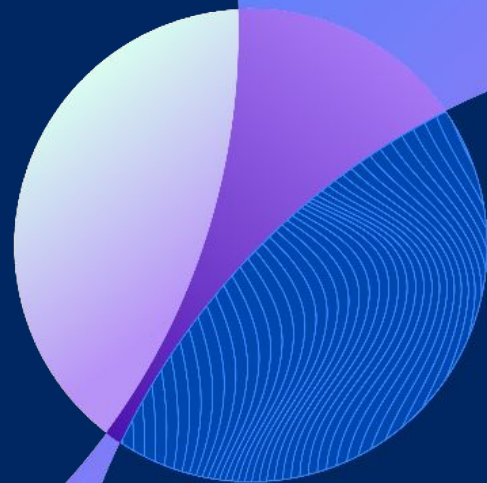


coursera

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Building a Workforce-Ready Ecosystem through Industry Micro-Credentials



- **Marilyn Wiley**, Dean, G. Brint Ryan College of Business, University of North Texas, and SWBDA President
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- **James Payne**, Dean, College of Business Administration and Paul L. Foster and Alejandra de la Vega Foster Distinguished Chair in International Business
-
- **Colleen Malloy** - Account Director, Coursera for Campus

New Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2026

87%

of graduates with micro-credentials report **securing in-field roles within one year.**

94%

of employers indicate **willingness to offer higher starting salaries** to candidates with these credentials.

82%

of employers place greater value on **micro-credentials developed with industry partners.**

2x

as many students (71%) say they're **likely to enroll in a program with credit-bearing credentials.**

Our research found that micro-credentials drive:



Faster pathways to better jobs



Student engagement and enrollment



Stronger early graduate performance



Faster curriculum refresh for institutions



Clear skill signals for employers

By integrating industry-aligned, credit-bearing, and project-based micro-credentials into degrees, institutions can prove student skills to employers, update curriculum faster, and boost student enrollment.

Insights from over 3,500 students, employers, and higher education leaders across 7 countries on the new currency for career readiness

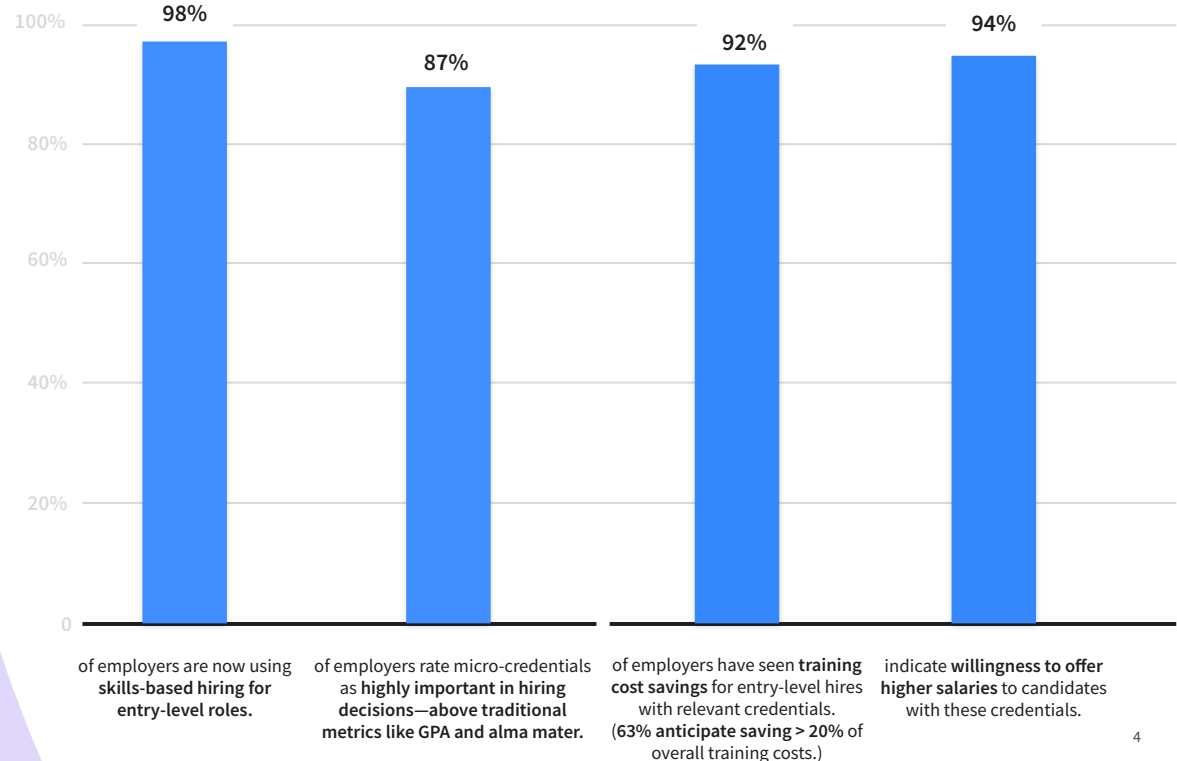
The job market is changing fast.

61%

of employers expect more than 30% of employees' core skills to change by 2030.

That's why graduates need proof of job-aligned skills that can be quickly understood in a screening process.

Employer demand for job-ready skills is high; degrees must prove what graduates can do.



Micro-credentials lead to better jobs and higher pay



87%

of graduates with micro-credentials report **securing a field-aligned role within 12 months.**



83%

of employed graduates say micro-credentials played a **significant role in landing their position.**



29%

of employers are willing to offer a **15%+ salary bump** to graduates with regular micro-credentials,

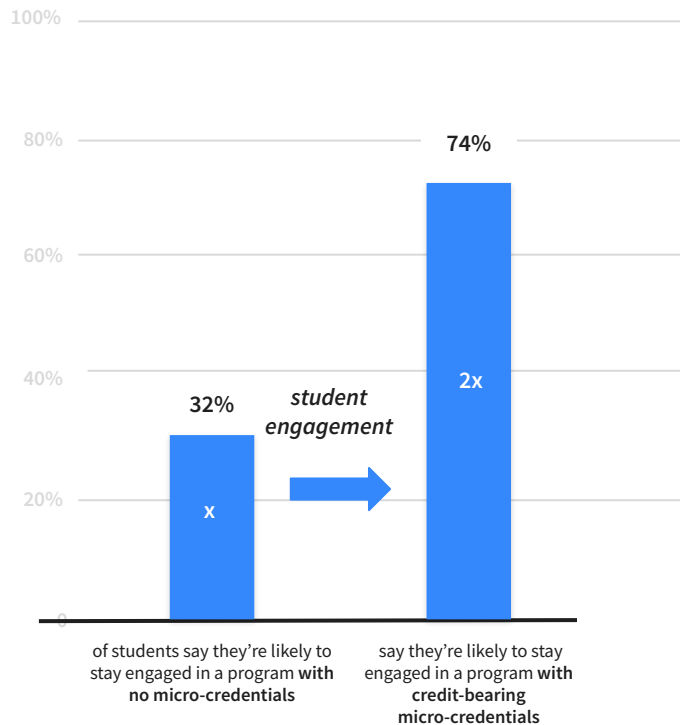
- 44% of employers for GenAI credentials
- 37% of employers for credit-bearing credentials

2x

as many students say they're likely to **stay engaged** in a program with credit-bearing options, compared with programs with none.



Micro-credentials aid student engagement and retention



How can campuses connect degrees with employer demand?

62%

of employers say targeted, role-based learning programs significantly impact their organization's productivity.
(+ *another 37% report some positive impact*).

52%

say targeted, role-based learning programs significantly impact their organization's profitability.
(+ *another 46% report some positive impact*).

Employers highly value the role-based learning micro-credentials drive

Today's employers are seeing undeniable returns when learning is targeted to specific roles. Nearly all (98–99%) see improved productivity and profitability from role-based learning.

They need employees who can bridge the gap between broad knowledge and specific, day-one execution. This is the exact gap that micro-credentials fill.

The case for agility: Generative AI



GenAI enrollments on Coursera

Since December 2022, Coursera has seen over **18 million enrollments** in GenAI content, averaging **over 20 enrollments per minute in 2026**.



Employers demand GenAI skills

60% of **employers say they would choose a less experienced candidate with a GenAI credential** over a more experienced candidate without one.



Students earn GenAI micro-credentials

Nearly 50% of students surveyed globally have *already* earned a GenAI micro-credential, highlighting **strong demand for these credentials**.

Panel Discussion

- Changing employer expectations
- Industry-recognized micro-credentials in career readiness
- Employer demand signals and internship/workforce preparation
- Credential pathways, credit recognition, and workforce-aligned learning

Coursera Integration at Spears

- 40 students earned a specialized certificate (Lean Six Sigma) through our Supply Chain course (MKTG 4213).
- Incorporated Coursera content into two of our core courses, ECON 3613 and MSIS 3223, with approximately 900 students per semester both Fall 2025 and Spring 2026.
- 20 faculty members have requested access to explore the courses in order to incorporate in their future courses beginning Fall 2026.
- The MBA Program is developing an AI-focused bootcamp for incoming students that will include Coursera coursework.
- Accounting will begin incorporating Coursera content into Foundational Accounting and Intermediate Accounting courses beginning Summer 2026.
- We will be offering Professional Development opportunities to staff Summer 2026



The blueprint of a trusted micro-credential

01

Credit recommendation

Micro-credentials should carry weight in both academic pathways and employer decisions. Credit recommendation helps formalize the skills that micro-credentials signal.

02

Industry alignment

Micro-credentials should be built or selected in partnership with industry to ensure that skills align with real roles and current technology stacks.

03

Project focus

Micro-credentials should emphasize project-based learning so that completed learning translates into demonstrated skills.

Links to Resources:

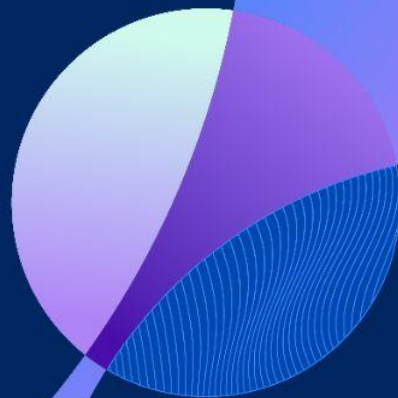
Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2026

Implementation toolkit

- Five Step Framework
- Case Studies
- Resources



Questions



Strawman for Consideration

Opening (5 min) - Share key findings from the Microcredential 2026 report.

Upfront: (talk about your high level programming for career alignment, and impact)

- **Question 1** - What does workforce readiness mean today? (Career Readiness examples) Jim
- **Question 2** - What are employers signaling that business schools need to pay attention to? Marilyn
- **Question 3** - How are business schools adapting?
 - ACE recommendations and pathways to credit? (Marilyn)
 - 90 Credit Bachelor of Business Acumen and Technology (Jim)
- **Question 4** - What does a workforce-ready ecosystem look like?
 - Texas Talent Accelerator - Marilyn

Audience Q&A

12 mins each and then 9 mins for audience