# UNL – Micro-Credentials Guide - Purpose

The Micro-Credential Guide aims to establish a comprehensive foundation for understanding and developing micro-credentials and badges at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Building on the foundational processes for creating and awarding digital badges, which were developed in 2021 as part of the NU Connect Pilot Program, this guide serves as a living document that will continue to evolve as micro-credentials and badges become more widespread on campus. It is intended as a valuable resource for faculty and staff involved in the micro-credential process.

Micro-credentials can be awarded as certificates, endorsements, industry certifications or badges, and may be for-credit or non-credit.
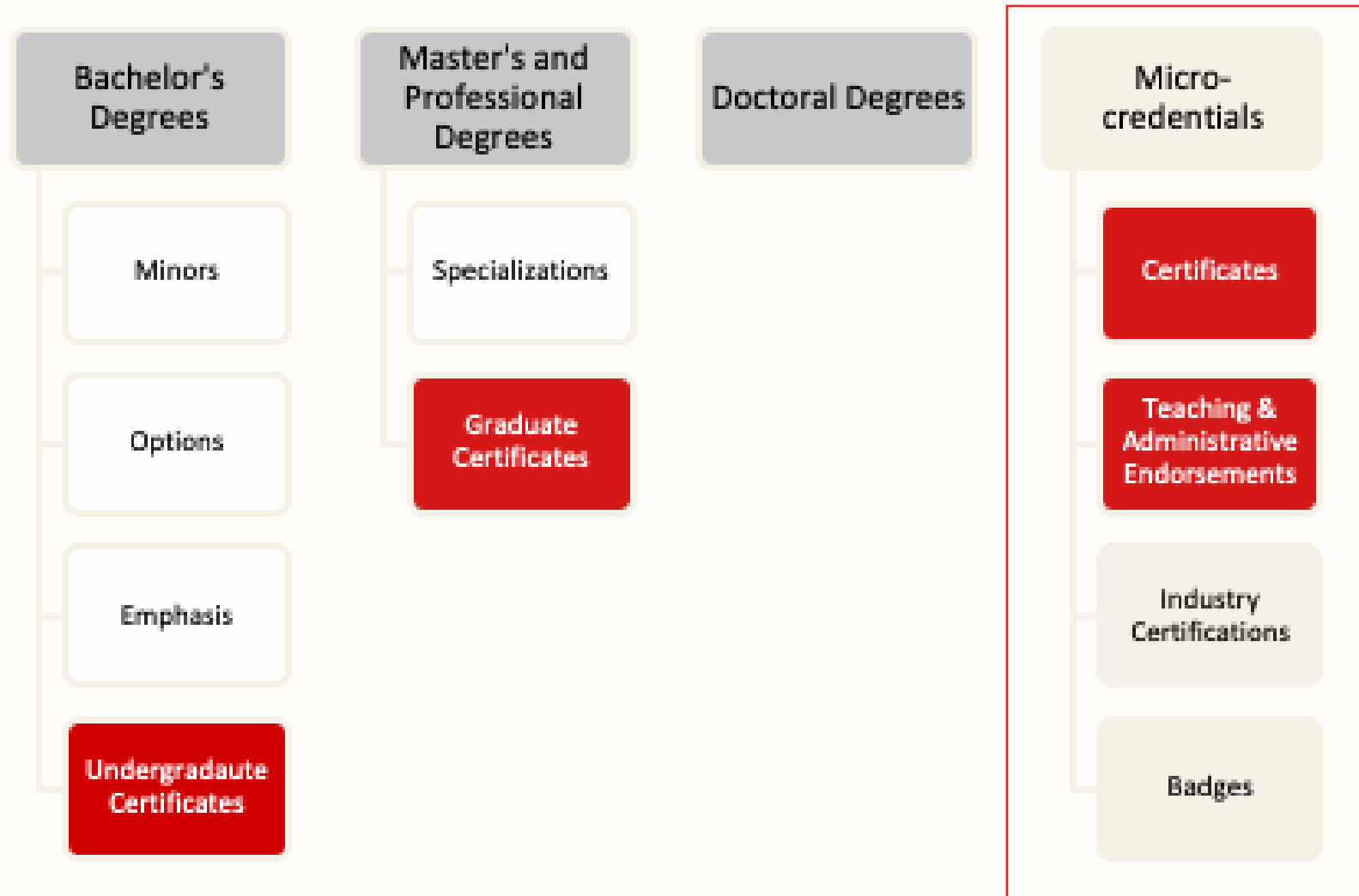
Guiding Principles of Badges

Each badge at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln should be structured around a set of activities that include the three guiding principles:

- **Knowledge:** Provides a common foundation for the badge topic.

- **Experiences:** Allows students to co-create their learning pathways.

- **Reflection:** Encourages students to review their knowledge and experiences and consider how they can be applied in the future.

- Badges offer both credibility and flexibility. Our offerings are authored by UNL faculty, staff, industry leaders, or a combination of the three. Each badge should be at least a minimum of 15 hours to complete and is often stackable, allowing learners to pursue mastery or special recognition at various stages of learning. Mastery criteria are determined by the proposer at the time a badge is proposed.

Audience of Badges

Badges can be structured toward four distinct audiences or groups, examples are reflected below, and are aligned to the Taxonomy of Badges reflected in the next section:

- **Continuing Education/External Audiences**: These badges are awarded to learners outside of the university.

- **Faculty/Staff**: Faculty and staff badges are designed to recognize the professional development, achievements, and contributions of university employees.

- **Student Co-curricular**: Student co-curricular badges are awarded to students for their participation and achievements in extracurricular activities, clubs, student organizations, and community service.

- **Student Curricular**: Student curricular (for-credit) badges are tied to specific academic courses within the university's curriculum. At this time, UNL is not creating student curricular badges.

Taxonomy of Badges

UNL supports six types of badges, which are aligned with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Each type is distinguished by the level of activity required by the learner to obtain the badge.

- **Engagement Badge**: Documents participation and is best suited for engagement in extra-curricular activities, attendance at one or more events or workshops, or active membership in a UNL organization. Participation should be meaningful and provide value for the participant but reflection or a tangible submission from participants is not necessary. While not associated to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, it is encouraged that Engagement Badges reflect "Remember" and "Understand".

- **Foundational Badge**: Documents the introduction to skills and competencies gained from opportunities for personal, career, and professional development. Foundational Badges are associated with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy through "Remember" and "Understand." These should demonstrate learning, but not mastery, and may involve practicing skills and competencies in the learning environment.

Taxonomy of Badges (continued)

- **Intermediate Badge**: Documents skills and competencies that have professional and career value. Learner activities should demonstrate mastery of skills and competencies and take place in professional environments. Intermediate Badges are associated with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy through "Apply" and "Analyze" and require some artifact(s) to be submitted and assessed by grantors before being awarded.

- **Advanced Badge**: Documents a learner's qualification and capability to employ a collection of competencies or industry standards in professional environments. Advanced Badges are associated with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy through "Evaluate" and "Create."

- **Mastery Badge**: Similar to Advanced Badges but specifically show that a learner is qualified and capable of employing a collection of competencies or industry standards in professional environments. It is also possible for a combination of Foundational, Intermediate, and Advanced Badges to stack into a Mastery Badge.

- **Industry Badge**: Shows a learner is versed in practicing multiple skills necessary to achieve industry or professional certification or licensure. Like Advanced Badges, these demonstrate mastery but for a specific industry or profession, rather than general skills and competencies.

	Engagement Badge	Foundational Badge	Intermediate Badge	Advanced Badge	Mastery Badge	Industry Badge
Outcome	Aware Attendance Participation	Remember Understand	Apply Analyze	Evaluate Create	Qualified Demonstration of Mastery	Qualified Demonstration of Mastery
Learning Objectives	Awareness, Attendance, Physical or Virtual Presence	Recall facts, terms, concepts, and basic procedures related to the badge topic. Demonstrate comprehension by explaining ideas or concepts in one's own words, interpreting information, or summarizing key points.	Apply knowledge and concepts to solve problems, analyze scenarios, or perform tasks related to real-world situations. Break down complex information into smaller parts, identify patterns or relationships, and draw conclusions based on evidence.	Assess the validity, reliability, or effectiveness of information, arguments, solutions, or methods within the context of the badge. Generate new ideas, products, or solutions by synthesizing information, applying critical thinking skills, and exercising creativity.	Meets learning objectives from Foundational, Intermediate, and Advanced Badges.	Demonstration of a collection of competencies or industry standards
Assessment	Attendance or participation record.	Multiple-choice questions or quizzes.	Case studies, simulations, or projects.	Essays, debates, or presentations.	Assessments from Foundational, Intermediate, and Advanced Badges	Appropriate assessments for the industry standards.
Intended Audience	Faculty/Staff and Student Co-Curricular	External Audiences, Faculty/Staff, Student Curricular, and Student Co-Curricular	External Audiences, Faculty/Staff, Student Curricular, and Student Co-Curricular	External Audiences, Faculty/Staff, Student Curricular, and Student Co-Curricular	External Audiences, Faculty/Staff, Student Curricular, and Student Co-Curricular	External Audiences, Faculty/Staff, and Student Curricular

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Foundational Badge · Intermediate Badge · Industry Badge · Engagement Badge · Advanced Badge · Mastery Badge

Canvas Credentials

- NU Advance/UNL Canvas enable Credentials
  - Badge is not awarded until learner has met all of the objectives/competencies
  - Can be awarded upon completion of course, knowledge check with score, and manually within Canvas/Canvas Catalog

Badge Development & Approval Process

Applications for the creation of a badge are made to the Micro-Credential Advisory Committee. The application originates in the college or unit and is approved by the appropriate chair, dean, or vice chancellor prior to application submission. UNL utilizes two review processes prior to the submission of a badge to the advisory committee.

Step 1: The first step is for a proposer to seek approval from their Department/Unit Chair utilizing the *Micro-Credential Approval Form*. This form will require the proposer to identify the title, badge description, badge taxonomy and associated learning outcomes, intended audience, instructional method, assessments, and expected costs.

Step 2: With an approved form, the proposer schedules a meeting with the Micro-Credential and Badging Coordinator to discuss next steps. The coordinator will conduct a market analysis of the proposed badge, assign three industry skills, and ensure there is no duplication of other badges. Step 1 and step 2 complete the first review process.
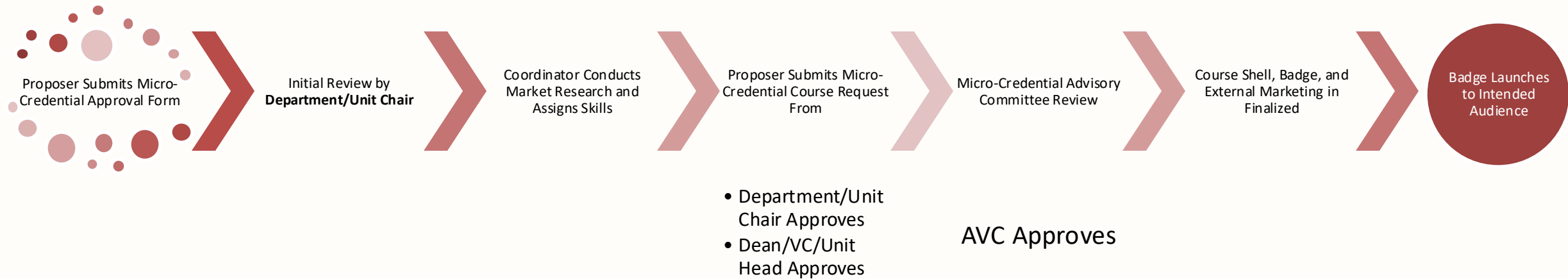
Step 3: In coordination with the coordinator, the proposer initiates the *Micro-Credential Course Request Form* and submits the completed form to the Department/Unit Chair for approval. Following approval, the form is routed to the Dean/VC/Unit Head for approval. Once all approvals are documented, the form is routed to the coordinator for submission to the Micro-Credential Advisory Committee.

Step 4: The Micro-Credential Advisory Committee reviews all documentation and determines if the course is approved. Upon approval, the form is forwarded to the AVC for Digital and Online Learning for review and final approval prior to recording and processing into the appropriate learning management system.

Step 5: The coordinator notifies the proposer of the decision and coordinates with the Assistant Director of Learning Experience for the development of the course shell in the appropriate learning management system. The coordinator develops the image associated with the badge, updates the badge inventory, and public directory.

Step 6: The proposer finalizes course development. The course is reviewed by the coordinator and the proposer prior to student enrollment. The coordinator develops the mechanism by which the badge is awarded into the appropriate learning management system.

Micro-Credential Process

Proposer Submits Micro-Credential Approval Form

Initial Review by **Department/Unit Chair**

Coordinator Conducts Market Research and Assigns Skills

Proposer Submits Micro-Credential Course Request From

- Department/Unit Chair Approves
- Dean/VC/Unit Head Approves

Micro-Credential Advisory Committee Review

AVC Approves

Course Shell, Badge, and External Marketing in Finalized

Badge Launches to Intended Audience

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For questions related to badges, please contact the appropriate person below.

Name and Title	Assistance Area	Contact Information
Badge Resource E-Mail Account	First point of contact for general badge support	online@unl.edu
Angie Rushman Coordinator, Micro-Credential and Badging	Provides proposal development support to proposers and coordinates with NU Advance on course creation.	402-472-6555 Arushman2@unl.edu
Diona Hartwig Assistant Director, Learning Experience	Provides support for NU Advance and development of course shells.	402-472-5736 diona.hartwig@nebraska.edu
Kevin Shriner, Ed.D. AVC Digital and Online Learning	Administrator overseeing all aspects of badge development.	402-472-3751 kevin.shriner@unl.edu

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