



STANDARD

Digital Credentials Standard

Issuance, verification, and revocation of
machine-verifiable professional credentials

DOCUMENT CODE
ICPA-STD-002

VERSION
2026.1

EFFECTIVE
1 January 2026

Document Code	ICPA-STD-002
Version	2026.1
Effective Date	1 January 2026
Review Cycle	Biennial
Document Owner	ICPA Standards Council
Classification	Public

As the profession moves to portable, machine-verifiable credentials, ICPA sets out a minimum technical and governance standard that accredited bodies must meet when issuing digital credentials under the ICPA mark. The 2026 edition reflects a year of public consultation, peer review, and alignment with the International Standard for Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (ISO/IEC 17011:2017) and the International Education Standards (IES) framework. It supersedes all prior editions and remains in force until the next biennial revision.

1. Scope

This standard covers any credential issued by an accredited body that represents an ICPA-recognised qualification, designation, or continuing professional development achievement, and that is presented in a machine-readable form (open badge, verifiable credential, or equivalent).

2. Technical baseline

Accredited bodies shall issue credentials that conform to one of the following published specifications:

- W3C Verifiable Credentials Data Model 2.0
- 1EdTech Open Badges 3.0
- Any successor specification ratified by the Standards Council

Credentials shall be cryptographically signed by a key controlled by the issuing body, with a documented key rotation policy and an auditable revocation mechanism.

3. Mandatory metadata

Every issued credential shall include, at minimum: issuer identity, subject identity, the ICPA-recognised qualification reference, date of award, validity period (if any), revocation endpoint, and a stable URI resolving to the credential's specification document.

4. Verification and revocation

Each issuing body shall operate a public verification endpoint available without registration. Revocation status shall be queryable in real time and shall be reflected within 24 hours of a revocation decision. ICPA will operate a meta-resolver at verify.i-cpa.org from Q2 2026.

5. Privacy and data minimisation

Credentials shall contain only the data necessary to evidence the qualification. Personal identifiers beyond name and credential subject ID must not be embedded. Where local law requires additional fields, they shall be selectively disclosable rather than embedded in plain form.

6. Accessibility

Human-readable presentations of credentials shall meet WCAG 2.2 Level AA. Accredited bodies shall provide alternative formats on request.

Approved by	Chair, ICPA Standards Council
Issued by	International Commission for Professional Accreditation, Fremont, California, USA
Contact	info@i-cpa.org · www.i-cpa.org

© 2026 International Commission for Professional Accreditation. All rights reserved. This document is published for the international accreditation community and may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes with attribution.