Enabling Academic Departments and Centers to Offer

Baccalaureate- and Graduate-Level Microcredential Courses

A Policy Framework and Implementation Guide

Draft Policy Reference No. GS-2026-002 (proposed) — companion instrument to Graduate Education Policy No. GS-2026-001

Prepared for the Higher Education Senate and Deans, Chairs, and Center Directors
Office of the University Registrar

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Regulatory basis: CHED Memorandum Order No. 1, Series of 2025 — Guidelines for Micro-Credential Development, Approval and Recognition in Higher Education

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1. Executive Summary

This proposal recommends that the University adopt a formal policy and process allowing academic departments and centers to design and offer microcredential courses at both the baccalaureate and graduate levels. The recommendation responds to CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 1, Series of 2025, which establishes the national framework for developing, approving, and recognizing microcredentials in Philippine higher education, and to a growing institutional and market demand for shorter, competency-focused, stackable learning options.

The proposal establishes two parallel offering tracks consistent with CMO No. 1: (a) non-credit, stand-alone microcredentials that departments and centers may launch under streamlined internal approval, and (b) credit-bearing, stackable microcredentials that carry weight toward a degree or formal qualification and therefore require CHED OPSD review and Commission En Banc (CEB) action in addition to internal approval.

It further proposes a governance structure spanning the Higher Education Senate, the Curriculum Committee (course-content review), the Office of the University Registrar (OUR), the Strategy and Quality Management Office (SQMO) (CHED compliance certification), and the proposing departments and centers themselves, together with a step-by-step submission process, design standards, and a phased rollout beginning with a pilot cohort.

Microcredential implementation under this policy will be consistent with the University's existing undergraduate and graduate academic regulations. The proposal further recommends a review of those regulations to ensure that the objectives of microcredentials are likewise supported while the principles underlying the academic regulations are upheld (Sections 4 and 12).

2. Rationale

Several converging factors support the adoption of a University-wide microcredential policy at this time:

- Ignatian mission alignment. Microcredentials operationalize *cura personalis* and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm by offering flexible, personalized pathways for lifelong learning and formation, allowing working professionals, alumni, and community and parish partners to access Jesuit-formed education — including its emphasis on discernment and service to others — without committing to a full degree program.
- Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). Short, stackable, quality-assured credentials directly advance SDG 4's targets on equal access to affordable technical, vocational, and tertiary education (Target 4.3) and on increasing the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship (Target 4.4), situating the University's lifelong-learning offerings within its broader sustainability and equitable-access commitments.
- National policy alignment. CMO No. 1, s. 2025 now gives CHED-recognized HEIs a formal channel to design, quality-assure, and — where appropriate — credit microcredentials toward the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) Levels 5–8.
- Learner demand for flexibility. Working professionals and current students increasingly seek shorter, verifiable, skills-based credentials that can be completed in weeks rather than years, and that can later stack into a degree.
- Competitive positioning. Peer HEIs (e.g., UPOU, DLSU, UP Diliman) have already begun operationalizing microcredentials; a clear institutional pathway allows Ateneo

departments and centers to move without each unit independently interpreting the regulation.

- Revenue and outreach diversification. Microcredentials open a channel for continuing education, corporate partnerships, and lifelong-learning offerings distinct from, but complementary to, existing degree programs.
- Risk of ungoverned proliferation. Without a clear policy, individual departments and centers may design microcredentials inconsistently, jeopardizing quality assurance, credit integrity, and CHED compliance.

3. Regulatory Basis: CMO No. 1, Series of 2025

CMO No. 1, s. 2025 sets the national framework that microcredentials must follow. Two distinct pathways are available to CHED-recognized HEIs, such as Ateneo, summarized below.

Table 1: Comparison Table of Microcredential Track A and Microcredential Track B

	Microcredential Track A — Non-Credit / Stand-Alone	**Microcredential Track B — Credit-Bearing / Stackable**
Purpose	Skills-focused certificate not intended to count toward a degree	Contributes credit toward a degree, certificate, or formal PQF-level qualification
Who may confer	Any CHED-recognized HEI, under its own certification	Only CHED-recognized HEIs, and only after CHED approval
Internal approval	Department/Center → Dean → School-level IQA review	Department/Center → Dean → School-level IQA review → Curriculum Committee review → Higher Education Senate
External (CHED) approval	Not required; the institution discloses its own accreditation status	Required: Letter of Intent → CHED OPSD review → CEB decision → listing as recognized provider
Design constraints	The institution sets its own rigor, duration, and assessment standards	Must align to PQF Levels 5–8; capped at 30 credit units / 300 training hours
Typical use case	Professional development, short courses, badges, corporate training	Stackable modules feeding into a certificate, diploma, or degree program, or curriculum-embedded components of an existing degree program

Both tracks require the offering unit to maintain transparent quality assurance and to disclose the credential's PQF alignment, learning outcomes, assessment method, and stackability options to learners.

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
AVPGEd (Office of the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Education)	The University office administering graduate education policy jointly authorizes, with OUR, the filing of graduate-level Microcredential Track B Letters of Intent with CHED and serves as the University's liaison with CHED IAS for graduate-level TNHE offerings.
CEB (Commission En Banc)	CHED's collegial decision-making body renders the final decision on credit-bearing microcredential applications forwarded by CHED OPSD (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Annex 1).
CHED	The Commission on Higher Education is the national government agency with authority to set minimum standards for higher education programs under Republic Act No. 7722.
CHED IAS (International Affairs Service)	The CHED office that Transnational Higher Education providers must inform of microcredential courses offered abroad (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Recognition provisions; see Section 10 of this policy).
CHED OPSD (Office of Programs and Standards Development)	Specifically, it's the Non-Conventional Higher Education Division; it reviews Letters of Intent for credit-bearing microcredentials and forwards a recommendation to the CEB (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Section 10 and Annex 1).
Course Validation	The process by which validated Non-Degree or CE coursework, including completed Microcredential Track B stacks, is credited toward a graduate degree.
Credit-Bearing CE Course	A Center-administered course carrying academic units and an official grade on the Ateneo GPE scale, including a Microcredential Track B offering delivered through a Center.
Credit Transfer	The crediting of units earned through a completed and validated Microcredential Track B course toward the unit requirements of a target degree, diploma, or certificate program is administered by OUR through SIS stacking once Course Validation (for graduate-level proposals) or the analogous undergraduate credit-validation process (for baccalaureate-level proposals) has been completed. See Section 6 of this policy.
Curriculum Committee	The University body that receives the School-Level IQA's report endorses Microcredential Track A proposals to OUR and, for Track B, additionally reviews content equivalency and unit value before endorsing the proposal to the Higher Education Senate.

Term	Definition
Curriculum-Embedded Microcredentials	A Microcredential Track B course is designed and offered as an elective component of an existing degree program's curriculum, rather than as a stand-alone offering that a learner separately applies to validate. See Sections 5, 6, and 7 of this policy for the provisions that apply to it.
Digital Credential / Digital Badge	A secure, verifiable, tamper-proof digital representation of a learner's completion of a microcredential, issued in a manner consistent with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Sections 7 and 14)
Equivalency Mapping	The jointly certified analysis, conducted by the Curriculum Committee with the Department Chair/Program Director, mapping a wholly new Microcredential Track B course's learning outcomes against the learning outcomes of the PQF level to which it is pegged and, where the course is credit-bearing, against the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) of the target degree program; required as part of the Curriculum Committee's full new-course review for wholly new stackable courses.
Grade Point Equivalent (GPE)	The numerical value corresponding to a Letter Mark on the Ateneo grading scale. For Microcredential Track B, the OUR registry records the GPE alongside the Letter Mark so it can be reported as the numerical grade that CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Section 11 requires for credit-bearing microcredentials.
Higher Education Institution (HEI)	An institution recognized by CHED to offer higher education programs, including microcredentials, under CMO No. 1, s. 2025.
Letter of Intent	The filing an HEI submits to CHED OPSD to signal its intent to offer a credit-bearing/stackable microcredential, opening the review process described in CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Annex 1.
Microcredential (MC)	A course or set of courses offered to lifelong learners within a field of study, solely developed by an HEI or jointly developed with an industry partner, providing knowledge, skills, values, and competencies in a focused area of study or practice (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Section 2).
Microcredential Track A	This policy's term for a non-credit, stand-alone microcredential offered under streamlined internal approval only; corresponds to a non-stackable microcredential under CMO No. 1.
Microcredential Track B	This policy's term for a credit-bearing, stackable microcredential requiring CHED OPSD review and CEB action in addition to internal approval corresponds to a stackable microcredential under CMO No. 1.

Term	Definition
OAVP GEd (Office of the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Education)	The University office that administers graduate education policy. Under this policy, it gives final graduate-level institutional sign-off on Microcredential Track B proposals and, jointly with OUR, authorizes filing their Letters of Intent with CHED. It coordinates with OAVP-UPI on any future graduate-level TNHE microcredential offering.
OAVP UEd (Office of the Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education)	The University office that administers undergraduate (baccalaureate) education policy. Under this policy, it acts through OCDI on baccalaureate-level microcredentials, including final institutional sign-off on Microcredential Track B proposals. It also co-leads, with the Office of the AVPGEd and OUR, the recommended review of academic regulations.
OCDI (Office of Curriculum Development and Integration)	The University office, under the direction of the Office of the AVPUEd, responsible for baccalaureate-level curriculum matters. Under this policy, it jointly authorizes, with OUR, the filing of baccalaureate-level Microcredential Track B Letters of Intent with CHED. It coordinates with OAVP-UPI on any future baccalaureate-level TNHE microcredential offering.
OUR (Office of the University Registrar)	Maintains the University's microcredential registry, issues and records digital credentials, and manages SIS credit transfer and stacking for both tracks; serves as the University's standing liaison with CHED OPSD and CHED IAS.
Outcomes-Based Design	The requirement that a microcredential's structure and content be built around learning outcomes stated in measurable, assessable terms, rather than around seat time or course inputs (see Section 7 of this policy); reviewed by the School-Level IQA as part of first-instance course-content review.
Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF)	The national framework, established under Republic Act No. 10968, describes qualification levels across Philippine education; microcredentials under CMO No. 1, s. 2025 must map to PQF Levels 5 through 8.
PQF Level	The specific tier, 5 through 8, to which a microcredential's learning outcomes are mapped, corresponds roughly to undergraduate, exit/capstone, master's, and doctoral rigor, respectively (see Section 7 of this policy).
Quality Assurance (QA)	The internal and external processes an HEI maintains to ensure the quality and credibility of its microcredentials, including accreditation-status disclosure and stakeholder feedback (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Section 11).

Term	Definition
School-Level Internal Quality Assurance Team (IQA)	The standing body for first-instance course-content review of Microcredential Track A and B proposals — outcomes-based design, assessment validity, and duration/PQF-level appropriateness — issues content clearance and reports to the Curriculum Committee.
SQMO (Strategy and Quality Management Office)	Certifies compliance with CHED CMO No. 1 disclosure requirements and PQF-level bookkeeping, and issues the institutional QA certification for registry listing; does not review course content.
Stackable Microcredential	Under CMO No. 1, s. 2025, a microcredential that meets formal-qualification rigor and may be credited toward a degree, diploma, or certificate program is equivalent to Microcredential Track B under this policy (CMO No. 1, Sections 6 and 10).
Stand-Alone / Non-Stackable Microcredential	Under CMO No. 1, s. 2025, a microcredential that need not conform to formal-qualification rigor and does not carry credit toward a degree is equivalent to Microcredential Track A under this policy (CMO No. 1, Section 6).
Tracer Study	A structured follow-up study of microcredential completers' outcomes, required of all HEIs offering microcredentials and made accessible to stakeholders (CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Section 10.A), is operationalized under Section 9 of this policy.
Transnational Higher Education (TNHE)	Higher education, including microcredentials, delivered abroad by a CHED-recognized HEI under Republic Act No. 11448, is operationalized under Section 10 of this policy.
Unified HE Grading System	The University-wide grading system to which Microcredential Track B grading transitions as soon as the SIS is capable of implementing this, replacing the current graduate GPE scale and undergraduate grading scale; see Sections 6 and 7 of this policy.

4. Proposed Governance Framework

The following roles and responsibilities are proposed to ensure consistent quality and CHED compliance across all microcredential offerings, while leaving course design in the hands of the proposing department or center.

Consistency with academic regulations. The implementation of microcredentials under this policy shall be consistent with the University's undergraduate and graduate academic regulations, including the Ateneo College Student Handbook, the Ateneo Graduate Student Handbook, and academic policies issued by the Offices of the AVPUEd and AVPGEd on

matters such as admission and registration, grading, course credit and validation, residency, academic standing, and student records. Nothing in this policy supersedes those regulations; where a microcredential-specific situation is not yet expressly addressed by this policy, the applicable academic regulation governs.

Because existing academic regulations were largely written with full degree programs and term-based enrollment in view, a review of these regulations is recommended (see Section 8, Phase 3, and Section 12). The review should ensure that the objectives of microcredentials: flexible, outcomes-based, and stackable pathways for lifelong learners are likewise supported, while the principles on which the academic regulations rest, such as academic rigor, the integrity of academic credit and records, and fairness and consistency of standards across learners, are upheld.

Table 2: Microcredential Governance Framework

Body	Responsibility	Track
Department / Center	Designs the microcredential: learning outcomes, content, assessment, delivery mode, PQF-level mapping, and proposed hours/units	A & B
Dean / Unit Head	Endorses the proposal; confirms resourcing, faculty qualifications, and fit with unit strategy	A & B
		A & B School-Level Internal Quality Assurance Team (IQA)
Strategy and Quality Management Office (SQMO)	Reviews CHED CMO No. 1 disclosure compliance (accreditation status, quality-assurance mechanisms) and PQF-level bookkeeping; issues the institutional QA certification required for registry listing and CHED reporting. Does not review individual course	A & B

Body	Responsibility	Track
	content, outcomes, or assessment design — that review is conducted by the Curriculum Committee	
Curriculum Committee	Receives the School-Level IQA's endorsement and report and, for Microcredential Track A proposals, endorses the proposal to the OUR[13.1] — this is the final step of the process previously performed directly by the Curriculum Committee as "QA review," now conducted at first instance by the School-Level IQA. For Microcredential Track B proposals, additionally reviews content equivalency and unit value against the target degree course; confirms decomposition validity where a stack is derived from an existing Curriculum-Committee-approved course, or conducts full new-course review, including a jointly certified Equivalency Mapping with the Department Chair/Program Director, for wholly new stackable courses	A & B
Higher Education Senate	Approves credit-bearing proposals; endorses stackability into existing academic programs	B only
Office of the University Registrar	Maintains the University's microcredential registry; issues/records digital credentials	A & B
Office of the University Registrar (SIS function)	Manages credit transfer and stacking of Microcredential Track B microcredentials into SIS student records	B only
Office of the AVPGEd (Graduate-level microcredentials)	Final graduate-level institutional sign-off; jointly authorizes, with OUR, filing of the Letter of Intent with CHED	B only
OCDI — Office of Curriculum Development and Integration under the direction of the Office of AVPUEd (Baccalaureate-level microcredentials)	Final baccalaureate-level institutional sign-off; jointly authorizes, with OUR, filing of the Letter of Intent with CHED	B only
OAVP UPI - Office of the AVP for University	Serves as the University's liaison with CHED IAS. For any microcredential	TNHE offerings only (A & B)

Body	Responsibility	Track
Partnerships and Internationalization	offered through TNHE, compiles and transmits the required course information to CHED IAS. Works with the Office of the AVPGEd (graduate level) or OCDI (baccalaureate level), and draws on registry and credential records from OUR (Section 10). Not operative until the University offers TNHE microcredentials.	
CHED OPSD / CEB	External review, quality assurance validation, and formal recognition as an approved microcredential provider	B only

5. Eligibility Criteria for Offering Units

To be authorized to propose a microcredential, a department or center should demonstrate:

- An existing CHED-recognized academic program or research/service mandate relevant to the proposed microcredential's subject area.
- At least one qualified faculty member or subject-matter expert to serve as course owner and assessor.
- A clearly articulated, outcomes-based curriculum with defined learning outcomes mapped to a specific PQF level (5–8).
- A defined assessment and verification method appropriate to the credential's level and stakes.
- For Microcredential Track B proposals:
    - Demonstrates linkage to an existing course, degree, diploma, or certificate program into which the microcredential can stack
    - Certified by the Department Chair/Program Director of the target program, and
    - Confirmed by the Curriculum Committee, identifying the specific elective course or elective requirement the stack is designed to validate against. Track B microcredentials may be validated only against elective courses or elective requirements; core curriculum courses and major (required) courses may not be offered or validated as microcredentials.
    - For Curriculum-Embedded Microcredentials (see Definition of Terms), the same Track B eligibility criteria, Curriculum Committee/Higher Education Senate review, and CHED filing requirements apply. The linkage is the host degree program's own curriculum, and the Department Chair/Program Director certifies that the microcredential is an elective component of that curriculum, identifying the elective requirement it fulfills and the host course code, if any.

- For Microcredential Track B proposals seeking eventual Course Validation:
    - Grading on the standard ADMU A–F grading scale, applicable to both graduate and baccalaureate levels, and transitioning to the Unified HE Grading System

- Issuance of an official grade in SIS, or pending transcription
  - for graduate-level proposals, in the offering Center's or Department's official grade roster
  - for baccalaureate-level proposals, in the offering department/program's grade records, subject to validation by the relevant department/program under the Ateneo College Student Handbook, Section II. (For baccalaureate-level proposals, the analogous department/program-level undergraduate credit validation process under the Ateneo College Student Handbook, Section II applies.)
  - For Curriculum-Embedded Microcredentials (see Definition of Terms), the same Track B eligibility criteria, Curriculum Committee/Higher Education Senate review, and CHED filing requirements apply. The linkage is the host degree program's own curriculum, and the Department Chair/Program Director certifies that the microcredential is an integral required or elective component of that curriculum, identifying the host course code.

6. Microcredential Submission and Approval Process

Microcredential Track A — Non-Credit / Stand-Alone

1. Department/Center completes the Microcredential Proposal Form (Appendix B).
2. Dean/Unit Head endorses the proposal.
3. IQA reviews outcomes-based design, assessment, and duration; issues content clearance.
4. IQA submits an endorsement and report to the GradEd or UEd Curriculum Committee for endorsement to the OUR.
5. SQMO certifies compliance with CHED CMO No. 1 disclosure requirements and completes PQF-level bookkeeping for the proposal, issuing the institutional QA certification required before OUR registers the microcredential (certification procedure and checklist: Appendix D).
6. OUR registers the microcredential in the University's internal registry and assigns a credential ID.
7. Department/Center launches the course and issues digital credentials upon completion.

Microcredential Track B — Credit-Bearing / Stackable

1. Steps 1–3 above are completed identically.
2. IQA submits an endorsement and report to GradEd or UEd Curriculum Committee for review.
3. Curriculum Committee conducts a further, Track-B-specific review of content equivalency and unit value against the target degree course, in addition to the outcomes/assessment review already completed at Step 3:
   - A streamlined decomposition review where the microcredential stack is derived from an existing Curriculum-Committee-approved course, confirming that full-stack completion is outcomes-equivalent to that course;

- Or a full new-course review, including a jointly certified Equivalency Mapping with the Department Chair/Program Director, where the microcredential is wholly new content.
- For a Curriculum-Embedded Microcredential, which may occupy only an elective slot in the host degree program, no curriculum revision of the host program is required, since the program's approved curriculum is unchanged. The Department Chair/Program Director's certification identifies the host program, the elective requirement the microcredential fulfills, and the host course code, if any.
- Upon completing this review, the Curriculum Committee endorses the proposal for presentation to the School Forum and to the Higher Education Senate for final approval.

4. The Higher Education Senate reviews the Curriculum Committee-endorsed proposal and approves it for degree-program stackability and credit-transfer implications.
5. SQMO certifies compliance with CHED CMO No. 1 disclosure requirements and completes PQF-level bookkeeping for the proposal, issuing the institutional QA certification required before the Letter of Intent is filed with CHED and before eventual inventory listing (certification procedure and checklist: Appendix D).
6. For graduate-level microcredentials, the Office of the AVPGEd and OUR jointly authorize filing of a Letter of Intent with CHED; for baccalaureate-level microcredentials, OCDI (Office of Curriculum Development and Integration) and OUR jointly authorize filing.
7. CHED OPSD (Non-Conventional Higher Education Division) reviews the submission.
8. OPSD forwards its recommendation to the CEB for a decision.
9. Upon CEB approval:
    a. CHED includes the University in its listing of recognized microcredential providers;
    b. OUR updates the registry and enables credit-stacking in SIS student records and finalizes the provisional PQF-level and unit/hour bookkeeping entry (Appendix D, Section C) in the registry, and confirmation of the program credit ceiling (Appendix D, Section D).
    c. OCDI/ AVPGEd updates the BOI for the listing of credit-bearing MCs.

Estimated timeline: 4–6 weeks for Microcredential Track A (internal review only); 3–6 months for Microcredential Track B, pending CHED's OPSD/CEB review cycle.

7. Design Requirements for Microcredential Courses

- Outcomes-based design, with learning outcomes stated in measurable, assessable terms.
- Explicit PQF level mapping (Levels 5–8) and, for Microcredential Track B, explicit mapping to the target degree/certificate program's curriculum.
- Microcredential Track B duration ceiling of 300 training hours or 30 credit units per stackable microcredential, consistent with CMO No. 1.
- A defined assessment method (e.g., project, examination, portfolio, practicum) proportionate to the credential's claims.
- Digital, verifiable credential issuance (e.g., secure digital certificate or badge) is recorded in the OUR registry.

- Public disclosure of the offering unit's own accreditation status and, where applicable, any industry partner's role in co-design or assessment.
- For Microcredential Track B microcredentials, the following grading requirements apply:
    - **Grading scale.** Grading follows the standard Ateneo grading scale applicable to the offering level: the graduate GPE scale (A–F) for graduate-level microcredentials, transitioning to the University's Unified Higher Education Grading System; or the corresponding undergraduate grading scale for baccalaureate-level microcredentials.
    - **Recording.** An official grade is recorded in SIS or, pending transcription, in the Offering Center's official grade roster.
    - **Badges are not a substitute.** A badge or completion certificate alone does not satisfy this requirement and forecloses future Course Validation — the University's standard course-credit validation process for graduate-level microcredentials, or the analogous OCDI-administered undergraduate credit validation process for baccalaureate-level microcredentials.
- Disclosure, at the proposal stage, of design origin: whether the microcredential decomposes an existing Curriculum-Committee-approved course (citing course code, title, and CC approval date) or constitutes wholly new content, since this determines the applicable Curriculum Committee review pathway under Section 4 and, for decomposed courses, limits validation to completion of the full module stack.

Design Standards: Unit-Hour Equivalency and PQF-Level Assessment Bands

CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Section 7 requires every microcredential to state its total learning hours and, whenever possible, its equivalent credit-unit value, and Section 6 sets an outer ceiling for Microcredential Track B of 30 credit units or 300 training hours, whichever is reached first — but the CMO does not itself prescribe an hour-to-unit conversion. To ensure a microcredential unit is a genuine equivalent of a standard course unit for stacking and Course Validation purposes, and that contact hours, assessment, and duration are computed consistently across departments and centers, all microcredential proposals must compute credit-unit value using the University's existing unit-hour standards below, rather than a proposal-specific ratio.

Table 3: Existing Ateneo Unit-hour Standards

Level	Basis	Per 1 Credit Unit
Graduate-level microcredential	Ateneo Graduate Student Handbook (2024 Ed.), Section 2.5.2.2	30 total learning hours; 15 total contact hours; minimum 8 in-person contact hours
Baccalaureate-level microcredential	AVP for Undergraduate Education Memorandum, Undergraduate Academic Policies, First Semester SY 2026–2027 (22 July 2026), Sec.	30 total learning hours; 15 total contact hours; at least 10 hours conducted onsite

	A, adopting VP–Loyola Schools Teaching and Learning Arrangements for Undergraduate Classes, SY 2023–2024 (19 April 2023)	

Graduate and baccalaureate microcredentials now share the same 30-hour / 15-hour learning-hour-to-unit ratio; the only remaining variance is the onsite-contact-hour floor within those 15 contact hours (minimum 8 for graduate, at least 10 for baccalaureate). The Ateneo College Student Handbook, Vol. 1 (2025 Ed.), Section III.1 still states the older lecture-hour-per-week formula; proposals must apply the Learning Hours standard above, which is the operative undergraduate policy as of First Semester SY 2026–2027, until the Handbook is amended to match.

Because the University's 15-contact-hour-per-unit standard (both levels) exceeds the ratio implied by CMO No. 1's own Microcredential Track B ceiling (300 hours ÷ 30 units ≈ 10 hours per unit), a Track B stack computed on this table — graduate or baccalaureate — will typically reach the 300-training-hour ceiling at or before 20 credit units. Proposals must state both the credit-unit value and the total contact hours; whichever ceiling under Section 3 above is reached first controls.

Duration follows from the same table rather than being set independently: duration in weeks equals total contact hours divided by the planned weekly contact-hour intensity. For Microcredential Track A, total instructional hours should generally fall within the 40-120-hour range typical of stand-alone microcredentials under CMO No. 1; Microcredential Track B proposals remain bound by the 300-hour/30-unit ceiling above.

Table 4: PQF-Level Assessment Bands for Microcredential Design

PQF Level	Rigor Benchmark	Typical Assessment Methods
Level 5	Undergraduate-equivalent, lower-division: foundational skills; guided application of concepts	Quizzes, structured exercises, skills demonstrations
Level 6	Undergraduate-equivalent, exit/capstone-level: independent application; integrative task	Projects, case analyses, practicum, or portfolio
Level 7	Master's-level: analytical and evaluative; evidence-based argument	Research papers, analytical projects, and evaluated professional practicum
Level 8	Doctoral-level: original contribution; critical, independent inquiry	Original research output, publishable-quality paper, critical review with novel synthesis

For Microcredential Track B proposals:

- Assessment must culminate in an official grade on the standard Ateneo grading scale (Letter Mark), consistent with the grading requirement above. Because the University's official grade is a Letter Mark rather than a raw number (the Grade Point Equivalent (GPE) exists in the University Transcript of Records only as a computational value for GPA, not as the officially issued grade). The OUR registry entry for any completed Microcredential Track B microcredential must record both the Letter Mark and its corresponding GPE, so the GPE can be reported as the numerical grade CMO No. 1, s. 2025. Section 11 requires credit-bearing/stackable microcredentials without altering the University's underlying letter-grade system.
- At proposal review, the School-Level IQA (Microcredential Track A and B) and the Curriculum Committee (Microcredential Track A endorsement and full Microcredential Track B review) confirm that declared contact hours, credit-unit value, and assessment method are consistent with this subsection before issuing content clearance or endorsement, consistent with Section 4.

Stacking Policy

The following rules govern how credit earned through Microcredential Track B microcredentials may be combined, or "stacked," toward the unit requirements of a target degree, diploma, or certificate program under Section 6, in addition to the per-microcredential 300-training-hour/30-credit-unit ceiling established above.

- Program credit ceiling. Credit earned through stacked Microcredential Track B microcredentials may not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the total unit requirement of the target degree, diploma, or certificate program. The Curriculum Committee computes this ceiling as part of its Equivalency Mapping (for wholly new stacks) or decomposition review (for stacks derived from an existing Curriculum-Committee-approved course) under Section 4, and OUR confirms it again before enabling credit-stacking in SIS student records.

- Validity period. Credit earned through a Microcredential Track B microcredential remains eligible for a maximum of five (5) years from the date its Letter Mark is recorded in the OUR registry. Where this five-year period or less, based on proposal, lapses before all components of a stack are completed, the affected microcredential(s) must be retaken, or the offering Department/Center must certify to the School-Level IQA that the learning outcomes and content remain current before OUR will process Course Validation and Credit Transfer for the stack.

- Sequencing. Whether a stack's component microcredentials must be completed in a prescribed order depends on how the stack is designed. Where the approved proposal specifies a required sequence among components (e.g., a prerequisite structure), that sequence must be followed exactly as approved, and OUR will not process an out-of-sequence completion as satisfying the stack. Where the approved proposal does not specify a required sequence, learners may complete the stack's components in any order within the validity period above. The Department/Center must declare, in the Microcredential Proposal Form (Appendix B), whether the stack requires a prescribed sequence, and the Curriculum Committee reviews this declaration as part of its Track B content-equivalency review under Section 4.

- Stacking process. Once all required components of a stack are completed within the validity period and, where applicable, in the required sequence, the offering Department/Center certifies completion to OUR, which processes Course Validation

(for graduate-level proposals) or the analogous undergraduate credit-validation process (for baccalaureate-level proposals) and enables Credit Transfer via SIS stacking, consistent with Section 6 and the Definition of Terms.

- Curriculum-embedded microcredentials. For a learner enrolled in the host degree program, credit earned through a Curriculum-Embedded Microcredential is recorded in SIS as part of that program's approved curriculum, like any other course in it. It does not require separate Course Validation or Credit Transfer, it does not count toward the program credit ceiling above, and its currency is governed by the applicable academic regulations on residency and maximum period of study rather than by the five-year validity period. Where a learner completes a Curriculum-Embedded Microcredential outside the host degree program (for example, as a lifelong learner) and later seeks to stack it, the validity, sequencing, and stacking-process provisions above apply in full, and the credit counts toward the program credit ceiling.

8. Implementation Roadmap

Phase	Activities	Target Timing
Phase 1: Policy Adoption	Higher Education Senate approves this framework; the Curriculum Committee, SQMO, and OUR finalize the Proposal Form and registry	Month 1–2
Phase 2: Pilot Cohort	Identified units/ departments/ centers submit pilot proposals (Microcredential Track A preferred for pilots)	Month 3–4
Phase 3: Pilot Launch & Review	Pilot microcredentials launch; Curriculum Committee reviews pilot program outcomes and learner feedback; review of faculty-level policies and guidelines that may be affected by the delivery of microcredentials; and review of existing undergraduate and graduate academic regulations to ensure they support microcredential objectives while upholding their underlying principles (see Section 4)	Month 5–8
Phase 4: Microcredential Track B Filing	Selected pilots with strong stackability potential file Letters of Intent with CHED	Month 6–9
Phase 5: University-Wide Rollout	Process opened to all departments and centers; annual review cycle established	Month 10–12

9. Tracer Study Requirements

Consistent with CHED Memorandum Order No. 1, Series of 2025, Section 10, which requires HEIs to conduct a tracer study of all microcredential learners and make it accessible to stakeholders, the following requirements apply to every Microcredential Track A and Track B offering:

- Ownership: The Department or Center offering the microcredential is responsible for administering the Tracer Study for its own completers, including survey design, distribution, and data collection.
- Reporting: The offering Department or Center must submit a Tracer Study Report to the School-Level Internal Quality Assurance Team (IQA) and to the Strategy and Quality Management Office (SQMO).
- Timing: The first Tracer Study Report for a given cohort of completers is due one (1) year after course completion, and annually thereafter for as long as that cohort remains within the tracking period.
- Minimum content: employment or further-study status, career or academic pathway (including further stacking or Course Validation uptake), and employer or learner feedback on the credential's relevance, sufficient to support the disclosure obligation under CMO No. 1, Section 10.
- Use: Tracer Study Reports inform the IQA's course-content review and the SQMO's CHED compliance certification, and support any future periodic review of the microcredential portfolio.
- Template: a recommended Tracer Study Survey Template — including the CORE items that SQMO and IQA aggregate for portfolio-level reporting — is provided in Appendix C.

10. Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) Reporting

This section applies only if the University offers, or partners to offer, a microcredential delivered abroad under Republic Act No. 11448 (the Transnational Higher Education Act) and its implementing CHED guidelines. It does not apply to Ateneo's current domestic Microcredential Track A/B offerings, and is included to establish institutional ownership in advance of any future TNHE activity.

- Reporting obligation: per CMO No. 1, s. 2025, Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) providers must inform CHED's International Affairs Service (CHED IAS) — in addition to the standard CHED OPSD process required for domestic credit-bearing microcredentials — of the microcredential courses offered abroad, whether standalone or stackable.
- Responsible office: OAVP UPI is designated as the University's liaison with CHED IAS for any future TNHE microcredential offering.
- Coordination: OAVP UPI, as the University's official liaison with CHED IAS, compiles and transmits the required TNHE course information to CHED IAS. It works with the Office of the AVPGEd (for graduate-level microcredentials) or OCDI (for baccalaureate-level microcredentials), consistent with the filing-authorization roles described above. OUR remains responsible for the University's central microcredential registry and gives OAVP UPI the registry and credential records needed for each TNHE submission.

- Activation: this section is not currently operative. It takes effect only if and when the University obtains, or applies for, Authority to Offer Transnational Higher Education under RA 11448 for a microcredential offering.

11. Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation	Owner
Inconsistent quality across units	Mandatory Curriculum Committee review and standardized Proposal Form for all offerings	Curriculum Committee
Credential/degree dilution concerns	Microcredential Track B limited to explicit, pre-approved stacking pathways; Higher Education Senate review required	Higher Education Senate
CHED filing delays	Batch Microcredential Track B filings; maintain standing liaison with CHED OPSD	Office of the AVPGEd / OCDI (by level) and OUR
Fragmented record-keeping	Single centralized OUR registry for all microcredentials, both tracks	OUR
Low faculty/department awareness	Orientation sessions and a published implementation guide (this document, Section 6–7)	AVPGEd / OCDI

12. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Higher Education Senate:

- Approve the two-track microcredential framework described in this proposal;
- Designate the Curriculum Committee as the standing body for course-content review (outcomes-based design, assessment validity, and Microcredential Track B equivalency), the SQMO for CHED CMO No. 1 compliance certification, and OUR for registry management;
- Authorize a Phase 2 pilot call to departments and centers within the current academic year; and
- Direct the Curriculum Committee, in coordination with the Office of the AVPGEd (for graduate-level offerings) and OCDI (for baccalaureate-level offerings), to finalize the Microcredential Proposal Form
- Direct the Offices of the AVPUEd (through OCDI) and the AVPGEd, in coordination with OUR, to review existing undergraduate and graduate academic regulations and recommend any amendments needed so that the objectives of microcredentials are supported while the principles of those regulations are upheld; and
- OUR to serve as the University's liaison with CHED OPSD for any Microcredential Track B filings.
- Designate the Office of the AVP for University Partnerships and Internationalization (OAVP UPI) to serve as the University's liaison with CHED IAS for any future TNHE

microcredential offering, in coordination with the Office of the AVPGEd or OCDI and with OUR as the central microcredential registry.

Appendix A: Summary of CMO No. 1, s. 2025 Key Provisions

- Applies to microcredentials designed, developed, and delivered by CHED-recognized HEIs, industry-based entities, non-HEI organizations, and established global microcredential providers.
- Grounded in the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), with microcredentials mapped to Levels 5–8.
- Distinguishes non-stackable (stand-alone) microcredentials, which need not conform to formal-qualification rigor, from stackable microcredentials, which must.
- Only CHED-recognized HEIs may confer certifications for stackable microcredential programs.
- Credit-bearing microcredentials are capped at 30 credit units or 300 training hours.
- Approval route for credit-bearing microcredentials: Letter of Intent → CHED OPSD review → CEB decision → inclusion in CHED's listing of recognized providers.
- HEIs must disclose their own accreditation status and quality-assurance mechanisms to learners.

Appendix B: Microcredential Proposal Form — Required Fields

- Proposing department/center and course owner
- Track requested (A – non-credit or B – credit-bearing/stackable)
- Title, description, and target learner profile
- Learning outcomes and PQF level mapping
- Duration (hours) and, if Microcredential Track B, credit unit equivalence
- Delivery mode and assessment method
- For Microcredential Track B: target degree/certificate program and specific stacking pathway
- Credential issuance mechanism (digital certificate/badge platform)
- Faculty/assessor qualifications
- Design origin: decomposition of an existing Curriculum-Committee-approved course (cite code/title and CC approval date) or wholly new microcredential content
- Grading scale to be used (standard Ateneo GPE scale required for Microcredential Track B proposals seeking future Course Validation; pass/fail or badge-only permitted for Microcredential Track A only) and SIS/registry course number
- For Microcredential Track B:
    - Curriculum Committee review type (full new-course or streamlined decomposition)
    - Delivery model: stand-alone stackable or curriculum-embedded (if curriculum-embedded: host degree program, course code, and required or elective status)
    - Department Chair/Program Director equivalency certification
    - Offering unit’s own accreditation status

- Where applicable, any industry partner's role in co-design or assessment (required for SQMO's CMO No. 1 disclosure certification under Section 6)

Appendix C: Tracer Study Survey Template

This template implements the annual Tracer Study Report required under Section 9. It is a starting instrument, not a fixed form: items marked (CORE) must remain unchanged across all offering units, since SQMO and IQA aggregate these verbatim for portfolio-level CHED compliance reporting: Departments/Centers may add program-specific questions elsewhere. Target length: 12–16 questions (roughly 5–8 minutes). Recommended delivery: a short online form linked to the OUR microcredential registry, with the first wave at 1 year post-completion per Section 9, and an optional second wave at 2–3 years for departments wanting longer-horizon data.

Section A: Screening / Respondent Identification

- Q1. Microcredential title and Credential ID [auto-filled / short text]
- Q2. Track completed — A (non-credit) or B (credit-bearing/stackable) (CORE)
- Q3. Offering Department/Center [auto-filled / short text]
- Q4. Completion date / cohort [auto-filled / date]
- Q5. Survey wave (e.g., 1-year, 2-year) [auto-filled / single select]

Section B: Employment & Career Outcomes

- Q6. Current employment status (CORE) [single select: employed full-time / employed part-time / self-employed / actively seeking employment / in further studies only / not seeking employment / other]
- Q7. If employed: job title and industry/sector [short text, conditional on Q6]
- Q8. Is your current role related to the content of this microcredential? (CORE) [Yes / Partially / No]
- Q9. Did completing this microcredential contribute to any of the following? (select all that apply: new job, promotion or raise, expanded responsibilities, new business/freelance opportunity, no material change) [multi-select]

Section C: Educational Pathway & Stacking Uptake

- Q10. Since completing this microcredential, have you: (a) enrolled in another microcredential at this University, (b) had it stacked/credited toward a degree via Course Validation, (c) enrolled in a degree program elsewhere using it, or (d) not pursued further study [single select]
- Q11. If (b) or (c), which program/degree and at which institution? [short text, conditional]

Section D: Credential Relevance & Skill Application

- Q12. How relevant have the skills/knowledge from this microcredential been to your current work or studies? (CORE) [1–5 scale: Not relevant to Highly relevant]
- Q13. Which specific skills or competencies from the microcredential have you applied most? (customize this checklist per credential's stated learning outcomes) [checklist, program-specific]
- Q14. Were there skills or topics you wish had been covered but weren't? [open text]

Section E: Employer/Supervisor Feedback (Optional Module)
Include only if the respondent consents to their employer being contacted, or if the respondent is asked to forward a short version to their supervisor.

- Q15. In your employer's view, how valuable is this credential for your role? [1–5 scale, optional]
- Q16. Would your employer support other staff pursuing this microcredential? [Yes / No/ Unsure, optional]

Section F: Overall Satisfaction & Program Feedback
- Q17. Overall, how satisfied were you with this microcredential? (CORE) [1–5 scale]
- Q18. How likely are you to recommend this microcredential to a colleague or peer? (CORE) [0–10 scale]
- Q19. What worked well, and what could be improved? [open text]

Section G: Consent & Data Use
Include a brief consent statement before the survey opens, referencing the University's Data Privacy Manual (and its microcredential annex, once adopted): what data is collected, how it will be used (aggregated reporting to IQA/SQMO and, where required, CHED), retention period, and the respondent's right to decline or withdraw.

Notes for Departments/Centers
- Add a "Program-Specific Questions" block after Section F for anything unique to your microcredential (e.g., practicum placement quality, cohort-specific feedback) — keep it short.
- Do not alter the wording of CORE items (Q2, Q6, Q8, Q12, Q17, Q18); SQMO aggregates these verbatim across all offering units for CHED compliance certification and portfolio-level reporting.
- Submit response data (or a summary against these items) as part of your annual Tracer Study Report to the IQA and SQMO, per Section 9.

Appendix D: Institutional QA Certification Template (SQMO)

This template implements the SQMO certification step required under Section 6 for every Microcredential Track A proposal that has cleared Curriculum Committee endorsement and every Track B proposal that has cleared Higher Education Senate approval. It documents SQMO's disclosure compliance and PQF bookkeeping check; it is not a re-review of course content, learning outcomes, or assessment design, which remain the Curriculum Committee's responsibility under Section 4. Target turnaround: five (5) business days from receipt of the endorsed/approved proposal. Actual disclosure to learners occurs at OUR registry listing (Track A) or at CHED-recognized-provider listing and registry update (Track B). The registry entry and associated credential materials are the University's disclosure channel; SQMO's certification confirms the disclosure content is ready for that publication, not that the publication has already occurred.

Section A: Proposal Identification
- Microcredential title and proposed Credential ID
- Proposing Department/Center and course owner
- Track (A — non-credit or B — credit-bearing/stackable)
- PQF level assigned by IQA/Curriculum Committee (5–8)
- Date proposal received by SQMO
- For Track A: date of Curriculum Committee endorsement; for Track B: date of Higher Education Senate approval

Section B: CMO No. 1 Disclosure Readiness Checklist (CORE — required for every certification): confirms the required disclosure content is drafted, accurate, and complete in the proposal record (not that it has already reached learners, which cannot happen before the microcredential is registered/listed).

- Accreditation status. Offering unit's own accreditation status documented in the proposal record, complete and accurate, ready for publication in the OUR registry/credential materials upon registration [Yes/No — cite document/location]
- Industry partner role. Industry partner's role in co-design or assessment, where applicable, documented and ready for publication in the OUR registry/credential materials upon registration [Yes/No/Not applicable]
- PQF-level disclosure. PQF-level alignment documented and consistent with the level IQA/Curriculum Committee confirmed, ready for publication upon registration [Yes/No]
- Learning outcomes. Learning outcomes documented and ready for publication upon registration [Yes/No]
- Assessment method. Assessment method documented and ready for publication upon registration [Yes/No]
- Stackability / status. Stackability options (Track B) or non-credit status (Track A) documented and ready for publication upon registration [Yes/No]

Section C: PQF-Level Bookkeeping: SQMO verifies the PQF level and, for Track B, the unit/hour values, and records them in its own certification file. For Track A, this verification is final at this stage, since no external approval remains pending after SQMO certification, and OUR enters the confirmed values into the registry. For Track B, the verification is provisional only — the values become final in the OUR registry once CEB approves (Section 6, Track B, final step)

- Certification record. PQF level verified and recorded in SQMO's certification file, for transmittal to OUR [Yes/No]
- Band consistency. Logged level consistent with the PQF-Level Assessment Bands (Table 4) [Yes/No]
- Track B unit/hour logging. For Track B: logged credit-unit value and total contact hours, as computed under Table 3 [Yes/No]

Section D: Track B Additional Items (CORE for Track B only)

- Grade reporting. Official grade reporting mechanism (Letter Mark and GPE) confirmed per CMO No. 1, Section 11 [Yes/No]
- Program credit ceiling. Program credit ceiling (30% of the target program's total units) confirmed and logged for this stack [Yes/No]
- Validity / sequencing. Stack validity period (maximum of 5 years from Letter Mark recording) and sequencing declaration on file, per Section 7 [Yes/No]

Section E: Certification Decision

- Certification status: Certified / Returned for Correction
- If returned: item(s) requiring correction and resubmission deadline
- SQMO reviewer name and signature
- Date certified
- Forwarded to: OUR (Track A); Office of the AVPGEd or OCDI, as applicable, and OUR (Track B)

Section F: Turnaround Log

- Date proposal received by SQMO
- Date certification issued
- Business days elapsed (target: 5 business days)

Notes for SQMO

- This checklist covers disclosure compliance and PQF-level bookkeeping only — do not substitute SQMO's judgment for the Curriculum Committee's content-equivalency or assessment-design findings.
- Retain a copy of each completed certification in the University's microcredential inventory for CHED reporting and for cross-reference against future Tracer Study Reports (Section 9).