

Statement and Recommendation From the UCC
on NKU Micro-credentials
To Faculty Senate

The following recommendation was approved by the UCC on 9/19/24.

Several years ago, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research and Outreach Samantha Langley established micro-credentials. These are 2-4 courses that provide students with additional credentials that they can place on their resume. Dr. Langley deemed the creation of and modification of micro-credentials as non-curriculum. She set up a process for approval of new micro-credentials and changes to micro-credentials. This process involves administration, staff and a limited number of faculty. The faculty selected do not provide full representation, unlike the UCC.

The normal curriculum process involves approval of new and changed curriculum by the department/school, chair/director, Teacher Education Committee (if necessary), college curriculum committee, college dean, Graduate Council (if necessary) and UCC. Aside from the chair/director, these steps are all bypassed with the approval of and changes to micro-credentials.

The UCC recommends that the process be revisited so that it mirrors the normal curriculum process. Reasons for this recommendation are enumerated below.

- Although micro-credentials are not degree conferring and will not appear on a student's transcript, they consist of courses that do appear on a student's transcript. Minors and certificates are also not degree conferring (they do appear on the student's transcript) and new and changes to minors and certificates go through the normal curriculum process.
- The chair/director proposing a micro-credential may not be aware of issues that the department/school faculty might raise. Working through the normal process would ensure that issues and any concerns are addressed early.
- Without more representation in the approval process, cross-department and cross-college issues are likely not being addressed. The UCC is responsible for hearing such issues when, for instance, a program or course might negatively impact other programs or courses.
- The curriculum is controlled by the faculty. Deeming micro-credentials as non-curriculum indicates to faculty that faculty input is not valued, violating collegial governance.
- The university currently has 47 micro-credentials. These are all listed on a micro-credentials page but not on departmental pages and do not appear in the catalog. This seems to be missing an opportunity whereby departments can advertise them. Although the decision of whether to treat micro-credentials or not is separate from putting these on departmental pages, it is another indicator that faculty do not control micro-credentials and that they are not "housed" in a department/school, unlike majors, minors and certificates.
- A casual investigation into enrollments indicates that there are currently 250 individual students registered as pursuing at least one micro-credential in the Fall 2024 semester. Of these, 96% are degree seeking students. It appears that only 4% are micro-credential-only students. Adding micro-credentials to the catalog will also provide additional opportunities for student awareness and an easier access to discuss during academic advising as a holistic part of a student's education and structuring career readiness into their academic career.

- The Provost has requested that course changes/deletions indicate micro-credentials that are impacted. In Curriculog, we can run an impact report to see all courses and programs impacted by a course change/deletion. However, as micro-credentials are not deemed curriculum, they do not appear in the catalog and therefore Curriculog does not display micro-credentials in the impact report. Many faculty members are unaware of available micro-credentials and so the impact of a course change/deletion on a micro-credential may not be recognized.