# Developing a microcredential proposal

Plan the proposal
Knowing your audience or market is foundational when designing a new program. These are the learners and earners, whether they be recent graduates, alumni, or mid-career employees looking to advance or pivot their career. They are not a homogenous group and will have some distinctive characteristics, but all share the common thread of being lifelong learners needing to fill skill gaps, upskill or reskill. Do your research and consider exploring market analysis to ensure the demand and audience is ready for your program.

## Consider the “how’

After reaching a clear position on the audience or market, it is time to address the issue of how to build microcredentials and to cultivate the wider ecosystem. Consider what your preferred approach or methodology will be, to align with institutional processes, culture and resources. Is it to be a small pilot, or will you collaborate with continuing education initiatives? Is there a sense of urgency to get going, or does a slower, more cautious approach fit better with the organizational culture? Will an agile approach, with rapid “test-and-learn” iterations, work well, or is longer term planning more appropriate? Is there an intention to work with external partners? The overall purpose and objective of the project will necessarily inform your preferred approach.

##### Articulate target learning outcomes or competencies

If the microcredential is competency-based, determine which learning objectives will help support the learner master the specific competency. If the credential is not competency-based, set learning outcomes and measurable learning objectives that will measure the microcredential’s outcome.

Consider engaging focus groups for input on how learners will be assessed and what evaluation method will be appropriate to determine whether a learner has successfully mastered a skill or competency.

## Identify authentic assessment strategies

Focus group sessions may provide input as to which authentic assessment will be suitable for a microcredential. The goal is to ensure that the assessment accurately measures the stated competency or stated learning outcomes and objectives. The goal of the assessment is to determine whether the learner can accurately fulfill the learning goals outlined in the microcredential.

Learners should be given clear instructions, criteria and a rubric on how to complete required assessments. A mastery benchmark or “passing grade” threshold must be determined in order to be awarded the microcredential, which has implications for design of a summative assessment.