



# **Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process**

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Unit**

Approved by Council: June 25, 2021

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

## **Introduction**

The Kentucky Public Postsecondary Education Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (the Policy) states that in order to live and thrive on a diverse campus and in an increasingly diverse world, students, faculty, and staff must become culturally competent. Cultural competency provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to increase their effectiveness in relating across cultural differences and prepares them for life in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments. As part of their plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion, institutions must implement initiatives designed to increase the cultural competence of students, faculty, and staff. The Policy identifies the creation of a cultural competency certificate program as one of the strategies an institution can implement in order to meet this goal.

## **Background**

In an effort to assist institutions in meeting this goal and to create a consistent statewide standard for competency and excellence in cultural competence, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (the Council) has created a process to certify that cultural competency microcredentials at individual institutions address certain student learning outcomes. Institutions may utilize this process to increase the cultural competence of their campus community and their graduates as they enter the workforce.

The Council created a cultural competency certification workgroup consisting of faculty and staff representatives from both four-year and two-year institutions across the state. The workgroup identified the minimum competencies, associated module topics and learning objectives that comprise the content for the certification.

The competencies, module topics, and learning objectives are supported by the A4 Model for Cultural Competence, which forms the underpinnings for the Council's comprehensive framework for cultural competence. The framework's mission is that students, faculty, staff, administrators, and Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions and communities will recognize their own responsibility to lead in a global society that promotes equity and justice.

## **Council's Role**

In support of institutional efforts to meet the goals outlined in the Policy, the Council shall certify a micro-credential in cultural competence for institutions who recognize the benefits of a culturally competent campus, want to increase the effectiveness of their faculty and staff in relating across cultural differences and want to prepare students for life in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments.

## **Microcredential Definition**

For the purposes of this process, micro-credentials for students are defined as "institutional acknowledgements of academic, evidenced-based competencies that result in essential skills (e.g., responsible conduct of research, public speaking, financial literacy, leadership, etc.) and may be part of college coursework, but may or may not be directly awarded university, college, department, and program credit." Micro-credentials may identify accomplishments in the non-credit offerings of the institution and complement classes, certificates, and degrees, but do not

replace them. These credentials are essential because they can showcase performance, demonstrate skills, or translate academic competencies into terms that non-academic employers are familiar with and value. Micro-credentials can also be a value-add for faculty and staff. For this group, micro-credentials are defined as “short, competency-based recognitions that demonstrate mastery in a particular area.”

A micro-credential allows a faculty or staff member to receive recognition after completing requirements from professional development.

## **Credential Certification Process**

The Council has created a process for certifying credentials in cultural competency at institutions who wish to align with statewide standards and award micro-credentials to faculty, staff, and students in recognition of completing the program. The Council supports the efforts of the institutions to increase the cultural competence of those in their campus community who wish to become more aware of their own cultural worldview; obtain knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and gain the ability to interact with those from other cultures. The benefits incurred on institutions through credential certification are as follows:

### *Neutral and independent third party verification*

Beginning in 2016, CPE’s Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has touted the benefits of cultural competence and its role in preparing students for living and working in an increasingly diverse world. It sets a goal for institutions to work toward producing culturally competent students, faculty, and staff. CPE’s focus and work in this area has been recognized statewide and nationally and its certification of the credential will carry substantial weight in academia and other workplaces. As described in more detail below, the CPE’s verification process will include an independent review team of experts and approval by one of CPE’s strategic committees.

### *Consistency, Currency, and Portability*

Obtaining a cultural competency credential certified by CPE will indicate to undergraduate and graduate admissions officers and employers that recipients have obtained a common set of competencies in cultural competence understood and agreed to statewide. This will add an additional layer of currency beyond that which is already provided by the conferring institution. The standards required for certification are consistently communicated and promoted by CPE through multiple mediums and in numerous venues. Certified credentials will also be promoted by CPE in the same manner and with a master list of certified programs to be prominently displayed on the CPE website. This will allow recipients to communicate their receipt of the credential in educational venues and in the workplace and have more confidence that the significance of that credential is better understood.

### *Positioning Kentucky as Leader in Cultural Competence*

As CPE continues to promote and educate on the value of cultural competence and its credential certification program, and as more credentials become certified, Kentucky will soon be seen nationally as a leader in this area. More and more each day business and industry are making diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority. Students across the Commonwealth and across the nation are seeking more knowledge in these areas and want to live and learn in diverse environments where equity and inclusion are of utmost importance. A Kentucky cultural

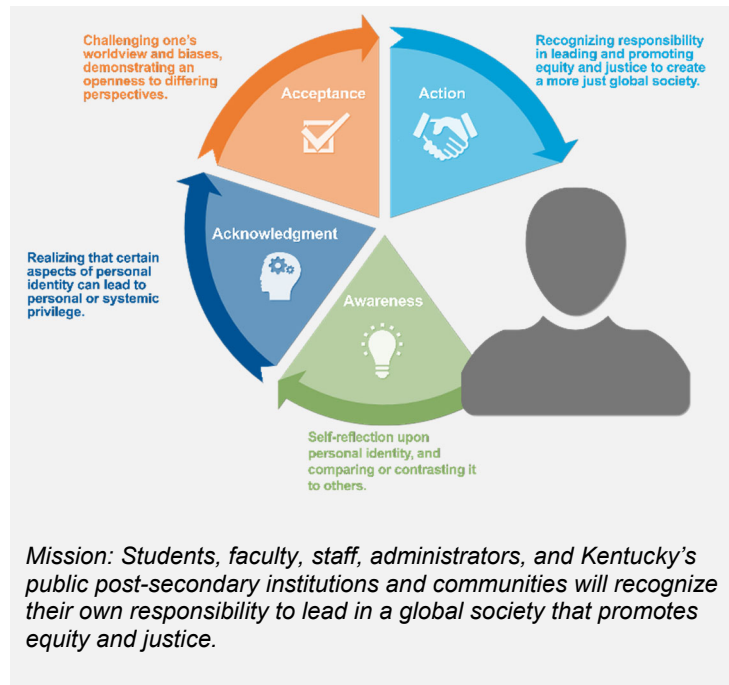
competency credential certification process widely participated in by institutions across the state demonstrates not only the state's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, but an understanding actually how to put that commitment into practice.

## Credential Curriculum Framework: A4 Model for Cultural Competence

For institutions who wish to have their cultural competency micro-credential certified by the Council, they must demonstrate its alignment with the A4 Model for Cultural Competence.

The A4 Model for Cultural Competence is a framework designed to provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to increase their effectiveness in relating across cultural differences in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments. Each phase in the framework offers

- 1) A learning objective, which describes the on-going, long-term goal of the phase;
- 2) Competencies which describe what the individual should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the phase
- 3) Module topics that describe which aspects of cultural competence should be addressed within the phase.



### Framework Components

1. **Awareness (A1)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will develop a better understanding of who they are, become more aware of human diversity and demonstrate a respect for the dignity of others.

#### Competencies:

- To define and differentiate key terms related to diversity
- To increase self-awareness by defining one's own identity and comparing/contrasting one's identity with others

#### Module Topics shall include, at a minimum:

- Defining Social Categories of Identity and Diversity
  - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Race, Ethnicity & Nationality
- Generational Diversity
- Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation (e.g., LGBTQIA+ including Homophobia, Transphobia, Heteronormativity)
- Exploring one's cultural identification by creating a capacity to be self-reflective

2. **Acknowledgment (A2)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels and consider how they may have or have not been affected by those dynamics.

Competencies:

- To discuss how our identities impact those with whom we interact
- To define intersectionality and explore how identities are influenced by several cultural categories
- To explore the concept of privilege and acknowledge our individual privileges

Module Topics shall include, at a minimum:

- Privilege
- Oppression
- Intersectionality of Identity - A discussion of the impact that belonging to multiple cultural groups has on privilege and oppression

3. **Acceptance (A3)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will demonstrate a continual openness to ideas, beliefs, and practices that challenge their own worldview and moves them to embrace a broader perspective.

Competencies:

- To identify one's personal biases and how they shape one's worldview
- To explore the concept of microaggressions and how they can impact members of different cultural groups
- To explore opposing views that challenge one's assumptions and beliefs (e.g., demographics, religion, politics, etc.)

Module Topics shall, at a minimum, include:

- Implicit and explicit bias
- Micro-aggressions

4. **Action (A4)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will be able to communicate in ways that indicate an acceptance of and appreciation for

individuals different from themselves and recognize their own responsibility in leading and promoting equity and justice in a global society.

Competencies:

- To authentically express one's individual experiences that honors self without condemning others
- To effectively communicate within and across cultures to foster and sustain open dialogue and navigate difficult conversations
- To develop a plan that integrates awareness, acknowledgment and acceptance into a model of action that identifies next steps for leading and promoting justice in a global society.

Module Topics shall include, at a minimum:

- Antiracism
  - Individual Level - the act of opposing racism in all forms - both in our society, other people, and even the racism that exists within yourself and in the ways you may perpetuate racism with your behaviors.
  - Organizational/Structural Level - the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is shared equitably.
- Allyship, Advocacy, Accompliceship
  - A discussion of the concepts of allyship, advocacy, and accompliceship as mechanisms for those with a privileged status to work in solidarity with a marginalized individual or group of people to eliminate the systemic oppression that grants them greater power and privilege.
- Courageous Conversations
  - A discussion of strategies for effectively communicating across differences by using authentic dialogue in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

## **Credential Requirements**

Institutions who wish to have their micro-credential certified by CPE must develop a process for awarding credit or recognition. Credit and/or recognition must consider the following:

- A micro-credential awarded to students must be the equivalent of at least 6 credit hours. Institutions can develop two micro-credentials, which include the learning objectives from the A4 model as follows:
  - The components of the first micro-credential would encompass the content found in the Awareness and Acknowledgement phases of the A4 model and would provide enough content to receive credit (6 hours). The program must be accessible for all students and would be prerequisite for Acceptance and Action.
  - The components of the second micro-credential would encompass the content found in the Acceptance and Action phases and would provide enough content to receive 6 hours of credit. This additional coursework would be optional and would occur after meeting the prerequisite.

- A micro-credential awarded to faculty/staff must be a minimum of eight professional development hours and include the learning objectives from all for four phases of the A4 models. Institutions may develop their own professional development for faculty/staff, or they may take advantage of one of the implementation methods offered by the Council.

## Credential Certification Process

Institutions who wish to have their cultural competency micro-credential recognized by the Council as a certified Kentucky Cultural Competency Credential must submit a proposal using the CPE Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process. Cultural competency credentials must align with the A4 Model for Cultural Competence and describe how participants will demonstrate the competencies in the framework in order to receive approval.

### Proposals must include the following:

- Institutional Information – This section will include the name of the institution, point of contact, contributing departments, proposed implementation date and a statement of support from the president.
- Body of the Proposal – The section will include a description of the following:
  - An overview of the program, a description of the target audience (e.g., faculty, staff, students, etc.)
  - A description of implementation method and the timeline (e.g., total time required to complete the certification; equivalent to at least 6 credit hours for students and eight professional development hours for faculty/staff)
  - A course outline and description of how the course aligns with the competencies in the A4 model
  - A description of the tasks required of the participant (e.g., workshops, writing assignments, learning plans, quizzes, peer review, etc.)
  - A description of assessments (what participants need to do to demonstrate competency in a particular area), and faculty/staff associated with implementation
  - A description of how the micro-credential will be awarded and ultimately displayed by the recipient
- Budget – This section will include a description of budget implications and resources needed for implementing this program.

Upon receipt, the Cultural Competency Advisory Council, consisting of faculty and staff representatives from Kentucky's two- and four-year public institutions, will review the proposal materials and provide feedback on compliance with the standards and requirements outlined herein within ten (10) working days. Proposal review shall be an interactive process and feedback may include recommendations for proposal modifications. Once the advisory council determines that a program meets the outlined requirements, staff will make a recommendation to the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee (ASI) that the credential be certified as a Kentucky cultural competency credential.

The ASI will take action on the credential certification at its next scheduled meeting.