

Micro-Credentials In IPE: The IPE Path of Distinction and Badger Programs in University of Wisconsin-Madison



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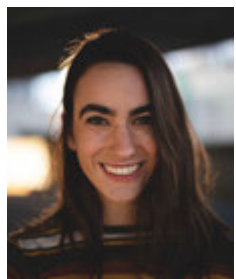
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Background

According to the World Health Organization (2010), all cross-professional students should graduate collaborative-practice ready. To address this need, calls for the integration of interprofessional practice and education (IPE) have become increasingly more common and important.

In 2020, in concert with its [5-year strategic plan](#), the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education (UW CIPE) worked collaboratively with over ten program/school partners to establish a Two-Tier IPE Integration System. Tier 1 of the IPE Integration System aims to provide all UW-Madison cross-professional students with foundational IPE opportunities, and Tier 2 aims to provide additional longitudinal IPE opportunities for students with special interest in advancing

their knowledge, skills, and expertise in one or all of the following areas: interprofessional fundamentals, simulation, practice, leadership, and research (Gartland et al., 2021). Students who participate and successfully complete Tier 2 IPE programs will receive IPE micro-credentials. With the consideration that UW CIPE is not an academic program and cannot offer educational certificate and degree programs, micro-credentials in the format of IPE Badges and IPE Path of Distinction have been identified as the best approach to recognize and award students' accomplishments. These micro-credentials provide a means for students/graduates to present and showcase their IPE milestones to potential employers.

Although micro-credentials in cross-professional education are gaining popularity,

they are still new to IPE. To ensure micro-credentials retain their value, UW CIPE has followed the following recommendations in issuing IPE micro-credentials (Peppler-Beechey & Weingarten, 2021):

- Regulated and issued by the UW-Madison
- Provide focused IPE trainings with measurable outcomes
- Demonstrate the achievement of specific knowledge, skills, and competencies in becoming interprofessional practitioners
- Documented on transcripts and widely recognized.

The UW CIPE micro-credentials include the UW CIPE Badger and the UW IPE Path of Distinction programs.

UW CIPE Badger Program

The [UW CIPE Badger Program](#) is a branch of the [UW-Madison Badger program](#) in which we provide focused IPE academic training, called **IPE Badges**, with fewer academic requirements than a typical degree and/or certificate program. IPE Badges are formal, virtual, micro-credentials issued to learners (students, faculty, staff, or practitioners) who participate in and successfully complete designated IPE offerings and activities at UW-Madison and its partners.

Each IPE Badge consists of a specified set of academic training and/or experiences that focuses on different aspects of IPE in healthcare to advance the IPE Quadruple Aim (better care, better health, better value, and better work experience). Successful completion of an IPE Badge signifies the achievement of competence in the specified domain and is recognized by awarding a digital badge from UW CIPE. The IPE Badges can be showcased via personal profile, social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.), and/or shared with potential employers as a way to help the learners articulate the skills they have gained from completing the Badge criteria. Completion of IPE Badges approved by the UW CIPE Badger program will be counted towards the UW IPE Path of Distinction. Since 2019, UW CIPE has

Table 1: UW IPE PoD Requirements

IPE Learning:	Students must complete an IPE Fundamental Badge, IPE Designated Course, IPE Simulation, and IPE Practice Badge.
IPE Leadership:	Students must complete an IPE Leadership Badge through fulfilling two or more IPE leadership opportunities.
IPE Project:	Students must complete an IPE Scholarship Badge by developing, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating an IPE-related project to advance the Quadruple Aim (better health, better care, better value, and better provider work experience).
Final IPE Reflection and Knowledge Sharing:	Students must either submit a reflection or present/share (individually or as teams) their learning from their IPE PoD journey with students in their (and other) programs to complete the PoD requirements.

awarded close to 800 students IPE Badges, with the most Badges issued in the following: IPE Fundamental Badge, IPE Leadership Badge, and IPE AHEC Scholar Badge. Other Badges include IPE Didactic Badge, IPE Simulation Badge, IPE Specialty Badge, IPE Clinical/Community Badge, Global Health Badge, One Health Badge, and the IPE Scholarship Badge. The interest in IPE Badges is growing in which we expect to issue over 400 additional IPE Badges this academic year.

UW IPE Path of Distinction (PoD) Program

The [UW IPE PoD](#), one of the first of its kind, is built upon the UW CIPE Badger Program in which we recognize and award students with special interest in IPE with distinction at graduation. The UW IPE PoD is a two-year, longitudinal IPE program that provides UW-Madison cross-professional students with opportunities to gain and advance their knowledge and skills in interprofessional competencies (IPEC, 2016), and to become interprofessional practitioners (Khalili, 2021) as future healthcare team members and leaders. Students undertake IPE learning, IPE research, IPE leadership, and IPE reflection opportunities that supplement their program-specific education. To receive the UW IPE PoD award, students need to complete and satisfy the program requirements before graduation (Table 1).

Currently, Genetic Counseling, Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Public Health, Social Work, and Veterinary Medicine students at UW-Madison are eligible to apply. Since the different professional and graduate programs range in length between two and four years, the UW IPE PoD is designed to be completed in two years. Students at any year in their program may apply so long as they are able to satisfy all requirements by April 1 of the year in which they graduate. Given that the UW IPE PoD Program is built upon the UW CIPE Badger Program, if a student is unable to complete the PoD Program requirements, they still receive

recognition of completed IPE Badges.

Applicants are required to complete an online application found on the [UW CIPE website](#). The application includes a 500-word personal statement that showcases candidates' interest and experience with IPE as well as their perception of how the UW IPE PoD will impact their professional growth in addition to submitting their resume or CV.

To foster a sense of cooperation and belonging, student participants commence the UW IPE PoD program ideally as a cohort in the fall. The UW IPE PoD was launched in fall 2021, and the 2021-2023 cohort includes ten students from five cross-professional programs, including Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and Public Health.

Implications

The wealth of support for IPE efforts helps to ensure that IPE will be integrated into curricula across a wide variety of health professional education. The UW CIPE Badger and the IPE PoD Programs provide a framework for other institutions looking to provide robust and unique IPE opportunities for their students.

To ensure the IPE micro-credentials meet the UW CIPE strategic directions towards achieving the Quadruple Aim, IPE competencies and socialization, each IPE micro-credential is evaluated using different and tailored methods including, knowledge quizzes, student team reflections/debriefs, facilitator feedback, capstone projects, and pre-post surveys. In addition and as part of UW IPE Systematic Assessment, all the health science students at UW-Madison are required to participate in an annual pre- and post-IPE evaluation (in early fall and late spring respectively using three IPE surveys (Dual Identity Scale, Interprofessional Socialization and Valuing Scale, and IPEC Competencies, plus two open-text questions) to assess the impacts of all IPE offerings at UW-Madison (including the micro-credentials) on students' achievement and success in meeting the IPE socialization, competencies, and

accreditation requirements.

Students' responses to the UW IPE PoD have been overwhelmingly positive. A medical student comments,

“ I had been interested in IPE since beginning medical school, but I never knew how to engage with it or what I could do. The PoD gives students a centralized place to not only see what IPE offerings our institution has, but also empowers students to create new experiences and engage with other professional students in new and rewarding ways.”

Another author, a physical therapy student, echoes this same sentiment:

“ The best clinicians I have worked with all emphasized the importance of interprofessional collaboration to me. The impact of these skills is two-fold; not only do members of different professions work more effectively and efficiently, but it's clear patients benefit too. UW-Madison's IPE PoD Program allows us incredible opportunities to advance our interprofessional skills before we even graduate; therefore, graduating students who strive to implement the Quadruple Aim in practice. For example, one of the opportunities the PoD Program offers is the Interprofessional Dementia Caregiving Telehealth Community Placement. As a physical therapy student, I work with medical, pharmacy, and social work students to research and provide resources for a caregiver of a person living with dementia. My team has adapted a progressive approach, and we are compiling resources for the caregiver's current needs, as well as materials and education that will prove to be useful as the disease progresses. Overall, UW-Madison's PoD allows me to learn about interprofessional work and its impact on the healthcare community and gives me the space, guidance, and opportunities to practice with peers of different healthcare backgrounds to be the best clinician I can be.”

Faculty and staff working with the cohort of ten students enrolled in the UW CIPE PoD have also found the experience to be equally rewarding. It has provided an opportunity to employ active participation in interprofessional education of cross-professional students and practice the very skills they are promoting and teaching. Relationships between and among staff, faculty, and students continue to be built and all have worked collaboratively to enhance the program. Several faculty members have informally shared the increased intentionality when planning and discussing IPE activities in their own programs. Integration of IPE in their classroom may not be measurable, yet the positive impact of IPE through UW CIPE continues to affect teachers and learners in many ways.

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