

ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALS

Gary Chinn & Peter Butler
Guiding Principle 3 Team

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN RELEVANT & RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

CURRICULUM SUB-COMMITTEE

Explore alternative curriculum structures

Support flexible approaches

Identify social & professional competencies
needed

WHAT ARE ALT CREDENTIALS?

In contrast to credentials typically conferred by higher education institutions (Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral)

PRINCIPLE CHARACTERISTICS

1

DELIVERY MODES

Face to face, online, and blended

2

DURATION

From hours to months, and frequently self-paced

3

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Varies widely, from attendance to assignments to exams

PRINCIPLE CHARACTERISTICS

4

AREA OF FOCUS

Typically focused on knowledge & skills highly relevant to the labor market

5

INTEGRATION FLEXIBILITY

Can be offered independently or integrated/embedded into another qualification (including academic credit)

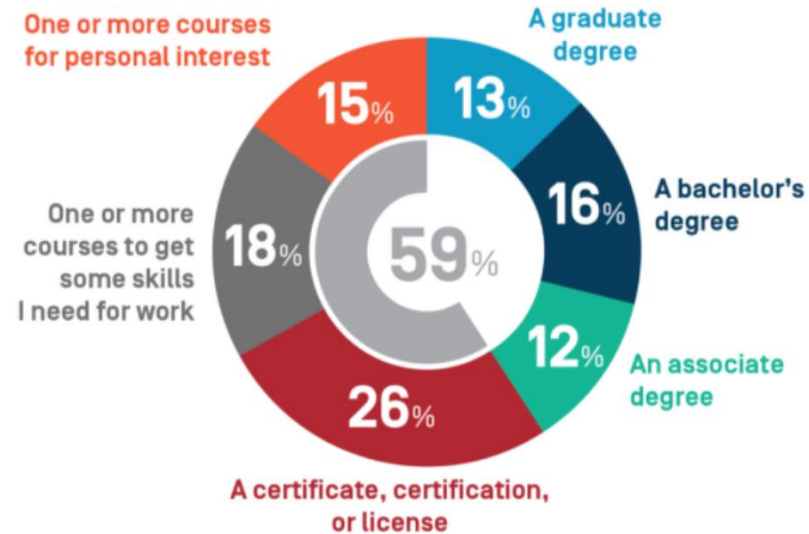
TERM CLARITY

*How do
credentials differ?*



	CERTIFICATE*	CERTIFICATION	DEGREE	LICENSE
Awarded by	Education and training providers, employers, labor unions, and industry associations	Industry certification bodies	Education institutions	Government agencies
Awarded for	An exam at the end of a training or education course or a one-time assessment	Third-party, independent competency assessment	Course of study	Meeting requirements of an occupation
Indicates	Education/knowledge/skills	Skill mastery/competencies	Education, successfully passed courses	Legal permission
Time to complete	Variable, generally less than 2 years	Variable	Variable, generally 2 years or more	Variable
Time and renewal requirements	Often no time limit, no renewal requirement	Time-limited, includes recertification	No time limit, no renewal requirement	Time-limited, renewal generally required
Revocation process	Cannot be revoked	Can be revoked for incompetence or unethical behavior	Cannot be revoked	Can be revoked for incompetence or unethical behavior
Examples	CNC Machinist, Zurich Insurance Apprenticeship	CompTIA Cybersecurity Analyst, Certified Energy Auditor, Medical Laboratory Scientist, MLS(ASCP) ^{CM}	Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Associate of Arts in Business Administration	Electrician, Professional Engineer, Registered Nurse

CONTEXT: LEARNER TRENDS



The majority of adults considering enrolling in an education or training program in the next six months **prefer nondegree programs**.



Public Viewpoint:
COVID-19 Work and Education Survey

CONTEXT: UNIVERSITY RESPONSE



Developing and supporting instructional and course alternatives:

- Expand flexible delivery mechanisms—offer courses in the evenings, on weekends, online, in hybrid formats, and in shorter terms for non-traditional students.
- Develop alternative credentialing programs—certificates, badges, and competency-based programs including those that incorporate assessments for prior learning—and strengthen the relationship between continuing education (non-credit) and traditional academic programs.
- Incorporate adaptive learning approaches—allowing students to learn on custom pathways tailored to their abilities and needed competencies.

Integrating and enhancing service and work-based learning:

- Expand students' participation in work-and-learn opportunities, including internships, externships, co-ops, problem-based learning, and capstone projects situated in business and community contexts.

EXAMPLES

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES

Recognized by educational institutions

May or may not confer academic credit

Undergraduate Certificate in

Nursing Forensics



PennState
World Campus

Online Faculty Development

EXAMPLES



**Engineering
Leadership
Development
Program**

Penn State College
of Engineering



MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Recognition of student learning at level less than an academic credit

Typically non-credit, but can be "stacked" or bundled for credit.

Digital badges are a form of micro-credential.

EXAMPLES

SKILLS-BASED SHORT COURSES

Typically non-credit

A diversity of providers, including higher education institutions, MOOCs, coding boot camps, and professional organizations

VERIFYING FRAGMENTED LEARNING: AN ONGOING CHALLENGE

CONNECTING CREDENTIALS

A BETA CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK

Building a system for communicating
about and connecting diverse credentials



OPEN QUESTIONS

Should Penn State pursue alternative educational pathways for students?

Are we willing to adapt to accommodate and facilitate these pathways?

- Structural layer - who will do this work, or assist with it?
- Policy layer - what changes are required to allow or encourage this work?
- Technology layer - what platforms are needed to support these learner pathways?

How will we know we have succeeded? How can we evaluate efficacy and ensure quality?