



# A Digitally Enabled Ecosystem of Micro-credentials

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Cedefop virtual event, 22-23 June 2023  
#microcredentials

**Microcredentials  
a labour market  
megatrend**



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

# Three Truths and a Lie

- 1** | I have a strong research interest in micro-credentials
- 2** | I have a strong background in micro-credential platforms
- 3** | I have over 30 years experience in flexible lifelong learning



# A Complex Ecosystem With Many Diverse Habitats

CULTURE AND EDUCATION / CULTURA Y EDUCACIÓN  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/11356405.2022.2102293>



## Unboxing micro-credentials: an inside, upside and downside view (*Descifrando las microcredenciales: en qué consisten, ventajas e inconvenientes*)

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### ABSTRACT

Micro-credentials are the latest shiny new thing attracting the attention of politicians, policy-makers and educational leaders. This paper endeavours to 'unbox' the micro-credential by peeling away inherent tensions in competing definitions and underlying drivers. It reports the tripartite methodology adopted for a state-of-the-art literature review which offers an inside, upside and downside view on the micro-credential. Selected findings illustrate how the growth of the micro-credential needs to be understood in a wider socio-cultural context. The micro-credential movement is part of a complex credential ecology steeped in history, politics and cultural norms. In response to major societal and technological change forces, the paper invites debate on what counts as valued skill and knowledge in today's rapidly changing digital society. It challenges existing business models for higher and further education and the traditional status of the university degree. Therefore, the micro-credential is not just another passing educational fad, as it brings into question much bigger issues concerning employability, the changing nature of work and new models of life-long learning.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

micro-credentials; literature review; higher education; employability; life-long learning

### PALABRAS CLAVE

microcredenciales; revisión bibliográfica; educación superior; empleabilidad; aprendizaje permanente

85% HE

Table 6. Distribution of publications by focus or sector.

Sector	All publications		Highly relevant	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Higher education	126	85.1	42	93.3
Vocational and further education and training	42	28.4	12	26.7
Industry/corporate	26	17.6	15	33.3
MOOC sector	15	10.1	6	13.3
Community organization	2	1.4	1	2.2
K-12 schools	8	5.4	0	0
Employers (i.e., recruitment, training, etc.)	15	10.1	9	20.0
Employees (i.e., CPD, career benefits, etc.)	15	10.1	7	15.6
Societal (i.e., future private and public benefits)	11	7.4	8	17.8
Cross-sector	8	5.4	7	15.6
Other	1	0.7	0	0.0

Table 7. Drivers and attractors for micro-credentials.

Type	All publications		Highly relevant	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Increase employability	94	63.5	38	84.4
Support CPD and workplace training	88	59.5	28	62.2
Increase flexibility for learning	80	54.1	34	75.6
Close skills gaps in response to changing nature of work	74	50.0	32	71.1
Promote lifelong learning	71	48.0	30	66.7
Develop twenty-first-century transversal skills	50	33.8	23	51.1
Develop a new twenty-first-century credential ecology	35	23.6	22	48.9
Increase access and pathways to formal education	30	20.3	17	37.8
Support new models of pedagogy	27	18.2	12	26.7
Respond to COVID crisis	23	15.5	14	31.1
Reflects neo-liberal market forces	22	14.9	5	11.1
Test innovations and trigger changes	13	8.8	6	13.3
Reduce costs of education and training	12	8.1	5	11.1
Increase equity for under-represented groups	12	8.1	6	13.3
Promote major education system reform	10	6.8	4	8.9
Increase institution revenue and reputation	6	4.1	3	6.7
Promote sustainable development goals	5	3.4	4	8.9
Respond to changing demographics	3	2.0	3	6.7

# A Complex Ecosystem With Many Diverse Habitats

- 1** | **The ecosystem metaphor**
- 2** | **External ecosystem for the QA of micro-credentials**
- 3** | **Institutional ecosystem for the QA of micro-credentials**



# Before we start...



## Micro-credential Observatory

The NIDL's Micro-credentials Observatory provides a regularly updated collection of major reports, policy initiatives and research related publications on the growth, development and impact of micro-credentials in higher education and lifelong learning more generally.

- [NIDL Activities](#)
- [NIDL Research](#)
- [Major Policy Initiatives](#)
- [National & International Reports](#)
- [Useful Journal Articles](#)
- [Events, Conferences and Webinars](#)

### NIDL Quicklinks

[Research Outputs](#)

[Research Projects](#)

[Research Links](#)

[Resource Bank](#)

[Micro-credentials](#)

<https://www.dcu.ie/nidl/micro-credential-observatory>



# 1. The Ecosystem Metaphor





# 1. The Ecosystem Metaphor

THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE

## Universities must change or lose their place to alternative education providers: OECD education chief



**Sandra Davie**  
Senior Education Correspondent

PUBLISHED 30 JAN 2022, 8:00 PM SGT

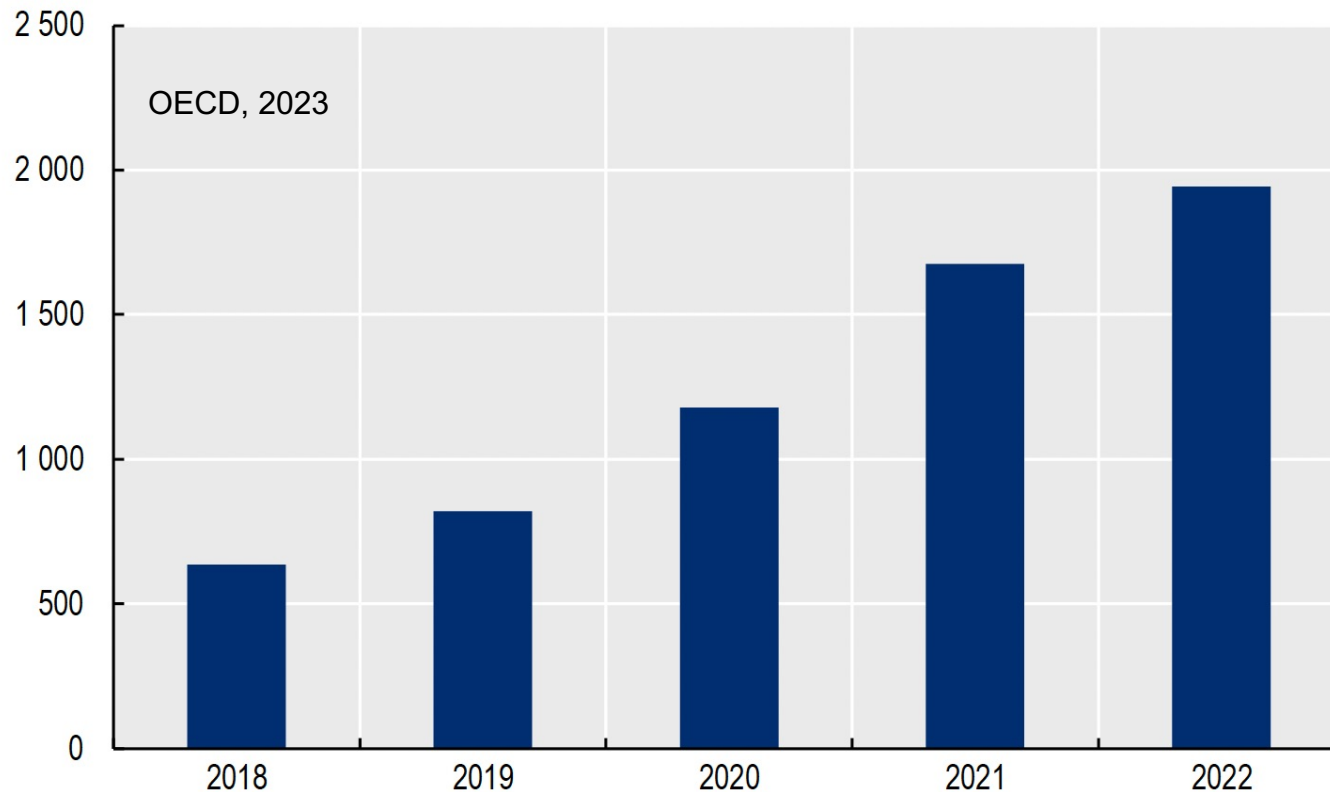


In the third of a four-part series on [the changing role of universities](#), OECD's education chief Andreas Schleicher talks to The Straits Times' senior education correspondent Sandra Davie on how universities have to evolve to stay relevant.

For some time now, people have been questioning the value of universities. The challenge became more robust in the last two years as the Covid-19 pandemic hit and universities began to deliver their programmes online, said a global education expert.

# 1. The Ecosystem Metaphor

Figure 1. The number of micro-credentials offered on six major learning platforms (2018-2022)



Note: The figure shows the number of micro-credentials offered on Coursera (MasterTracks, Professional Certificates, Specializations and University Certificates), edX (MicroBachelors, MicroMasters, Professional Certificates, Professional Education and XSeries), FutureLearn (Academic Certificates, ExpertTracks, Micro-credentials and Programs), Kadenze (Programs) and Udacity (Nanodegrees).

Source: (Shah, 2021<sup>[4]</sup>; Shah, 2022<sup>[5]</sup>)



## Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability: Uses and Possibilities

Figure 2. Examples of context in which micro-credentials are expected to play a role

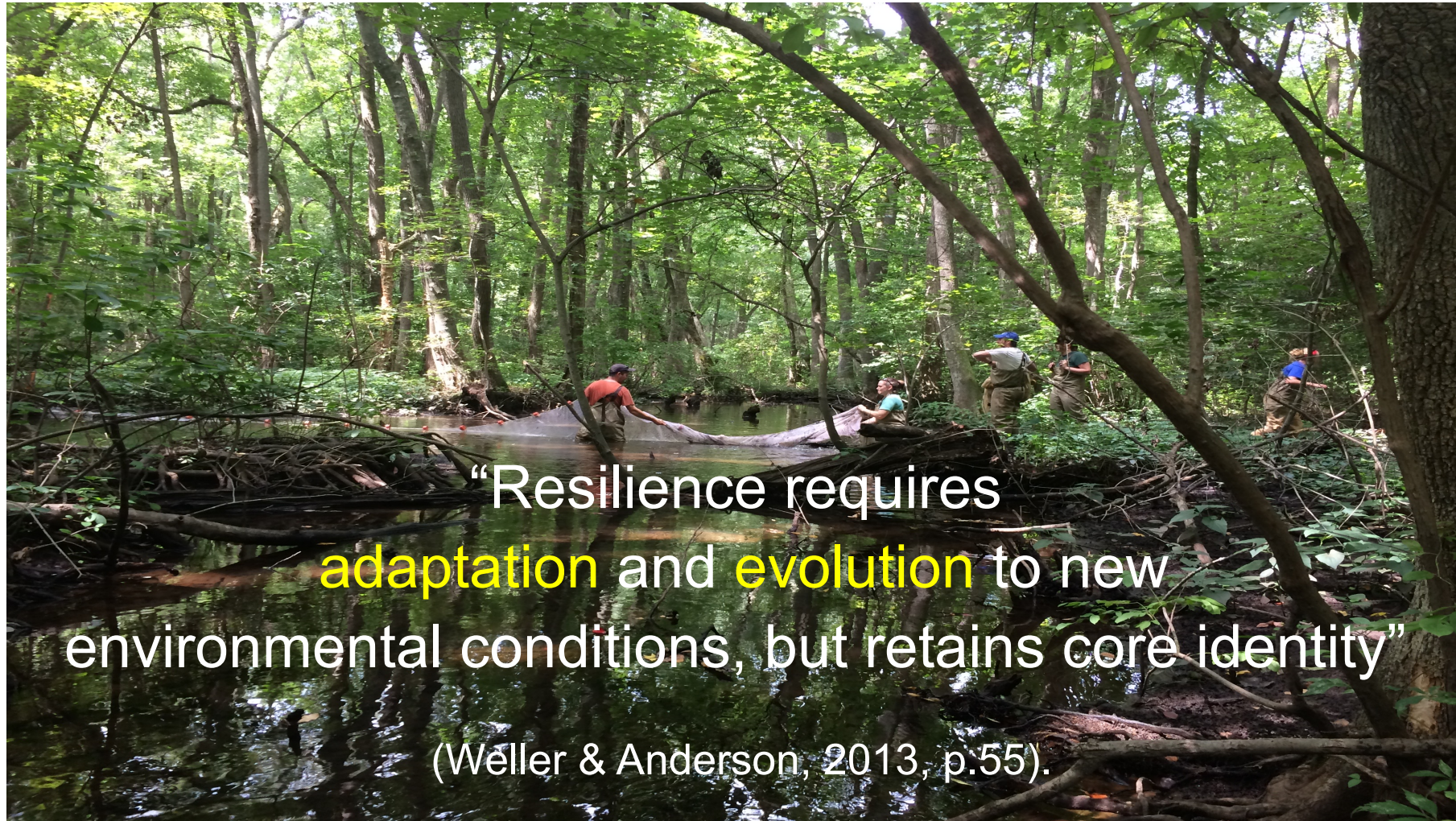
- Upskilling and reskilling
- Employability
- Lifelong Learning
- More flexible, learner-centred education
- Access to and completion of education and training
- Student international mobility
- Social inclusion
- Active citizenship and well-being



[https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability\\_9c4b7b68-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability_9c4b7b68-en)



# 1. The Ecosystem Metaphor



“Resilience requires  
**adaptation** and **evolution** to new  
environmental conditions, but retains core identity”

(Weller & Anderson, 2013, p.55).



# 1. The Ecosystem Metaphor





# 1. The Ecosystem Metaphor





## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

# Employers value microcredentials but don't know how to assess their quality

Published Feb. 23, 2023



Natalie Schwartz  
Editor



<https://upcea.edu/employers-are-all-in-on-microcredentials-survey-shows-inside-higher-ed/>

### Survey of 510 US employers

- Although a majority of surveyed employers say they value alternative credentials, many also harbor concerns over assessing the quality of education and understanding the skills and competencies they represent.
- That's according to a recent survey of 510 employers from the University Professional and Continuing Education Association, also known as UPCEA, and Collegis Education, a technology services provider for colleges.
- Despite their concerns, 23% of respondents said the greatest benefit alternative credentials provide is giving workers real-world experience. Also, 16% of respondents said alternative credentials help employees develop specialized skills and 13% said they improve performance.





## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

HOLONIQ. GLOBAL IMPACT INTELLIGENCE

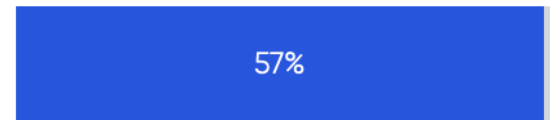
Recognition and quality assurance constraints the top barrier, although less so in 2023, and now more concern regarding basic understanding.

The top barrier to the adoption of micro-credentials at scale is:



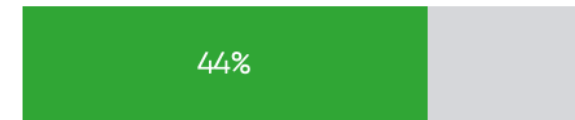
Constraints in the recognition and quality assurance of micro-credentials

2021 Survey



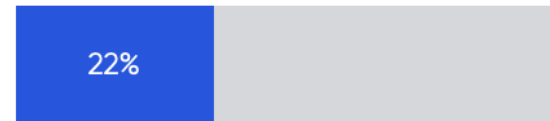
57%

2023 Survey



44%

Lack of understanding of what micro-credentials are

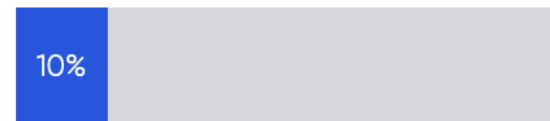


22%

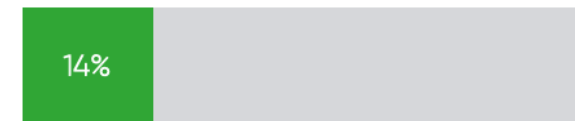


31%

Complexity of micro-credential offerings

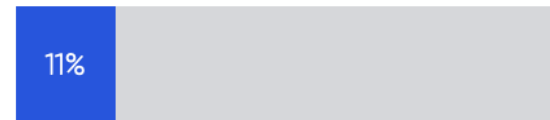


10%

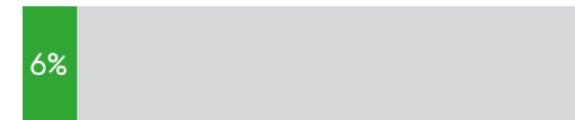


14%

Lack of trust in some micro-credentials



11%



6%

Source: HolonIQ, March 2023. n = 389 across 2021 and 2023 surveys.

## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

(How) do the quality assurance principles apply to micro-credentials?



OECD Education Working Papers No. 281

Digital higher education:  
Emerging quality standards,  
practices and supports

François Staring,  
Mark Brown,  
Paul Bacsich,  
Dirk Ifenthaler

[https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/digital-higher-education\\_f622f257-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/digital-higher-education_f622f257-en)

Table 5. Key principles for the quality assurance of digital higher education

PLAN & ADJUST: Institutional strategy, quality culture and infrastructure for digital teaching and learning	
<b>Description</b>	The institution has clear objectives in all its areas of activity, as well as clear policies and processes for QA and development. These are developed with the participation of the relevant stakeholder groups, set out in writing and communicated transparently. Quality-related decisions are evidence-based, recorded in writing and communicated clearly. The implementation of measures takes place in dialogue with the departments involved and is discussed as part of follow-ups. The results flow into the revision of goals, principles and processes and the "Plan-Do-Check-Adjust" cycle begins again.
<b>Principles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Vision, mission and strategy for digitalisation and innovation</li><li>2. Organisational quality culture centred on digitalisation, innovation and collaboration</li><li>3. Digital education infrastructure</li></ol>
IMPLEMENT: Implementation of quality assurance processes and supports for digital teaching and learning	
<b>Description</b>	Whenever possible, QA and development processes are carried out on a decentralised basis, by the directly responsible unit. The university supports the QA and development processes centrally, through professional services and the provision of the necessary resources.
<b>Principles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Digital course content, design, delivery and assessment</li><li>5. Supporting and incentivising staff professional development</li><li>6. Preparing and supporting students for digital learning</li></ol>
MONITOR: Feedback and performance monitoring of digital teaching and learning quality	
<b>Description</b>	Information obtained through the QA and development processes is communicated to relevant stakeholders at all university levels within the framework of feedback loops. In addition to the quality of the services provided, the institution regularly reviews its QA and development system based on qualitative and quantitative evidence, external reviews, and/or benchmarking.
<b>Principles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Monitoring the quality of digital teaching and learning</li><li>8. Strengthening feedback and monitoring practices</li></ol>

OECD, 2022



## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

### 1 No specific quality assurance standards for micro-credentials



In **25+ countries**, we found no national framework, standards or guidelines for micro-credentials. In many cases, however, there is evidence of a plan or commitment in the future to integrating quality assurance standards for micro-credentials within existing requirements.

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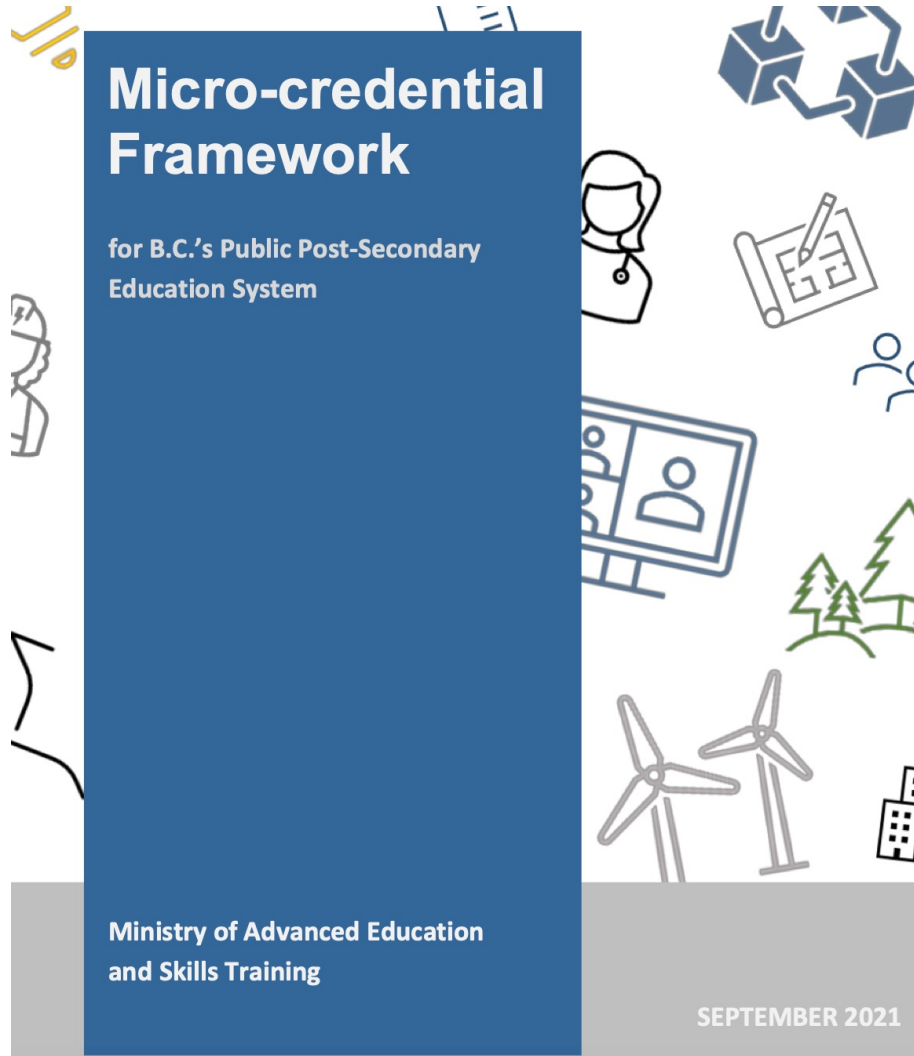
### 2 Common standards and quality assurance processes apply for micro-credentials



In **Australia, Canada (x3), United Kingdom, Estonia, Spain (x2)** and **The Netherlands** we found common standards already apply for micro-credentials, and tangible evidence of a decision to extend the application of existing standards for their quality assurance.



## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For Micro-credential Development and Implementation in  
B.C.'s Public Post-Secondary Education System

#### ACCESS:

Micro-credentials should increase access to post-secondary education and be accessible to a range of potential learners. They should provide flexibility, reduce barriers and increase opportunities for employment and life-long learning. Tuition and fees should align with the duration, skill level, learners targeted and expected outcomes of a micro-credential.



#### QUALITY:

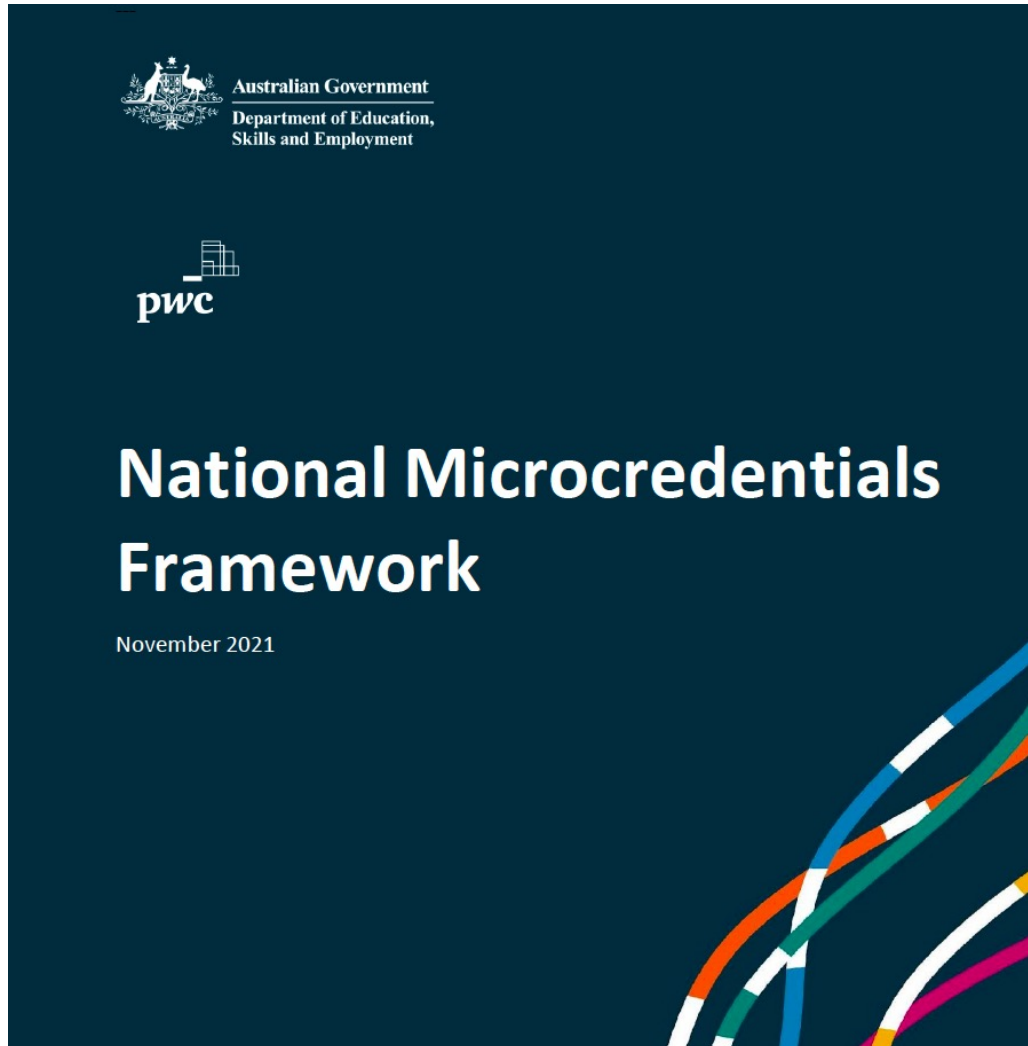
Micro-credentials will be developed and assessed through a process that assures learners of their value and facilitates recognition by employers and other post-secondary institutions.

#### Quality Assurance\*

Micro-credentials will be developed, approved and periodically reviewed, through an institutional process that aligns with existing post-secondary standards and policies, for credit and non-credit offerings, to ensure value to learners in meeting education or employment goals.

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/micro-credentials/mc\\_framework.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/micro-credentials/mc_framework.pdf)

## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



### 5.6 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance protects the integrity of the microcredentials ecosystem, by giving employers and recognising bodies confidence in the microcredentials being delivered by an issuing authority, and by protecting learners. While most microcredentials are unaccredited, a strong feature of stakeholder consultations is the need to ensure this framework is minimalist.

Quality assurance measures are important and have been captured in various parts of this framework - the requirement for clearly stipulated learning outcomes in 5.1, evidence of attainment in 5.2, and critical information requirements (such as issuing institution, provider or CRICOS codes, relevant regulator, and approach to academic integrity and assessment) in Section 4.

Microcredentials should be reviewed regularly (and as appropriate) by providers to ensure that microcredentials remain relevant and updated. Providers are encouraged to stipulate quality assurance processes on the Marketplace.

**5.6.1. Where an issuing authority has not applied a regulated standard (i.e. the standards and academic integrity processes applied to award courses or components within a training package) to a microcredential, they must provide a statement of assurance of quality on the Marketplace - e.g. a profile of the provider/ institution, a description of the quality assurance processes undertaken, and the process for review/ updating the microcredential.**



## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

Germany



Microcredentials at universities - strategic development and quality assurance

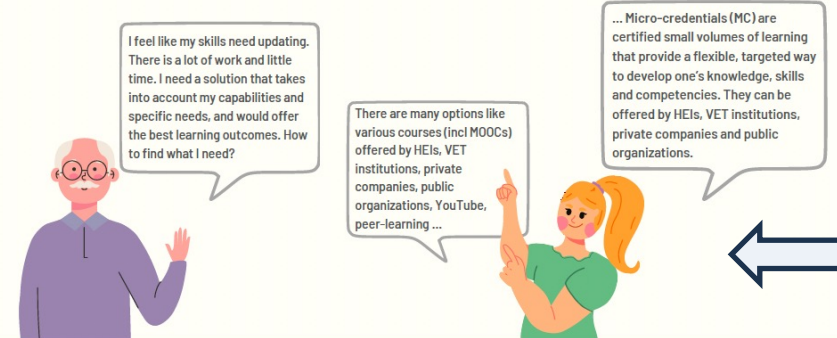
Results of the Microcredentials Future Workshop

Spain



ANECA presents a framework document for quality assurance of microcredentials in the Spanish University System

### QA of MICRO-CREDENTIALS - the Estonian touch



Estonia

#### HOW IS THE QUALITY OF MCs ASSURED?

##### AGENCY

Assessing the formal and non-formal education institutions in a flexible, fair, and comparable way. Since 2018, Estonian Quality Agency for Education has assessed the quality of continuing education in more than 100 non-formal education institutions.

##### EQA of MC provided by formal education institutions

- The institution can offer micro-credentials if it has gained the right to conduct studies in that study programme group at the level of higher education.
- The quality is safeguarded via regular EQA of institutions (higher education) or study programme groups (VET).

##### EQA of MC provided by non-formal institutions

- The institution requesting the right to offer MCs must undergo quality assessment in the study programme group that follows the requirements of ESG principles.
- Regular external review at least once in 5 years.

##### REGISTER OF MCs

Institutions offering MCs must register

## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

### 1 No specific quality assurance standards for micro-credentials



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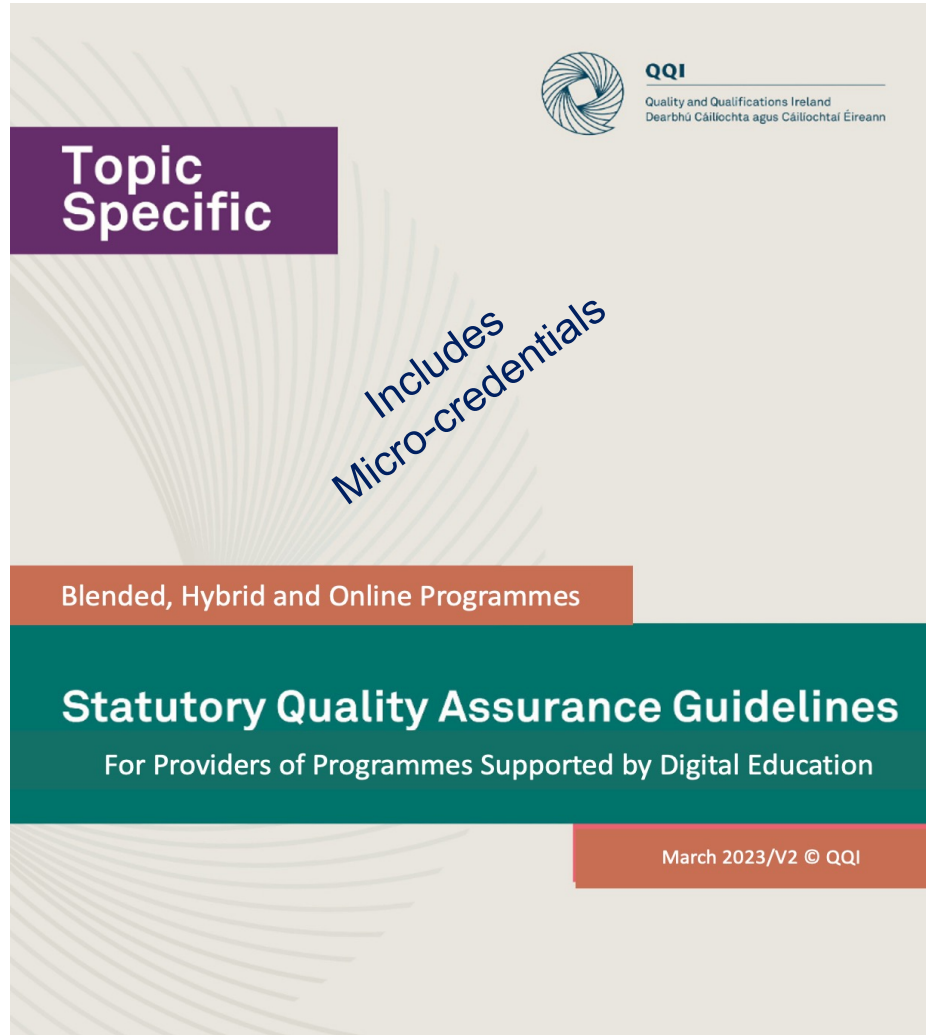
### 3 Specific guidelines and quality assurance processes developed for micro-credentials



In **New Zealand, Malaysia** and **Ireland** we identified a framework or specific standards or guidelines for micro-credentials to address particular issues related to their quality assurance.



## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



### Specific QA issues for online [MCs]

#### Organisational context

- Business continuity
- Access to IT infrastructure
- Learners outside of country

#### Programme context

- Online teaching experience
- Training and professional development
- Synchronous vs asynchronous delivery

#### Learner context

- Learner readiness
- Access to online resources
- Equivalency of learning support

## 2. External Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



### DESIGNING A VOLUNTARY INSPECTION SCHEME FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS

#### Standards and Indicators

- Management, Staffing and Administration
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Participant support
- Facilities
- Premises and facilities in the case of face-to-face delivery

# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

**eCampusOntario**  
**Micro-credentials Portal**

FR

## Micro-Credential Filters

Clear Filters ×

Industries

Areas of Focus

Start Date

Deliveries ←

Languages

Duration

- Hybrid (115)
- In person (77)
- Online (1,459)

# Fast, affordable, flexible training opportunities.

Find a micro-credential and unlock your potential with in-demand skills employers need. Your future starts with a search.

Topic, industry, institution... **SEARCH**

or browse all **1795** micro-credentials from institutions across Ontario. >

**88% Online**

<https://microlearnontario.ca> 20/03/2023

### 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

The screenshot displays the 'microcredseeker' website. At the top left is the logo, and at the top right is a 'Compare Courses' button. The main heading reads 'The new way to get ahead', followed by a sub-heading: 'Browse and compare microcredentials available in Australia from tertiary education and training providers.' Below this is a search bar with the text 'Search for microcredentials' and a 'Search' button. To the right, a woman is shown holding a box. A filter menu for 'Delivery mode' is open, showing three options: 'Online' (343), 'On campus' (11), and 'Multi-modal' (12). At the bottom, the text '93% Online' is displayed, along with the URL 'https://www.microcredseeker.edu.au' and the date '20/03/2023'.

**microcred**  
seeker

Compare Courses

## The new way to get ahead

Browse and compare microcredentials available in Australia from tertiary education and training providers.

Search for microcredentials Search

343  
11  
12

**Delivery mode** ⓘ

- Online
- On campus
- Multi-modal

93% Online

<https://www.microcredseeker.edu.au> 20/03/2023



# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



Microcredentials ▾ Educators ▾ About ▾ Resources ▾

Compare Courses

Active Filters

Clear all

Showing 1 - 10 of 93 courses

Sort by Relevancy

Industry

Education & Training X

Refine courses

Level >

Credit ⓘ >

Start date ⓘ >

Industry >

Duration >

Expert



Personal Effectiveness

The University of Melbourne

Gain strategies to better manage your own time and resources to lead others more effectively.

Start date 29 May 2023

Duration 4 Weeks

Price \$1350 including GST

✓ Credit may be available

Stackable with other microcredentials

Competent



Online Marketing Strategies in Business

CQUniversity Australia

Explore and evaluate the effectiveness of online marketing strategies.

Start date Flexible

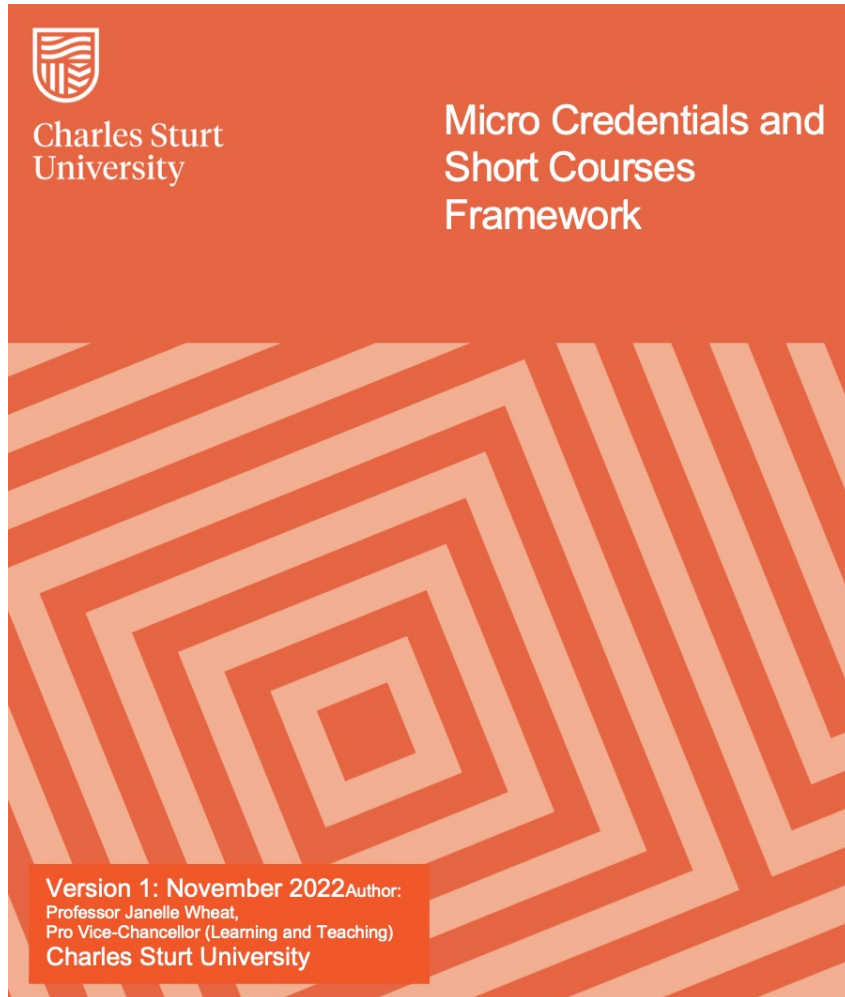
Duration 50 Hours

Price \$450 including GST





# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



[https://cdn.csu.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/4137924/Micro-Credential-Framework.pdf](https://cdn.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/4137924/Micro-Credential-Framework.pdf)

## Types of micro credentials and short courses

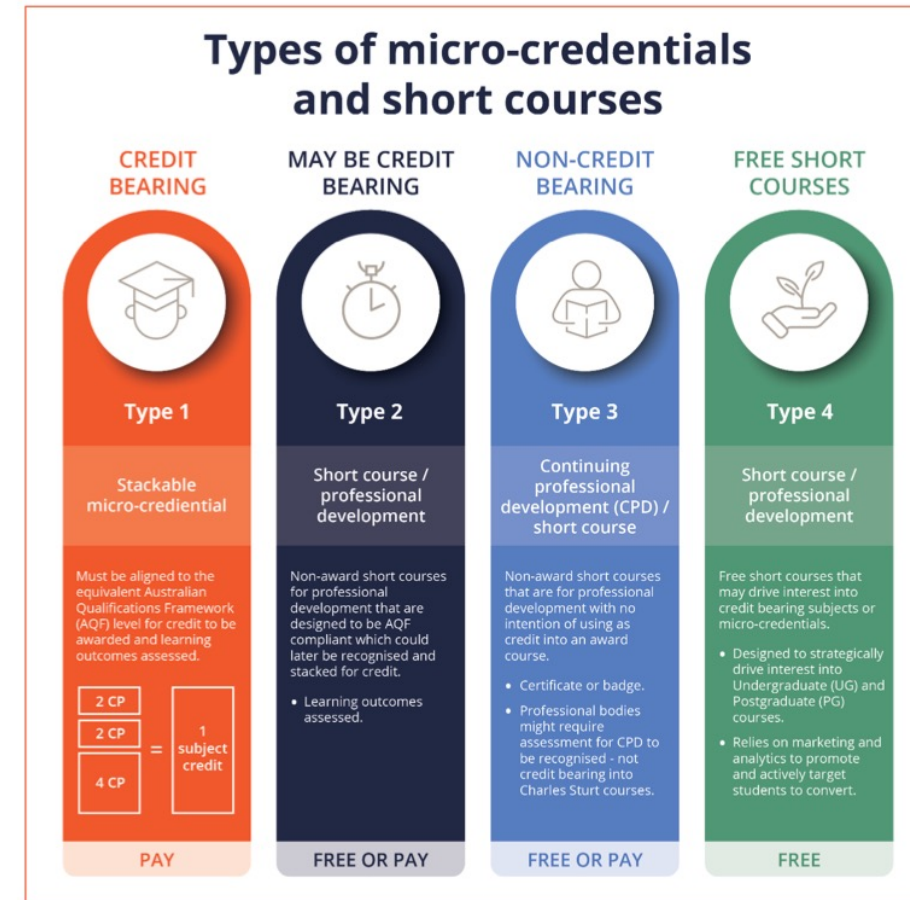


Figure 1. Types of micro credentials and short courses offered at Charles Sturt

# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

The screenshot shows the MicroCreds website interface. At the top left is the 'MICROCREDS' logo. To its right is a navigation menu with 'EXPLORE' and a dropdown arrow. Further right is a search bar with the text 'SEARCH FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS' and a magnifying glass icon. On the far right of the top navigation are links for 'FOR EMPLOYERS' and 'ABOUT U...'. Below the navigation is a large heading 'MICROCREDS' with a sub-heading '278 MICROCREDS' circled in blue. To the right of this heading is a statistics box with a blue border containing the text: 'Online = 150', 'On-campus = 0', 'Blended = 95', and 'Hybrid = 0'. A bracket on the right side of this box points to the date '30/05/2023' and the URL 'https://microcreds.ie/'. Below the statistics is a 'FILTER BY' section with several dropdown menus: 'SUBJECT AREA', 'TOPICS', 'DELIVERY MODE', 'COURSE DURATION', 'UNIVERSITY', and 'SORT BY'. To the right of these filters is a pink 'CLEAR ALL' button and a grid icon.



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

This module will provide an understanding of the principles of accident investigation and the...



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

## ADVANCED ANIMAL NUTRITION

The provision of feed is by far the greatest cost of modern animal production. It is important, therefore, to ...



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

## ADVANCED ASSESSMENT IN RESPIRATORY NURSING

This module provides the student with the opportunity to develop their competence and expertise in respiratory nursing...



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

## ADVANCED DATA PROGRAMMING WITH R

This comprehensive micro-credential covers advanced use of R and Rstudio, following on from the Data Programmin...

# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials

The screenshot shows the MicroCreds website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'MICROCRED' on the left, 'EXPLORE' with a dropdown arrow, a search bar containing 'SEARCH FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS', and 'FOR EMPLOYERS' and 'ABOUT' on the right. Below the navigation, the main heading is 'MICROCRED' with '249 MICROCREDS' underneath. A 'FILTER BY' section contains several dropdown menus: 'SUBJECT AREA', 'TOPICS', 'DELIVERY MODE', 'COURSE DURATION', 'UNIVERSITY', and 'SORT BY', along with a 'CLEAR ALL' button. A '100% Online' filter is selected, showing a list of courses with images and titles: 'UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN - ADVANCED ANIMAL NUTRITION', 'UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK - ADVANCED ASSESSMENT IN RESPIRATORY NURSING', 'UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN - ADVANCED DATA PROGRAMMING WITH R', and 'UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK - ADVANCED NEGOTIATION SKILLS'.

The screenshot shows the Micro-credentials Portal website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'Micro-credentials Portal' logo, a language selector set to 'FR', and 'Micro-Credential Filters'. Below the navigation, there is a large banner with the text 'Fast, affordable, flexible training opportunities.' and a sub-headline 'Find a micro-credential and unlock your potential with in-demand skills employers need. Your future starts with a search.' A search bar contains the text 'Topic, industry, institution...' and a 'SEARCH' button. Below the search bar, it says 'or browse all 1795 micro-credentials from institutions across Ontario.' To the right, there is a 'Micro-Credential Filters' sidebar with options: 'Clear Filters x', 'Industries', 'Areas of Focus', 'Start Date', 'Deliveries' (highlighted with a yellow arrow), 'Languages', and 'Duration'. Under 'Duration', there are three options: 'Hybrid (115)', 'In person (77)', and 'Online (1,459)' (circled in blue). A woman is shown smiling and looking at a laptop displaying '88% Online'. The URL 'https://microlearnontario.ca' and the date '20/03/2023' are visible at the bottom.

The screenshot shows the microcred seeker website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'microcred seeker' logo and a 'Compare Courses' button. Below the navigation, there is a large banner with the text 'The new way to get ahead' and a sub-headline 'Browse and compare microcredentials available in Australia from tertiary education and training providers.' A search bar contains the text 'Search for microcredentials' and a 'Search' button. To the right, there is a woman smiling and carrying a bag.

## Missing in the ecosystem...

- Careers guidance
- Course quality rating
- Details on QA processes
- Learner support information
- Employability outcomes data
- Evidence of a connected system



# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



**National College of Ireland**

## Microcredentials

Short programmes that give you an in-depth understanding of a key skill area in a focused way.



BITE-SIZED. ACCREDITED. STACKABLE. FUTURE-FOCUSED.

# Micro-Credentials

**Bite-sized and future-focused**



## Micro-credentials

School of Food Science and Environmental Health Micro-credentials



Springboard+ is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Ana chomhoibristú ag an Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the European Union

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS



HOME COURSES ABOUT FAQ HOW TO APPLY BLOG REPORTS CONTACT LOGIN REGISTER

**8,291 PLACES**

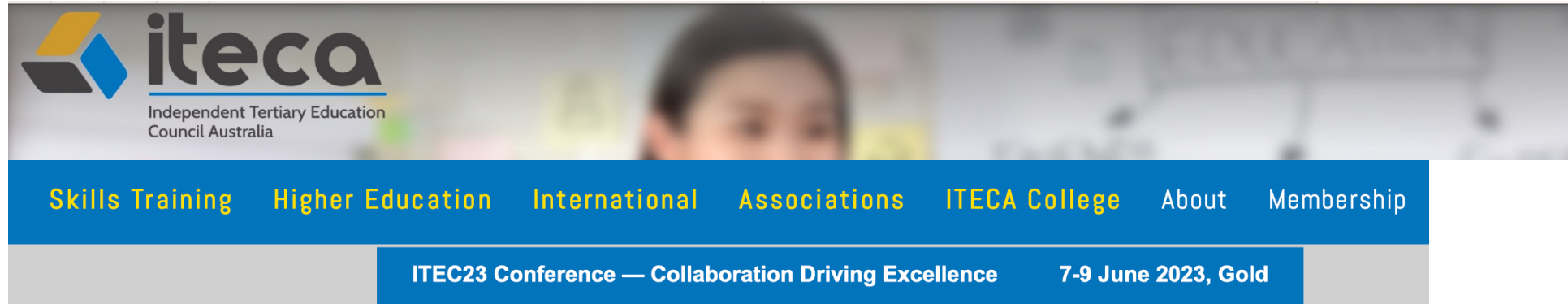
**252 COURSES**

**25 PROVIDERS**

**SEARCH COURSES**

**AM I ELIGIBLE**

# 3. Institutional Ecosystem for the QA of Micro-credentials



## Turn Off The Microcredentials Marketplace

ITECA MEMBER-DRIVEN ADVOCACY



Article Date —

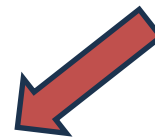
14 June 2023

Education Sector/s —

Higher Education

Summary —

Despite the Microcredentials Marketplace being described as a colossal waste of money, another \$1 million has been committed by the Australian Government for an online resource that **doesn't give students good advice on** their full range of study options. The [Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia](#) (ITECA) has advised the Australian Government that this wasteful spending should stop and that a new online platform should be created that allows school leavers and existing workers to assess options across the skills training and higher education systems. This approach would bring together the three unconnected platforms that the Australian Government current spends taxpayers' money on.



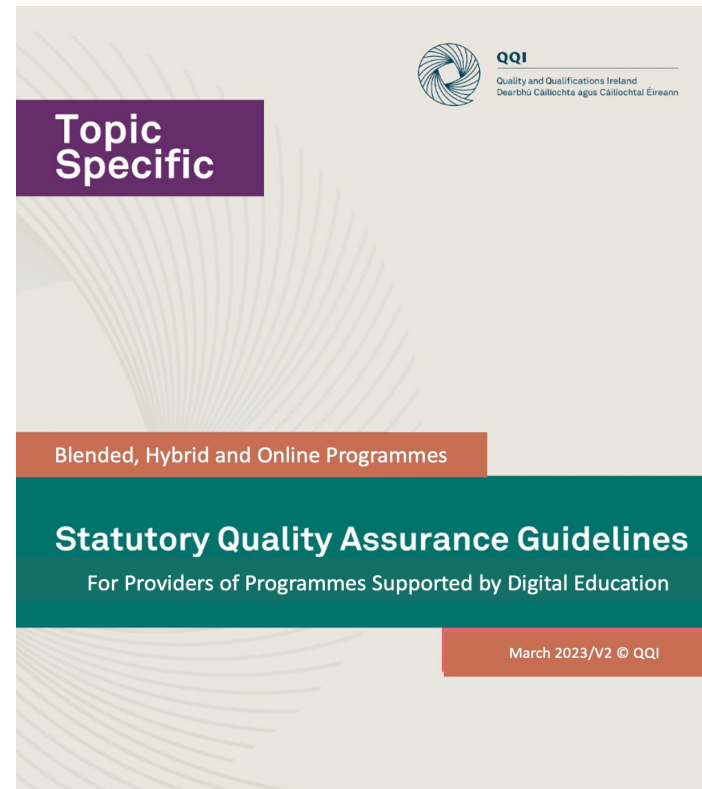
# Final Remarks

## EUROPEAN QUALITY STANDARDS & GUIDELINES



New QA considerations?

## COUNTRY SPECIFIC QUALITY GUIDELINES & FRAMEWORKS



Enabling or Constraining?

## GUIDES & BENCHMARKING TOOLS FOR ENHANCING QUALITY



Fostering Quality Conversations!



# Final Remarks

## A Strategic Institutional Response to Micro-Credentials: Key Questions for Educational Leaders

### ABSTRACT

This article responds to the rise of the micro-credential movement. It evidences the heightened attention politicians, policy-makers and educational leaders are giving to micro-credentials by framing the discussion in several recent high-level policy developments, an exponential growth in the number of academic publications and the increasing level of interest shown by popular media. It follows that micro-credentials appear to be high on the change agenda for many higher education institutions (HEIs), especially in the post-COVID-19 environment.

However, the emergence of the micro-credential raises several crucial questions for educational leaders, set against fear of missing out. Importantly, the paper identifies a significant gap in the literature regarding leadership and strategic institutional responses to micro-credentials. Indeed, there is a dearth of literature. Leadership is crucial to the success of any educational change or innovation, so five key questions are presented for institutional leaders. They challenge institutions to make strategic decisions around how they engage with and position micro-credentials. If micro-credentials are part of an HEI's change agenda, then serious consideration needs to be given to the type of leadership and internal structures required to develop and execute a successful micro-credential strategy. Consideration must also be given to fit-for-purpose business models and how to mitigate potential risks. We hope to bring these strategic questions to the table as institutions plan, envision and develop their micro-credential strategies.

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### KEYWORDS:

Micro-credentials; Higher Education Leadership; Educational Change Management

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<https://jime.open.ac.uk/>

COLLECTION:  
MICROCREDENTIALS

ARTICLE



# Thank you



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