



UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

# MICRO- CREDENTIALS POLICY

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University of Bahrain/ eLearning Center

Effective: 29 December 2024

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# POLICY INFORMATION

Title:	Micro- Credentials Policy	
Policy Description:	Micro-credentials are designed to focus on specific skills and competencies, making them smaller in scope than minors or degrees. They help learners achieve academic and career goals and differentiate themselves in a competitive job market by clearly outlining mastered skills. This policy includes both credit-bearing and non-credit bearing micro-credentials, providing flexible opportunities for diverse learners to enhance their skill development and recognition.	
Policy Scope:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> general	
Policy Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New policy <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of existing policy	
Approval Authority:	University of Bahrain Council	
Authority/ Owner of Policy:	eLearning Center	
Approval Date:	29 December 2024	
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Approval Date of Last Revision:		
Date of Next Revision:	December 2029	
Related Documents:	None	

Policy Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty members
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admin Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/> All University Affiliates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deans	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Directors	

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# 1 Definitions

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<b>Digital Badge:</b>	Is the validated digital image and its associated metadata that documents when, where, and how an accomplishment, skill, quality, interest, micro-credential, or other stackable credential was assessed.
<b>Stackable Micro-Credential:</b>	Is part of a sequence of individual micro-credentials that can be accumulated to build up an individual's qualifications and help that individual move along a career pathway and further education. Stackable Credential combines related assessed skills to accurately reflect an accumulated body of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
<b>Stacking:</b>	Is the practice of assembling or compiling associated skill sets.
<b>Assessment:</b>	Is a process to determine a learner's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.
<b>An award student:</b>	Is a learner who is enrolled in a specific course that upon successful completion will result in a qualification at the University of Bahrain.
<b>Certification:</b>	Is the verification and authentication of a learner's entitlement to a qualification.
<b>Credit</b>	Is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and/or learning outcomes between different types of learning.
<b>Formal learning:</b>	Is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.
<b>Non-formal learning:</b>	Refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.
<b>Non-Award student:</b>	Is one enrolled in a unit of study without being enrolled in a specific award course as part of the degree program of the university of Bahrain.

<b>Professional learning:</b>	Refers to contexts requiring specialized knowledge, advanced learning, responsibility, and autonomy, and requires intensive preparation through learning.
<b>Distance-learning:</b>	Is a mode of education where learners and instructors are separated by physical distance, often utilizing technology such as the internet, video conferencing, and other communication tools to facilitate learning interactions.
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<p>Are specific statements that describe what learners should know, understand, or be able to do after completing a learning experience, course, or program.</p> <p>They typically articulate measurable achievements that demonstrate the mastery of knowledge, skills, or competencies.</p>
<b>Target audience:</b>	Refers to the specific group of people or individuals that a micro-credential course is intended to reach and engage with.

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## 2 Policy Purpose

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The purpose of this Policy is to outline the University of Bahrain's definition of, and approach to the development, approval, delivery, and recognition of micro-credentials. These credentials are designed to address essential skills needs, validated by the latest industry data and globally recognized standards, while aligning with the strategic goals of the university and the Kingdom of Bahrain. Micro-credentials are structured to integrate with existing degree or certificate programs at the University of Bahrain by contributing credits toward degree requirements. They also have the potential to be combined or stacked in innovative ways, offering opportunities for future academic pathways, while standing alone as valuable career and job credentials with global recognition and applicability.

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### 3 Policy Scope

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This Policy applies to:

- All staff involved in the development, approval, delivery, and awarding of micro-credentials at the University of Bahrain. It also applies to partnerships with third parties or other entities to develop and deliver micro-credentials. This includes credit bearing and non-credit bearing micro-credentials.
- Learners, participants and prospective participants in the University's micro-credential offerings.

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### 4 Policy Statement

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The University of Bahrain's micro-credentials:

focus on acquiring skills to meet the needs of employers and/or industries.

- 4.1 Offer both credit-bearing and non-credit bearing options.
- 4.2 Be designed to be flexible and fast in meeting industry demands. They provide flexibility and expedited skill acquisition to individuals seeking targeted and current knowledge and competencies.
- 4.3 Allow learners to choose the level of recognition and academic credit.
- 4.4 Be recorded on official transcripts or/and records (digital badges) or/and certificates are issued upon successful completion.
- 4.5 Enhance credibility and recognition of learners' achievements.
- 4.6 Are designed either individually or collaboratively by a department(s), college(s) center(s) or other unit(s) or/and with external partners.
- 4.7 Are comprised of courses but may also include non-course curricular requirements (such as completion of portfolios and certification exams).

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### 5 Roles and Responsibilities

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5.1 Deans' Committee (Chaired by Vice President):

- Develop, review, and approve the micro-credential policy.

- The committee establishes clear quality standards and guidelines for the development of micro-credential programs.
- Ensure the quality and integrity of micro-credential offerings.
- The committee reviews and approves proposed micro-credential programs.
- The committee explores opportunities for recognizing micro-credentials within the broader educational ecosystem such value of credentials.
- Ensure alignment with institutional goals, regulations, and industry standards.
- Provide guidance and oversight for policy implementation.
- Submit quarterly reports to the university president.

## 5.2 Faculty/Instructors:

- Develop and deliver high-quality curriculum for micro-credential programs.
- Facilitate learning experiences and provide support to micro-credential participants.
- Assess learner performance and provide constructive feedback.
- Develop and implement assessment for micro-credentials.

## 5.3 Deanship of Registration:

- Facilitating the process of converting approved micro-credentials into academic credits in collaboration with academic departments.
- Implementing exemptions for specific courses or program requirements (if applicable) based on approved micro-credentials.
- Issuing official documentation or transcripts that reflect learners' micro-credential achievements, exemptions, and awarded credits.
- Maintaining an up-to-date and secure record of learners' micro-credential achievements.

## 5.4 College Micro-credential Committee (Chaired by the College Dean) or Academic Unit/Center (Chaired by the Director or Head)

- Establish quality assurance processes to ensure the rigor and credibility of micro-credentials.
- Conduct regular reviews and audits of micro-credential programs.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of micro-credential offerings.
- Report to University micro-credential committee.
- Ensure assessments align with learning outcomes and industry standards and addresses skills gaps.
- Evaluate and maintain the integrity of the assessment process.
- Assign admin staff to provide comprehensive support for micro-credential learners, including guidance and resources.

- establishing and maintaining relationships with external partners or third parties, industry professionals, and employers to ensure the relevance and industry alignment of micro-credential offerings.

#### 5.5 Public Relations Director (Marketing):

- Facilitate internal and external communication related to micro-credentials.
- Provide information and support for marketing and outreach activities.

#### 5.6 e-Learning Center:

- Provide and maintain a platform or learning management system (LMS) for offering micro-credentials.
- Ensure the availability and functionality of the platform for delivering micro-credential programs.
- Collaborate with relevant departments to integrate micro-credentials into the e-learning platform.
- Support the technical aspects of micro-credential delivery, including enrollment, access, and tracking.
- Provide training and support for instructors and learners on using the platform for micro-credentials.
- Maintain and update the platform to align with emerging technologies and industry best practices.

#### 5.7 VP for Admin, Finance, and IT:

Approval and process of payments for faculty members involved in development/delivery of micro-credentials.

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## 6 Micro-credential Types

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### 6.1 The University administers and offers two types of micro-credentials:

6.2 Credit bearing micro-credentials: allow individuals to earn academic credit in discrete, modular formats that accumulate over time. Micro-credentials can be offered as standalone modules derived from existing university courses, or as a collection of modules that together meet the learning objectives of a full course. Colleges, centers, and academic units not affiliated with any college across the university are encouraged to develop innovative, credit-bearing micro-



credentials that address high-priority, in- demand skills in Bahrain. Upon successful completion of all assessment requirements for a credit bearing micro-credentials learners will receive the full credit allocation equivalent to the originating course(s). Credits earned from this will be recognized on official transcripts and may be counted towards degree programs at the University of Bahrain.

- 6.2.1 Non-credit bearing micro-credentials: UOB's non-credit bearing micro-credentials validate skills acquired through professional learning or non-formal learning experiences including continuing education, workplace training programs, personal interests, or community initiatives. By offering a range of micro-credentials, the university meets the dynamic demands of learners and industries, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and skill development.

6.3 Credit-bearing micro-credentials may:

- 6.3.1 provide a pathway to a recognized award qualification offered by the University.
- 6.3.2 be stacked to enable the granting of credit towards an award qualification.
- 6.3.3 be delivered in different modes and formats to suit learner's needs and preferences.

6.4 The following are not considered suitable to be offered as a micro-credential:

- 6.4.1 unassessed learning or courses, including work integrated learning that is not assessed.
- 6.4.2 badges which are obtained through participation only (i.e. no assessment);

6.5 Micro-credentials are stackable. Credit bearing micro-credentials must be comparable to a standard course, or part thereof, where relevant, about:

- level of learning
- duration of learning
- learning outcomes.

6.6 Where micro-credentials are offered for credit will have credit point value.

6.7 Micro-credentials offered for credit may be configured with single or multiple credit point options. For instance, a micro-credential stack or program could consist of a combination of multiple micro-credentials, each varying in credit points. Examples include a program with three micro-credentials, each worth three credits, or a combination of two three-credit micro-credentials along with a three-credit capstone micro-credential. Additionally, a single micro-credential with a specific credit point value may be offered.

6.8 A micro-credential set:

6.8.1 must include micro-credentials with learning outcomes and assessment mechanisms that are comparable to those of the unit taught in the academic program.

6.8.2 must be designed to enable learners to undertake the relevant micro-credentials sequentially, showcasing developmental progression. Alternatively, the micro-credentials can be completed as standalone modules that may not be undertaken sequentially but still combine to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.

6.8.3 may provide flexibility, allowing learners the option to select and complete specific micro-credentials within the set, without being required to undertake all micro-credentials within the set.

6.9 When establishing a micro-credential with a third party or a partner, a comprehensive proposal should outline the responsibilities of both the university and the collaborating entity. This includes the possibility of offering micro-credential through distance learning. The proposal must include specific details regarding the division of responsibilities between the university and the third party in the following areas:

6.10 Curriculum development and content creation:

6.11 Clarify which party is responsible for designing and developing the curriculum and content of the micro-credential.

6.11.1 Instruction and delivery: Specify the roles and responsibilities of each party in

delivering the micro-credential, whether through distance learning methods, or other means.

6.11.2 Assessment and credentialing: Clearly define the responsibilities of the university and the third party in terms of assessing learner performance and issuing the micro-credential upon successful completion.

6.11.3 Review and improvement: The agreement between the UOB and the third party should outline the specific responsibilities and obligations of each party regarding the review and improvement process. This can help ensure that both parties are committed to continuous enhancement and the overall success of micro-credential.

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## 7 Quality Assurance

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An effective quality management system covering all aspects of the design, development, delivery, assessment, monitoring, review, and improvement of the micro-credentials must be established, maintained, and improved by the college or academic unit(s) or center(s) (not affiliated with any colleges) and University Deans' Committee or provider as indicated in the approval and review process of the micro-credentials. In general, the committee should observe the micro-credentials to ensure high quality implementation.

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## 8 Policy Procedures

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### 8.1 Admission Requirement:

8.1.1 Micro-credentials admission requirement may be set by the offering college or center or unit.

8.1.2 Entry requirements should not pose any unreasonable barriers to entry and must be appropriate to the type and level of study.

8.1.3 Although it is preferred that prior knowledge is stated as assumed knowledge, an UOB micro-credential may specify another UOB micro-credential as a formal pre-requisite; no other formal pre-requisites may be specified.

8.1.4 The following assumed knowledge may be specified where relevant:

- 8.1.4.1 A minimum period of work experience may be assumed, which may include types of work experience.
- 8.1.4.2 Specific knowledge or skills may be assumed (e.g. a specific software package or a specific research technique)
- 8.1.4.3 Micro-credentials, or specific iterations of micro-credentials, may be available only to nominated members of specific organizations.

## **8.2 Approval:**

- 8.2.1 Proposals for new micro-credentials or modifications to existing ones must be reviewed and recommended by the College Micro-credential Committee, which is chaired by the Dean or the Director or Head of an academic unit or center. For collaborative proposals between colleges, or between a college and an academic unit or center, one college will be designated to submit the proposal on behalf of all parties involved.
- 8.2.2 The university Deans' Committee (acting as the University Micro-credential Committee) will review and approve proposals, ensuring quality and relevance for their intended purpose.
- 8.2.3 Approved micro-credentials are valid for up to three years. Proposers may seek re-approval by submitting an updated proposal when the approval period expires.

## **8.3 Evaluation and Review:**

- 8.3.1 The college or academic unit, or center offering the micro-credential must ensure that a summative learner evaluation of all micro-credentials is undertaken the first time they are offered, and at least annually after that.
- 8.3.2 All micro-credentials must be reviewed every 3 years by the academic unit on the micro-credentials.
- 8.3.3 The review will need to address whether the micro-credential is meeting its purpose, any issues raised in learner evaluations, the ongoing appropriateness of teaching and learning methods and assessment, whether learning outcomes remain appropriate, and whether there is continued demonstrable support for the micro-credential from industry, employers, or the community.
- 8.3.4 Every faculty member offering micro-credentials must submit a report to the College Micro-credential Committee each year confirming that the review(s) have

taken place, and outlining any issues raised and steps taken or proposed to address them.

- 8.3.5 The Deans' committee every three years will make a final decision on whether a micro-credential can continue to be offered, and whether there are any conditions attached to their continuation.

#### **8.4 Credits:**

- 8.4.1 A 3-credit micro-credential is determined based on 120 hours of learning, encompassing both contact hours (face-to-face instruction) and non-contact hours (private study time).
- 8.4.2 In terms of assigning credits, the general guideline is that 1 credit is equivalent to 40 hours of combined contact and non-contact learning. However, micro-credentials that are not primarily designed for credit towards a UOB program are not required to assign a specific credit value.
- 8.4.3 When assigning credits to micro-credentials, it is crucial to maintain the integrity and academic standards of the program. While there is no specific standard range or maximum limit for the credit value, it is important to ensure that the credit allocation aligns with the rigor and depth of the micro-credential. The credit value should accurately reflect the learning outcomes and level of achievement attained.

#### **8.5 Credit Transfer to UOB Program:**

- 8.5.1 Learners who have achieved a micro-credential or a stack of micro-credentials can request to transfer their credits to the UOB degree program.
- 8.5.2 UOB micro-credentials, which are primarily designed as pathways to earning degrees, must indicate a specific credit value to be transferred to the degree program.
- 8.5.3 It is important to note that being eligible for or receiving credit towards a UOB program does not guarantee that the credit will count towards the completion of the program. Learners must fulfill the requirements of the approved program they wish to transfer the credits to.

#### 8.5.4 Minimum Grade Requirements for micro-credential Stacks

- Micro-credentials are structured as competency-based stacks, and therefore, undergraduates must earn a minimum grade of C or higher in all courses that count toward the micro-credential stack.
- For postgraduate micro-credentials, learners must achieve a minimum grade of B or higher in all courses that contribute to the micro-credential stack to be eligible for credit transfer within their academic program.

#### 8.5.5 Digital Badges for Incomplete Degrees

- In cases where learners are unable to graduate with their degree due to an overall GPA falling below the undergraduate minimum of 2.0 or the graduate minimum of 3.0, they can earn badges for successfully completing micro-credential stacks.
- To qualify for badges, learners must have attained the minimum required grade or higher in all courses included in the micro-credential stack.

### 8.6 Target Audience:

Given the wide range of potential uses for micro-credentials, there are several different potential target audiences:

- Current students
- Prospective students
- Adult learners
- Alumni
- Business/Industry partners/ Education Institutes
- High school students
- Educators
- Community partners
- Faculty/staff
- Professionals

## **8.7 Curriculum Development:**

To establish micro-credentials that are eligible for academic credit, the faculty member must prepare a course plan and design in the Micro-credential Template including the following information:

- Micro-credential code
- Micro-credential title
- Micro-credential Credit Points
- Micro-credential Field of Education
- Micro-credential NQF level
- Upskilling workforce
- Target Audience
- Pre-requisites
- Volume and duration of learning proportionally aligned to the credit point value.
- Mode of teaching (face-to-face, distance and blended)
- Language of instruction
- Micro-credential structure
- Micro-credential outline
- Micro-credential content
- Micro-credential learning outcomes
- Micro-credential assessment
- Micro-credential Stacking - Relationship to other micro-credentials to claim credit against other accredited units of cumulative equal value.

## **8.8 Course Naming:**

8.8.1 Every micro-credential offered by UOB must have a clear and descriptive title that indicates its category and specifies the disciplinary or professional area it focuses on. The title should be consistent throughout.

8.8.2 Micro-credentials must adhere to the approved naming convention outlined in the Procedure/Template and should not use titles that are currently used for any Award Program.

8.8.3 The title of a micro-credential or micro-credential stack cannot be changed once assigned. If a different title is desired, a new proposal must be submitted.

**8.8.4 Micro-credential Coding Convention:**

- Each micro-credential will be assigned a unique code following the coding convention with reference to the college or academic unit or center that is offering it: MICROXX#1##2. If College of Information Technology is offering the then the micro-credential code will be MICROIT###
- #1 represents the first digit of the micro-credential level, as defined in the micro-credential level table.
- ##2 serves as a distinctive identifier for the micro-credential.

**8.8.5 Micro-credential Title Convention:**

- Micro-credential titles should be concise and descriptive, accurately reflecting the learning outcomes of the unit.
- The titles should be easily understandable, particularly for learners who are selecting their desired micro-credentials.
- Terms like "Introduction to...", "Foundations of...", or "Beginning..." are typically used for 100-level micro-credential units, while terms such as "Advanced..." are usually reserved for 300 or 500-level micro-credential units.
- The level 000 is not eligible for academic credit whereas 100 to 500 are eligible for micro-credit.



#### 8.8.6 Micro-credential levels:

Micro-credential level	Basic description
000	These micro-credentials do not necessarily align with any NQF level. This is micro-credential is not credit based.
100	These micro-credentials broadly align with NQF Level 5. It provides disciplinary foundations and an introduction to studying in that field.
200	These micro-credentials broadly align with NQF Level 6. These are intermediate units that reflect a greater depth of knowledge than, and may build upon, 100-level outcomes.
300	These micro-credentials broadly align with NQF Level 7. These are advanced and more specialized micro-credentials. They build upon and reflect a greater depth of knowledge than, and may build upon, 100 and 200-level outcomes.
400	These micro-credentials broadly align with NQF level 8. These are built upon 300 level outcomes.
500	These micro-credentials broadly align with NQF Level 9. These micro-credentials are designed to provide an advanced level of disciplinary knowledge. These micro-credentials build upon the general academic skills developed in undergraduate education.

### 8.9 Course Design and Development:

- 8.9.1 The design and development of micro-credentials will be led by staff in the relevant department.
- 8.9.2 When designing micro-credentials, instructors will be provided with access to the micro-credential learning platform to develop the learning materials.
- 8.9.3 Micro-credentials at UOB must be designed, developed, and delivered to ensure the highest quality and currency of educational offerings. They must:

- Reflect UOB's dedication to delivering high-quality alternative educational opportunities to learners and the broader community.
- Be designed and developed with a focus on addressing skills gaps in relevant industries or disciplines, incorporating discipline-specific expertise and pedagogical rigor. This ensures that learners acquire the necessary competencies and knowledge to meet the evolving demands of the workforce and contribute effectively to their respective fields.
- Foster partnership pedagogy whenever relevant and feasible, encouraging collaborations and meaningful engagement with external stakeholders, including industry experts and organizations. This facilitates the incorporation of practical industry perspectives and enhances the applicability of acquired skills.

#### **8.10 Assessment:**

8.10.1 To receive a credit-based micro-credential verified certificate, a learner must demonstrate attainment of the learning outcomes through completion of assessment. Assessment tools and activities must be specified for each component of the micro-credentials, and:

- focus on the learning outcomes.
- enable accurate decisions to be made about learner achievement.

8.10.2 Assessment must have the following characteristics:

- All written assessments are to be submitted electronically.
- Assessments are to be marked, and written feedback is provided to the learner.
- If a learner receives an overall failing mark, the enrollee may request that all assessment be remarked by a marker who was not involved in the teaching of the course and who is appointed by the Dean of College or Director or Head or may follow the appeal process of UOB.

## **8.11 Certificates:**

- 8.11.1 Micro-credential digital badges, certification and transcript is managed by Deanship of Registration.
- 8.11.2 On successful completion of assessment, a certificate will be awarded in the form of a digital badge or/and certificate and/or will be shown in a transcript.
- 8.11.3 Each digital credential must contain sufficient information to ensure that the learning the participant has achieved is appropriately described.

## **8.12 Fees:**

- 8.12.1 The fees for micro-credentials are determined based on considerations such as micro-credential costs, resources, and maintenance, marketing, and other relevant expenses.
- 8.12.2 Standard fees for micro-credentials at the university of Bahrain should be set at a level that ensures the sustainability of the University's standard offerings.
- 8.12.3 In exceptional circumstances where unique considerations arise, such as external partnerships, sponsored programs, or other specific situations, the university administration may exercise discretion to deviate from the standard fee determination process outlined in the University micro- credential Fees Policy.
- 8.12.4 Detailed information regarding micro-credential fees, including specific fee structures, payment schedules, and any applicable charges, will be outlined in the separate University Micro-credential Fees Policy.

## **8.13 Technology / Platform Use:**

- 8.13.1 Regularly assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the technology/platform in delivering micro-credential courses.

Explore opportunities for continuous improvement and enhancement of the technology/platform to meet evolving learner needs.

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## 9 Contact Information

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To provide further assistance in implementing this policy, or any related questions can be directed to eLearning Center

Email: [microcredentials@uob.edu.bh](mailto:microcredentials@uob.edu.bh)

Contact #: eLearning Center 17437717/36661

