

Alternative Credentials Guiding Principles

The College of Graduate, Research & Online Education (GRO) will serve as the academic affairs unit responsible for leading alternative credentialing

in the form of credit-bearing certificates, commonly referred to as “micro-credentials” at the University of Northern Iowa. More specifically, the Division of Online Education and Individual Studies (OEIS) will provide direct support and leadership in the creation of new certificates. The focus of these efforts will be on connections and human interactions that sustain students as they create a sense of belonging at UNI, imagine and shape their futures, and find pathways to build a better tomorrow.

1. OEIS, in cooperation with the academic home departments, will provide leadership for graduate and undergraduate alternative credential offerings.
 - a. The focus will be on innovation around the demand for alternative credentials, whether stand-alone or stackable degree programs.
 - b. Support will be provided throughout the process of conceptualizing a program, identifying demand, curriculum development, and offering modality.
 - c. The Office of Financial Aid will be consulted to determine financial aid eligibility for the proposed program.
2. Current UNI policies and procedures for degree and non-degree programming (online & residential) will be utilized for post-development and implementation.
3. The development of new alternative credentials should follow current practices, including course and program learning outcomes; the opportunity for learners to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes should be embedded in the experience and be made available for assessment purposes.
4. Academic home departments provide direct oversight of their programs.
5. OEIS will provide additional support for online programs (i.e., marketing, course development, consultation, recruitment, instructional design support, etc.).
6. Online and residential graduate programs may be provided additional support from GRO (i.e., curriculum development, admissions support, etc.)
7. The GRO Administrative Fellow will assist the Dean in guiding alternative credentialing efforts at UNI. The primary focus will be on pioneering practices, credential design, feasibility, and program quality. In addition, this individual will work collaboratively with departments on program assessment efforts and building community partnerships
8. An advisory board (Alternative Credentialing Advisory Board) will be established with the primary charge of consulting on the future direction of alternative

credentials (emphasizing hands-on, innovative, and relevant offerings) and ensuring quality programming (including design, assessment, and delivery).

- a. Committee membership will consist of representatives from (The Office of Admissions, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, GRO, the Office of the Registrar, University Relations, and a faculty member from each academic college).
- b. The Dean's Administrative Fellow for Micro-credentialing and Environmental Analysis will chair this committee. The Dean of GRO will serve as a non-voting member.
- c. Regular Alternative Credentialing Advisory Board meetings will be scheduled four times each academic year, with additional meetings being scheduled as needed.