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GUIDE

GUIDE FOR PROGRAMME TEAMS

How to get your digital badges claimed and shared

Most of the value of a badge is lost before anyone thinks about LinkedIn. This guide follows a badge from the moment it is issued to the moment someone checks it, and shows what to fix at each step.

By **Rob Tyler, Co-founder, Certify** · Updated 26 September 2026 · 9 min read

Online version: https://www.certify.one/guides/badges-claimed-and-shared

THE SHORT ANSWER

Badges go unclaimed for ordinary reasons: the email is missed, the learner doesn't know what they have been given, or claiming takes too many steps. Fix those first. Sharing follows when the badge is worth showing off, arrives at the right moment, and comes with a clear, specific ask.

Why do so many digital badges go unclaimed?

Most badges that are never used are lost in the first few days, long before sharing comes into it. The learner doesn't see the email, doesn't recognise the sender, doesn't understand what a digital badge is, or gives up at the claim step. Each of those is a design problem you can fix, not a sign that learners don't care.

It helps to stop thinking of "sharing" as one event and start thinking of a badge's journey as a series of steps, each of which loses some people:

Step	What happens	What usually goes wrong
Issued	The badge is created for the learner	Wrong or out-of-date email address
Delivered	The notification reaches the inbox	Spam filters, unfamiliar sender, corporate firewalls
Opened	The learner opens the email	Vague subject line, sent at the wrong moment
Claimed	The learner accepts or views their badge	Too many steps, unexpected account creation, poor mobile experience

Step	What happens	What usually goes wrong
Shared	The badge goes on LinkedIn, a CV or elsewhere	No reason given, no suggested wording, badge not worth showing
Verified	Someone else clicks through and checks it	Verification page is confusing or doesn't explain the achievement

Look at your own numbers for each step before changing anything. A programme that loses half its learners at "delivered" needs a different fix from one that loses them at "shared".

What should you do before you issue a single badge?

Tell learners about the badge before they earn it. When a badge arrives as a surprise, many people treat it like any other automated email. When they have been told at the start of the course what they will receive, what it proves and how employers use it, the delivery email becomes something they are waiting for.

Practical ways to do this:

- Mention the badge in joining instructions, the course welcome and the first session.
- Show an example of the actual badge, including its verification page, inside the course.
- Explain in one or two sentences why it matters: it is verifiable, it shows exactly what was assessed, and it can be added to a LinkedIn profile.
- Collect the email address the learner wants the badge sent to. For most adult learners this should be a personal address, because work addresses stop working when people change jobs, and a badge should outlast any one employer.

The other pre-issue decision is quality. People share things they are proud of. A badge for attending a one-hour webinar will never be shared as often as one for passing an assessed course, and issuing too many low-value badges makes all of them look less credible. Our guide to designing a badge programme (https://www.certify.one/guides/designing-a-badge-programme) covers how to decide what deserves a badge.

How do you write a delivery email that gets opened?

Send it from a name the learner recognises, make the subject line about their achievement, and give them one obvious thing to do. The delivery email is the single most important moment in the badge's life, and most programmes treat it as a system notification.

What works:

- **A recognisable sender.** Use your organisation's name, not the name of your badge platform. If your platform lets you send from your own domain, set that up properly with your IT team so the mail passes spam checks.

- **A specific subject line.** "You've earned the Health and Safety Supervisor badge" beats "Your credential is ready".
- **One button.** "View and share your badge" is clearer than three competing links.
- **A reason to act.** One sentence on why the badge is worth adding to a profile, in plain words.
- **No attachments.** Attachments make emails more likely to be filtered and pull learners away from the verifiable version.

If you issue to learners at large employers, universities or public bodies, their mail systems may quarantine messages from senders they haven't seen before. Ask one or two contacts at those organisations to allow-list your sending address before a big issuance, and send yourself a test to a range of personal and work inboxes first.

When is the best time to issue a badge?

As close to the moment of achievement as you can. The motivation to share is highest in the hours after someone finishes a course or passes an assessment, and it fades quickly. Automatic issuance on completion, for example through an integration with your learning management system, is the right default.

There are good reasons to wait. An assessment may need marking, a certifying body may need to sign off, or you may want to present badges at a ceremony. In those cases, tell learners when to expect their badge, and send it on the day you said you would. A badge that arrives when promised still lands well. One that arrives three weeks later without warning usually doesn't.

How do you make claiming a badge effortless?

Count the steps between opening the email and seeing the badge, and remove every one you can. Learners should be able to open their badge on a phone, see clearly what it is and who issued it, and add it to LinkedIn without having to create an account or remember a password first.

Test it yourself, on a phone, as a learner would. Check that:

- The badge page loads quickly and reads well on a small screen.
- The learner's name, the achievement, the issuer and the date are obvious.
- Adding the badge to a LinkedIn profile and sharing it as a post are both visible without scrolling.
- There is a simple way to download or save the badge and its certificate.
- The page explains, in a line, what information is public, so learners feel safe sharing it.

If your platform forces steps you can't remove, tell learners about them in the delivery email so nobody is surprised.

How do you encourage learners to share their badge?

Ask them clearly, tell them why, and give them the words. Most people don't share badges because they don't know it's expected or don't know what to say. A specific request with a ready-made post removes both problems.

- **Make the ask specific.** "Add it to your LinkedIn profile" and "Share it with your network" are clearer than "Share your achievement".
- **Offer sample wording.** Two or three sentences the learner can edit, naming what they learned and tagging your organisation.
- **Explain what employers see.** A shared badge links to a page where anyone can check the achievement is real and see exactly what it involved.
- **Respond to shares.** When learners post their badges, comment, congratulate and reshare from your organisation's account. Other learners notice, and sharing becomes normal.
- **Involve managers.** In workplace programmes, a manager's congratulations on a shared badge is often worth more to the learner than the badge itself.

What follow-up should you send after issuing?

Send one reminder to people who haven't opened their badge, and one to people who opened it but haven't claimed or shared it. A week and around three weeks after issue are sensible starting points. Most non-claimers simply missed the first email, and a single friendly reminder recovers a meaningful share of them.

Keep reminders short and useful: the badge, the button, the reason. Don't send more than two, and stop as soon as someone has claimed. For badges that expire, add renewal reminders well before the expiry date, so learners renew and reshare rather than letting the credential lapse.

What are the most common "I never got my badge" problems?

Nearly all of them come down to four causes, and each has a simple fix.

What the learner says	Usual cause	Fix
"I never received it"	Spam or quarantine, or a typo in the address	Check the address, resend, and ask them to search for your sender name
"It went to my old work email"	Issued to a work address they no longer use	Collect personal addresses at enrolment, and allow corrections
"My name is wrong"	Name taken from a registration system	Correct and reissue, and fix the source record so it doesn't recur
"I can't find the share button"	Viewing on mobile, or unsure what to do	Link to a short how-to page from the delivery email

It is worth publishing a short help page for learners that answers these, and linking to it from every delivery email. It saves your team time and it signals that the badge is something you take seriously.

How should you measure claim and share rates?

Track each step of the journey as a percentage of badges issued, by cohort, and compare against your own baseline rather than someone else's headline figures. Published share rates vary enormously with the audience, the value of the badge and how the figure is calculated, so the most useful comparison is with your own programme last term.

At minimum, track:

- **Claim rate:** badges claimed or viewed by the learner, as a share of badges issued.
- **Share rate:** badges shared at least once, as a share of badges issued.
- **Verification views:** how often people other than the learner open badge pages.

Change one thing at a time, such as the subject line or the reminder timing, and compare the next cohort with the last. Our guide to measuring a badge programme (https://www.certify.one/guides/measuring-a-badge-programme) goes further, including how to connect these numbers to outcomes leadership cares about.

QUICK-START CHECKLIST

- [ ] Tell learners about the badge at the start of the course, and show them an example.
- [ ] Collect a personal email address for badge delivery.
- [ ] Send delivery emails from your organisation's name, with a subject line about the achievement.
- [ ] Issue automatically on completion, or tell learners exactly when to expect it.
- [ ] Test the claim and share steps on a phone.
- [ ] Include a specific ask and sample post wording.
- [ ] Set up two reminders: non-openers, then non-sharers.

CERTIFY ACADEMY

Learn it in Certify Academy

Module 3 of the free Digital Badge Practitioner pathway, "Launching and growing your programme", covers issuing workflows, acceptance and sharing, and measurement. It ends with a practical task: a one-page launch plan for your own programme.

Start the free course → (https://academy.certify.one/en/pathways/digital-badge-practitioner)

Frequently asked questions

What is a good claim rate for digital badges?

There is no universal benchmark, because claim rates depend on the audience, the value of the badge and how the rate is calculated. Set your own baseline with your first cohort, then aim to improve it cohort by cohort. Fixing delivery and the claim step usually produces the biggest early gains.

Should badges go to a personal or a work email address?

For most adult learners, a personal address is better. Badges are meant to belong to the learner for their whole career, and work addresses stop working when people change jobs. For internal staff programmes, a work address is fine as long as learners can move the badge to a personal address later.

Do learners need an account to claim a badge?

That depends on the platform. Requiring an account or password before someone can see or share their badge adds friction and loses learners, so check how your platform handles it before you launch, and tell learners in advance about any steps they will need to take.

How many reminder emails should we send?

Two is a sensible maximum: one to people who haven't opened their badge, about a week after issue, and one to people who haven't claimed or shared it, around three weeks after. Stop reminders as soon as a learner has claimed, so nobody is chased for something they have already done.

Related post

Why learners don't claim their digital badges (https://www.certify.one/blog/why-learners-dont-claim-digital-badges)