

Digital Badges

Layout for printing

POLICY NUMBER:

UW-1088

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:

Academic Planning and Institutional Research

University Policy

RATIONALE/PURPOSE:

Lifelong learners seek to document, via a digital record, specific learning achievements that are recognized by employers and other audiences. Digital badges meet this need by providing durable, reliable, shareable and verifiable records of well-defined and specific knowledge, skills or competencies.

DEFINITIONS:

Digital badge

A validated digital record of demonstrated competency, skills or knowledge achieved through a learning activity. Because it reflects assessed and demonstrated learning, a badge goes beyond recognition of the simple completion of a learning activity. The digital record represented by and attached to a badge contains detailed metadata about the student and their achievements, including who earned it, who issued it, criteria required to earn it, and the means by which competency in the relevant skills was assessed and as possible the evidence and assessment of the relevant skills.

SCOPE:

Digital badges may be offered by any UW-Madison unit; they are not limited to academic units. Though the technology and tools used to create and issue digital badges can also be used to maintain digital archives for participation in camps, workshops or conferences, such digital records are not digital badges as defined in this document. They are, instead, digital participation awards and are outside the scope of this policy governing the official UW-Madison badge and its associated imagery.

POLICY:

Digital badges are associated with learning demonstrated through participation in UW-Madison learning activities and assessed by UW-Madison.

Learning associated with UW-Madison digital badges may be obtained via non-credit learning experiences or portions of credit-bearing courses. Digital badges may augment or complement, but may not duplicate, transcribed credentials. Similarly, badges should not be awarded merely for completing a regular, credit-bearing course.

Digital badges cannot be earned through assessment only; they must be offered in conjunction with a formal or informal UW-Madison learning experience. Credit-based offerings can include portions of courses or combinations of courses. Non-credit offerings may include continuing education, employee professional development programming, seminars, workshops, or other events that involves a learning experience and assessment activity. All admissions, financial aid, and enrollment processes are set by the policies related to the learning experience itself, and do not pertain to the badge.

Digital badges offered by UW-Madison do not lead to the conferral of a degree as defined by UW-Madison and will not be reflected on the UW-Madison academic transcript. All promotional materials and communications regarding digital badges must clearly state this limitation.

While elements of for-credit courses may relate to meeting digital badge requirements, badge completion is not a substitute for or component of for-credit coursework nor are badges recorded on the university transcript. Digital badges are non-credit credentials intended to supplement traditional academic transcripts and resumes for learning by highlighting demonstrated competency in a defined area or discipline, recognition for things learned on-the-job, or mastery of industry-specific training or products.

Once issued, badges are controlled by the learner, though they may not be altered. Badges are verifiable, shareable, and discoverable.

PROCEDURE:

- I. Badges may be offered by any UW–Madison division or department (sponsoring unit).
 - II. All units that wish to offer a digital badge must complete a proposal and implementation form.
 - III. The proposal includes the badge title, description, intended audience, learning outcomes, specific earning criteria, demonstrated competencies/skills, administrative details, and fiscal management structure. Proposal forms should originate from members of the sponsoring unit.
 - IV. A digital badge represents an assessed successful outcome of a learning experience at UW–Madison. When designing a learning experience that will include the offering of a digital badge, the resources to assess the student’s learning must be included in the program structure, management, and budget.
 - V. Consistent with other UW–Madison credentials, the unit seeking to offer a digital badge will consult with their school/college Continuing Education Director, Academic Dean and/or academic planner, or Divisional Director. (The Division of Continuing Studies will consult in the planning stages and will offer guidance about school/college/divisional consultation.) In all cases, proposals to offer badges that include for-credit course activity must include support from the department/program and academic dean in the school/college offering the courses.
 - VI. Proposals are approved by the head of the division or their designee. Considerations for granting approval should evaluate the academic quality, market need, and financial sustainability of the learning experience.
 - VII. Once approved the badge will be implemented into the campus badging system and can be included in announcements of the learning experience.
 - VIII. Badge completion will be recorded using the current campus badging system administered by the Division of Continuing Studies.
 - IX. The sponsoring unit is responsible for collecting and issuing learner completion records in the campus badging system.
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- X. The sponsoring unit of the badge is responsible for the cost of badge set up and training in the campus system. Quotes for this charge can be provided by the Division of Continuing Studies and are dependent on the number of badges and prior experience with the system. The sponsoring unit should include the ongoing cost of assessment and issuance of badges to completers in their budgets for providing the learning experience.
 - XI. Badges will not be included as a separate page in [Guide](#). An announcement of badges used to signify successful assessment of learning may be included in the Guide if the learning experience is associated with an appropriate program included in Guide.
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RELATED UW-MADISON POLICIES:

[UW-1005 Credit by Department Examination](#)

[UW-1014 Policy on Departmental Placement Examinations](#)

[UW-1048 Ways of Earning Credit at UW-Madison](#)

RELATED UW-MADISON DOCUMENTS, WEB PAGES, OR OTHER RESOURCES:

[Guide](#)

Policy Administration

APPROVAL AUTHORITY:

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

POLICY MANAGER:

Vice Provost of Academic Affairs, Director, Academic Planning and Institutional Research
