The Learning Institute's Badging and Micro-Course Development Guide



The Learning Institute

The Learning Institute supports UMB faculty and staff in developing and implementing digital badges and micro-courses for university students and employees. Each micro-course within The Learning Institute is collaboratively developed and designed to showcase unique professional achievements, soft-skills development, extra-curricular course completion, and non-academic certifications. The micro-courses within The Learning Institute are collaboratively sourced from various offices and departments at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, utilizing existing programs and initiatives geared toward the betterment and education of UMB staff, students, and faculty.

For questions related to digital badging and micro-courses, contact:

 Gregory A. Brightbill, Ed.D, MBA, MEd Associate Director, Student Leadership & Involvement, Intercultural Leadership & Engagement Gbrightbill@umaryland.edu

Phone: 301-471-1037

Contents

The Learning Institute	1
What are Micro-Credentials?	3
Micro-Credentialling and Digital Badging	3
What are the benefits of a digital badge?	3
Badgr	4
What is a Micro-Course?	4
What is Micro-Learning?	5
Validating Micro-Credential Programs	5
Designing a Micro-Course	6
Who can teach a micro-course?	6
Building a Micro-Course	6
Creating Engaging Content for Micro-Courses	7
Step 1: Define Learning Objectives	7
Step 2: Choose a Topic	7
Step 3: Scripting	7
Step 4: Visual Design	7
Step 5: Recording	7
Step 6: Editing	8
Step 7: Assess Accessibility	8
Step 8: Delivery Platform	8
Step 9: Feedback and Iteration	8
Using ClipChamp: A Short Guide	8
Micro-Course Assessment Tips	10
Awarding Micro-Credentials and Digital Badges	11
Badge Proposal Process	11
Badge Creation in Badgr	11
How to Award Badges	12
Can Digital Badges Be Awarded Through Blackboard?	12
Cost	12
Badges Awarded by Initial Funding Departments	12
Badges Awarded by Non-Initial-Funding Departments	12
How Much Does it Cost to Receive a Micro-Credential?	12

How Can Students Access Digital Badges After Graduation?	12
Badging Tips	12
Reviewing Digital Badges and Sharing on LinkedIn	14
Redeeming Badges	14
Option 1: Claiming through a hyperlinked Claim Code	14
Option 2: Badge awarded by email	14
Reviewing Digital Badges	15
Sharing Your Digital Badges to LinkedIn	16

What are Micro-Credentials?

Micro-credentials are unaccredited competency-based certificates for individuals who have completed a non-academic educational training or program. Open badges are verifiable micro-credentials that can be shared through social media or LinkedIn. Each badge awarded comes with a unique Credential ID and URL, allowing each badge to be verifiable by current and prospective employers.

Micro-Credentialling and Digital Badging

Historically, micro-credentialling was tied to unaccredited paper certificates, however, in today's modern world we are seeing micro-credentialling being associated with digital badges. Digital badges are open-access and verifiable virtual credentials. All digital badges offered alongside The Learning Institute come with a unique identifier and URL specific to the badge, the issuer, and the awardee.



(Above is an example of a digital badge awarded through the Badgr platform)

What are the benefits of a digital badge?

The benefits of a digital badge include:

- 1. **Credential recognition:** Digital badges serve as a visual representation of an individual's skills, knowledge, and achievements. They can be easily displayed on a personal website, social media profile, or resume, helping to demonstrate credibility and expertise to potential employers or clients.
- 2. **Gamification of learning:** Digital badges can add a fun and engaging element to online learning by giving learners a tangible reward for their achievements.
- 3. **Increased motivation:** Digital badges can motivate learners, encouraging them to continue learning and developing new skills.
- 4. **Verifiable credentials:** Digital badges can be easily verified by anyone with an internet connection, making it easy for employers and other stakeholders to validate the skills and achievements of an individual.
- 5. **Improved accessibility:** Digital badges are easily accessible and can be earned from anywhere with an internet connection, making it easier for individuals to earn and display their credentials.

Badgr

Badgr is an open-source, digital credentialing platform designed to help organizations and individuals recognize and showcase their learning achievements. It provides a platform for issuing, managing, and verifying digital badges, which are graphical representations of skills, competencies, and achievements. The badges can be earned through various learning activities, such as completing courses, participating in events, or demonstrating mastery of specific skills.

With Badgr, learners can collect and showcase their badges on a personal portfolio, which acts as a digital resume of their learning achievements. They can also share their badges with others through social media or email, making it easier to demonstrate their skills and experience to potential employers, educators, and other stakeholders.

In addition to providing a platform for learners, Badgr also offers a suite of tools and resources for educators and organizations to issue badges and manage the badge-issuing process. This includes features for designing badges, setting criteria for earning badges, and tracking and verifying the achievements of learners.

Badgr is designed to be an open and interoperable platform, meaning that badges issued through Badgr can be recognized and accepted by other organizations and platforms. This allows learners to build a comprehensive and portable record of their learning achievements, which they can take with them as they move from one learning opportunity to the next.

What is a Micro-Course?

A micro-course is a short, focused, and bite-sized online learning experience that typically covers a specific topic or skill. Micro-courses are designed to be consumed in just a few minutes and can be taken on a computer, tablet, or mobile device. They are often delivered through a

learning management system or mobile app and can be in videos, infographics, quizzes, interactive games, or a combination of these formats.

The purpose of micro-courses is to provide learners with quick and convenient access to specific knowledge and skills, without the need for a full-length course. They are often used to complement longer-term learning programs or as stand-alone learning experiences for busy professionals who need to acquire new skills quickly.

The time commitment of each micro-course varies depending on the learning outcomes and objectives outlined by the content experts and micro-course planner. Courses may vary from a singular 30-minute workshop to a multi-hour training program or course.

What is Micro-Learning?

Micro-learning refers to a learning approach that focuses on delivering small, bite-sized pieces of information or training to learners in short, focused sessions. The goal of micro-learning is to provide learners with quick and easy access to information that can be easily absorbed and retained.

Micro-learning is often used as an alternative to traditional, longer-form training methods, such as lectures or workshops. It is particularly useful for busy professionals who do not have the time or resources to devote to lengthy training sessions. Micro-learning allows learners to access information at their own pace and on their own terms, making it a flexible and convenient way to learn.

The benefits of micro-learning include increased engagement, improved retention of information, and a more efficient use of time. By breaking down information into smaller, manageable chunks, learners are more likely to pay attention and retain the information they learn. Additionally, micro-learning can be easily integrated into learners' daily routines, allowing them to fit learning into their busy schedules.

Learn more about micro-learning

Validating Micro-Credential Programs

It is important to validate the academic integrity of micro-credentials to ensure that they are valid and reliable indicators of an individual's skills and knowledge. Verification helps to establish that the micro-credential was issued by a credible organization and that it reflects the attainment of a specific set of skills or knowledge. As such, The Learning Institute reviews all micro-credential proposals to make sure that they meet a high-level criteria and set of standards. Overall, verifying micro-credentials is important to establish their credibility, maintain their quality, facilitate their recognition, and reduce the risk of fraud or misuse.

Here are some reasons why verifying micro-credentials is important:

1. **Ensuring credibility:** Verification helps to ensure that the micro-credential was issued by a credible organization that has a reputation for delivering high-quality educational

- programs. This helps to establish the value of the micro-credential and increase its credibility.
- 2. **Ensuring quality:** Verification helps to ensure that the micro-credential reflects the attainment of a specific set of skills or knowledge. This ensures that the micro-credential is a reliable indicator of an individual's abilities and helps to maintain the quality of the micro-credential.
- 3. **Facilitating recognition:** Verification helps to facilitate the recognition of the microcredential by employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders. This can help to increase the value of the micro-credential and enhance the opportunities available to individuals who hold it.
- 4. **Reducing fraud:** Verification helps to reduce the risk of fraud or misuse of the microcredential. By ensuring that the micro-credential was issued by a credible organization and that it reflects the attainment of a specific set of skills or knowledge, verification can help to prevent the issuance of fraudulent or misleading micro-credentials.

Designing a Micro-Course

Who can teach a micro-course?

The Learning Institute believes that anyone can be a teacher. While we cannot pay any of our microcourse instructors, we are excited to offer them an opportunity to be an educator here at UMB. So, if you are an expert in a specific area or if you are passionate about a particular topic, submit a microcourse proposal using our online form! If you have questions about developing a micro-course, contact Dr. Gregory A. Brightbill at Gbrightbill@umaryland.edu.

Building a Micro-Course

Here are the steps to building a micro-course:

- 1. Identify the learning objectives: Determine what the learners need to know and what specific skills they need to acquire.
- 2. Break down the content into small, manageable chunks: Divide the content into short, focused segments that can be easily consumed in just a few minutes.
- 3. Choose the right format: Decide on the format that best suits the content and learning objectives. Some popular formats include videos, infographics, quizzes, and interactive games.
- 4. Use technology to deliver the content: Use a learning management system or a mobile app to deliver the content to learners.
- 5. Incorporate interactive elements: Add interactive elements, such as quizzes or games, to engage learners and help them retain the information better.
- 6. Evaluate and refine: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the micro-learning course and make improvements based on learner feedback.
- 7. Promote and market: Promote the micro-learning course to the target audience to ensure maximum engagement and participation.

Remember, the key to effective micro-learning is to keep it concise, relevant, and easily digestible for the learners.

Learn more about micro-course content development

Learn more about building a micro-course in Blackboard

Creating Engaging Content for Micro-Courses

Creating videos for micro-learning and micro-courses requires careful planning and execution to ensure that learners can easily digest the content in short bursts. Videos should be on average 5-10-minutes.

For individuals without access to paid video-editing software, a free option that we recommend is ClipChamp. For more information about ClipChamp, see the Using *ClipChamp: A Short Guide* section of this guide.

Here's a step-by-step guide to help you create effective micro-learning videos:

Step 1: Define Learning Objectives

Before you start creating your videos, clearly define the learning objectives you want to achieve. What specific skills or knowledge do you want learners to gain from watching your videos? Keep these objectives concise and focused to align with the micro-learning format.

Step 2: Choose a Topic

Select a specific topic that aligns with your learning objectives. Micro-learning videos should address one concept or skill at a time to keep the content focused and easily digestible. Consider breaking down larger topics into smaller, bite-sized segments for better retention.

Step 3: Scripting

Write a script for your video to ensure clarity and coherence. Keep your language simple and concise, avoiding jargon or unnecessary details. Focus on delivering the key points effectively within a short timeframe. Each video should ideally be on average 5-10 minutes.

Step 4: Visual Design

Design visuals that complement your script and reinforce key concepts. Use graphics, animations, or relevant images to enhance understanding and engagement. Keep the visual elements clean and uncluttered to avoid overwhelming the viewer.

Step 5: Recording

Record your video using a quality camera and microphone. Pay attention to lighting, sound quality, and framing to ensure a professional-looking result. Consider using a teleprompter or cue cards to help you deliver your script smoothly. When recording, only record your video and avoid presenting alongside your PowerPoint, but instead turn your PowerPoint into individual images to later insert during the video-editing stage.

Step 6: Editing

Edit your video to enhance clarity and flow. Cut out any unnecessary pauses or repetitions to keep the content concise. Add visual effects or transitions to make the video more engaging but avoid overdoing it. When inserting background music, keep the loudness of the music to a minimum so that learners can clearly hear the presenter. When editing a video, keep the 5–10-minute length in mind. Keep the editing simple and focused on enhancing the learning experience. If you find that you have a video that is overly long, cut the larger video up into smaller 5–10-minute mini-videos and then edit and publish them separately.

When adding music and stock images/videos, carefully avoid using copyrighted media. Copyrighted media can be purchased through Adobe or, for copyright-free media, use the free media in ClipChamp.

Step 7: Assess Accessibility

Ensure that your video is accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities. Add captions or subtitles to make the content accessible to hearing-impaired viewers. Captions can be added through ClipChamp or YouTube. Provide alternative formats or transcripts for learners who may have difficulty accessing video content.

Step 8: Delivery Platform

Choose a suitable platform for hosting and delivering your micro-learning videos. Consider uploading your videos to YouTube and using the imbedded link in your micro-course.

Step 9: Feedback and Iteration

Gather feedback from learners to identify areas for improvement and refinement. Use analytics and learner feedback to assess the effectiveness of your micro-learning videos and make adjustments as needed. Continuously iterate on your content to ensure that it remains relevant and impactful.

By following these steps, you can create engaging and effective micro-learning videos that help learners acquire new skills and knowledge efficiently. Remember to keep the content focused, concise, and visually engaging to maximize learning outcomes in a short timeframe.

Using ClipChamp: A Short Guide

ClipChamp is a free user-friendly online video editor provided by Microsoft that allows you to create and edit videos with ease. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced video creator, ClipChamp offers a range of features to help you produce professional-looking videos. ClipChamp.

ClipChamp Video Tutorials

Here's a short guide to help you get started:

1. Sign Up or Log In:

- ClipChamp can be downloaded and installed on a PC, downloaded as a mobile application, or accessed online at https://clipchamp.com/en/
- UMB does not currently include ClipChamp in their Microsoft Suite, but individuals can create a ClipChamp account for free.

2. Create a New Project:

- Once logged in, click on the "Create a Video" button to start a new project.
- Choose the aspect ratio and resolution for your video, depending on your intended use. For micro-course videos, use the 16:9 aspect ratio.

3. Import Media:

- Click on the "Add Media" button to upload your video clips, images, audio files, or other media
 assets
- You can also drag and drop files directly into the ClipChamp interface.
- ClipChamp also offers plenty of free-to-use copyright-free stock media, images, and videos. Individuals nervous about using copyrighted media should utilize this option.

4. Edit Your Video:

- Arrange your media assets on the timeline to create your desired sequence.
- Trim, crop, or split video clips as needed to remove unwanted footage or adjust the timing.
- Add transitions, text overlays, filters, and other effects to enhance your video's visual appeal.

5. Customize Audio:

- Adjust the volume levels of audio tracks and add background music or sound effects to complement your video.
- ClipChamp offers a library of royalty-free music tracks to choose from, or you can upload your own audio files. When adding background music, keep the music's noise level low to optimize and emphasize the speaker's recorded audio.

6. Preview and Export:

- Preview your video to ensure everything looks and sounds as you intended.
- Once satisfied, click on the "Export" button to save your video to your device or directly share it on social media platforms.

7. Save Your Project:

- Before closing ClipChamp, make sure to save your project to revisit and make further edits later.
- Projects are saved automatically as you work, but you can also manually save them with a specific name for easy access.

8. Explore Advanced Features:

- ClipChamp offers advanced features such as green screen (chroma key), audio editing, and real-time collaboration in its premium plans.
- Consider upgrading to access these additional features if you require more advanced editing capabilities.

9. Get Help and Support:

- If you encounter any issues or have questions about using ClipChamp, visit the help center or reach out to customer support for assistance.
- ClipChamp provides comprehensive tutorials and guides to help you make the most of its features.

With ClipChamp's intuitive interface and powerful editing tools, you can create professional-quality videos in no time. Experiment with different effects and techniques to bring your creative vision to life and engage your audience effectively.

Micro-Course Assessment Tips

- 1. Determine the program's purpose and intended outcomes: Identify the program's objectives, target audience, and intended learning outcomes. Ensure that the program's goals align with the needs of the target audience and the industry.
- 2. Evaluate the program's design: Review the program's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment methods. Ensure that the program's design supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and incorporates best practices in adult learning.
- 3. Assess the program's delivery: Observe the delivery of the program, including the quality of instruction, the support provided to learners, and the availability of learning resources. Evaluate the program's accessibility and ensure that it is delivered in a way that is inclusive and equitable.
- 4. Evaluate the program's assessment: Evaluate the program's assessment methods to ensure that they align with the program's objectives and intended learning outcomes. Ensure that the assessments are reliable, valid, and aligned with industry standards.
- 5. Measure the program's outcomes: Evaluate the program's outcomes to determine whether learners are achieving the intended learning outcomes and if the program is meeting its objectives. Collect feedback from learners and stakeholders to gain insight into the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- 6. Ensure compliance with relevant standards: Ensure that the program meets any relevant industry or regulatory standards and that it aligns with any relevant frameworks or guidelines.
- 7. Continuously monitor and evaluate the program: Establish a process for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. Use the feedback collected from learners and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to the program.

Learn more about measuring learning objectives

Awarding Micro-Credentials and Digital Badges

Badges can be awarded by anyone at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Badges are awarded using an online tool called Badgr. Badgr is a free and open-source platform for badge issuing, management, and tracking user achievements. To access the online tool, individuals can go to https://umaryland.badgr.com/; then, using their UMB credentials, individuals can log into the platform to review the badges they have been awarded. Badges can then be externally shared to various social media, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, and embedded as a hyperlink for email signatures or on resumes/CVs.

Individuals interested in awarding badges should first submit a badge proposal before they are granted access as a badge issuer in the badging platform Badgr.

Watch a video on awarding digital badges in Badgr

Badge Proposal Process

Individuals interested in becoming badge issuers and awarding micro-credentials are required to submit a Micro-Credential Proposal. However, before starting the form, the following materials are needed:

- 1. Micro-credential name (less than 35 characters)
- 2. Brief description of micro-credential (less than 100 words or 750 characters)
- 3. A digital graphic. Graphics should follow UMB branding standards, include the name of the micro-credential, and be an <u>acceptable image file to Badgr</u>. For examples, see the <u>Learning Institute's current badges</u>.
- 4. Micro-credential learning objectives. Micro-learning objectives should be brief, clearly outline the intended learning outcome, and should not exceed 5 learning objectives.
- 5. Learning objective assessment measures overview

For each learning outcome, a clear and defined assessment measure should be used to evaluate if the learner has achieved and/or displayed the learning outcome. Assessment measures can be created at a later time in badge development; however, a brief overview of assessment measures should be included in the proposal.

Once an individual has compiled the 5 aforementioned items, they can apply to be a badge issuer using the Micro-Credential Proposal form. Micro-Credential Proposal forms are reviewed on a semi-weekly basis and applicants should expect to hear back in less than 10 business days.

CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR BADGE PROPOSAL

Badge Creation in Badgr

After your badge has been approved, you will be given access to the badging platform as an "Editor." Here you can now upload your badge information and create your micro-credential.

Watch a video on creating digital badges in Badgr

How to Award Badges

After a person has completed the online training and is added to the badging platform Badgr, as a badge issuer, they can then award badges to recipients.

Watch a video on awarding digital badges in Badgr

Can Digital Badges Be Awarded Through Blackboard?

Yes, the current badging platform allows for Blackboard integration. However, additional training is required for an issuer to utilize Blackboard as an in-between badging platform.

Cost

The cost varies depending on if you are awarding the badge as an issuer or if you are receiving the badge as an awardee. See below for more information:

Badges Awarded by Initial Funding Departments

The UMB Badging Initiative is jointly funded by The Office of Emergency Management, UMBPD, and UMB Student Affairs. Offices that fall within those departments or divisions can award badges at no cost.

Badges Awarded by Non-Initial-Funding Departments

Badges are \$4.00 for each individual badge awarded to a recipient. Payment is to be made by the department awarding the badges and is due to UMB Student Affairs by April 30th of each year. For more information about payments, contact Ray Dudeck at Rdudeck@umaryland.edu.

The Learning Institute does offer financial support to groups looking to partner in awarding badges to students. To apply for financial support and award badges for no cost, contact Greg Brightbill at Gbrightbill@Umaryland.edu.

How Much Does it Cost to Receive a Micro-Credential?

Micro-Credentials are free for students, staff, and faculty at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

How Can Students Access Digital Badges After Graduation?

The URL to digital badges will stay active following graduation. Students may opt to save the URL to a resume or CV for future use. Badges that have already been shared will continue to be verifiable. If desired, graduating students can create a free digital badging account that accepts "open badges" on an application such as Badgr or Canvas Credentials and transfer each of their badges (via their unique URL) to their free account.

Badging Tips

Digital badges with short, skill-based names are becoming increasingly important in skill-based hiring for several key reasons. These badges serve as concise, visual representations of an individual's specific skills and competencies. Here's a short summary of their significance:

- 1. **Clarity and Precision**: Short, skill-based names make it clear and easy to understand what a person is proficient in. Instead of vague titles or lengthy descriptions, employers can quickly identify the exact skills possessed by a candidate.
- 2. **Efficient Hiring**: In today's fast-paced job market, recruiters often have limited time to review resumes and applications. Digital badges with concise names allow them to assess candidates more efficiently, ensuring they focus on individuals with the right skills for the job.
- 3. **Standardization**: Skill-based badges provide a standardized way to communicate qualifications across various industries and professions. This uniformity simplifies the hiring process, making it easier for employers to compare candidates.
- 4. **Recognition of Micro-Credentials**: Many skills are acquired through short courses, workshops, or online tutorials. Skill-based badges recognize and validate these micro-credentials, allowing candidates to showcase their continuous learning and adaptability.
- 5. **Alignment with Job Requirements**: Short, skill-based badges enable job seekers to align their qualifications precisely with the specific requirements of a job posting. This helps both candidates and employers find the best fit.
- 6. **Enhanced Trust**: Digital badges often come with verification features, such as links to detailed skill assessments or endorsements. This enhances the trustworthiness of a candidate's claims and reduces the risk of hiring individuals with inflated qualifications.

Reviewing Digital Badges and Sharing on LinkedIn

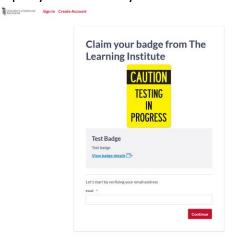
Watch a video on redeeming and sharing digital badges

Redeeming Badges

Option 1: Claiming through a hyperlinked Claim Code

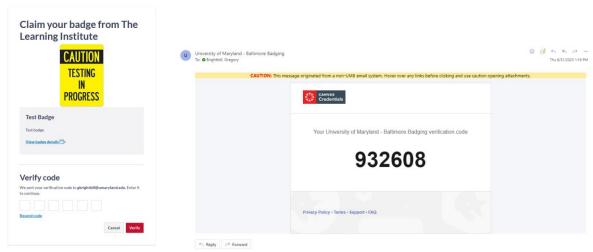
Step 1: Click hyperlink and input university email address

If you received an email with a hyperlink telling you to redeem your badge, you will need to click on the hyperlink and input your university email.



Step 2: Confirm verification code.

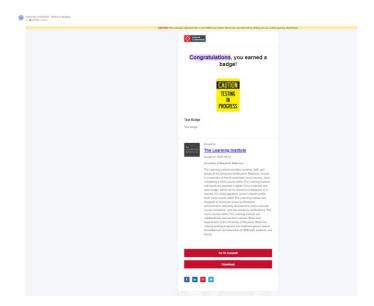
You will need to confirm using the verification code sent to the email provided. If you do not see the email, double check your spam, clutter, or junk folders.



↑ Example of verification code email ↑

Option 2: Badge awarded by email.

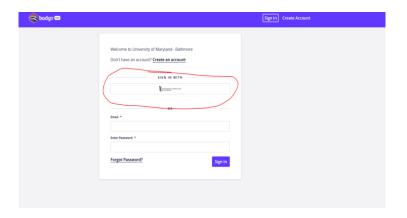
If your badge was awarded to you by email, you do not need to redeem your badge. You will know if your badge was awarded by email if you got the following email:



Reviewing Digital Badges

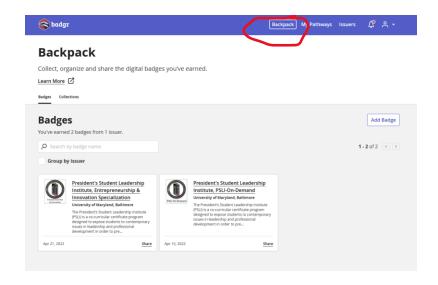
Step 1: Go to UMB's Badging Website

Go to https://umaryland.badgr.com and click "Sign in with University of Maryland, Baltimore" Make sure your account is associated with your UMB email address so that your UMB badge is connected to your Badgr account. If you do not have a UMB email address (email ending with "umaryland.edu") you can create a free account. However, if you are creating a new account, it is important that the account you create uses the email address associated with the badge you were awarded.



Step 2: View your Badge Backpack

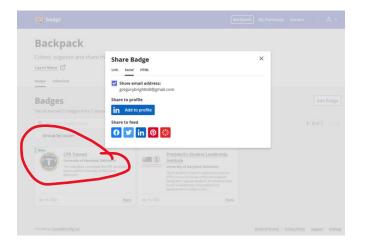
Click "Backpack" on the top right side of the page and view your awarded badges. You can view individual badges by clicking on them.



Sharing Your Digital Badges to LinkedIn

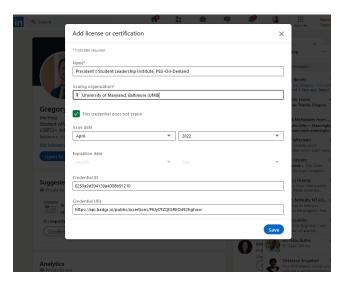
Step 1: Share your badges to your LinkedIn profile.

Click on your badge and select "Share Badge." Now you can share about your badges on social media profiles. You are going to want to add your badge in the "Licenses and certifications" section of your LinkedIn profile. To start, click on the blue LinkedIn "Add to profile" button and log into your LinkedIn Profile.



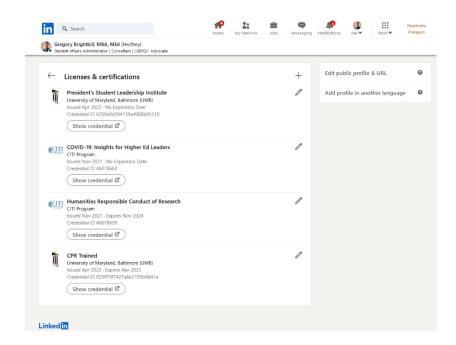
Step 2: Input organization information

Next, in the "issuing organization" section, delete Badgr and add "University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB). Then click "save."



Step 3: Review your digital badge on LinkedIn

Congratulations, your digital badge has been successfully added to your LinkedIn Profile. Make sure you double check that it works! Also, click "show credential" to verify that your Badgr badge is connected properly and verifiable.



Step 4: Confirm "show credential" link

Click on the "show credential" link and confirm that it takes you back to the badging website. All information on this page should be relevant to your specific badge.

