Micro-credentials for higher education institutions

Approaches developed in the EHEA using peer support

Symposium of QUATRA – TPG A Working Group
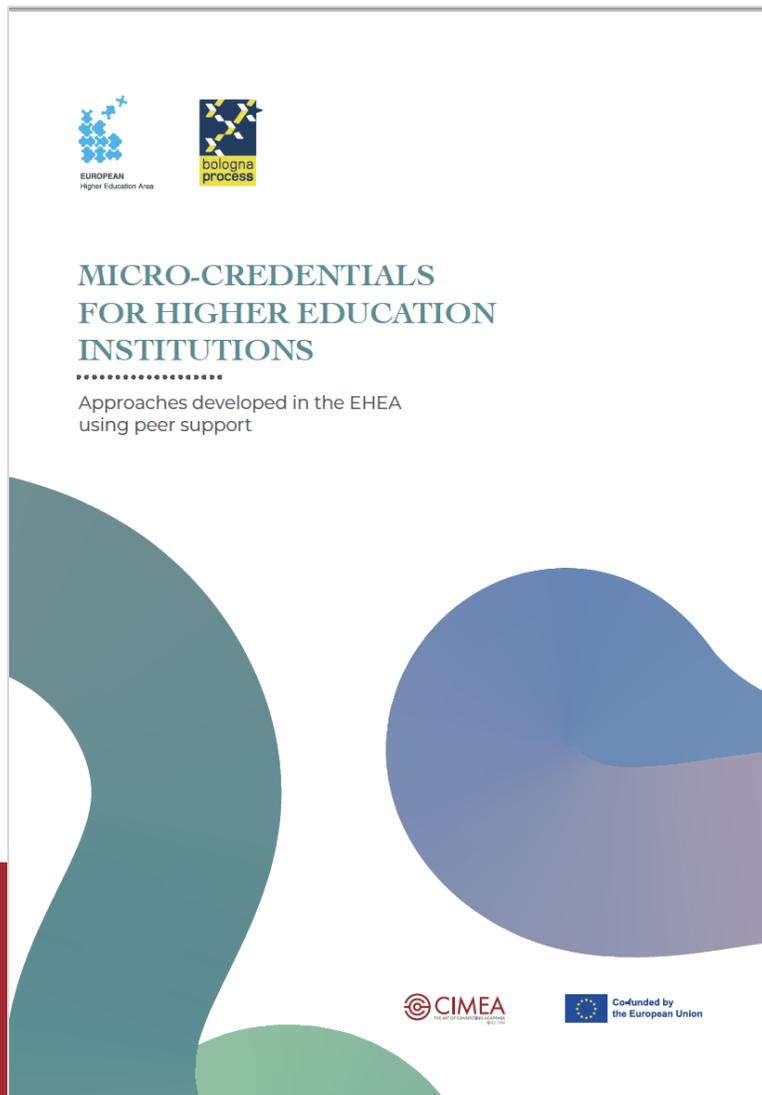17 September 2024

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MICRO-CREDENTIALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Approaches developed in the EHEA using peer support

Rome Communiqué

«Explore how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tools»

Targeted to HEIs

Hands on tool to support higher education institutions in the process of designing, implementing, awarding and recognising quality-assured micro-credentials

Joint document

Bring togheter the results of the work of the three EHEA Thematic Peer Groups

Provision and recognition of micro-credentials are two sides of the same coin

Builded on guiding questions

What is a micro-credential?

As per the [Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#), "micro-credential means **the record of the learning outcomes** that a learner has acquired following **a small volume of learning**. These learning outcomes will have been **assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria**. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific **knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs**. Micro-credentials are **owned by the learner**, can be **shared and are portable**. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are **underpinned by quality assurance** following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity"

Why offer a micro-credential?

- ✓ Attract different groups of learners

- ✓ Support students' access to study programmes

- ✓ Respond to the demand of employers for more flexible learning pathways

- ✓ Explore different study fields before applying to a programme

- ✓ Foster connections between HEIs and relevant stakeholders

- ✓ Enhance attractiveness of HEIs (QUATRA, 2023, IMINQA, 2023)

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What type of micro-credentials?

Unbundling existing programmes:

- ✓ Useful to support completion of academic degree programmes
- ✓ Teaching approach, delivery methods, learning outcomes may need to be adapted

Developing stand-alone courses:

- ✓ Agile and dynamic design process, cooperation with other providers

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What to take into consideration when defining learning outcomes?

- ✓ From the initial design to the final assessment
- ✓ Crucial to plan teaching and learning based on knowledge, skills and competences (Cedefop, 2022)
- ✓ Basis for creating learning paths and qualifications comparable in their intrinsic diversity (MICROBOL, 2022)
- ✓ Need for further cooperation with non-academic actors

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What to take into consideration to assign a QF level and define the workload?

✓ Suggested to include MC in NQF

✓ It may be difficult to ascertain to which QF level

✓ Provide clear indication to the learner

✓ No specific credit range has been set for microcredentials

(MICROBOL, 2022)

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How to build a microcredential around the learner?

- ✓ Learner-centric education approach

- ✓ Definition of the target group

- ✓ Learners' profile: students or lifelong learners

- ✓ Provide the learner with accurate information

- ✓ Collect learners' feedback to have insights for verifying the quality of learning and teaching

    (Cedefop, 2022, MICROBOL, 2022, TPG-LRC CoRE, 2024)

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How to Quality Assure micro-credentials?

Internal QA:

✓ Encompassed under HEIs regular QA activities

✓ Need to consider the unique characteristics of micro-credentials

External QA:

✓ Focus on reviewing the fitness-for-purpose of the institutional approach to micro-credentials to avoid overburdening HEIs (IMINQA, 2023)

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How to support the recognition of a micro-credential?

✓ Information provision as the key element (input/output phase)

✓ At all levels; in different format;

✓ EC Council recommendation lists the standard

Two-track approach

✓ All the standard elements are properly displayed: LRC

✓ Elements are not transparently recorded: E-valuate methodology as a support to verify robustness of information and Recognition of Prior Learning

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How can digital solutions support the portability of micro-credentials?

Key words: portability and interoperability

At the European level, initiatives aimed to support:

✓ Agreed criteria for digitalisation of data

✓ Secure, transparent and trusted data provision

✓ Platforms of credential sharing

Examples:

✓ DEQAR as an example of interoperable solution

✓ European Learning Model
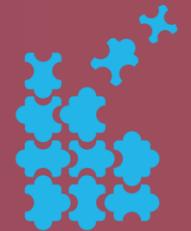
✓ European Blockchain Service Information - EBSI

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Thank you!

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