

Digital Badges Policy 2025-27

LCCA Governance



London
College of
Contemporary
Arts

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Section 1: Introduction

Policy Statement

LCCA will implement a comprehensive Digital Badges Programme to recognise, validate and celebrate the diverse achievements of students and staff through internationally recognised digital credentials, thereby enhancing graduate employability, supporting professional development, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

Introduction and Purpose

LCCA recognises and celebrates the full range of skills, achievements, and competencies developed by its students and staff. Digital badges provide a flexible and verifiable way to acknowledge learning and accomplishment that occurs both within and outside the formal curriculum, responding to evolving employer expectations and sector developments in alternative credentials.

This policy establishes a comprehensive framework for the creation, issuance, and management of all official digital badges at LCCA, ensuring consistency, quality, and strategic alignment across the institution. The LCCA Digital Badges Programme aims to:

- Foster meaningful engagement in academic and professional development activities aligned with institutional strategies and graduate attributes.
- Maximise visibility and portability of skills and achievements to support employability, career progression, and lifelong learning.
- Provide secure, verifiable, portable, records of accomplishment for Badge Earners.
- Ensure all badges are credible, high-quality, and strategically aligned with the College's mission and values.
- Meet sector expectations for micro-credentials whilst demonstrating Office for Students (OfS) compliance for positive student outcomes.
- Position LCCA as a sector leader in innovative credentialing.

This policy establishes a robust framework of principles, standards, and quality assurance processes within which Digital Badge Creators can innovate and develop specific requirements for earning badges. This approach ensures institutional consistency whilst enabling disciplinary distinctiveness and pedagogical creativity. The programme shall be formally designated as “The LCCA Digital Badges Programme” or “The Digital Badges Programme” for all institutional communications and documentation.

The College's centrally Approved Platform for The LCCA Digital Badges Programme is Open Badge Factory (OBF), selected for its compliance with Open Badges 2.0 specifications and integration capabilities with institutional systems.

Scope

This policy provides comprehensive coverage of all digital badging activities across the institution.

Applicable institutional units

All schools, departments, professional services, and affiliated units of LCCA are eligible to issue digital badges subject to approval processes outlined in this policy.

Eligible Participants

The following individuals are eligible to earn digital badges:

- All registered students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research)
- Alumni maintaining active engagement with the institution
- All categories of staff (academic, professional services, and affiliate)

Coverage: This policy governs all digital badges issued under the authority of LCCA, including those issued by:

- The main LCCA brand
- Internal departments
- Approved sub-institutions (see definitions)

Examples of authorised issuing units include the Careers and Employability Service and the Staff Development and Training unit, each operating under their own brand identity within the LCCA framework.

Internal departments wishing to issue digital badges under their distinct brand must secure formal approval from the Digital Badges Programme Working Group and shall thereafter be designated as "sub-institutions" for the purposes of this policy.

Principles for Digital Badges

The LCCA Digital Badges Programme operates according to eight core principles that ensure quality, credibility, and strategic value:

Principle	Description
Meaningful	Badges must represent substantive achievements and demonstrable skills with clear academic, professional, or personal development value. Badges should not be awarded for attendance or participation alone, except where approved by the Digital Badges Programme Working Group with strong pedagogical or strategic rationale.
Verifiable	All badge criteria must be transparent, measurable, and independently verifiable through robust evidence within the Open Badges infrastructure.
Learner-Centred	Badge Earners maintain complete ownership and control over their earned badges, including storage, display, and sharing decisions.
Transparent	All badge information (issuer, issuance date, expiry, criteria, assessment methods) must be publicly accessible within the badge's metadata.
Consistent	Badges must adhere to the College's branding guidelines, visual identity, and quality standards, ensuring institutional coherence and recognition.
Strategic	Badges must demonstrably support the strategic objectives of the issuing department and the wider College (including graduate attributes, employability enhancement, staff development frameworks, and institutional KPIs)
Inclusive	Badge programmes must actively promote equitable access and recognition opportunities for all eligible participants, with particular attention to widening participation groups and diverse learning needs.
Evidence-Based	All badges require authentic, assessable evidence of achievement appropriate to the level and type of recognition, with clear documentation and quality assurance processes.

Definitions and Key Terms

Badge Earner: A verified student, alumni, or staff member who has successfully met the specified criteria and has been formally awarded a digital badge.

Creator: An authorised department, School, unit, or staff member within the College responsible for conceptualising and developing a digital badge within the approved platform and typically responsible for submitting the respective new badge proposals for institutional approval.

Criteria: The specific, measurable, and achievable requirements that Badge Earners must satisfy to be awarded a badge. These must be clear, concise, and publicly accessible to ensure transparency and consistency.

Digital Badge: A sophisticated visual, digital token of achievement, underpinned by the Open Badges 2.0 international standard. Each badge contains verifiable metadata detailing the issuer, the criteria for earning the badge, and evidence of accomplishment, and timestamp information.

Digital Badges Programme Working Group: A formally constituted working group of the Learning and Teaching Committee with delegated authority for operational governance, quality assurance, strategic development, and continuous enhancement of the Digital Badges Programme.

Evidence: The work or proof submitted by a Badge Earner to substantiate that they have met the published criteria.

Issuer: An authorised department, School, unit, or staff member within the College responsible for the full lifecycle of badge administration, including promoting digital badges, managing the criteria assessment process, awarding digital badges to eligible Badge Earners, and maintaining comprehensive records for quality assurance purposes. Issuers may simultaneously serve as Creators for their badges.

Open Badge Factory (OBF): The College's institutionally adopted Approved Platform for creating, designing, managing, and issuing digital badges.

Open Badge Passport: A free, independent platform where Badge Earners can receive, store, and share their badges from multiple issuers globally, supporting lifelong learning portfolios.

Sub-institution: An approved department, School, or unit within the College that has been formally authorised through the governance process to issue LCCA digital badges under their own distinct brand identity, whilst maintaining compliance with institutional standards.

Section 2: Framework and Implementation

Process for proposing and creating a new Digital Badge

The badge creation process follows a rigorous five-stage quality assurance framework designed to ensure strategic alignment, pedagogical value, and operational sustainability:

Stage 1: Badge Proposal Development

Any department, school, unit, or staff member seeking to become a Badge Issuer completes the "New Badge Proposal Form" including:

- Strategic rationale and intended learning outcomes
- Assessment criteria with rubrics and quality assurance processes
- Target participants and anticipated uptake
- Resource implications and sustainability planning
- Explicit mapping to institutional strategies

Form available electronically from Programme SharePoint with guidance

Stage 2: Initial Review

- Working Group evaluates against eight policy principles
- Assesses: alignment, feasibility, quality, completeness
- Timeline: 5 working days
- Outcome: Progress to approval or return for revision

Stage 3: Formal Approval

Following successful review, the Working Group makes a comprehensive assessment decision:

- Approve with any conditions specified
- Request specific revisions with guidance
- Decline with justification and alternative suggestions
- Timeline: Decision within 10 working days

Stage 4: Implementation and Launch

Approved Creators receive platform access and mandatory training to:

- Design badges using College templates (WCAG 2.1 compliant)
- Configure comprehensive metadata
- Complete quality assurance checks
- Prepare launch communications

Working Group provides final sign-off before public launch

Criteria for Badge design and Awarding

Excellence in badge design is fundamental to programme credibility and learner engagement. All badges must meet the following comprehensive standards:

Badge Metadata: All badges must include complete and accurate metadata in the Approved Platform, including:

- Name: A clear and concise name for the achievement that avoids jargon and acronyms.
- Description: A short, compelling summary of what the badge represents.
- Criteria: A detailed description of what the Badge Earner had to do to earn the badge. This can also link to a public webpage (for example, on the College website) with the full criteria.
- Evidence: Where applicable, clear specification of the type and standard of evidence required for assessment.. The Digital Badge may be linked to the evidence submitted by

the Badge Earner, but this is not recommended for most badges. Evidence should only be linked if it was proposed within the New Badge Proposal Form and approved by the Working Group.

- Alignment: Tags indicating alignment with college frameworks (such as Graduate Attributes, OfS and QAA Subject Benchmarks, UK Professional Standards Framework, and relevant PSRBs).
- Issuer: Verified institutional identity with official contact information.
- Issue Date: Automatic timestamp of award date for verification.
- Expiry Date: Where applicable, clearly stated validity period for time-sensitive competencies.

Rigorous Assessment Standards

The process for assessing whether an Earner has met the criteria must be robust, fair, and transparent. The Issuer is responsible for carrying out the assessment.

Strategic Taxonomy Alignment

Where appropriate, all badges should be categorised according to the College's Badge Taxonomy (see Appendix A) to ensure a clear and coherent sense of progression through levels (Participation, Achievement, or Expertise) whilst mapping to relevant skill domains.

Badge Expiry and Revocation

Expiry

Badges may be issued with an expiry date if the skill, knowledge, or compliance requirement they represent has a demonstrable limited validity period (for example, software proficiency or first aid certification). The expiry period must be:

- Justified in the badge proposal with reference to industry standards or regulatory requirements
- Clearly communicated to Badge Earners at point of application
- Included prominently within the badge's metadata

Revocation

The College reserves the right to revoke a badge in exceptional circumstances, including:

- Discovery of administrative or technical error in issuance.
- Proven academic misconduct or fraud by the Badge Earner, as detailed within the Error! Reference source not found. section of this policy.
- Official discontinuation of the badge or associated programme
- Regulatory or accreditation requirements
- Serious reputational risk to the institution

All badge revocations must be:

- Formally proposed with relevant and appropriate supporting information
- Reviewed by relevant senior academic leadership
- Approved by the Programme Working Group
- Communicated to affected Badge Earners with clear rationale
- Recorded in the central badge registry with full audit trail

Academic Misconduct or Fraud

The integrity of the Digital Badges Programme is paramount. The College maintains a zero-tolerance approach to academic misconduct.

All work and evidence submitted for a digital badge must be the authentic and original work of the Badge Earner, created specifically for the badge application unless otherwise specified in the criteria.

Any suspected instances of academic misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of evidence, or misrepresentation of achievements, will be investigated in accordance with the College's existing Academic Misconduct Policy. For current students, a finding of misconduct will result in standard institutional penalties which may include the non-issuance or revocation of the badge and potential wider academic sanctions.

Staff participation in the Digital Badges Programme is subject to the College's standards of professional conduct. Any suspected misconduct, including but not limited to, plagiarism or falsification of evidence, will be considered a serious professional conduct issue and investigated in accordance with the College's formal Staff Disciplinary Procedure. A proven case will result in the non-issuance or revocation of the badge and may lead to formal disciplinary action as per the terms of employment.

For all Badge Earners, including alumni and staff, the College reserves the right to withhold issuance or revoke a digital badge at any time if evidence of misconduct or fraud is proven following a formal investigation conducted according to principles of natural justice.

Section 3: Governance and Monitoring

Governance and Oversight

The Learning and Teaching Committee holds ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction and academic oversight of The LCCA Digital Badges Programme. Its responsibilities include:

- Approving this policy and any subsequent major revisions.
- Reviewing the annual report on the programme's performance and impact.
- Providing strategic guidance to ensure the programme aligns with the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy and institutional KPIs.
- Ensuring alignment with OfS requirements and sector quality standards
- Approving the annual budget (if applicable) and resource allocation for the programme
- Overseeing risk management and mitigation strategies

A Digital Badges Programme Working Group (or Manager, acting on behalf of the Committee) will be manage the operational delivery and continuous improvement of the programme. Its responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and approving all new badge proposals against the principles in this policy.
- Maintaining a central registry of all approved badges.
- Strategic management and analysis of programme data.
- Providing guidance, training, and support to Issuers.
- Managing the College's Approved Platform account and vendor relationship.

- Conducting annual reviews of badge effectiveness, uptake, and impact
- Ensuring equality of access and monitoring demographic participation
- Developing and maintaining operational procedures and guidance
- Fostering innovation and sharing best practice across the institution

Reporting Structure

- Monthly operational meetings during term time
- Termly reports to Learning and Teaching Committee
- Annual strategic report to Academic Board
- Integration with institutional quality assurance cycles

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
Digital Badges Programme Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic programme leadership and development - Primary point of contact for all stakeholders - Platform vendor relationship management - Training programme development and delivery - Badge approval process administration - Cross-institutional programme promotion - Annual programme evaluation and reporting - Sector benchmarking and external engagement
Badge Creators/Issuers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design pedagogically-sound learning experiences - Develop robust, measurable assessment criteria - Submit comprehensive badge proposals - Assess evidence fairly, consistently, and transparently - Issue badges through approved platform - Maintain detailed records for quality assurance - Promote badges to target audiences
Badge Earners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage authentically with badge requirements - Submit original, honest evidence of achievement - Provide constructive feedback for programme enhancement - Act as ambassadors for the programme
IT Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide technical infrastructure support - Ensure platform security and data protection - Manage system integrations

	- Support user authentication and access
Academic Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify opportunities for badge integration - Support students in badge applications - Provide subject expertise for badge design - Act as assessors where appropriate - Promote badges within their disciplines

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Digital Badges Programme operates within a monitoring and evaluation framework designed to ensure continuous enhancement and strategic value:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Badge uptake rates by student demographic groups (termly analysis)
- Completion rates for commenced badge journeys
- Graduate employment outcomes correlated with badges earned
- Employer recognition and value perception
- Student satisfaction with badge programmes (minimum 85% target)
- Staff engagement with professional development badges

Annual Programme Review includes:

- Quantitative analysis of participation and achievement data
- Qualitative thematic analysis of stakeholder feedback
- Equality impact assessment with action planning
- Benchmarking against sector leaders and international best practice
- Cost-benefit analysis and value for money assessment

Risk Register review and mitigation planning

- Strategic recommendations for programme development
- Good practice case studies for dissemination
- Regular operational metrics review
- Termly stakeholder feedback collection
- Annual strategic planning workshop

- Responsive development of new badge opportunities
- Regular review of technology platform capabilities
- Integration with institutional planning cycles

Data Protection and Privacy

The Digital Badges Programme will be managed in compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

Personal data (name and email address) is required to issue a badge to an Earner. This data will be controlled by the College as the Issuer and by the Approved Platform as the data processor.

Badge Earners must provide explicit, informed consent for their data to be used for badge issuance. Information on data usage, sharing, and retention will be provided at the point of application or enrolment for a badged activity through clear privacy notices.

While the metadata within a badge is public by design, the Badge Earner maintains complete control over the visibility, sharing, and usage of their earned badges through their Open Badge Passport account settings.

Data Retention and Rights

- Badge records retained for 6 years post-graduation/employment
- Annual review of retention requirements
- Badge Earners may exercise full GDPR rights including:
 - Access to personal data held
 - Rectification of inaccurate data
 - Erasure (where legally permissible)
 - Data portability
 - Objection to processing

Section 4: Document Review and Support

Policy Approval, Implementation and Review

This policy was approved by Academic Board. Academic Board retains ultimate authority for approval and must ratify any substantial amendments on the recommendation of the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC).

Operational oversight sits with the Digital Badge Programme Manager, working with the Digital Badge Programme Working Group and the Quality Team. The policy will be reviewed annually by the LTC, with interim reviews undertaken if required by regulatory, strategic, or operational change. Proposed amendments will be submitted to the LTC for consideration and approval prior to Academic Board ratification where applicable.

Implementation will be carried out collaboratively across academic teams, professional services, and business support services. Queries, requests for clarification, or suggestions for enhancement should be directed to the Quality Team at quality@lcca.org.uk.

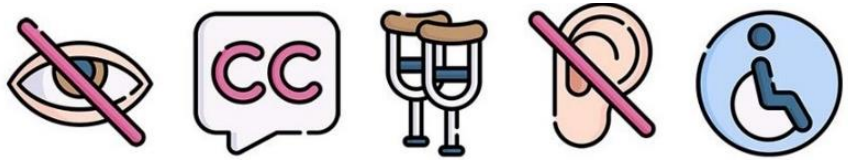
The Quality Team will maintain the canonical version of this policy (in Word and PDF). A certified copy will be published as a SharePoint page using SharePoint's built-in accessibility tools (e.g. Immersive Reader and Read Aloud). An Easy Read summary will be provided alongside the full policy. This document has been prepared in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 to ensure digital content is accessible to everyone.

Policy Availability

The Quality Team shall maintain primary responsibility for the canonical version of this policy, ensuring version control, accessibility, and appropriate dissemination.

The canonical version should be stored in both PDF and Microsoft Word file formats.

Accessibility and Inclusion



The Digital Badges Programme is committed to ensuring equitable access and participation for all eligible Badge Earners.

Programme Accessibility

- All badge criteria and materials use plain English principles
- Badge platform meets WCAG 2.1 AA standards
- Visual badge designs include appropriate colour contrast
- Alternative evidence submission formats accepted where appropriate

Reasonable Adjustments

Badge Earners requiring adjustments (e.g., extended deadlines, alternative assessment formats) should:

- Students: Contact Student Support Services
- Staff: Discuss with line manager or HR
- External participants: Contact the Programme Manager

Support for Diverse Groups

Recognising LCCA's diverse community, the programme ensures:

- Cultural sensitivity in badge design and criteria
- Recognition of different learning styles and experiences
- Flexibility for those balancing work/study/care responsibilities
- Additional support for first-generation HE students

Support for Diverse Student Groups

Recognising LCCA's diverse student population, including high proportions of widening participation students:

- Questions use plain English principles
- Cultural sensitivity in examples and language
- Recognition of students balancing work/study/care responsibilities
- First-generation HE students supported with clear explanations

Need an alternative format?

Contact the document's creator for alternative formats of this document, such as html, Word, PDF, or large print.

Related Documents and Guidance

UCA Regulatory Framework

- UCA Academic Misconduct Regulations

LCCA Information, Policies and Guidance

- LCCA Student Charter
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2023-2027
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy [pending]
- LCCA Graduate Attributes Framework

External Regulatory Framework

- Open Badges 2.0 Specification
- [OfS Regulatory Framework](#)
- [Conditions of Registration](#)
- [QAA Quality Code](#)
- [UK Professional Standards Framework](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 Guidance](#)

Key Information	
Version	V0.2 DRAFT
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Owner	Learning and Teaching Team; Quality Assurance
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Draft V 0.1	Associate Dean (L&T)	16-07-2025	First draft
Draft V 0.2	QA Manager	18-07-2025	Document formatting and suggested enhancements
Version 1.0	QA Manager	30-09-2025	Formatting document for publishing

Appendix A: College Badge Taxonomy

To create a coherent, progressive ecosystem of recognition, all badges are systematically categorised by achievement level and skill domain.

Level of Achievement

1. Participation/Foundation Level
 - o Recognises engagement and commitment to learning
 - o Examples: "Welcome Week Champion," "Workshop Participant," "Conference Attendee"
2. Achievement/Competency Level
 - o Demonstrates specific skills or knowledge through assessment
 - o Examples: "Data Analyst," "Confident Presenter," "Python Programming Intermediate"
3. Expertise/Excellence Level
 - o Recognises exceptional achievement, leadership, or innovation
 - o Examples: "Peer Mentor Leader," "Research Excellence," "Digital Innovation Award"

Skill Domain Framework

Aligned with LCCA Graduate Attributes and employer requirements:

- Leadership and Teamwork: Collaboration, project management, mentoring
- Digital Capabilities and Data Literacy: Technical skills, data analysis, digital creativity
- Communication and Influencing: Written, verbal, visual, and digital communication
- Research and Critical Thinking: Academic skills, problem-solving, innovation
- Career Management and Employability: Professional skills, networking, entrepreneurship
- Wellbeing and Community: Resilience, cultural competence, social responsibility
- Professional Development (staff): Teaching excellence, research impact, leadership

Annual Taxonomy Review

The taxonomy undergoes annual review to ensure:

- Continued alignment with graduate attributes
- Employer relevance and recognition
- Student progression opportunities
- Emerging skill requirements
- International comparability