



## UNIVERSITY POLICY

**Section:** 10.1.15

**Section Title:** Academic: Academic Matters

**Policy Name:** Digital Credentials

**Formerly Book:** N/A

**Approval Authority:** Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Responsible Executive:** Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Adopted:** 03/29/2023

**Reviewed:**

**Revised:**

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### 1. Policy Statement

Digital badges and digital certificates are valid digital representations of earned accomplishments or proficiencies that provide opportunities for recipients to explore and receive acknowledgement of completed learning in topics both inside and outside of the structure of degrees, majors, and minors. Together, these programs are referred to as “digital credentials.”

### 2. Reason for Policy

To provide a structure for how digital credentials are proposed, approved, documented, and maintained, and how these are utilized by all members of the Rutgers community.

### 3. Who Should Read This Policy

All members of the Rutgers community.

### 4. Resources

Digital Credential website: <https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/microcredentialing-and-digital-badging>

Digital Credential Visual Identity System: <https://communications.rutgers.edu/services-resources/digital-badges>

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All policies are subject to amendment. Please refer to the Rutgers University Policy Library website ([policies.rutgers.edu](https://policies.rutgers.edu)) for the official, most recent version.

## 5. Definitions

- **Approver** – The person or committee that administers the digital credential programs across the functional area approver accounts. The approver will review submitted materials for their alignment with the guidelines for digital badges and digital certificates in their respective account area, and respond to the submitter with feedback on their potential new program.
- **Artifacts** – The documentation of learning that was undertaken in earning a particular digital credential. This can include submitted papers, reports, videos, completed assessments, and other examples of accomplishments by the learner during the digital credential program.
- **Badge or Certificate Proposer** – The individual, group, or program proposing a new digital credential offering. They must follow the guidelines and process for submitting a digital credential within their respective functional area approver account. Proposers can be current student groups, faculty, or staff of the University using the appropriate University approval process.
- **Coordinator** – The person who assists proposers with new digital credentials for inclusion in a functional area approver account's offerings. They enter new digital credentials into the digital credential software platform and make them eligible for earning.
- **Digital Badge** – Shareable electronic documentation of competency-based learning or validated participation in and assessment of a learning opportunity.
- **Digital Certificate** – Shareable electronic documentation of competency-based learning in a certificate program.
- **Digital Credential** – Shareable electronic documentation of competency-based learning in either a digital badging or digital certificate program.
- **Earned Badge** – A digital badge for which a learner has completed all the necessary learning requirements and assessments, and has been given access to accept and share the digital badge.
- **Earned Certificate** – A digital certificate for which a learner has completed all the necessary learning requirements and assessments, and has been given access to accept and share the digital certificate.
- **Functional Area Approver Account** – For the digital credential process and its associated software platform, there are seven accounts to organize the digital credential functions and offerings within that area – one for each of the four Chancellor-led Units (Rutgers–New Brunswick, Rutgers–Newark, Rutgers–Camden, and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences), the Division of Continuing Studies, the University Libraries, and one for programs that reside in a universitywide administrative office. The universitywide account is coordinated by a committee of members of the Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- **Metadata** – The digitized information stored within each digital credential that includes: the URL to view the information; the name of the digital credential; the name of the earner; the name of the issuer; the date the digital credential was issued; the level of mastery; the learning outcomes; the completed assessment; validity dates of the credential; and the artifacts of the learning process. This data will always be linked to the digital credential and available for viewing. Rutgers will always maintain this metadata into the future, despite any changes in the software platform.

- **Microcredential** – A short, competency-based recognition that enables an educator to document a learner’s mastery in a particular area.
- **Offered Badge** – A digital badge that has been fully approved and is available for learners to earn.
- **Offered Certificate** – A digital certificate that has been fully approved and is available for learners to earn.

## 6. The Policy

### A. Introduction

Digital badges and digital certificates, collectively referred to as “digital credentials” or “digital microcredentials,” provide opportunities for learning in shorter amounts of time than those found in full degree programs, while providing assessment and documentation of the learning process. Rutgers University provides for digital credential programs across the University, so that students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members can take advantage of these learning opportunities—both academic and non-academic—for credit and not-for-credit, internal or external, and stand-alone or packaged into clusters or stacks. Digital credentials make it easy for learners to confirm skills, knowledge, and abilities. They document the resume-level skills achieved by the learner, and include verification from Rutgers of this completed learning. Once achieved, these learning opportunities can be shared with potential and current employers, graduate school programs, other academic institutions, colleagues, and peers. Earned digital credentials can be valid for a lifetime, for a specific period of time, or be renewable.

This initiative is overseen by a Microcredentials Steering Committee, reporting to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### B. Guidance

Information on digital credentials at Rutgers can be found at: <https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/microcredentialing-and-digital-badging>. The site includes information on the guidelines and process to submit proposals for new digital credential programs within each of the seven functional area approval accounts; the Digital Credential Approver and Coordinator within each area; links to the current offerings; and information on why digital credential programs can help meet the needs of educators, learners, and employers.

### C. Compliance

A Visual Identity System has been developed for the creation of digital badge and digital certificate images, and further information on this can be found at <https://communications.rutgers.edu/services-resources/digital-badges>.

Any digital credentials created at the University must follow the Guidelines, Proposal Review Procedures, and Visual Identity System referenced herein to qualify as a Rutgers-validated offering.

Rutgers funds a digital credential software platform at the University leadership level, while enabling each functional area approval account to set the review and approval process for these offerings within their respective area.

The metadata within each digital credential and earner record will be maintained by Rutgers in perpetuity across any changes in the associated software platform vendor.

No other digital credential programs will be recognized or validated by the University.