



Nation's Top Universities Embrace a New Credentialing System with Launch of the University Learning Store

MADISON, Wis. March 22, 2016 -- Six of the nation's top universities have come together to offer a new credentialing system that may become the standard in career-focused, skills-based training. Georgia Tech Professional Education, UCLA, University of California, Davis Extension, University of California Irvine Division of Continuing Education, University of Washington Professional and Continuing Education and University of Wisconsin-Extension today launched the [University Learning Store](#), enabling job seekers and working professionals to earn industry-validated micro-credentials in a range of business and technical skills.

[Micro-credentials](#) earned online through the University Learning Store give employers confidence in learners' capabilities because of a thorough, industry-based verification process. To earn a micro-credential, learners must prove their knowledge through hands-on, skills-based assessments. Employers and industry experts have verified these assessments as appropriate measures of competencies, aligning the training to job skills needed to close the [skills](#) gap.

David Schejbal, dean of University of Wisconsin-Extension, the founding institution of the University Learning Store said, "Although an array of non-degree credentials exist, they can leave employers guessing as to their true value. With the University Learning Store, leading institutions have joined forces to introduce credentials that clearly indicate the capabilities of the credential holders."

Each micro-credential can be combined with others to create a larger certification from the institution. At launch, the University Learning Store will pilot a range of courses that roll up into two certifications:

- [Global Business Communication](#) delivered by the Georgia Institute of Technology
- [Business Communications](#) delivered by University of Wisconsin-Extension

Additional certifications, such as Effective Business Writing by University of California Irvine, are coming soon. The University Learning Store course catalog will continue to grow with micro-credentials in three categories:

(more)

- **Power skills** include competencies in communication, teamwork and collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving and more.
- **Technical skills** include industry-specific and job-specific skills in information technology, business, agriculture, health care, sustainability and more.
- **Career-advancement skills** include topics such as leadership, public speaking, management, negotiation and more.

Upon successfully completing an assessment, learners earn a micro-credential to add to their resumes. Micro-credentials come in the form of a printable certificate or a digital badge for display on social media profiles. Anyone—from entry-level employees to experienced professionals—can shop for credentials at the online store, as they would at a retail store. Learners purchase only the courses they need to meet their career goals and choose credentials from well-known university brands all in one location.

“This is an innovation in skill credentialing that the workforce, and higher ed, has not seen before,” said Nelson Baker, dean of Georgia Tech Professional Education. “At Georgia Tech, we bring the same rigor and real-world applicability to our non-degree educational opportunities as we do other programs. Industry validation is the final frontier of proving the value of lifelong learning.”

Micro-credentials can be earned in days or weeks at prices that are much lower than traditional college courses. Each University Learning Store course costs \$50, \$100 or \$150. Because the initial focus of the initiative is a pilot, courses are available at half-price for a limited time.

For more information or to enroll, please visit universitylearningstore.org.

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