

Micro-credentials Policy

Last Modified	March 2020
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Approval Authority	Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Contact Officer	Academic Quality Team Leader – Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic)

Introduction

This policy outlines the conditions under which micro-credentials can be established, quality assured, and awarded at the University of Canterbury.

Definitions

Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) – a committee of Universities New Zealand. Charged with considering academic matters across the university system

Digital badge – a digital badge is defined as a validated indicator of an accomplishment, competence, skill, quality, or interest that has been earned by the badge holder. Digital badges are associated with an image and contain embedded metadata about the badge, its recipient, the issuer, and any supporting evidence for the achievements listed.

Micro-credential – is defined as

- a self-contained, stand-alone assessed credential;
- typically 5–40 points in size in increments of 5 points;
- tightly focused on a coherent capability or skills set¹;
- at a minimum of level 5 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, and at a maximum of level 8.

A micro-credential normally certifies achievement of a smaller quantity of learning than course level.

Staff or staff member – person/s engaged for paid employment with the University by way of an employment agreement.

¹ See [NZQA](#) and CUAP definitions: link to the website

Student Achievement Component funding (SAC funding) – the Government’s contribution to the direct costs of teaching, learning and other costs driven by student numbers.

Student – a person who is currently enrolled as a student at the University, either directly or through official arrangements with another organisation.

Policy Statements

Micro-credentials assist the University’s strategic objectives of engagement with those within its local community as well as offering opportunities for life-long learning. Micro-credentials can be offered as a flexible learning opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse cohort of learners.

Micro-credentials offered by the University

- Provide continuing education and/or upskilling for those already in or entering the workforce, and
- Provide opportunities for current students to develop complementary skills to their qualification (for example safe work practices, work ready skills for work integrated learning or skills for employment).

Scope and application

This policy covers the development, offering and quality control aspects of micro-credentials created by the University and how micro-credentials offered by other Universities may be recognised for credit.

All staff members who wish to offer micro-credentials are expected to follow this policy and associated processes, whether micro-credentials are funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) or by a third party as well as those offered as professional development (not funded under TEC guidelines).

This policy **does not cover** continuing education or upskilling opportunities that

- a) **are not** assessed, and/or
- b) bear **no** academic points.

Establishing a University of Canterbury Micro-credential

- A micro-credential should not duplicate existing approved offerings (i.e. courses, awards) in the University, but can use existing materials.
- Strong evidence of need from employers, industry, professional organisations, iwi, and/or other communities is essential.

- In cases of collaboration with external parties on the development, assessment or delivery of a micro-credential granted through the University, the responsibility for the academic quality of the micro-credential sits with the University.
- Micro-credentials may have entry criteria in terms of prerequisite knowledge, skills or experience.
- Micro-credentials may be considered for credit towards a University of Canterbury qualification subject to [Credit Recognition and Transfer Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#).

Micro-credentials must adhere to the Universities' guiding principles: micro-credentials as approved by CUAP, and the requirements of the [Appendix H: Quality Assurance of University Courses and Programmes not leading to a Qualification \(PDF\) \(CUAP Handbook available on Universities New Zealand website\)](#).

Granting of a University of Canterbury Micro-credential

- A micro-credential may be awarded following successful achievement of learning gained from a programme delivered by the University.
- The achievement of a micro-credential may be recognised on a student's Academic Transcript and/or via a digital badge or certificate.

Quality assurance of University of Canterbury Micro-credentials

- The micro-credentials Board of Studies (MCBS), a sub-committee of the Academic Administration Committee, reviews and approves micro-credentials under delegated authority from Academic Board. See the [Appendix](#) for the creation and approval process.
- Applications for micro-credentials must use [Template 7: Micro-credentials \(see Templates sub-heading, on the Bluebook intranet pages\) \(staff only\)](#) and supply the necessary evidence as outlined in the Template before being considered.
- Micro-credentials are approved by the MCBS for a period of 5 years, after which re-approval is needed.
- An evaluation plan must be in place to ensure that a micro-credential is evaluated annually. This evaluation must include student feedback.

Managing Micro-credentials

The proposer of a micro-credential (proposer) shall send [Template 7](#) to the MCBS for approval.

The MCBS will maintain oversight of micro-credentials across the University to avoid duplication and ensure non-proliferation.

Details of the micro-credential will then be logged electronically into a central repository which will be administered by the Academic Quality Team. A list of approved micro-credentials will be made available on the University's internet and intranet.

Setting of Fees for University of Canterbury Micro-credentials

For micro-credentials attracting SAC funding:

- the appropriate fee band will be applied as set by Council; and
- An application will be made to TEC for micro-credential funding approval.

If a micro-credential does not qualify for SAC funding, the College, Service Unit or Research Centre offering the micro-credential will propose an appropriate fee which will be approved by an SMT Member.

When setting fees, the proposer should consider the following:

- Funding (if any) that has been provided by an external provider,
- Existing/similar courses in the market place/industry,
- Whether or not the course is solely for professional development, and
- The level of the micro-credential being offered (example level 5 vs level 8).

Recognising Micro-credentials

- Currently, any micro-credential offered by the University is unable to be credited towards a qualification. However a College may conduct a recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessment for any completed University of Canterbury or external micro-credential and decide to award credit on the basis of RPL, in accordance with [Credit Recognition and Transfer Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#), for a specific course.

Recognising External Micro-credentials

- Micro-credentials awarded by other tertiary institutions may be recognised by the University toward a qualification by way of credit transfer at the discretion of the enrolling Dean subject to the [Credit Recognition and Transfer Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#).

Related Documents and Information

UC Regulation

- [Admission Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#)
- [Credit Recognition and Transfer Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#)

UC Policy Library

- [Creating Reviewing and Modifying Courses Programmes and Qualifications Guidelines \(PDF, 250 KB\)](#)
- [Credit Recognition and Transfer Policy \(PDF, 434KB\)](#)

UC website and intranet

- [Tangata Tū, Tangata Ora: Engaged empowered, making a difference, Strategic vision 2020 to 2030 \(University website\)](#)

External

- [Quality assurance of university course and programmes not leading to a qualification \(PDF,CUAP Handbook 2019\) \(Appendix H\) \(PDF\) \(Universities New Zealand website\)](#)
- [Micro-credentials funding approval guidelines \(PDF\) \(Tertiary Education Commission website\)](#)
- [Micro-credentials Funding approval \(New Zealand Qualifications Authority website\)](#)

Appendix

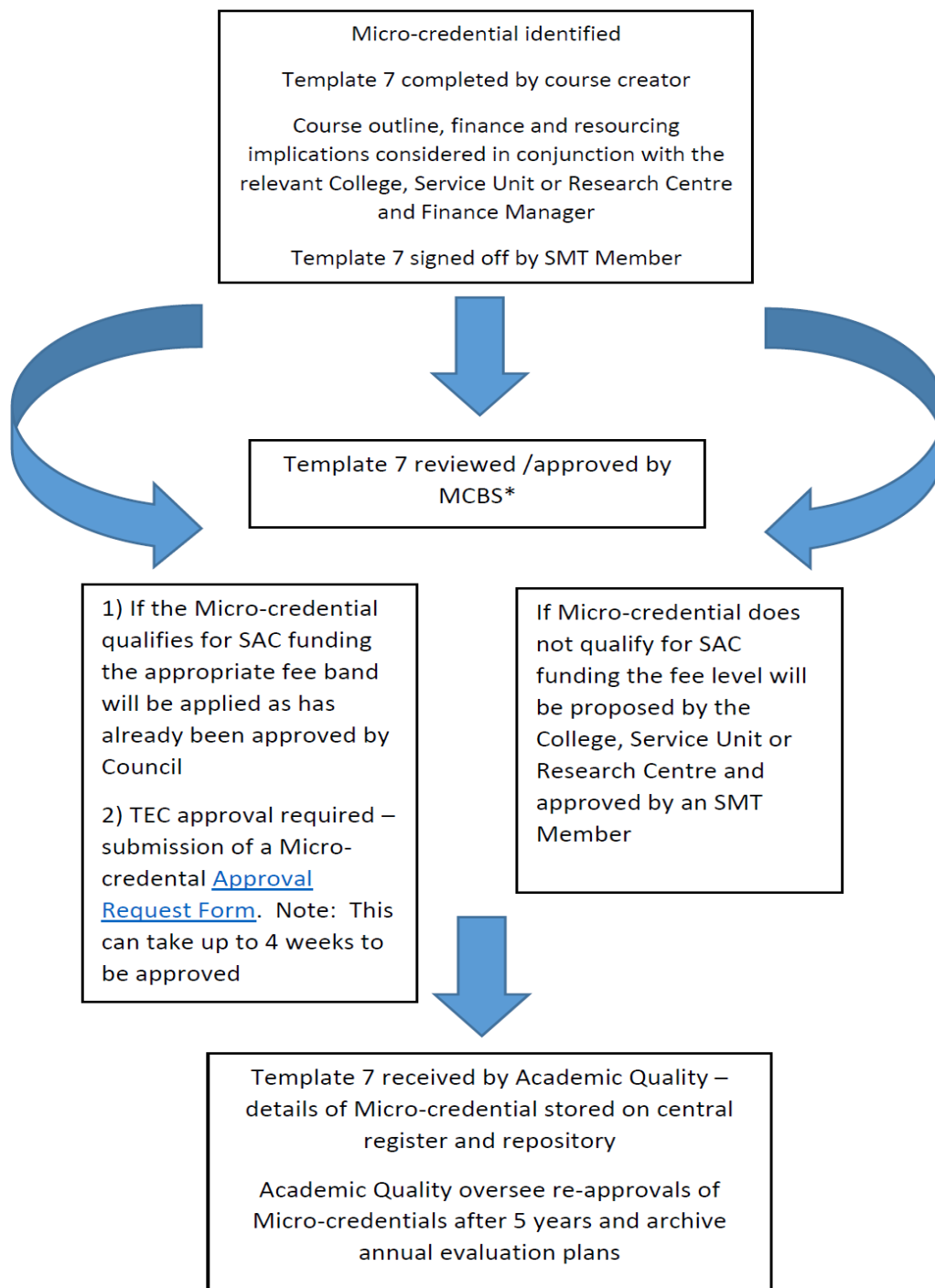
- [Creation and approval process for micro-credentials via the Micro-credentials Board of Studies](#)

Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action date
1.00	Document creation and deposit into the UCPL	AVC(A)	December 2019
1.01	Change to Recognising Micro-credentials sub-heading and content	Policy Unit	March 2020

This policy remains in force until it is updated

Appendix

Creation and approval process for micro-credentials via the Micro-credentials Board of Studies.



**Approval by the MCBS will be time limited to give an opportunity for the creation/approval process to be reviewed and refined until we have comfort it works. In due course the creation/approval process will be assigned to College Board of Studies and the MCBS will be dissolved.*