

Modular Credentials

Functional Lead: Provost

Division: Academic Support Division

Responsible Office: Director, Academic Support Division

Reference: (a) Awarding a Professional Certificate of Leadership to Marine Employees
Completing MCU Leadership Seminars Decision Paper dtd 31 May 2024

1. Purpose. To establish policy and procedures for the development and management of modular credentials at Marine Corps University (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 narrowly scoped 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.
- Academic certificate programs.
 - As one example, Lejeune Learning Institute (LLI) has been approved by the Commanding General of Education Command to issue a Professional Certificate of Leadership (reference a). It has been authorized for civilian employees of the Marine Corps that have successfully completed the three MCU produced leadership seminars.

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.** To assure value, utility, and ultimately portability, modular credential developers will document the key elements of the credential listed below and provide 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 levels.
- Contact hours.
- Deliverer/instructor qualification requirements.
- Accreditation/credit target, if applicable.

Administrative Elements

- Credential type (badge, certificate, etc.).
- Eligibility [rank, military occupational specialty (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 point of contact (POC).
- Keywords - (content and Marine Corps areas of emphasis).
- Connection to other credentials, if applicable (stackable or horizontal).
- Review/revision cycle for credential.
- Where credentials 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. A Curriculum Review Board will take place that enables the Commanding General of Education Command to approve or disapprove any recommended changes to the current curriculum.

f. MCU Recordkeeping. Academic Affairs will maintain a master file of modular credentials offered through MCU. It will also record the number of individuals who earn modular credentials throughout each academic year for enrollment purposes. This will be provided to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

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

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