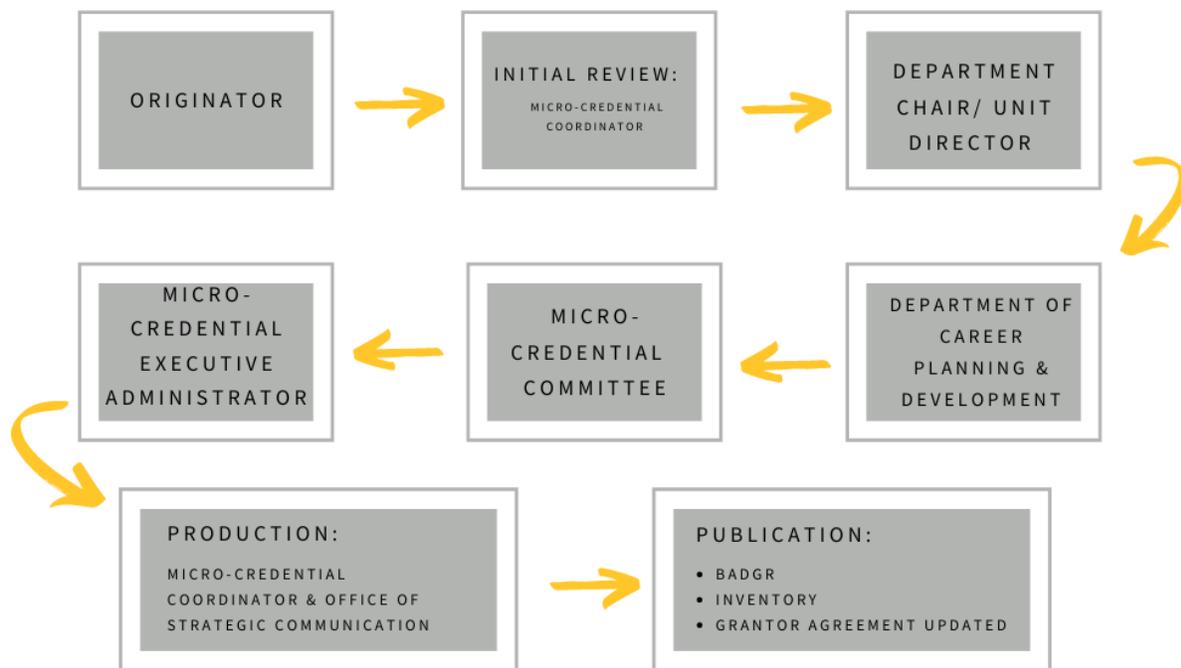
**Step Four: Micro-credential Review Committee.** The MCC reviews the proposed micro-credential for alignment with the taxonomy, rigor with respect to assessment and artifacts, possible overlap with existing micro-credentials, appropriate tagging conventions used, and general fit within KSU’s micro-credential offerings.

**Step Five: Micro-credential Executive Administrator.** The Executive Administrator is the final approval step before production and publication.

Step Six: Production. Micro-credential coordinator works with Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing to develop the image associated with the micro-credential and contacts approved grantors associated with micro-credential to sign the Grantor Agreement. The micro-credential is built in both Badgr and the Inventory once image is available from StratComm.

Step Seven: Publication. Once grantor agreements have been signed, all grantors and the department chair/director for the Issuer will be notified the micro-credential is available and ready to be awarded. New micro-credential will be publicly visible in Badgr and the Inventory. Please allow 1-5 business days, depending on capacity, between MCC approval and Publication.

### VISUALIZATION OF TRADITIONAL APPROVAL PROCESS



## SOUVENIRS

### A UNIQUE MICRO-CREDENTIAL

Souvenirs are a unique type of micro-credential in that they do not require learners to demonstrate competencies. Souvenirs document participation. They are best suited to awards for engagement in extra-curricular activities, attendance at one or more events, or active membership in a KSU organization. Participation to earn Souvenirs should be meaningful and value adding for the participant, but reflection or a tangible submission of evidence from participants is not necessary.

Over their course of tenure at KSU, students will engage with a wide variety of programs and events. Not all of which will be suitable for recognition with a Souvenir. Events and experiences that are associated with Souvenirs should have one or more of the following qualities:

- Mark a milestone, tradition, and/or shared experience among students within a program, cohort, or class (e.g., first-year convocation, a sophomore seminar, or senior exhibition).
- Incentivize and reward student participation in co-curricular and/or extra-curricular experiences (e.g., attending a career fair, concert or play on campus, or a lecture series).
- Encourage student engagement with academic support resources (e.g., attend a workshop hosted by the Writing Center).
- Require intentional engagement with an experience or event beyond passive interaction or their regular routine (e.g., passing by an informational table or attending a required class experience).

Verification of Souvenir achievement is determined through a participant's completion of one or more of the following activities within the Owl Life platform:

- Attendance at a specific event (e.g., attend a major-specific career fair)
- Attendance at a series of events (e.g., attend four of eight lectures within a speaker's series)
- Membership in a specific organization (e.g., become a member of the academic Registered Student Organization associated with their major)
- A combination of the above experience types that may or may not need to be completed in a specific order

### **SOUVENIR APPROVAL PROCESS**

Souvenirs are exempt from the traditional approval process outlined in the Micro-credential Approval Process of this document and does not use Curriculog. Souvenirs are designated for participation in events and organizations available through Owl Life. To create a Souvenir from an Owl Life event, and subsequently award the Souvenir, follow the steps outlined below.

1. Submit a Souvenir Request Form in Owl Life.
2. Create the event within Owl Life.
3. Collect attendance information using Owl Life.
4. Attendance data from Owl Life is transmitted to Badgr.
5. Souvenir is issued to attendees.

## **BADGR**

### **WHAT IS BADGR?**

Badgr allows users to issue and manage a standardized type of digital badges called Open Badges. A digital badge is a visual symbol of accomplishment. **At Kennesaw State University, we refer to digital badges as micro-credentials.** An Open Badge is a specialized type of digital badge that contains verifiable information. Because they follow an open standard, learners can combine badges from many different sources, or institutions, into common collections, and when they share them, these badges may be verified by any compatible system to ensure that they are trustworthy representations of their learner's experiences.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from [Badgr website](#)

### **PURPOSE OF BADGR- PUBLIC**

Kennesaw State University's public Badgr page provides a list of all micro-credentials currently offered. The page is fluid, and micro-credentials can be added or hidden at any time.

The public Badgr page allows learners to view Issuers and Badges. Issuers are the departments and offices that own micro-credentials. They are not the individuals who award the micro-credential. Badges are micro-credentials; due to limitations of Badgr, this cannot be changed on the Badgr site. Users can search for a micro-credential using keywords in addition to filtering by Issuer.

### **PURPOSE OF BADGR- PRIVATE**

In addition to the public Badgr page, Badgr is used to award micro-credentials to learners. Each faculty or staff member approved to grant micro-credentials, or a Grantor, will have a staff account associated with their Issuer.

#### ***Granting Micro-credentials Using Badgr***

If you are an approved grantor for a micro-credential, you will have a staff account in Badgr. To award a micro-credential to a learner, follow the steps below. Additional details can be found on the [Badgr user-site](#).

1. Login to Badgr using your kennesaw.edu email address (your password is **not** associated with you KSU login).
2. Select the Issuers tab from the navigation bar at the top of the page and find the Issuer you are associated with. If you are associated with multiple Issuers, you will need to know what Issuer the micro-credential you awarding are is associated with.
3. Under the Badges tab (remember this is the terminology Badgr uses for all micro-credentials), select the micro-credential you would like to award.

#### *Awarding to an Individual*

4. Select "Award Badge"
5. Complete the Badge Award Page
  - a. An email address is required, it is recommended you use the learner's KSU email.
  - b. The Narrative section is optional and represents any additional comments for the learner
  - c. The Evidence section is required for Badges and Digital Certificates and should be an open-access URL directing viewers to the artifact the learner completed to earn the micro-credential.
6. Select "Award Badge" to finalize the award process.

#### *Bulk Awarding*

4. Select "Bulk Award from CSV"
5. Complete and upload the Bulk\_Award\_Template. Similar to *Awarding to an Individual* above, you will need to include each learners' email. Adding a Narrative section for each learner is optional. If the micro-credential is a Badges or Digital Certificates an evidence URL is necessary for each recipient.
6. Preview the mapping and confirm the columns align. If you used the template, you should not have to adjust anything.

7. Select “Finish” to finalize the award process

## **MICRO-CREDENTIAL INVENTORY**

### **WHAT IS THE INVENTORY**

The Inventory provides a list of all micro-credentials both presently and historically available at Kennesaw State University. The Inventory is archived semi-annually (January 1 and July 1) and is accessible here: [KSU Micro-Credential Inventory](#).

### **PURPOSE OF THE INVENTORY**

Badgr will not display micro-credentials that are no longer offered at Kennesaw State University on the KSU public page. Instead, micro-credentials that are no longer offered can only be visible through a Learner’s account in Badgr. The Inventory is a public record that is complementary to Badgr and can be used to access details, including earning criteria, for past micro-credentials. Each micro-credential in the Inventory will be designated as Active or In-Active. In-Active micro-credentials will also include the month and year it was no longer available to earn.

### **NAMING CONVENTIONS**

In the Inventory, micro-credentials follow a naming convention similar to that of courses in an academic discipline. Each Issuer has a three to four letter prefix, and a three-digit number which is automatically assigned. The number depends on the taxonomy association -- 100’s for Souvenirs, 200’s for Ribbons, 300’s for Badges, and 400’s for Digital Certificates -- and number of micro-credentials associated with the issuer. The title of the micro-credential will also appear in the name, which is the same as what appears in Badgr.

For example, the Office of Assessment has a badge for rubric design which is the third micro-credential the unit was approved to offer. In the Inventory, this would appear as ASMT 303-Rubric Design.

## TERM GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<b>Active/In-Active</b>	Status of a micro-credential ability to be awarded specified in the Inventory.
<b>Assessment Item</b>	Submitted by Learner, this is evaluated by Grantor against learning criteria before the micro-credential is awarded.
<b>Award</b>	Act of granting or issuing a micro-credential to a learner that has completed all requirements of the micro-credential.
<b>Badgr</b>	The online tool used for awarding and managing micro-credentials at Kennesaw State University. View KSU's public Badgr page at <a href="https://kennesaw.badgr.com/public/organization/badges">kennesaw.badgr.com/public/organization/badges</a>
<b>Badge</b>	Type of micro-credential awarded for mastery of skills and competencies. Meta-data is required. Distinction criteria is optional. 'Badge' is a KSU term.
<b>Consumer</b>	A person who views a learner's award micro-credential. The audience may include employers, potential employers, and the learner's professional or social media networks.
<b>Curriculog</b>	The online system used to propose and approve micro-credentials through the traditional process. Sign in to Curriculog using NetID and password at <a href="https://kennesaw.curriculog.com">kennesaw.curriculog.com</a>
<b>Digital Image</b>	A visual symbol of accomplishment. Each micro-credential has its own digital badge image associated with it.
<b>Digital Certificate</b>	Type of micro-credential awarded for collection of skills and competencies. Meta-data required. Distinction criteria is not available. 'Digital Certificate' is a KSU term.
<b>Distinction</b>	A special recognition option for Ribbon and Badge Learners. Assessment criteria for distinction-level should be defined prior to a micro-credential's approval.
<b>Learner Activity</b>	Task associated with a micro-credential that results in learning.
<b>Emsi</b>	A labor market analytics firm that uses data to drive economic prosperity. <sup>2</sup> Emsi provides available skills to be included with a micro-credential.
<b>Grantor</b>	A faculty or staff member who has the authority to award a micro-credential on behalf of their associated Issuer. There may be more than one grantor for any micro-credential. Each grantor should have a updated Grantor Agreement on file.
<b>Grant Agreement</b>	Document of trust that outlines what micro-credential an individual grantor has authority to award.
<b>Icon</b>	The clip-art image on a digital badge that can be changed to align with micro-credential subject area.
<b>Inventory</b>	A complete list of current and past micro-credentials offered at Kennesaw State University.
<b>Issuer</b>	Office or Department of ownership for a micro-credential that is charged with assigning individuals to award the micro-credential

<sup>2</sup> Taken from [Emsi Linked-In page](#).

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Learner</b>	Individual who signs up for a micro-credential and completes all earning criteria. This may be a KSU student or member of the KSU staff, faculty, or community.
<b>MCC</b>	Micro-credential Committee. Reviews proposed micro-credentials as part of the traditional process.
<b>Meta-data</b>	Artifacts that are assessed based on pre-determined criteria. These artifacts should be included when a Badge or Digital Certificate is awarded.
<b>Micro-credential</b>	A digital record that recognizes a learner's successful completion of educational activities that lead to professional skills and competencies
<b>NACE Skill</b>	Career ready competencies determined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.
<b>Open Badge</b>	A specialized type of digital badge that contains verifiable information. 'Open Badge' is a universally accepted term.
<b>Revoke</b>	Act of removing a previously awarded micro-credential from a Learner's record.
<b>Ribbon</b>	Type of micro-credential awarded for introduction to skills and competencies. No meta-data required. Distinction criteria is optional. 'Ribbon' is a KSU term.
<b>Skills</b>	Competencies that add market-value to the micro-credential. Appears in Badgr and can link to related job information.
<b>Souvenir</b>	Type of micro-credential awarded for participation in an activity or event. No meta-data required. Distinction criteria is not available. 'Souvenir' is a KSU term.
<b>Tag</b>	A word or phrase describing the topic, taxonomy, Issuer, or distinction availability for a micro-credential. Appears in Badgr.
<b>Traditional Process</b>	Approval process for Ribbons, Badges, and Digital Certificates at Kennesaw State University.

## APPENDIX

### NEW MICRO-CREDENTIAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Item	Description	Yes	No
<b>Unit</b>	The unit issuing the micro-credential has the authority and expertise to do so.		
<b>Name/Description</b>	Name and description are clear and distinguish the micro-credential from other similar micro-credentials at KSU.		
<b>Classification</b>	Classification of micro-credential is accurate.		
<b>Distinction</b>	The requirements for distinction are clearly described, elevated, and will limit recipients to a minority of those qualifying for the original badge.		
<b>Earning Criteria</b>	The earning criteria is a rigorous observable demonstration of the skill or competency described. If a badge or certificate, the required demonstration of skill or competency indicates the earner can likely transfer it to an authentic work environment and perform this skill at entry level.		
<b>Expiration</b>	Expiration is logical and does not harm earners.		
<b>Tags</b>	The tags align with the predominate themes of the micro-credential. All predominate themes are included. Any aligned NACE, professional standards, and AAC&U tags are included.		
<b>Skills or Competency</b>	Assignment matches what the skill or competency states and displays what the earner knows or can do.		
<b>Validity of Skills or Competency</b>	Evidence that the skills or competency is valued in the current or future workforce is provided. This may include published educational standard or professional standards of practice.		
<b>Overlap of Micro-credentials</b>	If the micro-credential overlaps with other KSU micro-credentials, the difference is clarified and justified sufficiently. The perceived value of the existing micro-credential is not damaged by the addition of the proposed micro-credential.		
<b>Audience</b>	The audience will benefit professionally by this micro-credential.		
<b>Measure of Competency</b>	An instrument (rubric) to measure competency is provided. The instrument is a valid, transparent, and as objective as possible measure of the stated competency or skills. The quality of performance warranting micro-credential award is defined by a rigorous and reasonable cut score on the instrument.		

Item	Description	Yes	No
<b>Artifact Dissemination</b>	Artifacts to provide evidence of skill/competency attainment can be easily shared electronically		
<b>Directions and Delivery Structure</b>	Instructions on how to enroll, access, and ask questions about this micro-credential are complete, accurate, and logical.		
<b>Time to Completion</b>	Time to completion is in a reasonable range for the micro-credential classification.		
<b>Expected Frequency of Awards</b>	The frequency warrants institutional resources necessary to make this micro-credential available.		
<b>Cost</b>	No fee for award of the micro-credential is required. Costs associated with the learning experience are described, reasonable, and will not likely prevent the micro-credential from being awarded.		