

# PAPERCLIP COMMUNICATIONS

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PaperClip Communications  
Webinar

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# Micro-credentials 101:

## The Essential Foundational Blocks to Initiate & Build a Successful Program

Thursday, December 1, 2022

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## Today's Moderator and Presenter



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# Introduction to the Topic

## **Key strategy 1: Clarity**

- Definitions
- Types of micro-credentials

## **Key strategy 2: Communication**

- Develop a communication plan

## **Key strategy 3: Alignment**

- With institutional goals and needs of stakeholders
- Program alignment with competency framework

## **Key strategy 4: Developing efficient processes**

- Governance
- Register and track learners

## Introduction to the Topic

- Institutions across the U.S. and globally are increasingly offering micro-credentials.
- These short-format credentials offer more options for learners
  - Degree-seeking students *and* working adults.

## Introduction to the Topic

- We will explore different types of micro-credentials and the value propositions they offer.
- As well as key strategies for building and maintaining a micro-credentialing initiative on your campus.

# Key Strategy #1

## Clarity

Confusion around terminology, due to lack of consistency across institutions.

Let's go over some definitions!



## Key Strategy #1: Clarity

### Defining “micro-credentials”

*There is no global  
consensus on the term  
‘micro-credential’  
(Oliver, 2021)*

Oliver, B. (2019). Making micro-credentials work for learners, employers and providers. Deakin University. <https://dteach.deakin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/103/2019/08/Making-micro-credentials-work-Oliver-Deakin-2019-full-report.pdf>



## Key Strategy #1: Clarity

### Defining “micro-credentials”

***Skills you need.  
Proof you have  
them.***

**Small** programs, focused on work relevant skills, that result in a **digital** credential

May be credit-bearing (up to 11 credits), or non-credit.

*personalize your experience • augment your degree • differentiate yourself*

# How are they different from other credentials?

## Micro + digital

# How are they different from other credentials?

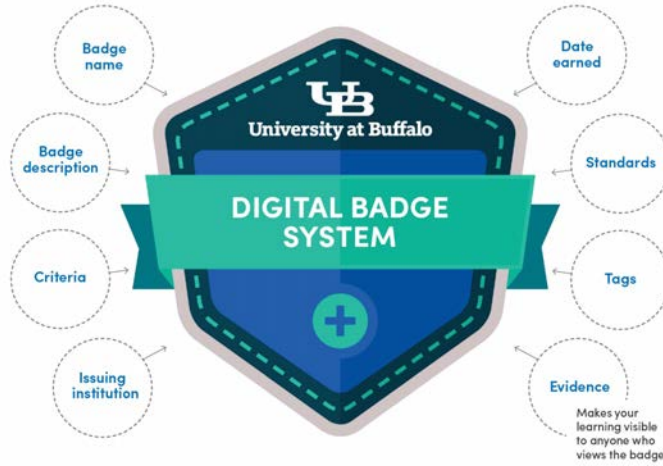
## Micro + digital

- Time to completion
- Granularity of the subject matter

- Issued through digital platform
- Shared through digital means
- Embedded with metadata

# Key Strategy #1: Clarity

## Defining “digital credentials”



Awarded, stored, and shared via digital means.

Verifiable metadata (“data about data”) is embedded

## Digital Credential Platforms



Accredible

Hyland®

Credly



participate.



Badge List



ForAllSystems



badgr

[www.paper-clip.com](http://www.paper-clip.com)

<https://badgelist.com/>

<https://badgelist.com/>

<https://badgr.io/>

<https://info.credly.com/>

<https://www.forallsystems.com/>

<https://www.hylandcredentials.com/>

<https://www.participate.com/>

# Key things to think about

What types of micro-credentials will you offer?

## Level

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Continuing education/  
Professional development

## Credit status

- Credit-bearing
- Non-credit bearing
- Non-credit, with a path to credit

## Other?

## Types of collaboration

- Collaborations amongst departments
- Collaboration with non-academic entities  
(e.g., employers)
- Collaboration with other institutions

# Key Strategy #1: Clarity

## Types of micro-credentials



- Credit-bearing programs
- Stackable towards a degree
- “Mini specialization”
- Differentiate academically

- Co-curricular/ extra-curricular
- Recognition of learning gained outside the classroom
- Showcase diverse experiences and skills

- Continuing education, professional development & other non-degree programs
- Meet the needs of non-degree seekers
- Upskilling/ reskilling



# Other types?

- Credit-bearing programs
- Stackable towards a degree
- "Mini specialization"
- Differentiate academically

- Co-curricular, extra-curricular
- Recognition of learning gained outside the classroom
- Showcase diverse experiences and skills

- Continuing education, professional development & other non-degree programs
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- Upskilling/ reskilling



# Key Strategy #1: Clarity

## What about other terms?



## Key Strategy #1: Clarity

### The U.S. Department of Labor defines a stackable credential as-

“Part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.”

<https://higherlearningadvocates.org>

<https://higherlearningadvocates.org>

## Key Strategy #1: Clarity

### Defining “stackable towards a degree”

**Short-form  
program that  
builds towards a  
larger credential**

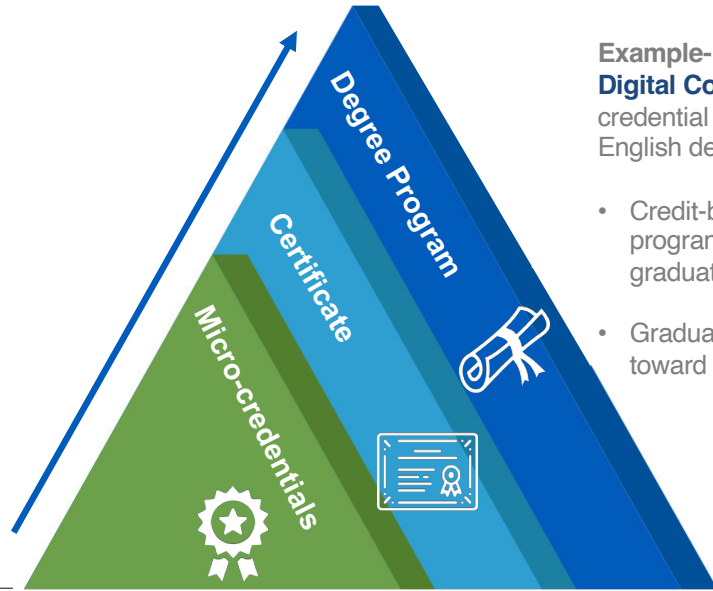
Example: “A student might complete a short-term *certificate in cyber security* one term and later return to apply some of those credits to earn an *associate degree* in information systems technology.

*The short-term certificate enables the graduate to immediately gain work experience in the field and the second credential helps them advance along that career ladder.”*

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/02/02/stackable-credentials-can-open-doors-to-new-career-opportunities/>

# Key Strategy #1: Clarity

## Defining “stackable towards a degree”



Example-  
**Digital Composition** micro-credential offered through the English department

- Credit-bearing (6 credits) program stacks towards a graduate certificate
- Graduate certificate stacks toward Master’s degree

## EXAMPLE: Non-credit stacking

### Undergraduate project-based learning micro-credential



Highlights: Incorporates motivational elements; 21<sup>st</sup> century skill development; and learner agency.

Students earn digital badges as they complete project milestones.

Three badges "stack" to an achievement badge.



## EXAMPLE: Inter-disciplinary micro-credential

Offered through Interprofessional Education, UB Medical School

**Graduate, credit-bearing, stacked**



Highlights: Distinguishes graduates of UB's health professions programs as interprofessional collaborative healthcare practitioners.

Students earn digital badges as they complete project milestones.

Badges earned through experiential learning activities embedded in existing courses of participating programs.

# Key Strategy #1: Clarity

## Benefits of digital credentials

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Hi

From buildingofficial@iccsafe.org

To

Cc

Subject

Building Code Official  
Chicago District Office  
4051 Flossmoor Road  
Country Club Hills, IL 60478 USA  
1.888.ICC.SAFE (422.7233)

Search for people, jobs, companies, and more

**Dr. Jane Tyler**  
Speech Language Pathologist  
Greater Chicago Area | School Psychologist, In-home Behavior

Previous Chicago Public Schools, Austin Independent School District, Texas Tech University

**Certifications**

**Certified Autism Specialist (Click to Verify)**  
International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards

Certified Autism Specialist	
Badge Name	Certified Autism Specialist
Badge Type	Certified
Expires On	12/16/2016
Badge ID	5320
Last Updated	13/06/2014

**Peter Farruggia, MPH** • 2nd  
Assistant To The Executive Director at Center for Leadership & Organizational Effectiveness...

Digital Badge 3 of 3 complete! Achieved the full micro-credential! #publichealth #interprofessionaleducation #collaboration #teamwork ...see more

Interprofessional Health Care in the Practice Setting was issued by **University at Buffalo** to Peter Farruggia.  
youracclaim.com • 1 min read

14 • 2 Comments

<https://www.iccsafe.org/content/digital-badge-email-signature/>

# Key Strategy #2: Communication

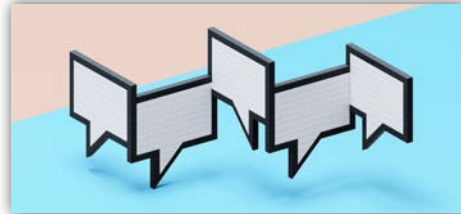
## Develop a communication plan

Basics:

- ✓ How does your institution define MCs?
- ✓ Other terminology (e.g., digital badge).
- ✓ Types of MCs you offer.
- ✓ Value propositions for key stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, industry partners).



Collaborate with Communications Team





# Key Strategy #2 Communication

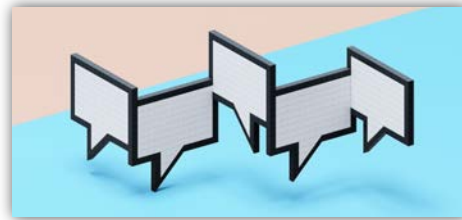
## Develop a communication plan

Additionally...

- ✓ Who will promote the MCs?
  - Centrally or in individual units?
  
- ✓ What methods will be used for promotion? Think internal and external.
  
- ✓ Connecting with stakeholders
  - Student events
  - Listservs
  - Request time at meetings
    - Industry partners
    - Internal groups  
(e.g., Academic Advisors; Deans)



Collaborate with Communications Team



Learn about the needs of your stakeholders FROM your stakeholders

Now it's time  
for a 3-minute  
stretch break.

**Key strategy 1: Clarity**

- Definitions
- Types of micro-credentials

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**Key strategy 3: Alignment**

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- Program alignment with competency framework

**Key strategy 4: Developing efficient processes**

- Governance
- Register and track learners

## Key Strategy #3: Alignment

### Alignment with-

- Your institution's mission
- Strategic Goals (set by institutional leadership)
- The needs of the workforce
- Student needs and preferences



**How will  
you know?**

# Key Strategy #3: Alignment

- Aligned to the needs of the workforce
- Engage external stakeholders (e.g., employers, industry partners, NGOs)

<p><b>Low-level collaboration</b></p>	<p>Input is sought from external stakeholders and used to inform the curriculum/ assessment design of the micro-credential.</p> <p>Industry standards/ competency frameworks used in curriculum planning and tagged in digital credential (e.g., <a href="#">Engineering Competency Model</a>)</p>
<p><b>Mid-level collaboration</b></p>	<p>Learners interact with the external company/ organization in some way (e.g., experts in the field conduct workshops, site visits, internships)</p> <p>Company/ association/ industry endorsement.</p>
<p><b>High-level collaboration</b></p>	<p>Formal partnership in which both entities benefit.</p>

## Key Strategy #3: Alignment

- Aligned to the needs of the workforce
- Engage external stakeholders (e.g., employers, industry partners, NGOs)

### How?

- ✓ Engage your office of workforce development or business partnerships
- ✓ Engage existing industry advisors, employer-partnerships or form new advisory councils
- ✓ Use labor market analytics (e.g., Lightcast data)

**Learn more-**  
Report contains excellent section on University-to-Business Stakeholder Engagement



<https://upcea.edu/credentialhallmarks/>

<https://lightcast.io/>

# Key Strategy #3: Alignment

Align MCs to a competency framework

## What is a competency framework?

A structure that sets out and defines each individual competency needed in an employment setting (e.g., certain field, industry, specific job)

- ✓ Align micro-credentials to skills needed by employers
- ✓ Demonstrate relevancy
- ✓ Increase discoverability
- ✓ Better transparency for learners and employers

# Key Strategy #3: Alignment

Align MCs to a competency framework

## Examples-

### National Association of Colleges and Employers

Professional skills for a career ready workforce



### Competency Model Clearinghouse

Industry specific models



### O\*Net

The nation's primary source of occupational information.



www.paper-clip.com

<https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/>

<https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

<https://www.onetonline.org/>

NACE competencies- Professional skills for a career ready workforce

Collaboration between the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and industry partners

regularly updated database of occupational characteristics and worker requirements information across the U.S. economy. It describes occupations in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required as well as how the work is performed in terms of tasks, work activities, and other descriptors.

O Net-

The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) is developed under the sponsorship of the **U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA)**

The O\*NET Program is the nation's primary source of occupational information.

Central to the project is the O\*NET database, containing hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors on almost 1,000 occupations covering the entire U.S. economy. The database, which is available to the public at no cost, is continually updated from input by a broad range of workers in each occupation.

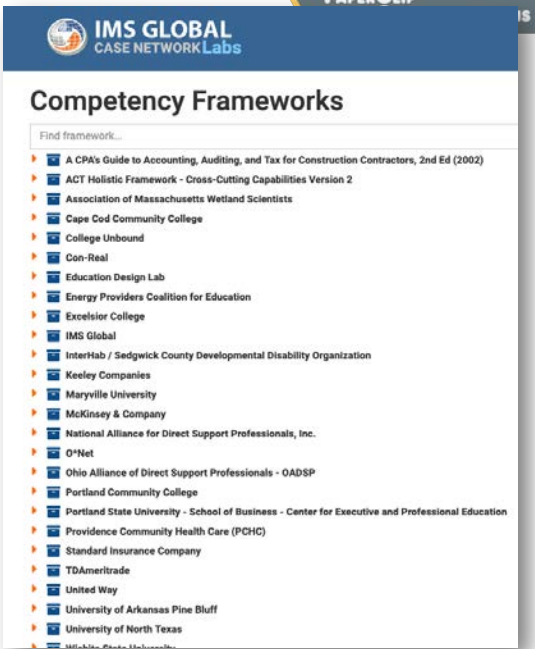
hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors on almost 1,000 occupations covering the entire U.S. economy. The database, which is available to the public at no cost, is continually updated from input by a broad range of workers in each occupation.



**IMS Global**  
(now 1EdTech)

Extensive list of existent competency frameworks

<https://labs.casenetwork.imsglobal.org/cfdoc/>



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**IMS GLOBAL**  
CASE NETWORK Labs

### Competency Frameworks

Find framework...

- A CPA's Guide to Accounting, Auditing, and Tax for Construction Contractors, 2nd Ed (2002)
- ACT Holistic Framework - Cross-Cutting Capabilities Version 2
- Association of Massachusetts Wetland Scientists
- Cape Cod Community College
- College Unbound
- Con-Real
- Education Design Lab
- Energy Providers Coalition for Education
- Excelsior College
- IMS Global
- InterHab / Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization
- Keeley Companies
- Maryville University
- McKinsey & Company
- National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, Inc.
- O\*Net
- Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals - OADSP
- Portland Community College
- Portland State University - School of Business - Center for Executive and Professional Education
- Providence Community Health Care (PCHC)
- Standard Insurance Company
- TD Ameritrade
- United Way
- University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- University of North Texas
- Wichita State University

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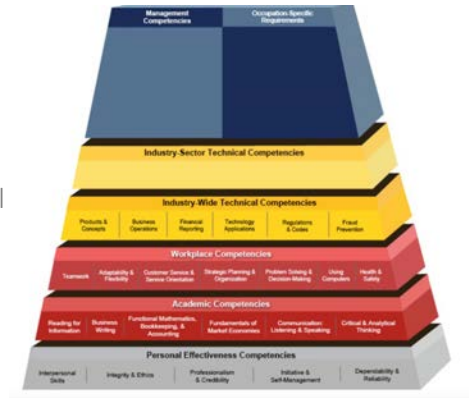
<https://labs.casenetwork.imsglobal.org/cfdoc/>

# Key Strategy #3: Alignment

Align MCs to a competency framework

## How?

- ✓ Add tags as metadata in digital credential
- ✓ Indicate competencies on promotional materials
- ✓ Use framework to design curriculum for stacked credentials
- ✓ Use competencies as a sorting option on website



Financial Services Competency Model

## Financial Services Competency Model

<https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/competency-models/financial-services.aspx>

# Key Strategy #3: Alignment

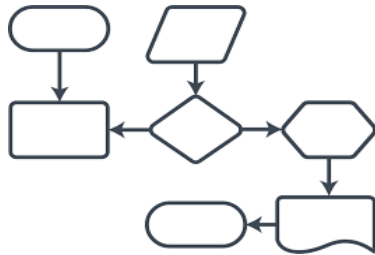
Align MCs to a competency framework

- ✓ Map to content and assessments
- ✓ Identify gaps
- ✓ Develop additional content and assessments to ensure competencies can be gained

	Activity A	Activity B	Activity C	Activity D	Activity E
Follow workplace safety procedures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use personal protective equipment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Handle hazardous materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Develop OHS system			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Monitor OHS system			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain OHS system			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Plan and organize own work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate accountability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate adaptability		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work with other team members		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Communicate effectively with others	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use communication tools and equipment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Organize remote team		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provide guidance to remote team			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitor remote team			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/competencytoolkit/chapter/sample-structures/>

## Key Strategy #4: Develop Efficient Processes



- ✓ **Proposal process**
- ✓ Design programs (e.g., curriculum development)
- ✓ **Review proposals**
- ✓ **Approval process**
- ✓ Launch new MCs
- ✓ Marketing and promotion
- ✓ **Register and track learners**
- ✓ Issue credentials
- ✓ Program review and revisions

## Key Strategy #4: Develop Efficient Processes

### Governance process

- ✓ Review and approval of proposals

#### Planning may entail-

- Develop proposal forms
- Establish a review committee
- Create a rubric
- Determine final approving body

#### Who to engage-

Engage with leadership (academic and/or continuing education), curriculum committees, external experts.

## Key Strategy #4: Develop Efficient Processes -Governance

### Why?

- ✓ Oversight is necessary to ensure the value and integrity of the credential
- ✓ Issuing any credential reflects upon the reputation of the institution
- ✓ Ensure that the micro-credential is pedagogically sound



### Examples

- [University of Wisconsin](https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1088)
- [University at Buffalo](https://www.buffalo.edu/micro-credentials/internal/proposal.html)
- [Kennesaw State University \(Implementation Guide\)](https://cia.kennesaw.edu/initiatives/micro-credentials.php)

<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1088>

<https://www.buffalo.edu/micro-credentials/internal/proposal.html>

<https://cia.kennesaw.edu/initiatives/micro-credentials.php>

## Key Strategy #4: Develop Efficient Processes

### -Example governance process

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
<p>Finalize program design.</p> <p>Complete required proposal forms.</p> <p>Obtain departmental/unit-level approval.</p>	<p>Submit proposal to Office of Micro-Credentials.</p> <p>Director of Micro-Credentials assigns to Micro-Credential Review Committee.</p>	<p>Review committee provides feedback.</p> <p>Final proposal is added to subsequent Associate Deans Council meeting agenda.</p>	<p>Program presented to the Associate Deans Council (final approving body)</p>	<p>Once approved the program is officially a "micro-credential" and ready to be implemented.</p>

**Process takes approximately 6 weeks to 3 months.**

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## Key Strategy #4: Develop Efficient Processes

### -Register and track learners



#### Planning may entail-

- Determine process for learners to enroll
- Identify registration/ tracking system
- Develop coding schema (if using SIS)

#### Who to engage-

Leadership; Registrar; SIS staff

Image:

[https://www.teachermagazine.com/assets/images/teacher/\\_articleimagetransform855x313/Leadership\\_QA-Lesson\\_study\\_2020-11-11-212341.jpg](https://www.teachermagazine.com/assets/images/teacher/_articleimagetransform855x313/Leadership_QA-Lesson_study_2020-11-11-212341.jpg)



# Resources and References

University at Buffalo, Office of Micro-Credentials-  
[buffalo.edu/micro-credentials](http://buffalo.edu/micro-credentials)

UPCEA Hallmarks for Credential Innovation-  
<https://upcea.edu/credentialhallmarks/>

1 EdTech List of Competency Frameworks  
<https://labs.casetwork.imslobal.org/cfdoc/>

Now it's time  
for today's  
key takeaways.

# Today's Key Takeaways

1. **Clarity, Communication, Alignment, and Efficient Processes**
2. It is important to always keep the learner in mind and to remember that micro-credentials promise flexibility, affordability, and relevancy, which should be upheld in order to maintain the integrity of these credentials.
3. Consider offering a pilot before making critical decisions (e.g., developing a policy).
4. High-level collaboration is needed to offer micro-credentials. Engage internal and external stakeholders.
5. Think long term- Offer high quality learning experiences that provide knowledge and skills that are needed in the workforce. The quality of your micro-credentials will reflect on the qualifications of your earners, which will then build your reputation and increase demand.

Now it's time  
for the Q&A.

# Q&A Session

## **Ask a Question or Offer a Comment!**

Type in a question or comment at any time by using the Q&A panel on the webinar platform.

If you have a question that you were unable to ask during the webinar, please feel free to email the presenter(s) directly or email [info@paper-clip.com](mailto:info@paper-clip.com) and reference today's webinar.

## Today's Moderator and Presenter



**Kristin Morgan**

Webinar Coordinator,  
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4. Enter the requested information
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December 14, 2022



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January 5, 2023



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Engage Protest Leaders & Minimize the Threat of Violence & Disruption

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Understanding Student Mental Health Diagnoses

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January 26, 2023



## Rural Students Recruitment & Retention

Create An Access & Enrollment Pipeline To Overcome Barriers