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DFC Memo: 2022-04
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida College System Presidents

FROM: Kathy Hebda, Florida College System Chancellor 

DATE: April 4, 2022

SUBJECT: General Education Digital Badges – House Bill 1507 (2021)

During the 2021 Florida Legislative Session, House Bill 1507 amended [section \(s.\) 1007.25, Florida Statutes \(F.S.\)](#), to require public postsecondary institutions to award students a nationally recognized digital badge upon completion of general education core courses that demonstrate career readiness, beginning with students who initially enter a postsecondary institution in fall 2022 for the 2022-2023 academic year.

The bill charges the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Board of Governors for the State University System (SUS) to jointly appoint faculty committees to identify the competencies within the general education core that demonstrate career readiness and will result in the award of a “verifiable and interoperable nationally recognized digital credential.” These badges must be awarded and recognized by every public postsecondary institution in the Florida College System (FCS) and SUS.

Process

Staff from the Division of Florida Colleges (DFC), Board of Governors’ office, and the Office of Articulation collaborated on implementation, which began with an environmental scan that identified broad, institutional general education student learning outcomes (SLOs) across all 40 FCS and SUS institutions. Once the general education SLOs were identified and grouped thematically, the SLOs were then compared to the career readiness skills identified by the Florida Talent Development Council. Based on the areas of direct alignment, it was determined the first digital badge would focus on effective communication.

In January 2022, DFC recruited FCS faculty representing 12 colleges to serve alongside SUS faculty on the “Fundamentals of Written Communication” committee. The committee met in February 2022 to create a definition of “effective communication,” specify the learning outcomes of the digital credential, and identify career readiness competencies aligned with the digital credential. Following the faculty committee’s work, a group of employers were engaged to validate the career readiness competencies.

KATHRYN S. HEBDA
FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM CHANCELLOR

Institutional Obligations and Actions

There are four primary obligations for institutions in the granting and awarding of the digital badges.

1. **Advertising in Catalog**: In accordance with s. 1007.25(4), F.S., students must be able to distinguish in the public postsecondary institution's catalog which general education core courses are linked to earning a digital badge. This requirement is in effect starting fall 2022 for the 2022-2023 academic year and thereafter.

Action: Institutions should denote in their 2022-23 catalogs that students will earn the Fundamentals of Written Communication digital badge upon completion of ENCX101, or a course for which ENCX101 is a prerequisite, with a grade "C" or better. Section 4 of the attached resource guide contains minimum requirements and recommendations for FCS institutions to consider when advertising the badge.

2. **Granting Digital Badges**: Statute specifies that postsecondary institutions are responsible for "granting" students the digital badge(s). Institutions will determine the most appropriate approach for ensuring this information is available as students seek employment.

Action: Until a statewide solution is realized, institutions should determine the most appropriate approach for posting the student's badge (e.g., on a co-curricular transcript, through a digital badging platform, through career center platforms, or by any other means). It is expected that institutions will develop a process to automatically grant the digital badge to students upon meeting the minimum requirements.

3. **FASTER Transcripts**: The FASTER Postsecondary Course Demographic Record Format (P01) will be modified to reflect student attainment of digital badges. As faculty committees identify digital badges, the table values will be expanded accordingly. Institutions will record digital badges earned via FASTER.

Action: Institutions should be aware of upcoming changes to FASTER that will impact demographic records formats. Modifications to local business processes may be needed to account for the new field. Additional technical details will be transmitted to FASTER users as soon as practicable.

4. **State Reporting**: FCS institutions will be required to report general education digital badges through state reporting. Within the Student Database, Data Element 2123, General Education Digital Badge, was created to capture digital badges. As faculty committees identify digital badges, the table values will be expanded accordingly.

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Action: Institutions should be aware of upcoming changes to the Student Database. Modifications to local business processes may be needed to account for the new data element. Additional technical details will be transmitted to reports coordinators as soon as practicable.

Next Steps

A technical assistance webinar for FCS and SUS institutions will be held on April 6, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. (EDT). The webinar will provide institutions with an overview of the development of the digital badge, guidance on implementing the digital badge, and plans for future badges. You may register for the webinar at

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4955478437367847692>.

If you have any questions regarding the General Education Digital Badges, you may contact Dr. Carrie Henderson, carrie.henderson@fldoe.org, or Katie Grissom, katie.grissom@fldoe.org.

KH/kg

Enclosure

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