

WORK CENTRAL AB

Micro-Credentials

Fast, Focused Skills Training for Today's Job Market

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Understanding Micro-Credentials

Micro-credentials offer a faster, more affordable way to build specific, job-ready skills without committing to a full diploma or degree. This guide covers what they are, how Alberta supports them, and how to choose one that will genuinely help your career.

1. What Are Micro-Credentials

Micro-credentials are short-term, flexible learning programs, often completable in weeks rather than years, designed to help learners develop specialized, job-ready skills to quickly re-skill or upskill. They complement traditional credentials rather than replacing them entirely, and often focus on a narrow, clearly defined competency.

2. Alberta's Micro-Credential Strategy

- Micro-credentials are a key part of Alberta's broader post-secondary strategy to make skills training more flexible and responsive to industry needs.
- Programs have been developed in partnership with industry, employers, and post-secondary institutions across priority and emerging sectors, from technical fields to sustainable technology.
- Alberta post-secondary institutions, including Red Deer Polytechnic, continue to expand micro-credential offerings - contact your institution of interest directly for current program listings.

3. Choosing a Micro-Credential That Adds Value

What to Look For

- Offered or recognized by an accredited post-secondary institution, rather than an informal or unverified provider.
- Directly tied to a skill gap you've identified through job postings or employer conversations in your target field.
- Results in a verifiable credential or digital badge you can add to your resume and LinkedIn profile.
- Realistic time commitment that fits your current work and life schedule.

4. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Many Alberta post-secondary institutions offer Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), which can formally recognize skills and knowledge you've already gained through work experience, informal learning, or training outside Canada - sometimes reducing the micro-credential or program requirements you need to complete. PLAR assessments are typically far less expensive than the equivalent full coursework.

5. Using Micro-Credentials Strategically

- Stack multiple micro-credentials over time to build toward a broader skill set relevant to your career goals.
- Use micro-credentials to test interest in a new field before committing to a longer program or full career change.
- Combine micro-credentials with more traditional credentials - many employers value a demonstrated pattern of ongoing learning alongside formal education.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

How much do micro-credentials typically cost? Costs vary widely by institution and topic - generally far less than a full diploma or degree, given the shorter time commitment.

Do micro-credentials count toward a full diploma or degree later? Sometimes - ask your institution whether specific micro-credentials can be ladderred into a related certificate, diploma, or degree program.

Are micro-credentials respected by employers? Increasingly yes, particularly when tied to a specific, verifiable skill and issued by a recognized institution - they work best as a complement to, not a replacement for, your broader experience.

6. Micro-Credentials for Career Changers

- For those considering a career change, a micro-credential can be a lower-risk way to build initial credibility in a new field before committing to a longer program.
- Pair a micro-credential with informational interviews in your target field to validate that the skill is genuinely what employers are looking for.
- Highlight micro-credentials prominently on your resume and LinkedIn profile when they're directly relevant to the role you're applying for - see our Career Change Guide for more.

Micro-Credentials Checklist

- ✓ Identified a specific, job-relevant skill gap to address
- ✓ Confirmed the micro-credential is offered by an accredited institution
- ✓ Checked whether PLAR could reduce program requirements based on your experience
- ✓ Confirmed the credential will be verifiable on your resume or LinkedIn
- ✓ Considered how this micro-credential fits into a broader learning plan

Keep Building Your Skills With Work Central AB

See our Professional Development and Career Planning guides for how micro-credentials fit into a longer-term career strategy. Visit [**workcentralab.ca/resources**](https://workcentralab.ca/resources).