

# Microcredentials at Canadore College Proposal

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Date: November 12, 2020



## Introduction

The overall structure of the Microcredentials at Canadore College report was based on consideration of the following goals:

- a) Define the term Microcredentials for Canadore College
- b) Create a policy for Microcredentials for Canadore College
- c) Create a framework for Microcredentials that can be reflected in the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF)
- d) Identify potential skills gaps and knowledge opportunities for Microcredential development at Canadore College
- e) Increase awareness of Microcredentials at Canadore College

An analysis of existing, but limited and varied, microcredential information from across the province was completed, and a definition, draft policy, and draft framework were developed to initiate development and delivery processes to offer microcredentials at Canadore College. Potential skills gaps and knowledge opportunities were identified and are summarized for review and consideration. Once implemented, marketing and communications for new deliveries can begin.

## Background: Fulfilling Canadore’s Strategic Mandate Agreement and Identifying Opportunity

In the same way that industries continue to evolve, so too must the education and training needed to participate in and contribute to those industries. As a leader in industry training and lifelong learning, Canadore College continues to develop innovative, flexible and competitive education that meets the needs of its diverse population of learners and its local, regional, and global partners.

Canadore’s Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) and Strategic Solutions 2022, in conjunction with the changing face of lifelong learning and skills training around the world, support an immediate need to develop and offer microcredentials at Canadore College. Our SMA dictates that we will continue to pursue credentials that reflect the learning of our students and the needs of our employers as we develop the workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; we will offer a complete array of credentials, ranging from certificates to degrees. Developing the granular end of the credential range allows us to ensure our students have access to accelerated, convenient, and competency-based learning opportunities that reflect employment market needs. By engaging with community, business, and industry, we will create a unique student experience that is both cost effective and competitive. Working with employers allows us to contribute to the development of industry-requested skills that reflect the specific needs of that industry. Microcredentials is one of the ways Canadore will fulfill its promise to create new channels for the delivery of our programs and services.

Additionally, in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development committed \$3 million to RapidSkills, “a time-limited, grant-based initiative that will support industry recognized, short-duration training that helps people get back to work quickly” (RAPIDSKILLS: MICRO-CREDENTIALS PILOT CALL FOR PROPOSALS). This funding was designed to (i) support workers in a changing economy, including laid-off, at-risk, and underutilized workers, develop the skills they need to get and keep good jobs; and (ii) help employers build the workforce they need to grow their businesses. Further, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities believes that microcredentials support lifelong learning and allow our workforce to remain up-to-date and responsive to



the needs of local labour markets. Creating shorter, cost-effective training results in applicants who are qualified and recognizable to businesses across all industries looking to hire. Ministry direction suggests there is an immediate need for the delivery of microcredentials, a form of education perfectly suited to address the current and future economy.

## Defining Microcredentials

A microcredential is a short, customizable learning experience designed to provide learners with specialized, industry-relevant training that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to compete in a global job market.

Microcredentials are succinct, value-added online, face-to-face, or blended modules and courses that can be self-paced or follow a more traditional instructor-led approach. Upon completion of a microcredential, learners will have demonstrated proficiency of discrete skills and knowledge often validated by industry experts.

Where applicable, microcredentials can be applied to laddering and pathway opportunities for other credentials like courses and programs.

## Implementation of Microcredentials

The implementation of microcredentials at Canadore will begin with the development of our framework for delivery and an examination of our existing content. Once complete, consultations with industry to identify skills and knowledge gaps will assist in the development and delivery of new content (please see Potential Skills Gaps and Knowledge Opportunities for further details on this process). As needed, the framework will be assessed and revised according to the timeline for all Canadore policies.

Under the microcredentials classification, Canadore will offer the following credentials:

### 1. *Badge*

- Credit or noncredit experience/workshop/course
- Digital or non-digital
- Self-paced or instructor-led
- Up to 15 hours in duration
- Designed to provide a basic skill, knowledge and/or attitude for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning

### 2. *Certificate of Training*

- Credit or noncredit workshop/course(s)
- Instructor-led
- Up to 100 hours in duration
- Designed to provide a limited set of skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes for a specific discipline, trade or occupation for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning

### 3. *Canadore College Certificate*

- Credit or noncredit course(s) or program
- Instructor-led

- May be as low as 100 hours in duration
- Designed to provide a set of enhanced skills, knowledge and attitudes for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning

## Draft: Fitting Microcredentials into the Ontario Qualifications Framework

To maintain the integrity of the Ontario Qualification Framework (OQF) in all Canadore credentials, focusing on the quality, accessibility, and accountability of these new postsecondary offerings, the following is a proposed addendum to the existing framework to include the 3 microcredentials outlined above.

**Table 1 – Microcredential Qualification Descriptions (Ontario Qualifications Framework)**

The qualification categories distinguish between levels of knowledge based on a continuum ranging from the mastery of particular, established bodies of knowledge and skills to levels at the frontiers of knowledge where new knowledge is created and established assumptions and methods are challenged. Each qualification may be seen as a reference point along that continuum. The descriptions of each qualification outline its purpose, typical admission requirements and typical duration.			
	Microcredentials		
Descriptors	<i>Badge</i>	<i>Certificate of Training</i>	<i>Canadore Certificate</i>
Overall Program Design and Outcome Emphasis	Credit or non-credit experience/workshop/ course designed to provide a basic skill, knowledge and/or attitude for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.	Credit or Non-credit workshop/course(s) designed to provide a limited set of skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes for a specific discipline, trade or occupation for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.	Credit or Non-credit course(s) or program that is designed to provide a set of enhanced skills, knowledge and attitudes for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.
Preparation for Employment and Further Study	Demonstrates the achievement of a specific skill for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.	Demonstrates the achievement of a limited set of skills for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.	Demonstrates the achievement of a set of enhanced skills for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.
Typical Duration	Up to 15 hours in duration (self-paced or instructor-led).	Up to 100 hours in duration (instructor-led).	As few as 100 hours in duration (instructor-led).
Admission Requirements	At least 19 years of age or older. Where the content is part of a program, the admission requirements for the program applies.	At least 19 years of age or older. Where the content is part of a program, the admission requirements for the program applies.	Ontario Secondary School Diploma/Ontario Secondary School Graduation Diploma or equivalent or at least 19 years of age or older. Where the content is part of a program, the admission requirements for the program applies.
Qualification Awarded	Badge	Certificate of Training	Canadore College Approved Certificate



**Table 2 – Microcredentia l Qualification Standards (Ontario Qualifications Framework)**

This table outlines the generic competencies that the holder of each qualification is expected to be able to demonstrate, with a focus on knowledge and skills transferable to the workplace or useful for further study. The descriptors in the first column indicate the different categories of competencies, which vary in nature and degree depending on the qualification. The capacity to work creatively and autonomously is required at all levels but in contexts that range from fixed routines to those characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty.

Descriptors	Microcredentia ls		
	<i>Badge</i>	<i>Certificate of Training</i>	<i>Canadore Certificate</i>
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	Demonstration of a distinct, basic skill, knowledge, or attitude for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.	Demonstration of a limited set of skills, knowledge, or attitude for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.	Demonstration of a set of enhanced skills, knowledge and attitudes for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning.
Conceptual and Methodological Awareness/Research and Scholarship	Level is dependent on the specific skill being assessed.	Level is dependent on the specific skill being assessed.	Level is dependent on the specific skill being assessed.
Communication Skills	Level is dependent on the specific skill being assessed.	The ability to communicate clearly and correctly within the specific context.	The ability to: a) Communicate clearly, concisely and correctly within the requirements of the skill set.
Application of Knowledge	Level is dependent on the specific skill being assessed.	The ability to perform within the specific context.	The ability to perform: a) Some complex or non-routine activities; A prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes.
Professional Capacity/Autonomy	Level is dependent on the specific skill being assessed.	The ability to perform within the specific context.	The ability to: a) Perform a range of varied activities or knowledge application situations where the range of contexts in which the choice of actions required is usually clear and complexity in the range of options to be applied is limited; b) Undertake activities involving individual responsibility or autonomy and/or collaboration with others as part of a group or team.
Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	An understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and skill level and an appreciation of the methods and techniques that they are not qualified to employ.	An understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and skill level and an appreciation of the methods and techniques that they are not qualified to employ.	An understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and skill level and an appreciation of the methods and techniques that they are not qualified to employ.



## Policy (Operational Policy Manual)

**TITLE:** Microcredentials Policy

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** TBD

### 1. SCOPE

#### Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the President.

#### Application

This policy applies to all microcredentials at Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology (hereafter referred to as “Canadore” or “the College”).

### 2. PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

#### 2.1 Purpose

2.1.1 To provide students with credentialing opportunities for completion of competencies that address specific skills and support lifelong learning..

2.1.2 In accordance with the College Strategic Goals of providing access to training and educational programs that lead to meaningful employment, this policy provides guidance to ensure that the microcredentials offered at Canadore are aligned with the Ministry’s Qualification Framework and are subject to applicable processes identified in the College’s Academic Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Framework.

#### 2.2 Principles

2.2.1 Microcredentials enhance a learner’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

2.2.2 Microcredentials are designed in collaboration with industry to provide learners with specialized, industry-relevant training.

2.2.3 Microcredentials are a response to a rapidly evolving economy; it is expected that development timelines will keep pace.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

#### 3.1 Microcredential

A microcredential is a short, customizable learning experience designed to provide learners with specialized, industry-relevant training that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to compete in a global job market.

Microcredentials are succinct, value-added online modules and courses that can be self-paced or follow a more traditional online instructor lead approach. Upon completion of a microcredential, learners will have demonstrated proficiency of discrete skills and knowledge often validated by industry experts.

Where applicable, microcredentials can be applied to laddering and pathway opportunities for larger credentials like courses and programs.

### 4. POLICY

4.1 Each microcredential badge, certificate of training, or certification, will undergo an approval process to  
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ensure that it meets the criteria for a microcredential.

4.2 Microcredentials range from 4 hours to 100+ instructional hours. Microcredentials include the following categories: Badge, Certificate of Training, and Canadore College Certificate.

4.3 Microcredentials should not have pre-requisites, nor should they be pre-requisites to other courses in a program. Where applicable, microcredentials can be applied to laddering and pathway opportunities for larger credentials like courses and programs.

4.4 Where microcredential content is part of a program, admission requirements for the program applies.

4.5 Demonstration of a distinct, basic skill, knowledge, or attitude for entry-level employment, professional development, or lifelong learning is required for successful completion or award of the microcredential.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### President

The President is responsible for the overall management and operation of the College. The President will ensure that the policy is implemented, and that compliance is monitored.

### Vice President, Academic

The Vice President, Academic is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy and to resolve any disputes arising over policy interpretation. Approval of a microcredential offering will come from the office of the Vice President Academic. Should further consultation be required, the Vice President will bring the microcredential proposal to the Board of Governors.

## 6. EVALUATION

This policy will be evaluated every three years or earlier if required.

## RELATED MATERIALS

Minister's Binding Policy Directive *Framework for Programs of Instruction*

*Ontario Qualifications Framework*

Canadore's Microcredential Framework within the *Ontario Qualifications Framework*

## Potential Policy Impacts

The following policies may need to be amended to reflect the implementation and delivery of microcredentials at Canadore College:

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning Policy
- Auditing Courses Policy
- Credit Transfer Policy
- Credit Value Policy
- Grading Policy
- Graduation Policy
- Prior Learning Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Additional policies that may be impacted by the inclusion of microcredentials at Canadore may be identified and assessed by the office of the Vice President, Academic.



## Potential Skills Gaps and Knowledge Opportunities

An independent consultant recently completed an *Employment Research and Needs Assessment* report for Canadore College which identified potential skills gaps, dual roles needed within small and medium enterprises, preferred delivery method of training, and priority areas within our local labour market.

### Identified Gaps Within Current Skill Sets:

1. Soft skills training (communication, problem solving, work ethic, team work)
2. Written communication and numeracy
3. Human resource management and leadership
4. Public speaking and media relations
5. Accounting/bookkeeping
6. Marketing, social media and website maintenance
7. Project, budget and time management
8. Health and safety and mental health awareness
9. Conflict resolution and crisis management
10. Computer skills training (Microsoft Office)
11. Technical software skills (AutoCAD, SolidWorks)
12. Entrepreneurship

### Dual roles identified within Small and Medium Enterprises:

1. Office administration and bookkeeping
2. Office administration and marketing
3. Office administration and human resources
4. Sales and marketing
5. Graphic design and marketing
6. Graphic design and sales
7. Human resources and marketing
8. Human resources and health & safety
9. Trades and office administration

### Delivery Method of Training:

- 60 respondents preferred online learning over other methods of delivery
- 30 respondents preferred blended learning over other methods of delivery
- Less than 30 respondents preferred in-class over other methods of delivery

### Priority Areas:

1. Capitalizing on Digital Training Technologies
2. Utilizing Existing Resources
3. Micro Credential Development
4. Career Advancement Training
5. Multi Credential Development





The report specifically recommended the development of microcredentials in the following areas:

1. Business Administration
2. Entrepreneurship
3. Soft Skills
4. Computer Training
5. Health and Safety
6. Film and Television
7. Management

### ***Employment Research and Needs Assessment Findings***

The *Employment Research and Needs Assessment* report confirms that the recommended microcredential plan outlined in this proposal is timely and in line with local labour market demand. The report identifies microcredentials as a priority area itself, but microcredentials also help to address other aspects of the report such as skills gaps, the need for dual roles in one position, and delivery method preferences, all within those preferred priority areas. Completing a microcredential will allow graduates to easily diversify their skillset to meet industry demand, where multi-skill and multi-disciplinary work environments are increasingly expected from employees.

### **Recommendation**

It is evident that there is an immediate need for the development and implementation of microcredentials at Canadore College. These credentials will address skills and knowledge gaps identified in local industry and ensure that we meet our Strategic Mandate Agreement and Strategic Solutions 2022 commitment to produce culturally diverse, global-minded graduates with a competitive advantage. A timely review and approval of the attached definition, draft policy, and draft framework will assist in the initiation of the development and delivery of microcredentials at Canadore.

Our success is measured against our graduates attaining meaningful, program-related employment coupled with being active, positive contributors to our society. Microcredentials are the next opportunity to carry this commitment forward.