

# College of Science's Micro-Credentialing Policy and Related Processes

## Points of Contact

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## Purpose and Outline

This document outlines procedures for the faculty of the College of Science (COS) to follow in order to establish micro-credentials (commonly referred to as “digital badges” or “badges”). The procedures outlined in this document seek to encourage faculty to be innovative in proposing new micro-credentials, while also maintaining a quality education for students in the College of Science’s offerings.

The approval of micro-credentials will be handled in a similar fashion to the college’s standard curricular offerings, however, the COS Curriculum Committee (COSCC) is the final level of approval for micro-credentials that will involve credit-bearing courses. After receiving COSCC approval, the micro-credential will continue [to Office of Continuing and Professional Education](#) (CPE) for implementation.

The Office of Academic and Student Affairs is available to lend guidance and to facilitate this approval process. However, the creation and design of the micro-credentials is completed between the offering department and the CPE team. Additionally, all financial considerations must be made between the department, CPE, and COS’s finance team.

As the field of micro-credentials is an evolving one, this policy, too, will continue to evolve.

## Definitions

- **Department:** One of COS’s academic units as defined by the [University Catalog](#).
- **Micro-credential:** “Micro-credentials offer shorter and faster markers of critical skill acquisition, which helps our students and learners better align their educational needs with dramatically changing labor markets, without diminishing the breadth, quality and rigor of a Mason degree” ([Source](#)). As of October 2020, micro-credentials are primarily in the form of [digital badges](#).
- **Non-credit course:** A curricular offering that usually provides Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) credits, not standard university credits. These courses cannot count toward a university degree.
- **Standard Mason course:** A for-credit course offering approved by both the COSCC and the university’s Undergraduate or Graduate Council, listed in the [University Catalog](#).

## Establishing Micro-Credentials

- Faculty members should complete the [Micro-Credential Notification or Approval Form](#), which must be approved by the Department Chair of the administering department, or by the Dean of

the College of Science if the micro-credential will be housed outside of a department. Micro-credentials that involve for-credit courses must be housed within a department or the College of Science.

- The [Micro-Credential Notification or Approval Form](#) must be complete with appropriate approvals and submitted to the COSCC. Approval by the COSCC is required to move forward with establishing micro-credentials that involve for-credit courses. The COSCC's deadlines can be found [here](#).

#### *Potential Avenues to Creating a Micro-Credential*

- Creating a micro-credential using existing standard Mason courses (i.e. COS 500 and COS 600 for a badge in Scientific Leadership and Practice)
  - Complete and obtain appropriate approvals on the [Micro-Credential Notification or Approval Form](#) and obtain COSCC approval.
  - Work with CPE to develop the badge and consult with COS's finance team.
    - General revenue models as established by CPE (as of October 2020)
      - CPE markets, recruits, registers students, disperses revenue and generally manages the BADGE. COST: COS pays CPE office 20% of cost.
      - CPE ONLY create and administers the badges to students. COST: COS pays per badge, usually in bulk.
  - Faculty must communicate with their department chair on how teaching courses for the micro-credential may impact their teaching load.
- Creating a badge using new standard Mason courses
  - The course will follow the standard university course approval process (COSCC and Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council). Use the [CIM system](#) to create a new course. The course will be inserted into the University Catalog when the catalog is updated.
  - Complete and obtain appropriate approvals on the [Micro-Credential Notification or Approval Form](#) and obtain COSCC approval.
  - Work with CPE to develop the badge and consult with COS's finance team.
    - General revenue models as established by CPE (as of October 2020)
      - CPE markets, recruits, registers students, disperses revenue and generally manages the BADGE. COST: COS pays CPE office 20% of cost.
      - CPE ONLY create and administers the badges to students. COST: COS pays per badge, usually in bulk.
  - Faculty must communicate with their department chair on how teaching courses for the micro-credential may impact their teaching load.
- Creating a micro-credential using non-credit courses
  - Notify the college by completing the [Micro-Credential Notification or Approval Form](#) submit to the COSCC.
  - Non-credit courses cannot count toward the faculty member's teaching load.