THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER
A CHANGING QUALIFICATIONS LANDSCAPE
Microcredentials are increasingly being viewed as a new and more flexible way of recognising knowledge, skills and competences. Giving learners and employers the possibility to collect and certify competences of learning not confined to specific modules, microcredentials can act as building blocks facilitating lifelong and flexible learning. However, it is not always clear whether microcredentials represent something genuinely new and innovative. Looking at the certification and qualification landscape in general, box-and-square credentials – often linked to shorter learning experiences – already play an important role in many parts of the labour market (for example those offered by private companies, international organisations or public bodies).

Recent research carried out on microcredentials has focused on their increasing use in vocational and professional education and training, placing emphasis on their role outside formal education and training, notably in lifelong education and training. While this perspective is important and relevant, Cedefop’s research aims to examine their potential role in vocational and professional education and training (VET). The conference aims to initiate a discussion on the characteristics and the potential roles that might be played by microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employer-supported education and training, and will explore the issue of microcredentials’ broader uptake and function.

The first day will also include three break-out sessions:

• break-out session 1 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 2 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 3 will address the role of microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.

FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER
MICROCREDENTIALS AT NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS
The second day of the conference will offer participants an opportunity to discuss various topics related to microcredentials in the context of national, European and international levels. Microcredentials are increasingly being viewed as independent qualifications and certificates. Giving learners and employers the possibility to collect and certify competences of learning not confined to specific modules, microcredentials can act as building blocks facilitating lifelong and flexible learning. However, it is not always clear whether microcredentials represent something genuinely new and innovative. Looking at the certification and qualification landscape in general, box-and-square credentials – often linked to shorter learning experiences – already play an important role in many parts of the labour market (for example those offered by private companies, international organisations or public bodies).

Recent research carried out on microcredentials has focused on their increasing use in vocational and professional education and training, placing emphasis on their role outside formal education and training, notably in lifelong education and training. While this perspective is important and relevant, Cedefop’s research aims to examine their potential role in vocational and professional education and training (VET). The conference aims to initiate a discussion on the characteristics and the potential roles that might be played by microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.

The second day of the conference will also include three break-out sessions:

• break-out session 1 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 2 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 3 will address the role of microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.

FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER
MICROCREDENTIALS AT NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS
The second day of the conference will offer participants an opportunity to discuss various topics related to microcredentials in the context of national, European and international levels. Microcredentials are increasingly being viewed as independent qualifications and certificates. Giving learners and employers the possibility to collect and certify competences of learning not confined to specific modules, microcredentials can act as building blocks facilitating lifelong and flexible learning. However, it is not always clear whether microcredentials represent something genuinely new and innovative. Looking at the certification and qualification landscape in general, box-and-square credentials – often linked to shorter learning experiences – already play an important role in many parts of the labour market (for example those offered by private companies, international organisations or public bodies).

Recent research carried out on microcredentials has focused on their increasing use in vocational and professional education and training, placing emphasis on their role outside formal education and training, notably in lifelong education and training. While this perspective is important and relevant, Cedefop’s research aims to examine their potential role in vocational and professional education and training (VET). The conference aims to initiate a discussion on the characteristics and the potential roles that might be played by microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.

The second day of the conference will also include three break-out sessions:

• break-out session 1 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 2 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 3 will address the role of microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.

FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER
MICROCREDENTIALS AT NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS
The second day of the conference will offer participants an opportunity to discuss various topics related to microcredentials in the context of national, European and international levels. Microcredentials are increasingly being viewed as independent qualifications and certificates. Giving learners and employers the possibility to collect and certify competences of learning not confined to specific modules, microcredentials can act as building blocks facilitating lifelong and flexible learning. However, it is not always clear whether microcredentials represent something genuinely new and innovative. Looking at the certification and qualification landscape in general, box-and-square credentials – often linked to shorter learning experiences – already play an important role in many parts of the labour market (for example those offered by private companies, international organisations or public bodies).

Recent research carried out on microcredentials has focused on their increasing use in vocational and professional education and training, placing emphasis on their role outside formal education and training, notably in lifelong education and training. While this perspective is important and relevant, Cedefop’s research aims to examine their potential role in vocational and professional education and training (VET). The conference aims to initiate a discussion on the characteristics and the potential roles that might be played by microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.

The second day of the conference will also include three break-out sessions:

• break-out session 1 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 2 will look into the ways microcredentials interact with existing qualification and certification systems;
• break-out session 3 will address the role of microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education and training.
Conference on microcredentials for labour market education and training
25 and 26 November 2021
Virtual event
$microcredentialslab.labourmarket

Programme

DAY ONE – THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2021
(indicated times are CET)

9.00-9.30 Registration (technical check)

9.30-9.45 Welcome and introduction to the conference
Chair: Loukas Zahilas, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop
• Participant welcome
• Context and objectives of the conference
• Housekeeping rules

Opening address
Ugur Sagol, European Director, Cedefop

9.45-10.30 Session 1. Microcredentials for labour market education and training
Presentation of Cedefop’s Microcredential for labour market education and training project:
Jane Bjendjadić and Anastasia Pouliou, Experts, Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop
Jutta Kiskiytne, PPMI
QA in Cedefop’s project and findings

10.30-11.30 Session 2. Microcredentials and the political context
• Dhita Rosdeva, Head of Unit – Vocational Education and Training, Directorate B
Skills and Jobs, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission
• Robert Pfanner, Senior Advisor, The Educational Research Institute, Poland
• Agnes Roman, Advisor, European Trade Union Confederation

Open discussion – Brief summary of the day
– What is the added value of microcredential for individuals and employers?
– How can Member States increase learning opportunities for individuals, while supporting the preparedness of microcredential providers and enhancing individual ways and social opportunities for their citizens?
– How can coherent development of microcredentials be ensured? What level of regulation (if any) should be applied?
10-minute break

11.40-11.45 Guidelines for break-out sessions
Anastasia Pouliou, Expert, Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop

11.45-13.15 Parallel Session 1. The role of microcredentials in EU labour-market related education and training
(30-minute presentation followed by 60-minute discussion)
Chair: Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop

Introduction to the topic:
- Patrick Werquin, PPMI, Research leader and national researcher, France
- Bodil Husted, VIA University college, Denmark
Rapporteurs: Jutta Kiskiytne, PPMI

Key topics:
- Are microcredentials related to a genuine change in the way we recognize skills, abilities and competences?
- Are they the way to define better and standardize the already existing offer?
- What rules of microcredentials are in play in the labour market? What are their current strengths and weaknesses and how could they be improved?

11.45-13.15 Parallel Session 2. Interaction of microcredentials with existing qualification and certification systems
(30-minute presentation followed by 60-minute discussion)
Chair: Jens Bjendjadić, Cedefop

Introduction to the topic:
- Anastasia Pouliou, Expert, Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop
- Jürgen Siebel, Executive Director, Cedefop

Key topics:
- How can microcredentials interact with formal qualifications, should they do so, and who decides on their requirements at national level?
- Can partial qualifications and module certificates be considered microcredentials?
- Why should an end-user be helped to identify opportunities of recognize a non-ACRED-acknowledged microcredential?

11.45-13.15 Parallel Session 3. Microcredentials and their added value for end-users
(30-minute presentation followed by 60-minute discussion)
Chair: Ingrek Piakele, Cedefop

Introduction to the topic:
- Víctor Mitrany-Potelié, Trade Union for Commerce and Trade, Denmark
- Wojciech Konety, Educational Research Institute, Poland
- Ragnhild Marenne Shep, Research leader, PPMI

Key topics:
- For end-users (individuals holding as well as education institutions or employers) to trust microcredentials, which conditions must be met to ensure portability and transferability?
- Are microcredentials related to a genuine change in the way we recognize skills, abilities and competences? Or are they a way to define better and standardize the already existing offer?
- How could microcredentials play a more targeted role in supporting ‘age-neutral’ systems for VET, strengthening the focus of up-skilling and re-skilling?

13.15-14.00 Session 4. Summary of break-out sessions and open discussion – Brief summary of the day
Chair: Loukas Zahilas, Cedefop
Programme

DAY TWO — FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2021
(indicated times are CET)

9.00-9.30
Registration (technical check)

9.30-9.40
Welcome and introduction
Anastasia Pouliou and Jens Bjørnåvold, Experts, Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop

9.40-10.30
Session 1. How can microcredentials build stronger links between vocational education and workplace requirements? Examples of cases outside Europe
Chair: Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop
Keynote speakers
• Dr Gavin Moodie, Centre for the Study of Canadian and International Higher Education, University of Toronto
• Dr Julie Reddy, Chief Executive Officer, South African Qualification Authority, South Africa
Discussant, John Hart, independent expert

10.30-11.15
Session 2. Global market of microcredentials
Professor Mark Brown, Director, National Institute for Digital Learning, Dublin City University
Dr Dominic Orr and Olena Rusnak, atingi Management and Digital Learning Advisor, GIZ/atingi, Germany
Open discussion
– How can microcredentials enable interoperability: across sectors, industries, borders, lifespans and digital systems?
– Is globalization of credentials a threat or an opportunity for national VET systems?

11.15-12.00
Session 3. Accessibility of microcredentials: what constitutes value for learners/employees and for employers?
Chair: Jens Bjørnåvold, Cedefop
Adam Gajek, Skills and Entrepreneurship Policy Advisor, Brussels
Kristel Jakobson, The European Students’ Union (ESU)

12.15-13.30
Session 4. International perspectives on microcredentials (Moderated panel discussion followed by Q&A)
Chair: Loukas Zahilas, Cedefop
Panelists
• Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Education sector, UNESCO
• Gillian Golden, Project Lead, Higher Education Policy Team, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD
• Anatolii Garmash, European Training Foundation (ETF)
Discussant, John O’Connor PhD., Head of Qualification Standards, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Ireland
Open discussion
– Are microcredentials changing the progression in learning?
– What are the implications for the recognition of learning across borders?
– Should we be seeking a common language on microcredentials? What are the benefits and limits of doing so?

13.30-13.45
Concluding remarks and end of the conference
Loukas Zahilas, Head of department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop
Anastasia Pouliou, Expert, Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop
End of Day 2

CONTACT DETAILS
Cedefop
EUROPE 123
SERVICE POST
GR – 570 01 Thermi
Greece
Phone: +(30) 2310 490 194
Email: contact@cedefop.europa.eu
Cedefop home page: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en
#Microcredentials4LabourMarket