ACCREDIBLE CREDENTIAL FRAMEWORK

IMPLEMENT CREDENTIAL OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

ACTIVITY O8

DESCRIPTION: IMPLEMENTING ALL THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL CHANGES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION AND ONGOING MANAGEMENT OF THE CREDENTIAL PROGRAM

INPUTS: CREDENTIAL OPERATING MODEL, SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS, GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

OUTPUTS: ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT CREDENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION IMPLEMENTED

Accredible

OVERVIEW

Implementing all the management and operational changes required to support the introduction and ongoing management of the Credential Program is key to ensuring the quality and ongoing success of the program.

There needs to be consideration of how to encourage and support local initiatives while maintaining both the quality of the overall program, and the reputation of your flagship programs.

This help sheet will help you to understand the types of governance required when launching a multi-department credentialing system.

By completing each task in this help sheet, you'll be able to implement your Organizational Design. This is a common construct to establish a Center of Excellence that owns and executes the Credential Program, supporting and guiding local teams.

The purpose of this documentation is to collect key definitions, use of terms, and concepts in incremental credentialing to inform each department and allow them to 'credential as they go.' This documentation will be the blueprint for every credential issued.

Your organization's credentials are a digital award that are a direct representation of your business, and are displayed within the public domain.

Digital credentials visually communicate your brand and establishment, whether the credential is being viewed by its learner, a person interested in earning a credential with you, an employer validating an award of an individual, or the awarded learners' friends, family, and social network.

This visual communication goes beyond badge and certificate designs—it includes the language used within the content, descriptions, overviews, and summaries. It also includes the:

- Skill tags associated to that credential, the taxonomy behind the design, and pathways that follow on from that credential.
- Delivery communications and method.
- Entire credential view around the design that represents the organization's brand.
- Type of credential we are issuing and the competency framework behind it.
- Process to claim and share the credential, and the support the individual receives with help on how to use the credential.

All of these elements feed into a larger credential governance, which is especially important for a multi-department organization. If different teams within an organization aren't aligned to the above, it creates a messy and confusing badging system.

Where we come in, in the Professional Services department, is to help structure, organize, and guide credential issuance as a central point of governance between all of the departments.

Categories of Governance; Language, Skills, Taxonomy, Delivery, Support, Pathways & Schema, Credential Brief

LANGUAGE

Outcome: Language Glossary for each department to use.

The language in the following places must align across each department:

- Credential description
- Credential delivery email
- Marketing communications

Rules should be set in place to ensure each department aligns. For example, will you be calling a badge or certificate a certification, award, credential, diploma, or something else? Should increasing difficulties be called levels, stages, ranks, or steps? Do we mean the same thing when we say competencies, skills, or learning outcomes? Or microcredentials, micro-pathways, and stackable credentials?

Any commonly used phrases to describe the credentials within the initiative should be determined in a glossary for each department to use.

Other language to consider:

Badges, microcredentials, micro-pathways, short-term credentials, incremental credentials, education certificates vs. certificates, licenses, certifications, degrees, noncredit-to-credit bridges, stacked credential, pathway, course, collection, credential wallet, credential portfolio.

Decide what the common language should be parent-organization wide, and build out the glossary to distribute to guide local teams on how to construct their content and the language that should be used.

SKILLS

Outcome: Governance guidelines over minimum and maximum number of skills that should be added to each credential, how the skills should be determined, and the level of detail in the skill tags.

Skill tags added to digital badges define the skills gained through a certification or training program. Skill tags inform learners of the value of the certification and allow an easy overview of the in-demand skills they can gain by attending the program or training. As more organizations adopt a skills-based hiring approach, skill tags are vitally important to convey the value between similar training and development opportunities.

Skill tags are often granular in their description. For example, McGraw-Hill uses skill tags including 'finding and replacing data,' 'renaming fields,' 'creating a blank form,' and 'grouping records in a report' as part of their Level 1: Access White Belt descriptors.

If your organization decides to go this granular with your skill tags, this granularity should be replicated across all departments. If you decide to take a more generic approach to skill mapping, it should follow suit no matter which department the certification is coming from.

Skill tags are a key part of contextual information as they inform third-party hiring or admissions administrators of the learner's experience and capabilities. Skill tags alongside badge descriptions are necessary for differentiating between digital badges offered from different organizations.

There are no limitations to the number of skill tags that can be added to a digital credential, however, they should be relevant to the award.

We recommend using keyword research tools to identify relevant high demand skill keywords and phrases that improve visibility for live credentials.

TAXONOMY

Outcome: Taxonomy categories mapped out and provided to local departments to allow them to categorize their credentials in an organized way.

Having clear taxonomies creates categories that enable each department to award classification in a consistent, meaningful way.

Below is an example of a categorized taxonomy, broken out to segment credentials issued into certain categories. These categories guide local departments on how to communicate a learner's achievement based on what the learner had to do to achieve the credential.

Achievement	Explanation
Knowledge	Understanding gained through learning or experience
Skill	An ability that has been acquired by training or practice
Certification	Validating the authenticity of something or someone
Eminence	A position of great distinction or superiority
Excellence	A position of great distinction or superiority
Relationship	A state of connectedness between people

This categorization supports recognition of the aspects important for your business and your learners. Key elements, such as what achievements to recognize and not recognize, need to be discussed and agreed upon.

DELIVERY

Outcome: Develop a communication plan that can be shared across all departments so each credential across the organization is delivered in the same way, no matter the department it's issued from.

There are many different communications that should be sent out to learners, alongside the actual delivery of their credential. The more touch points you have with your learners, the higher your level of engagement and digital credential adoption.

A recommended communication plan should be sent to each local department to guide them on the emails that should be sent and when, to ensure a consistent user experience.

Here's an example of a communication plan:

Credential Communication Plan

Communication goals	Communication Date	Audience	Frequency	Owner
Pre-launch Notification	1 week before launch	Expected Recipients	Once	X should send
Credential Delivery email	On launch day	Recipients	Once	X should send
Credential Open reminder	7 days after issuance	Recipients that have not opened Credential	Every 7 days for 8 weeks:	X should send
Credential Share reminder	14 days after issuance	Recipients that have opened but not shared credential	Every 14 days for 8 weeks.	X should send
WHEN APPLICABLE Credential Pathway communication	DISCUSS	Recipients that have not yet taken the next course	DISCUSS	X should send

SUPPORT

Outcome: Support documentation for learners that can be shared and utilized by all departments.

Learner support should be consistent across all departments within an organization. Each local department can choose where and how to display the help content (resource hub, landing page, email support team, credential guides, etc.). However, the content should be consistent across all departments.

You should create your support documentation and distribute it among all departments to ensure consistency in your learners' experience and levels of support received.

Here are some common learner questions:

- How Do I Add Credentials to My Mobile Digital Wallet?
- How Can I Use My Credential's Unique URL?
- How Can I Download and Print My Certificate?
- How Do I View and Print My Transcript Letter?
- How Do I Download a Digital Badge?
- How Do I Embed a Credential to My Email Signature?
- How Do I Embed My Credential Image to a Web Page?
- How Do I Send an Email Direct from the Credential View?
- How Do I Share My Credential?
- How Do I Add My Credential to LinkedIn?
- How Do I Add Evidence To My Credential?
- How Can I Embed the Full Credential Page into my Website?

PATHWAYS & SCHEMA

Outcome: Guidance for each department on the types of pathways their learners can take, and how each pathway works.

There are various pathways that issuers can design digital badging systems around to give learners greater flexibility during their skill or knowledge acquisition. The following are the most common pathways.

Standalone
A digital badge that doesn't specifically connect to any other digital badges through increasing levels or relevance.

Prescriptive
Digital badges that follow a linear sequential pathway of achievement and are usually set by the issuer. For example, Microsoft Word Levels 1, 2, and 3.

Descriptive
Digital badges that enable learners to choose their own learning paths that can be linear or nonlinear.

Stepping Stones
A sequential, prescriptive path of learning that learners follow step-by-step as determined by the issuer.

Constellation
A non-linear, descriptive learning pathway that puts control in the hands of the learner and enables them to build a custom portfolio of ability.

Collection
A non-linear, prescriptive learning path.

In addition to these six pathways, stacked badges can be collected in various models:

Vertical
Progressing through levels in a single topic. For example, Microsoft Word Levels 1, 2, and 3.

Horizontal
Building a collection of awards across numerous topics. For example, Microsoft Word Level 1 and Microsoft Excel Level 1.

Hybrid
A combination of both vertical and horizontal, where the learner builds a personal portfolio of different skills to various levels of competency. For example, Microsoft Word Levels 1 and 2, Microsoft Excel Levels 1, 2, and 3, and Microsoft Powerpoint Level 1.

Each local department should have a definition of which pathway and model is accepted in your business, and an explanation of how it should work. These pathways and models will ensure consistency in the way your learners collect credentials and progress through level increases.

These consistent definitions also help third parties easily recognize the type of credential pathway your learners take in order to achieve the award they're validating, as it's a recognized credentialing system from your establishment.

CREDENTIAL BRIEF

Outcome: Credential brief template that should be populated ahead of launching or issuing a new badge within local departments.

It's important to give each department their own template to populate before a credential can be issued. This will ensure that all elements are determined ahead of the credential being published in the public domain.

Here's an example of a credential template brief:

Credential Framework	
Business Dimension	What part of the business are we portraying?
Personal Achievement	What has our learner achieved?
Level of Responsibility	
What has our learner achieved?	
Alignment to Standard	
What has our learner achieved?	
External Landing Page / Issuer Website	
What has our learner achieved?	
Earn / Course Website	
What has our learner achieved?	
Skill Tags:	
What has our learner achieved?	
Reporting Tags:	
What has our learner achieved?	
Expiry Date	If applicable

CREDENTIAL BRIEF

Description
Description of what the course involved, levels / modules / tasks etc.
Criteria
Criteria required to take course
Any prerequisite courses required before this course could be taken
Next Steps
Recommended / required next step in the learner's pathway

⊟ Accredible

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