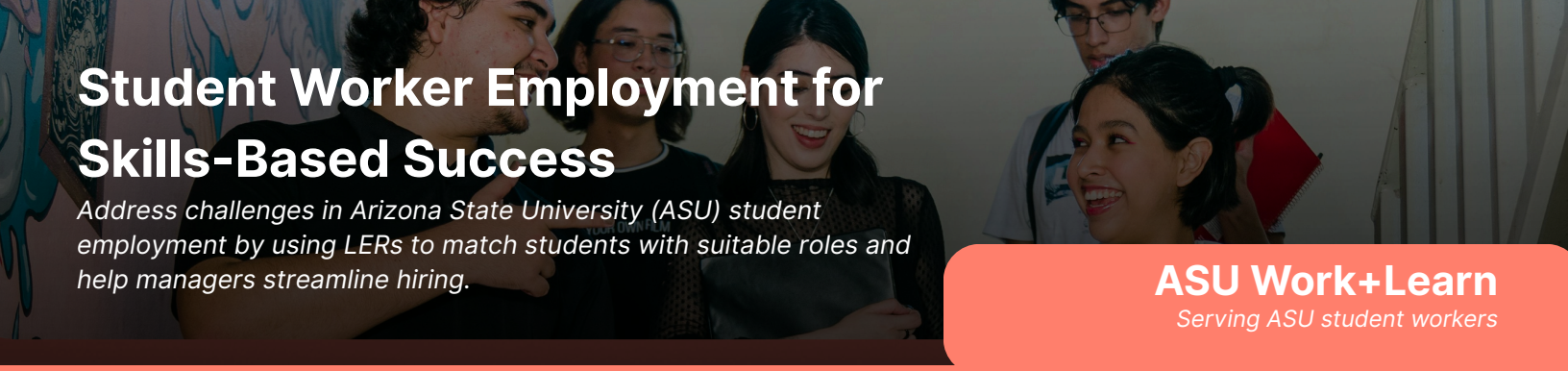
03. Case Studies

The diverse ways LERs are being explored, implemented, and scaled across the SkillsFWD grantees.

While all projects shared a common commitment to advancing skills-based practices and interoperable digital records, each was shaped by distinct community needs, institutional contexts, and strategic priorities. As a result, the teams pursued different use cases, assembled different partnerships, and encountered unique challenges that required adaptive approaches.

Each case study is organized to provide a clear view into these efforts, including the project's background and origins, the partners and roles that formed the project team, a description of implementation and key milestones, major takeaways and lessons learned, and plans for sustaining and expanding the work. Together, these case studies illustrate that there is no single path to LER implementation. Instead, successful efforts are grounded in intentional design, strong relationships, and solutions tailored to the learners, workers, employers, and systems they are meant to serve.





Student Worker Employment for Skills-Based Success

Address challenges in Arizona State University (ASU) student employment by using LERs to match students with suitable roles and help managers streamline hiring.

ASU Work+Learn
Serving ASU student workers

Background

ASU has been at the forefront of LER and digital credentialing technology since The Trusted Learner Network (TLN) was established within ASU's Enterprise Technology department in 2019. TLN has established a set of learner-centered digital infrastructure tools that issue, store and manage academic credentials and achievements. Through SkillsFWD, the University put these tools into the hands of their students and has begun to model the value that this technology can have in unlocking opportunities on campus and beyond.

While higher education is often valued for academic learning, this initiative focused on recognizing skills gained through on-campus employment. ASU's 10,000+ student workers develop valuable experience in critical roles across its campuses, yet these skills are often overlooked. The initiative aimed to create a system that documents both academic and employment learning, helping students showcase their skills for future campus jobs and post-graduation opportunities. Its goal was to design a scalable, sustainable process to verify and credential student skills within ASU's employment ecosystem.

Team

Work + Learn

Team Lead, Employer Partner, Credential Issuer

Set vision, convened and managed partnerships, ensured project progress. Employed student workers and issued credentials for skills gained through work experience.

ASU Enterprise Technology Arizona State University

ASU Enterprise Technology

Created digital credential issuing technology and designed credentials.

SmartResume

Technology Partner

Provided technology that enables students to store and share digital credentials.

Implemenation

As project lead, ASU Work+Learn brought together a cross-functional team from ASU Enterprise Technology, University College, and SmartResume. Beginning in early 2024, the group met regularly to design and prepare for a pilot launch in September 2024, timed to align with the start of the new school year.

The pilot aimed to create a structure that would allow hiring managers to identify and verify the skills students gain through on-campus employment and issue digital credentials reflecting those skills. To ensure the credentials would carry real value for students entering the workforce, the team grounded them in the NACE Career Readiness Competencies—eight essential skills employers look for in college graduates. To support issuing and managing these credentials, ASU Enterprise Technology developed CredID, a new platform, integrated with the existing student employment portal that enables managers to create and issue credentials that students can store and share through ASU Pocket or SmartResume.

Once the technical foundation was set, the Work+Learn team began engaging hiring managers from two University College units. Interest quickly grew across campus, and the pilot expanded to six units—an early sign of the program's relevance and appeal. This growth allowed the team to test the model with a broader and more diverse group of students, while also gathering valuable insights from managers across different units.

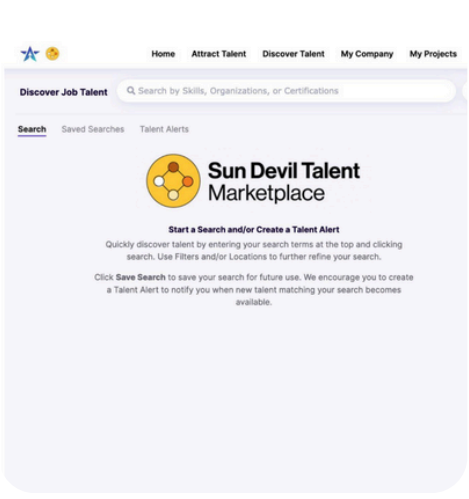
To introduce the new system, ASU Work+Learn hosted a hybrid launch event in September 2024, making it accessible to staff and students on all campuses. The event raised awareness, prepared hiring managers to create skills-based job descriptions, and helped students understand how credentials could enhance their resumes and future career prospects. A comprehensive SmartResume user guide offered ongoing support, enabling students to build their digital resumes at their own pace.

Of the 30 students in the pilot, 28 successfully created SmartResumes—demonstrating the impact of flexible, self-guided tools.

After launch, Work+Learn carried out a multi-channel marketing campaign to further engage students and employers within participating units. The campaign reached 605 learners, with 456 enrolling and earning a total of 6,429 verifiable credentials. Although external factors such as funding shifts and staffing changes limited expansion, the strong adoption rate underscored the initiative's relevance and appeal.

To sustain progress and improve the system, the team collected ongoing feedback through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with employers. This input informed enhancements to SmartResume's employer interface—streamlining communication, improving tracking of student submissions, and expanding customization options for students. These updates balanced employer usability with student autonomy, demonstrating the importance of designing a system that meets the needs of both. Through this iterative process, Work+Learn built a model for continuous collaboration and improvement—strengthening trust with hiring partners and laying the groundwork for long-term scalability.







Insights for the Field

Streamlined partnerships can quickly demonstrate value.
This project is very unique in that all learners, earners, employers, and credential issuers are members of the ASU community. This approach demonstrates how LERs can provide value and connect individuals to opportunity even within a single institution. This streamlined partnership approach allowed the team to achieve full-lifecycle adoption quickly and could be an effective way to demonstrate the value of LERs to external organizations that may be hesitant to change their practices without evidence of success.

Learning comes in many forms and should be recognized.
This initiative bolsters the skills-based movement more broadly by expanding how we think about recognition of learning in higher education. There are so many experiences on a college campus outside of the classroom, through which students gain valuable experience and skills that are relevant in the workforce. This initiative enables students to recognize and communicate the experience gained through their student employment in addition to what they learn through their coursework

Looking Ahead

By the end of 2025, the team plans to complete a study on the efficacy of credentialing to improve the connection to employment moving forward. In 2026, they expect to double the number of student workers that are credentialed through this initiative and broaden the initiative to include more work opportunities, academic offerings, short-term projects and diverse experiential learning experiences.

Looking forward, the project plans to expand credentialing to all approximately 10,000–12,000 ASU student employees, leveraging the systems, workflows, and resources developed during the pilot.