

# Digital Badges to Increase TA Training and Recognition

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## Extended Abstract

Digital badges are digital images that symbolize a specific achievement, benchmark, skill, or experience and which contain detailed verifiable metadata about what the badge indicates and how it was earned. Metadata includes the badge name, date issued, issuer, recipient, description of the badge and criteria for award. Additional details such as evidence of the achievement may also be included in the metadata. Digital badges offer an easy and free way to provide additional training for interested TAs without taking up limited TA meeting time or can be used simply to recognize outstanding TAs for all their hard work. TAs can share their earned badges on CVs, LinkedIn profiles or elsewhere to promote their accomplishments to future employers or admissions committees (who can easily view badge the metadata in order to gauge the badge utility). Badges can be adapted to many uses including micro-credentialing as educators can design their own badges and criteria as they like.

Setting up a digital badge can be relatively straight-forward. Some common learning management systems even support digital badge platforms. Example badges that could be used to recognize TA teaching skills include communication, guiding inquiry, and going above and beyond badges. These badges can be awarded based on faculty observation of TA teaching. Badges could also be designed to encourage TA development such as badges for peer observation or course material development. These badges would be awarded based on satisfactory completion of assignments or projects.

When setting up digital badges initially it is critical to consider which platform to use as there are many to choose from ([https://badge.wiki/wiki/badge\\_platforms](https://badge.wiki/wiki/badge_platforms)). Consideration should also be given to selection of the issuer as educators may wish to issue badges from their Department or Institution rather than from themselves directly. When creating badges it is important to consider what skills would be valued by TAs and their future employers. It is also important to clearly communicate the benefits of badges to TAs and to set clear criteria that can be assessed. For large-scale applications automatic awarding based on completion of online assignments may be preferable. When first implementing badges it may be useful to start with a small number of badges that can be slowly expanded and to search databases of existing badges to help with badge design (<https://badgerank.org>).

**Keywords:** digital badges, micro-credentialing, TA training

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