**Modular Credentials**

Functional Lead: Provost/VPAA

Division: Academic Support Division (ASD)

Responsible Office: Director, ASD

1. Purpose. To establish policy and procedures for the development and management of modular credentials at MCU.

2. Background. MCU provides many educational opportunities in addition to the formal programs delivered by the schools. Documentation of the knowledge, skills, and experiences gained through participation in these opportunities can be helpful to the Marine Corps and to the individual learner.

3. Policy

a. Definitions. Credential is a broad term that can be used to refer to anything from a digital badge one might earn for demonstrating a small technical competency to a certificate earned through a collection of coursework and experiences or traditional academic degrees and professional licenses. Some credentials are associated with academic credits, others are not. In general, credentials are officially documented experiences or accomplishments and verify an individual’s qualification or competency in a specific area. This policy applies to smaller, modular credentials, which MCU defines as:

* Micro-credentials, which are mini-qualifications that demonstrate skills (hard or soft), knowledge, and/or experience in a particular subject area or capability.
* Stackable credentials, which aggregate smaller credentials to recognize progressively larger qualifications and demonstrate their cumulative relationship to their career path. These can be:
  + traditional - linear and leading to a higher-level credential,
  + supplemental - enhancing an existing higher-level credential, or
  + independent – sets or clusters of multiple smaller credentials not building to a higher level.

b. Scope. This policy applies to the types of modular credentials defined above and does not apply to degrees or completion certificates provided by MCU’s formal resident and distance programs, education or training for which Continuing Education Units are already defined, or military skill identifiers.

c. Modular Credential Development. In order to assure value, utility, and ultimately portability, modular credential developers will document the key elements of the credential listed below and provide the documentation to Academic Affairs. Changes to modular credentials also must be documented with Academic Affairs.

Substantive Elements

* Title - must accurately reflect the topic and provide an indication of learning level (e.g., awareness vs competence).
* Learning outcomes.
* Target learning level.
* Assessment approach (completion, knowledge level, application-based assessment) - must be appropriate to targeted outcomes and level.
* Contact hours.
* Deliverer/instructor qualification requirements.
* Accreditation/credit target, if applicable.

Administrative Elements

* Credential type (badge, certificate, etc.).
* Eligibility (rank, MOS).
* Prerequisites, if applicable.
* Expiration/refresher requirements, if applicable.
* Delivery mode (asynchronous, face-to-face, etc.).
* Anticipated delivery schedule (frequency, timing).
* Owner - (who delivers, revises, etc.) and POC.
* Keywords - (content and Marine Corps areas of emphasis).
* Connection to other credentials, if applicable (stackable or horizontal).
* Review/revision cycle for credential.
* Where credential will be stored/recorded.

Collaboration Elements

* Recommended equivalency, if applicable (e.g., to credentials in other PME institutions or MOS school, etc.).
* Link to professional association(s), if applicable.
* External review of credential development, if applicable.
* External collaboration (development/delivery), if applicable.

d. Modular Credential Review. Credential developers are encouraged to seek review of credentials by appropriate experts and communities of interest to ensure quality and alignment with service needs and to reduce the potential for duplication of effort.

e. Modular Credential Approval. Directors of MCU’s schools and directorates may approve modular credentials to be developed and delivered by their organization. Additionally, MCU’s President and Provost will conduct a biennial review of all modular credentials offered through the university to determine the appropriate balance of educational value and staff/resources.

f. MCU Recordkeeping. Academic Affairs will maintain a master file of modular credentials offered through MCU.

g. Accessibility to Marine Corps Stakeholders. MCU continues to explore options for making modular credentials accessible via Marine Corps systems. Until a feasible option is identified, schools and directorates are encouraged to provide formal documentation that clearly describes the accomplishments and/or capabilities represented by the modular credential, as well as date, learning level, and other information that may be useful to Marine Corps stakeholders.

h. External Portability. MCU continues to explore options for making modular credentials portable to external systems. Until a feasible option is identified, schools and directorates are encouraged to provide formal documentation that clearly describes the accomplishments and/or capabilities represented by the modular credential, as well as date, learning level, and other information that may be useful to potential employers or collaborators.

Related Policies and Forms:

Promulgated: 14 Jul 2022

Reviewed: 12 Oct 2023

Revised: 12 Oct 2023