DIGITAL BADGES OVERVIEW

GOAL
The Alamo Colleges District (ACD) mission is to empower our diverse communities for success by taking "intentional action to support students’ career goals from pre-matriculation through post-graduation" (Aspen Institute, 2022). The purpose of this taxonomy is to create a consistent experience for the communities we serve across the Colleges and to maximize the visibility of in-demand skills. By aligning digital badges, micro-credentials, and micro-pathways across the district to local careers, job opportunities, and employers, we work to end poverty in San Antonio.1

DEFINITION
Digital badges are digital credentials that people earn by demonstrating a skill. They consist of an image and metadata, are aligned with the Open Badge standard, belong to the earner, and are shareable on social media platforms, resumes, and e-portfolios.

VALUE PROPOSITION
Digital badges articulate in-demand skills to employers and increase social mobility by positioning students for greater competitiveness in the job market.

The benefits of digital badges include:
- Increasing student engagement by motivating, rewarding, and validating learning
- Increasing students’ awareness of skills gained by connecting content to the workforce
- Making courses more attractive by articulating skills to employers
- Aligning with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Marketable Skills Goals
- Creating a digital method for reporting students’ acquisition of skills
- Providing data for identifying and addressing workforce skills gaps

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Hiring practices are changing rapidly. There is a shift to skills-based hiring and using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to scan application materials for keywords. To best prepare our learners for the new hiring landscape, the following three principles inform the creation of all badges in the ACD:

1. Represent in-demand skills.
2. Require skills assessments.
3. Are assessed by credentialed faculty or staff.

CREDENTIALED ASSESSORS
Faculty members and trainers will receive specialized training to award digital badges. Assessor Tiers are defined in this section by training required, responsible entity for the training, and correspond to the type of evaluation for a particular skill or competency.

- Tier 1: Digital badge training that credentials a faculty member or trainer to award badges that represent the THECB Marketable Skills. This tier is specific to each College and facilitated by the Colleges.
- Tier 2: Digital badge training that credentials a faculty member or trainer to facilitate a micro-course that awards a digital badge. This tier is not College-specific and is facilitated by Alamo Colleges Online (i.e., Badge Coach).
- Tier 3: Digital badge training that credentials an adjunct or full-time faculty member to integrate a digital badge into a credit-bearing course. This tier is not College-specific and is facilitated by Alamo Colleges Online (i.e., Badge Specialist).
# BADGE CLASSIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BADGE CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>EVALUATION / ASSESSOR TIER</th>
<th>EXAMPLE BADGE ICON *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketable Skill</td>
<td>Demonstrate a base-level skill that aligns with the core objectives of the Colleges (i.e., THECB). Measured with a skills assessment designed by one of the Colleges.</td>
<td>Indirect or direct assessment of a skill. Assessment is completed by a faculty member designated by the College (Tier 1).</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Empirical &amp; Quantitative Skills" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Demonstrate a base-level marketable or technical skill. Measured with a competency-based skills assessment.</td>
<td>Performance-based assessment with 80% proficiency or higher. Assessment is completed by a credentialed staff or faculty member (Tier 2 or Tier 3).</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Creative Problem-Solving Skill" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Demonstrate the desired behavior, ability, or on-the-job training consistently. Measured over time as the culmination of a capstone learning experience - capstone project, internship, apprenticeship, or portfolio and assessed with a competency-based skills assessment.</td>
<td>End-of-series, summative assessment (i.e., final course, project, or skill set) with 80% proficiency or higher. Assessment is completed by a credentialed staff or faculty member (Tier 2 or Tier 3).</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Therapeutic Communication Ability" /></td>
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<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Demonstrate the desired skill(s) by completing a series of required courses and/or activities. Measured by internal stakeholders through processes that are already established by the Colleges and the district (i.e., Level 1 Certificate).</td>
<td>Existing certifications that are approved by the Colleges. Assessment is completed by a credentialed staff or faculty member (Tier 2 or Tier 3).</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Certificate Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
<td>Demonstrate skills in a non-credit training that is mapped to a for-credit course and approved by the Colleges and the district for use as Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).</td>
<td>Successfully completing a course that is approved to award CPL and has an active Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Assessment is completed by a credentialed staff or faculty member (Tier 2 or Tier 3).</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Articulation Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Partnership</td>
<td>Demonstrate a skill, ability, or certificate in a learning experience that is co-sponsored by the Alamo Colleges District, Colleges and/or their departments, and an employer or education partner (i.e., Goodwill, Travis Early College High School).</td>
<td>Complete the requirements for the appropriate badge type. The icon may be co-branded as long as it meets the requirements and is approved by both parties. Assessment is completed by a credentialed staff or faculty member (Tier 2 or Tier 3).</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="External Partnership Icon" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The example icons serve as representations and not actual badges.*
ORGANIZATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Canvas Credentials (formerly Badgr Pro) has native tiered levels of permission requirements called roles. Alamo Colleges Online (ACOL) representatives are designated as the Organizational Administrator and provide centralized capacity-building support services for all Issuers. The goal of a centralized hub for digital badges is to create a consistent experience for learners across the Colleges and the district.

ACOL will create Issuers and assign selected staff the role of Issuer Owner on behalf of the Colleges. Additional support services include but are not limited to badge-related administration, data tracking, technology support, training, presenting, hosting meetings, creating and maintaining Issuer pages, creating and implementing a district-wide badge creation process, providing digital badge consultations, supporting the Digital Badge Community of Practice, and more.

ISSUERS

DEFINITION - WHAT IS AN ISSUER?

An Issuer is an organization, department, or individual responsible for issuing badges (Badgr, 2022). Internal partners at the Alamo Colleges serve as Issuers. Roles and types of Issuers are defined below to create a consistent experience for students and other stakeholders and to benefit from the permission requirements native to Canvas Credentials (formerly Badgr Pro). To see the Alamo Colleges’ current Issuers in context visit alamo.badgr.com.

ROLES - WHAT DOES AN ISSUER DO?

Issuer Owner is the second highest level of permissions. It has access to all of the permissions for the Issuer including: add/remove staff to the Issuer, edit the Issuer, edit badges, revoke badges, create groups, access member lists, edit pathways, add groups to pathways, award badges, and bulk award badges. The only restrictions for Issuer Owners are that they cannot access or edit other Issuers or the organization settings or welcome page.

The roles of Issuers vary and will continue to evolve as digital badge opportunities continue to expand. The roles are listed below and align with the permission requirements set by Canvas Credentials (formerly Badgr Pro).
### TYPES - WHO CAN BE AN ISSUER?

<table>
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<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>ROLES</th>
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<td>Organizations</td>
<td>There are six organizations in the Alamo Colleges District, Northeast Lakeview College, Northwest Vista College, Palo Alto College, St. Philip’s College, San Antonio College, and the District Support Operations (DSO). The DSO serves the Colleges and is not a distinct Issuer.</td>
<td>The Alamo Colleges, as five independently accredited Colleges, are each unique Issuers of badges for their students and the community.</td>
<td>The Colleges select representative(s) to be designated as the Issuer Owner. Credentialed faculty and staff are designated as Issuer Staff. ACOL representatives are designated as the Organizational Administrator and provide centralized support services for all Issuers. Refer to the Canvas Credentials support page for details about Issuer permission levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departments</td>
<td>The DSO is comprised of departments. DSO departments that work directly with learners may be Issuers of student badges when an aggregate learning approach serves our learners best. Any College department will use the College as the Issuer.</td>
<td>Economic and Workforce Development is an Issuer of badges to participants in their training programs. International Programs is an Issuer of a pathway of global competency badges, as an aggregate learning experience for students.</td>
<td>The department Issuers designate credentialed faculty and staff as Issuer Staff. ACOL representatives are designated as the Organizational Administrator and provide centralized support services for all Issuers. Refer to the Canvas Credentials support page for details about Issuer permission levels.</td>
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### TYPES - WHO CAN BE AN ISSUER? (CONT.)

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| Partners    | The ACD and the five Colleges have many internal and external partners. Partners may become Issuers when digital badge collaboration will serve students, faculty, and/or the partners in a meaningful way that supports the mission of ACD. | *Internal:*  
*ACOL,* as the district Canvas Credentials administrator, is an Issuer of a limited set of faculty/staff badges that are awarded upon the successful completion of micro-credential-related professional development.  
*External:*  
*Bellwether College Consortium* hosts a yearly award ceremony that is sponsored by ACD. A benefit of this partnership is that they are an honorary Issuer of badges to their awardees. | *Internal:*  
ACOL representatives are designated as the *Organizational Administrator* and provide centralized support services for all Issuers.  
*External:*  
Business and education partners who are approved as Issuers are treated as customers and receive support services from ACOL. External partners do not receive access to the ACD Canvas Credentials account. |

DIGITAL BADGE PATHWAYS

DEFINITION - WHAT IS A DIGITAL BADGE PATHWAY?

A digital badge pathway is a series of learning experiences that award stackable digital badges that culminate with a capstone badge. Digital badge pathways are considered Special Projects because they require substantial resources. The sponsor of a digital badge pathway must manage back-end processes including design, recruitment, enrollment, facilitation, and assessment.

CRITERION

Digital badge pathways must:
- Be scalable to ensure the highest return on investment
- Provide an experience for learners that cannot be replicated without the use of digital badge pathways
- Facilitate the experience in a Canvas course
- Award competency-based, in-demand skill badges
- Not duplicate existing badge opportunities across the Colleges or the district
- Receive approval by internal stakeholders
- Be stackable, and can be leveled (see iconography of leveled pathways below)

Current digital badge pathways:

Alamo Global Learner is a leveled pathway of digital badges that represent global and cultural competencies. The International Programs team and their badge-trained and credentialed staff, manage the back-end processes to make this digital badge pathway viable.
## ICONOGRAPHY OF LEVELED PATHWAYS

<table>
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<th>LEVELS</th>
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<th>EXAMPLE BADGE ICON</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Represents a demonstration of one sub-competency.</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Level 1 Badge" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Represents a skill attained through the demonstration of a group of sub-competencies represented by Level 1 badges.</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Level 2 Badge" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Represents the completion of a series of badges and the attainment of a skill set represented by a badge pathway.</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Level 3 Badge" /></td>
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</tbody>
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TECHNOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

The badging platform used by Alamo Colleges District is Canvas Credentials (formerly Badgr Pro). To read more information about this platform, view the technical requirements.

Alamo Colleges’ digital badges must be Open Badges:

• Use open-source data standards.
• Are portable so they may be shared anywhere.
• Have metadata about the achievement.

REFERENCE


Created by Amber O’Casey, Dr. Eryn Berger, and Dr. Luke Dowden
In partnership with Madison College Digital Credentials Institute

Reviewed and approved by the following in Summer 2022:

• Vice Presidents for Academic Success
• Digital Badge Community of Practice
• Directors of Marketing and Communication Council