

Academic Credentials and Senate Oversight

Established on: 2025 12 11

Effective Date: 2025 12 11

Approval Authority: Senate

Responsible Portfolio: Provost and Vice President Academic

Responsible Officer(s): Provost and Vice President Academic

Next Review Date: 2030 12 11

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the types of academic and professional credentials currently conferred by NOSM University, future potential credentials to be offered by the university, and establishes the role of the University Senate in the approval, oversight, and quality assurance of these credentials.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all credentials awarded by the University, including those delivered through the Continuing Education and Professional Development (CEPD), and in partnership with external institutions, where applicable.

3. Definitions

Credential: A formally awarded recognition of academic achievement, including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and micro-credentials.

Micro-credential: Typically a short, competency-based course aimed at quickly upskilling or reskilling learners for specific job market needs and often designed in partnership with industry, focussing on practical, job-ready skills.

4. Types of Credentials

As per NOSM University's Act of 2021 and as per Ontario Regulation 152/22, the university is permitted to confer the following two degree programs which are composed of for-credit courses: 1) *Doctor of Medicine* and 2) *Master of Medical Studies*.

NOSM University also offers a number of Post-Graduate Medical Education residency programs, the Dietetic Practicum Program and the Medical Physics Residency Education Program which all lead to a certificate of completion. Finally, the CEPD Unit offers several professional development courses and non-credit micro-credential courses.

In broader terms, universities may confer the following types of credentials:

a. Undergraduate Credentials

- Bachelor's and Honours Bachelor's Degree (e.g., BA, BSc, BCom, BEng, BEd, BMus, BSW)
- Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma

b. Graduate Credentials

- Graduate Certificate or Diploma
- Master's Degree (e.g., MA, MSc, MBA, MEd, MSW)
- Doctoral Degree (PhD)
- Professional Doctorates (e.g., EdD, DBA, DMin)

c. Professional Degrees

- Bachelors of Science, Nursing
- Doctor of Medicine
- Doctor of Dental Medicine or Surgery

d. Continuing Education and Alternative Credentials

- Professional Development Certificates
- Executive Education Certificates
- Certificates of Participation or Completion
- Micro-credentials (credit and non-credit)
 - Most micro-credentials in Canada are non-credit, but there is a trend toward stackable, for-credit options, especially as institutions look to bridge continuing education and formal academic pathways.

e. Honorary Degrees

- Honorary Doctorates (e.g., Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Letters, Doctor of Science, Doctor of Medicine *honoris causa*)

f. Joint and Dual Credentials

- Joint Degrees (conferred with one or more institutions)
- Dual Degrees (each institution confers its own credential)

g. Stackable Credentials

Laddered credentials designed to articulate toward higher qualifications (e.g., certificate leading to a diploma leading to a degree).

5. NOSM University's Senate Oversight and Responsibilities

In accordance with the NOSM University Act and Senate By-laws, the Senate holds primary responsibility for academic governance. This includes approving the creation, modification, or discontinuation of academic programs and credentials; determining curricula, admission standards, and graduation requirements; authorizing the awarding of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic distinctions; and overseeing academic appeals, examinations, and related processes. Senate also appoints academic leaders and establishes committees or councils as needed to fulfill its academic mandate. Approvals and oversight will follow the standard Senate approval process as set out in its governing documents.

6. Senate Oversight of Non-Credit Credential

Non-credit offerings, including professional development courses leading to participation certificates, are developed outside the scope of for-credit academic programs and therefore do not imply academic credit or equivalency. Senate will be kept informed of such offerings through regular reporting and will have the opportunity to provide feedback when appropriate to ensure alignment with the University's academic mission and values.

7. Senate Contributions to Internal and External Quality Assurance Processes

Senate ensures that all academic programs and credentials, for-credit and non-credit, meet institutional, professional, and regulatory standards. Internal quality assurance is maintained through NOSM University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and other established policies, including regular curriculum review, program evaluation, and monitoring of learner outcomes. External quality assurance is conducted in accordance with the requirements of accrediting and regulatory bodies (e.g., Accreditation Canada, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, College of Family Medicine of Canada, Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board etc). Program committees report accreditation and quality review outcomes to Senate, ensuring academic offerings remain relevant, rigorous, and responsive to evolving educational and professional needs.

8. Periodic Review

This policy shall be reviewed every five years or as needed to ensure relevance and alignment with institutional goals and sectoral trends.

9. Related Policies or Documents:

Other documents or policies linked to the current policy.

- NOSM U's Senate Bylaws and applicable policies
- NOSM U's IQAP

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Version	Date	Authors/Comments
1.0	2025 12 11	Office of the Provost and VP Academic