KPU | KWANTLEN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

AC15 Digital Credentials (Non-Credit) Policy

Category: AC (Academic)
Effective Date: January 1, 2026
Approving Jurisdiction: Board of Governors, with Senate advice
Administrative Responsibility: Provost and Vice President Academic

A. Context and Purpose

At Kwantlen Polytechnic University ("KPU"), Senate is the academic governance body that has the ultimate authority to approve curricula, as well as related guidelines and requirements, for Senate-approved courses and programs.

The University recognizes that students attain significant learning from Senate-approved, formal academic learning, and learning outside of the formal post-secondary education system, such as co-curricular activities, work, training, experience and other prior or new informal/non-formal learning.

Different from traditional post-secondary credentials, Digital Credentials offer learners diverse, flexible, innovative, customizable and up-to-date learning opportunities to maintain workplace relevance, upskill and reskill, and develop transferable skills.[1] KPU is committed to offering non-credit bearing Digital Credentials that recognize learners' competencies, validate competencies and informal/non-formal learning, and increase access to post-secondary education for a diverse range of learners.

To fulfill this commitment, KPU will establish and maintain a separate, formal institutional framework and the required institutional structures for developing and approving non-credit bearing Digital Credentials that meet institutional and Provincial standards, which ensures greater accessibility, responsiveness, transparency, relevancy, value, and quality. The framework will create a clear distinction between the different types of Digital Credentials, and a process for issuing Digital Open Badges to validate the learning experience. This framework will not alter the existing Senate governance process for creating or changing Senate-approved courses or programs. The framework provides an additional way to represent the added achievement in Senate-approved credit courses, non-credit learning experience, or completion-based learning activities.

[1] Prud'homme-Généreux, A. (2023). *BCcampus micro-credential toolkit for B.C.* BCcampus. https://opentextbc.ca/bcmicrocredential/chapter/background/

B. Scope and Limits

This policy applies to all Digital Credentials (Non-Credit) at KPU, which are organized into the following two categories:

1. Digital Credentials that recognize Competency-Based Learning and include an assessment of a learner's specific competencies. These are called Micro-Credentials.
2. Other Digital Credentials that recognize Completion-Based Learning. They indicate a learner's completion of a set of learning tasks or activities and do not include the assessment of a learner's specific competencies.

C. Statement of Policy Principles

1. The University will collaborate with Indigenous communities, institutions, employers, industry partners, and community organizations to develop Digital Credentials that support diverse learners' and community needs. These Digital Credentials are, among other things, flexible pathways for learners to meet workforce or learning needs.

2. The University will establish criteria and standards for developing and approving all Digital Credentials that align with institutional policies, governance processes, and Provincial post-secondary criteria and standards.

3. When considering the goals, structure, content and delivery of all Digital Credentials, the University will aim to reduce barriers, increase access and mobility, and meet the unique needs of learners.

4. Digital Credentials themselves are non-credit bearing; upon completion of Digital Credentials, learners are awarded Digital Open Badges to recognize their Competency-Based Learning (Micro-credentials) and Completion-Based Learning activities.

5. Digital Credentials that recognize Completion-Based Learning can arise from non-credit learning experience or informal/non-formal learning, such as co-curricular activities, work, training, and experience.

6. Micro-credentials at KPU can arise from non-credit learning experience, informal/non-formal learning, or credit courses (e.g., a component of a credit course, components of multiple credit courses, or full courses if their outcomes contribute to an identified competency).

7. Shorter-duration Micro-credentials can stack up into a larger Micro-credential that recognizes a coherent set of skills or competencies.

8. Digital Credentials cannot be used to satisfy Senate-approved courses or program requirements. In particular, a Micro-credential that arises from a Senate-approved credit course cannot be used to satisfy Senate-approved courses or program requirements. However, the Senate-approved course that has a Micro-credential associated may be used to satisfy Senate-approved courses or program requirements.

9. KPU Digital Credentials cannot be used as evidence in a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) assessment.

D. Definitions

Refer to Section A of AC15 Digital Credentials (Non-Credit) Procedure for a list of definitions in support of this Policy.

E. Related Policy and Legislation

University Act 35.2(5)

AC14 KPU Credential Framework Policy

F. Related Procedure

AC15 Digital Credentials (Non-Credit) Procedure