

## **University guidelines statement on Non-Credit Programming:**

*Approved by Senate: April 20, 1995*

*Updated: March 23, 2024*

The Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning (CTCL) regards non-credit and micro-credential programming as a quintessential channel by which Laurentian University can foster participation and provide meaningful educational contributions to the external community. Non-credit, micro-credential, general interest, and professional development programs provide innovative and flexible programming, professional training with opportunities to upgrade specialized skills within the current workforce.

The Laurentian University Strategic Plan 2024-2029 states:

Strategic Direction 1: “Enhancing our student experience” - build strong foundations for student success and well-being, by enhancing existing offerings aimed at equipping students with professional and industry relevant skills, practical experiences, and networking opportunities should be enhanced to ensure successful student transitions into the workforce.

Strategic Direction 2 “Energizing our Academic and Research Mission” - to integrate Interdisciplinarity and Tricultural Learning into Degree Programs by integrating the tricultural mandate into the learning expectations and outcomes of all existing Laurentian micro-credential, undergraduate and graduate program offerings (in-person and online)."

Given these strategic directions, the CTCL through non-credit and micro-credential programs can participate in achieving these objectives.

In the last two years, various non-credit and micro-credential programs have been developed by the CTCL. Enrollment levels have increased and demand for further programming has grown in this department over during this period, primarily as a result of close working relationships established with community organizations.

As stated in the report of the Senate Executive Committee dated April 1982, it is the hope of the Senate Executive that "all such courses or activities should be channeled through the academic unit involved and co-ordinated by the Centre for Continuing Education (now the Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning)". To meet this objective, guidelines proposed to assist the CTCL and academic units in the programming of non-credit and micro-credentials at Laurentian University have been established and enacted.

### **Non-Credit Programming**

The Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning strives to develop and implement a variety of high-quality, culturally sensitive, lifelong learning opportunities. The CTCL's goal is to increase accessibility to the university, for an ever-increasing diverse population and to foster the ongoing upgrading of personal and professional skills by providing programming reflective of identified community needs.

The non-credit and micro-credential activities, through strong internal partnerships and carefully cultivated community and professional partnerships, provide leadership, human and material resources to respond in a nimble and timely fashion to the educational, social and economic needs facing residents in Northeastern Ontario and beyond.

### **Mandate of the Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning**

As the unit responsible for coordinating non-credit and micro-credentials programs at the University, the CTCL views its role as encouraging, enabling and establishing programming in this area and has expertise in conference and workshop programming, program management, funding and proposal writing. The Centre has many community links, partnerships and connections in all sectors in Northern Ontario and across the country. It is committed to supporting and fostering internal partnerships by collaborating with HR, EDHRO, ISLC, etc. to develop professional development/training opportunities and sharing its resources and expertise in delivering interdisciplinary, diversified programs in both official languages with a tricultural focus. Coordinating all non-credit and micro-credential programming through the CTCL would facilitate accurate and complete documentation, reporting and accounting of all course-wide activities, which has continued to be mandated by the provincial government.

From a learner's perspective, a coordinated and central service would be beneficial and present a more favourable image to potential applicants. Admission, registration and fee collecting would be centralized along with the provision of learner support services. This would facilitate comprehensive information dissemination and provide concentrated customer service.

Non-credit and micro-credential programming initiated by a school, must not represent a financial burden to the university. Overhead for facilities and services used for the development and delivery of the proposed programming will be incorporated into the fee structure of the CTCL; however, any and all revenue will be transferred to the appropriate schools initiating the programming.

### **Benefits to Faculty**

Faculty are encouraged to work on non-credit and micro-credential programs, including proposal writing and funding application preparation, in collaboration with staff members of the CTCL. Benefits to this collaborative approach for faculty are numerous and includes but is not limited to a reduced share of the workload and will avoid duplication of effort. Centre-faculty collaboration would increase Faculty members' ability to make their work known to a wider circle of clients, and increase the potential for monetary and reputational return to the school. Additional benefits include access to innovative and creative course designs and materials, increased opportunities for close partnerships with agencies and other organizations in Northern Ontario, increased personal profile, and potential to access external funding.

### **Development Process**

Normally, non-credit and micro-credential courses and programs would fall into one of the following three areas:

1. professional upgrading - with emphasis on skill and competency acquisition and stackability of individual micro-credentials;
2. economic and social development support;
3. self-improvement initiatives

There are several ways in which an educational and training need might be identified. In some cases, a faculty member, or a school may bring program ideas forward. The Centre for Continuing Teaching and Learning may initiate a request based on an appeal from a specific community stakeholder, which may require the input and support of one or several schools and/or disciplines. A third option is that a proposal for co-sponsorship is received by the Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning from a community partner or another university. Examples of these partnerships include the Goodman School of Mines, Science North, the

Ontario Worker Cooperative Federation, Network North, the Institute of Canadian Bankers, Cambrian College, and College Boreal.

In deciding which initiatives to undertake, the Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning will apply the following criteria:

- \* *demonstrated community need*
- \* *availability of appropriate resources*
- \* *exclusiveness of programming to the University*
- \* *existing opportunity for co-sponsorship*
- \* *sound working relationship established or nascent between the co-sponsor and Laurentian University*
- \* *detailed budget information presented and it contains capacity for full funding*
- \* *demonstrated benefit to Laurentian University*

All proposals for non-credit and micro-credential program activities should be presented to the Director, Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning, for consideration and possible coordination. The Director will subsequently send it to the Senate Committee on Online Learning, Continuing Education and Part-time Studies for information. If the proposed micro-credential is to carry the name of OMC (Ontario Micro-credential) then the Senate Committee on Online Learning, Continuing Education and Part-time Studies will review and approve the proposal before the course/program is created.

Courses and programs will be developed by a team comprised of both internal and external community representatives. All schools and units involved, both academic and service, will be consulted, and invited to participate on the development team.

### **Program Evaluation**

The development and delivery team members, learners, instructors, CTCL personnel, and other service unit personnel as appropriate, will evaluate each program. A full report will be presented to the Director, Centre for Teaching and Continuing Learning within two months of each course offering and annually to the Senate Committee on Online Learning, Continuing Education and Part-time Studies, which would include an annual cost benefit review of the programs. This information will also be included in an annual report to the Senate.