



NADSP E-Badge Academy: Helpful Tips For DSPs



NADSP Certification Courses

Before you do anything else, you will want to enroll in the very first course listed in the E-Badge Academy Catalog. This course is called “NADSP Certifications for DSPs”. (If you are a supervisor seeking NADSP’s frontline supervisor certification, you would want to enroll in the “NADSP Certifications for Frontline Supervisors” course instead.)

This course is essentially a series of checklists, and the checkboxes for each certification requirement will automatically check themselves when that particular requirement has been met. When all the requirements for a given certification have been met, the certificate you have earned will be unlocked at the bottom of the checklist. Opening that unlocked certificate file for the first time will cause the certificate and the accompanying badge to be issued to you.



Code of Ethics Commitment Badge

This will be your very first badge in the NADSP E-Badge Academy. It’s a prerequisite for all the other badges, so if you don’t earn this badge first, you will not be able to earn any of the other badges. This badge is earned simply by agreeing to provide services which are in line with the NADSP Code of Ethics.

It is important to read the Code of Ethics carefully before you go into the “Commit to the NADSP Code of Ethics” activity. First, this is an important commitment you are making, and you want to be clear on what you are agreeing to. Secondly, you will be discussing how the Code applies to your work throughout your time in the E-Badge Academy, so becoming familiar with the language of the Code will be extremely helpful to you.

Because we know that this is the one badge course that everyone participating in the E-Badge Academy will complete, we also included a copy of our Certification Fraud Policy here. Please read it carefully as well. Actions such as copying the submissions of others, taking credit for the work of others, or submitting text from the internet or other sources as your own work would all be considered to be “certification fraud” and can lead to your removal from the E-Badge Academy and any certifications you were awarded being revoked.



Accredited Education Badges

Accredited Education badges are earned by uploading training records showing you have completed the required number of training hours in [an NADSP-Accredited training program](#). Typically this will mean that you are uploading a transcript or a set of certificates that you have received from that accredited training program.

The key here is that the training must be NADSP-Accredited. While many non-accredited trainings may be helpful and valuable to DSPs, only NADSP-Accredited trainings can be used to earn Accredited Education badges.

Please be aware that NADSP cannot count the same training content more than once. For example, there may be certain trainings that a DSP is asked to complete each year to meet regulatory requirements in their state or province, but these trainings can only be counted once toward a DSP's hours of NADSP-accredited training.

There are five different Accredited Education badges for DSPs: a 10-hour badge, a 25-hour badge, a 50-hour badge, a 75-hour badge, and a 100-hour badge. These hours are cumulative, meaning that the 10 hours used to earn a 10-hour badge can also be submitted when applying for the 25-hour badge. The 25 hours used to apply for the 25-hour badge can be submitted for the 50-hour badge, and so on.

When applying for an Accredited Education badge, it is important to submit all of the training records needed to demonstrate the completion of the required number of hours in a single submission. This is because each submission is likely to be assigned to a different reviewer who is not familiar with the DSP's prior submissions and does not have access to them. So, for example, when applying for the 25-hour badge, it is important to submit records showing at least 25 hours completed, rather than just the additional 15 hours that have been completed since the 10-hour badge was earned. If your training records are contained in multiple files, it is important to upload all of the files needed to show the required number of hours before submitting them.

While there are many training programs that are NADSP-Accredited, below is some additional information which may be helpful for some of the most commonly used accredited programs.

Relias

Relias will allow you to download a transcript in PDF format, which can then be uploaded to the NADSP E-Badge Academy when applying for Accredited Education badges. If this transcript can be generated with the training courses listed in alphabetical order, it will speed up the review process and result in you receiving your results sooner.

Please be aware that not all courses offered by Relias are NADSP-accredited. Filtering the Relias course library to show courses that list “NADSP-National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals” as the “Board Name” will generate a list of all courses that have been accredited for direct support professionals by NADSP. This information can also be found on the first page of each course.

College of Direct Support

All courses within DirectCourse’s College of Direct Support are NADSP-accredited, but courses from some other DirectCourse curricula, such as the College of Employment Services, the College of Recovery and Community Inclusion, and the College of Personal Assistance and Caregiving, are not. A course name that begins with “CDS” is a good indication that the course is NADSP-accredited.

While it is possible for CDS records to be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet, the E-Badge Academy cannot accept files in this format. If converting an Excel spreadsheet to a PDF file for upload to the E-Badge Academy, please make sure that all of the information remains visible and together on the same pages.

Open Future Learning

All Open Future Learning courses (including staff training modules, side-by-side modules, mini-modules, and audio modules) are NADSP-Accredited for DSPs. (However, multiple courses with the same title cannot be counted if taken on the same date.) Open Future Learning provides certificates rather than a transcript, so numerous certificates will be needed to document the completion of the training hours needed for NADSP Certification. As noted above, it is important to submit all of the records needed to document the hours completed in a single submission. When submitting Open Future Learning certificates to the E-Badge Academy, this means you should make sure all of the certificates are attached before clicking Submit.

NADSP Webinars

Any training provided by NADSP, including NADSP webinars, is considered to be NADSP-accredited, and can be used toward the accredited education requirements for certification. Any NADSP webinars should be documented using the [Accredited Education Documentation Form](#) found on the NADSP website.



DSP Core Competency Badges

The DSP Core Competency badges are all color-coded with green and orange, and they are all based on language from the CMS Core Competencies. Each of these badges comes with two prompts that you will be asked to respond to in a document called a “testimonial”. In written form, a testimonial is usually about half-a-page to one page in length. (We don’t deny submissions for being too short, but if you are writing less than half-a-page, it is likely that you are leaving out some key information that the reviewer will need.) If you prefer speaking to writing, we do also accept audio submissions in MP3 format.

First Prompt

The first prompt will typically ask you to describe an example of your work in which the skill associated with this badge was used. While direct support is often a team effort, it is *your skills* that the reviewer is trying to evaluate. We cannot award a badge based on what you “would do” in a hypothetical situation or based on the skills you have observed others using. If other professionals are involved in your example, just describe each person’s role, with a focus on your own actions. If you have not encountered the type of situation the first prompt is asking about, or have not had an opportunity to use the particular skill this badge is based on, then you should probably wait to apply for that particular badge.

Second Prompt

The second prompt will ask you to reflect on the values of your profession and will often (but not always) ask how the NADSP Code of Ethics came into play in the example you described. This requires a reflective style of writing that may be very different from the writing you typically do as a DSP. It may take some time and practice before you feel fully comfortable with it. If the second prompt asks about the Code, you may find this format will help you to get started: *The Code of Ethics says “(quote from the Code)” and I did this by (something from your example).*



The Badge Review Process

When you apply for either an Accredited Education badge or a Core Competency badge, your submission will be automatically assigned to a reviewer. The reviewers are all people who work in human services who have agreed to review badges in addition to their regular duties. In some cases, you may find that a badge is reviewed very quickly, while in other cases it takes longer. This does not necessarily indicate there is a concern and is most likely related to the reviewer you were assigned being occupied with other duties. NADSP asks our reviewers to respond to a submission within three business days.

You will be notified via email when the status of your submission changes. If your submission is approved, the badge will be awarded. If your submission is denied, the reviewer will attach a note to the submission explaining the reason for the denial, which can be viewed by following the link included in the email notification. (Reviewers may sometimes add a note to an approved submission as well.) If your submission was denied, we encourage you to re-submit, and the note from the reviewer should give you some guidance as to what aspect of your submission should be adjusted. Typically a denial means that some piece of information that was needed was either missing or unclear.