Requested Update to Microcredential Approval Process

Existing Microcredential Approval Process document:

Attachment_3_041123_Process_for_Approval_of_Microcredentials.pdf

Executive Summary:

The Center for Academic Innovation's instructional designers (formerly with Global Campus) has been offering the Online Course Design Institute (OCDI) for many years. Faculty and staff who have completed this rigorous, multi-week training have expressed interest in earning a microcredential and the accompanying badge for completion of the institute. Completion of the OCDI signifies a wide range of competencies in online course design and the digital badge is a way to showcase the accomplishment. This training, which includes assessments and is free of charge, is offered every semester and requires significant effort beyond a faculty member's regular workload.

Currently, there are two potential paths to approve this noncredit microcredential. The first option is for the Center for Academic Innovation to partner with a Major Academic Unit to navigate the existing approval process. However, since the Center for Academic Innovation independently manages the curriculum development, teaching, and assessment feedback for the OCDI, it would be more practical to modify the existing microcredential approval policy. This modification would allow internal units to offer microcredentials to K-State faculty and staff.

It is important to note that not all trainings would qualify as microcredentials. Only those aimed at the transformational growth of employees, and are also free of charge, require assessment, and extend beyond a day or two, would be eligible. Trainings strictly for compliance purposes, such as mandatory safety protocols, regulatory requirements, or standard operating procedures, would not qualify. Additional units have expressed interest in building microcredentials for K-State employees, including IT, and in previous years, HR.

An update is requested to the Microcredential Approval Process as outlined in the Approval, Routing, and Notification Document.

We suggest creating a subsection to the existing second point:

2. Microcredential approval may be sought by any Major Academic Unit (MAU) at K-State. The term Major Academic Unit includes all Colleges, K-State Olathe, K-State Libraries, K-State Extension, K-State Graduate School, and the Staley School of Leadership.

The subsection would read:

2a. All K-State units may propose noncredit microcredentials intended to provide professional learning opportunities to K-State faculty and/or staff. The noncredit microcredential must be:

- Internal to the institution
- Free of charge to the institution

- Intended to provide a transformational or growth opportunity to faculty and staff (not related to university compliance)

3c. All requests for microcredentials, whether credit or non-credit, must come through a Major Academic Unit (except for those that meet the criteria of 2a. above).

4a. Remove "the Dean of Global Campus."

FAQs:

Q. What internal units might be interested in offering a transformational training to faculty and staff?

A. The Center for Academic Innovation (formerly Global Campus) has offered the Online Course Design Institute for many years and faculty and staff who have completed it have asked if it could be a microcredential. This training involves multiple weeks, rigor, assessment, and full completion of it is over and above a faculty member's regular workload. It is also free and offered every semester.

Q. Can a training we already do (e.g., FERPA Training or Cybersecurity Awareness training) become a microcredential?

A. While these trainings are critical to maintaining university compliance, they are not intended to create transformational growth in participants.

Q. What if a noncredit microcredential from an internal unit that is not a Major Academic Unit becomes so popular that there is a market to offer it outside the university and/or for a fee?

A. In this case, the unit would need to partner with a Major Academic Unit and go through the steps to create a microcredential that would allow people to enroll who are not university employees. It would require new Faculty Senate approval.

Q. Would the internal noncredit microcredential go through a different approval process?

A. It would go through the same steps that the current noncredit microcredentials go through – internal unit approval, Faculty Senate Academic Affairs approval, and Center for Academic Innovation approval.

Q. Do other universities allow microcredentials to be offered to internal faculty and staff?

A. Yes! Kennesaw State University, University of Florida, and the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) offer microcredentials to faculty and staff, as just a few examples.

Q. If we issue a large number of new microcredentials to faculty and staff at K-State, will that impact that enrollment goals in the strategic plan?

A. Based on the time commitment required to effectively teach a microcredential, as well as the requirement that learners pass assessments to earn a microcredential, it is unlikely that this will grow significantly.

Q. What is the scalability of this?

A. Using the current K-State registration system, LMS, and microcredential badging system allows automated badge issuance once assessment is complete, which allows for scalability.