



## Meaningful Credentials: What are Students Earning upon Graduation?

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### This session

- Why credentials are important
- What know about credentials currently offered by TPSIDs
- How to develop a meaningful credential



The TPSID National Coordinating Center at Think College is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston.

The Center is funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education Grant #P407B100002.



## What is a credential?

- A credential is a verification of qualification or competency issued to a student by an accredited institution of higher education (IHE) – typically a diploma, certificate, or degree.
- Students earn the credential by following and completing a prescribed course of study

*Shanley, J., Weir, C., Grigal, M. (2014). Credential Action Planning Tool for Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. Boston, MA, Think College, University of Massachusetts Boston*



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## What issues are you interested in related to student credentials?

- Getting a credential approved by my college/university
- Measuring progress toward the credential
- Passing the licensing exams related to a labor credential
- Making our credential meaningful to employers
- Transferability to further postsecondary study
- Other??



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# Why are the credentials students with ID earn important?



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## Higher Education Credentials Vocabulary

**ARE THESE TERMS FAMILIAR?**

Postsecondary award, diploma, or certificate

Degree

Micro-credential

IHE-approved

Industry-recognized



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## Options for Credentials

- Program creates a new credential that only their students earn.
  - Aligned with an industry-recognized credential
  - Certificate of completion of a program of studies
- Program creates a new credential that all students can earn
- Offer access to an existing credential already approved by and awarded by the IHE



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## Credentials offered by TPSIDs 2016-17

**47** sites offered **60** total credentials  
11 sites offered more than 1 credential

**56** credentials were postsecondary awards/certificates

**4** credentials were micro-credentials (badges)

**8** programs had students who earned credentials that are available to all students



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## Credentials offered by TPSIDs 2016-17

**34** credentials (57%) were approved by IHE governance

**6** (11%) were aligned with industry-recognized credential

*Example: National Retail Foundation*

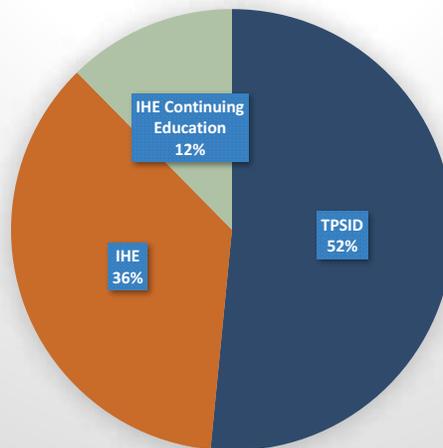
**19** (32%) can be earned by non-TPSID students



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CREDENTIAL Awarded By:



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## College to Career Experience Certificate of Accomplishment



1. 26 hours of coursework – either for credit or audit. Individually determined in relation to student goals
2. Minimum of 3 supervised internships related to career goal (paid or unpaid)
3. Student portfolio of accomplishment. Portfolio will include examples of assignments or projects for courses taken for credit; modified course assignments or projects for audited classes; examples of skills obtained through internships; and may also include examples of leadership or service learning activities on campus or in the community, extra-curricular involvement, etc.



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## UP Program Certificate of Accomplishment



- Awarded after 2-years based on satisfactory completion of five program components. These components include the following:
  - Personal Development Skills
  - Community Participation Skills
  - Vocational Preparation Skills
  - Social Participation and Learning
  - Course Auditing - 3 to 4 courses per semester
- Individual objectives written each semester for each student in an Individual Plan for College Participation
- Students are eligible for a Certificate of Accomplishment based on the following criteria:
  - Completion of 1800 hours of learning activities over a four semester period
  - Achievement of at least 80% of the objectives per semester within each component of the plan; and
  - Recommendation for a UP Certificate of Accomplishment by the program coordinator and Steering Committee.



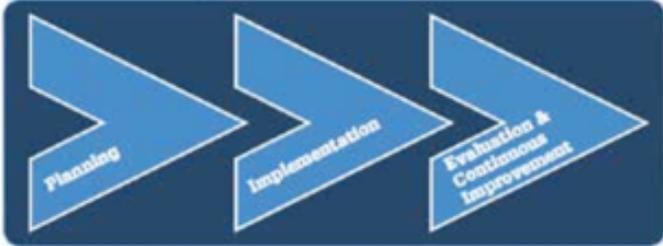
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**Credential Action Planning Tool for Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities**

**think COLLEGE!**

*By Judy Shonley, Cate Weir and Meg Grigol*



## Planning



- Convene a team to develop the credential
- Formalize the course of study upon which the credential will be based
- Identify a credential title
- Learn what other postsecondary programs for students with ID are doing to create a credential
- Review guidance for credential development provided by the Higher Education Act

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## Obtaining IHE approval



- Understand your institutional policies and procedures related to establishing a credential
- Identify the office at your institution that is responsible for student credentials
- Determine if the IHE has an existing credential that can be adopted or modified to serve as the credential for students in your program
- Speak with staff involved with institutional accreditation to determine how the credential you are developing may relate to program and/or institutional accreditation policies and procedures
- Gather information about how the credential may affect participation of your program in Title IV Federal Student Aid
  - Design the credential to meet CTP requirements



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## Implementation and Evaluation



- Determine and create marketing and informational communications about the credential
- Establish and implement an evaluation plan



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## Resources

- [Creative Approaches to Meaningful Credentials](#) – April 2017 webinar presented by Barbara Bookman, Martha Mock, and Carrie Shockley
- [Credential Action Planning Tool](#)
- [Insight Brief on Credential Development](#)
- [Article on the micro-credentials movement in higher education](#)



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